



# LANE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## October 2015 NEWSLETTER



### President's Message

**Pam Leavitt, LCBA President**

Congratulations to Brian McGinley who won the free annual conference registration given by the Oregon State Beekeepers Association. In addition, Walter Bucher, Barbara Elliott and Becky Lemler won the free conference registrations awarded by the LCBA. We certainly encourage our membership to take advantage of this opportunity to learn from the experts and network with fellow beekeepers at the Oregon Garden on Nov. 6th, 7th and 8th. The convenience of the central location should allow more people from the mid and southern parts of the state to attend.

Congratulations are also in order for our LCBA Scholarship winners for the Oregon Master Beekeepers Apprenticeship program. Francis Rothauge, Diana Scoville and Deb Elder will be starting their classes next year.

If you are interested in seeing bees and bee parts up close and magnified, please come to the meeting on October 20th, to watch Lynn Royce and Judy Scher use our new microscope and demonstrate bee dissection. We don't usually get to see our bees exposed in this manner. You also have an opportunity to dissect your own bees at the U of O Biology Lab on October 27th. There are still a few available spots left (see page 2).

My husband, Les, and I spent the first three weeks of September in Europe. We visited Dubrovnik, Croatia where we saw many hives on the hillside. (See picture on page 2). I have since learned that the old walled city of Dubrovnik, over 1000 years old, major economy is shipping and textiles, exporting their textiles, wine and beeswax.

Croatia is a small country which lies on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea. Slovenia is to the north, Hungary to the east and Bosnia/Herzegovina to the south. There are 150 cooperative beekeeping associations with more than 7,000 members. There are three microclimate zones, the highlands with cold winters and lots of snow and two other zones which have dry and hot summers. Eighty percent of beekeepers in Croatia are hobbyist, 17% have an additional occupation and the professionals are 3% of the total.

Fifty-nine percent use Langstroth type hive configuration, 16% nucs, 17% are hives using 42 X 26.6 cm frames, 4% are skeps and 3+% are other. The

*continued on page 2*

### NEXT MEETING:

**October 20, 2015**

**Come early to socialize and share your questions with experienced beekeepers.  
Hall opens at 7:00 pm**

**Early Educational Class!  
"Apitherapy"**

**Door opens at 6:00 pm  
Presentation starts at 6:15 pm  
Fireside Room**

**General Meeting  
Hall opens at 7:00 pm  
Program - 7:30 pm**

**Topic: Bee Dissection  
Speaker: Dr. Lynn Royce**

Trinity United  
Methodist Church  
440 Maxwell Road  
Turn West off River Road  
in Eugene (South of Beltline)

### Inside this Issue:

LCBA Scholarship Winners	2
U of O Dissecting Lab	2
Sept. Meeting Highlights	3
Bylaw Amendments	3
"Varorra Alert"	4
Bee Fondant Recipe	5
Oct. Beekeeping Tips	6
"Top Bar Woes"	6
Busy Bee	7
Upcoming Events & Announcements	7
LCBA Leadership, Officer Duties	8
Western Apicultural Conference	9
"Ten Things to do Now"	10
Classified Ads	11

*President's message continued* country produces more than 20 kinds of honey. The largest comes from multifloral sources; black locust, amorpha (false indigo), rapeseed (canola), lime tree and sunflower. The second largest source is lavender, rosemary, sage, salvia, juniper and fir.

The Croatian Bee, Hrvatska pcela, is the country's beekeeping magazine, which is one of the oldest beekeeping magazines in the world. It began publication on March 1, 1881. They print 7000 copies, 11 times a year.

Every city we visited had an open air market and they all had stands selling honey and hive products.



Bee Hives in  
Dubrovnik, Croatia



### OSBA Conference Winners

Left to right:  
Becky Lemler  
Brain McGinley  
Walter Bucher  
Barbara Elliott

### Congratulations LCBA Scholarship Winners

Francis Rothauge  
Diana Scoville  
Deb Elder

2016 Oregon Master Beekeeping  
Apprenticeship Program

### Early Educational Class

Bee club member, Deb Elder or "Dive Girl Deb" will be presenting a class at 6:15 p.m. on Oct. 20th in the Fireside Room on Apitherapy or "Bee Venom Therapy" (BVT). The word comes from the Latin apis which means bee. Apitherapy is the medicinal use of products made by honeybees. Deb will center her talk on what she thinks is the most powerful product of the hive: Venom. She has Lyme Disease and uses BVT. Come early and explore the history and use of this product of the hive as a treatment for many different conditions.

### Openings Still Available for the Bee Dissecting Lab at U of O

**Date:** Tuesday, October 27th, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm  
**Location:** U of O, Klamath Lab 21

LCBA is sponsoring a trip to the University of Oregon Biology Lab on October 27th. Dr. Lynn Royce will guide people through the dissecting process. Dr. Peter Wetherwax and his assistant Misty McLean-Schurbon, Department of Biology will be hosting this evening session.

You will need to bring your frozen bees to the lab. Freeze for at least 24 hours prior.

We still have 6 spots open for members. Contact Nancy Ograin if you are interested in attending. 541-935-7065 or [nancy.ograin@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.ograin@gmail.com)



## September Highlights by Jodi Wiktorowski, LCBA Secretary

### Announcements:

- Ramesh Sagili, the scheduled speaker for the meeting, was in an accident and was unable to make the meeting.
- Ken Ograin stepped up and offered to give a presentation for the meeting.
- Bylaw revisions have been completed and will be sent to all members. Voting will take place at the November meeting.

### General Meeting Speaker: Ken Ograin “Rendering Wax Cappings”

Ken Ograin elaborated on wax collection and processing, which he touched on at the August meeting. The first rule he gave was that for any cosmetics, only the wax cappings should be used, not the comb wax. In order to collect the cappings, a hot knife needs to be used when extracting honey. The cappings should be collected in a 5 gallon bucket with a paint strainer attached to catch the wax. The paint strainer allows any honey remaining in the cappings to drain out into the bucket. Ken suggested allowing 24 hours for the honey to drain. He discouraged squeezing the wax to remove honey because this will cause some honey to become trapped within the wax. After allowing the excess honey to drain, fill the bucket with tap water, not hot water. Soak the wax in its paint strainer for a couple hours to rinse any remaining honey out. Ken suggested rinsing the wax in this manner at least 3 times, until the water remains clear, then hang the paint strainer and allow the wax to completely dry.



Once the cappings are rinsed and dry, they are ready to be melted and used for candles or cosmetics! The cappings include wax, a small amount of propolis, and a little honey. To melt the wax use a double boiler or a hot plate. The wax should not be allowed to get over 160 degrees Fahrenheit and it will burn above 180 degrees. Once the wax is completely melted, it can be poured into molds or containers. The wax needs to be filtered through cheesecloth or remay to remove any particles. Remay can be found at Down to Earth or Territorial seed company. Ken suggested having 2 containers and filters prepared. If you tip the container with the melted wax, any particles will sink. As you pour the wax into the first container, stop once the particles appear. Pour the rest of the wax into the second container. The first container is clean and perfect for cosmetics!!! Hold on to the wax in the second container, the wax with particles, and combine all of this wax until you have enough to melt down and repeat the process to collect clean wax. Ken suggested that old Tupperware butter or yogurt tubs can be used to store the wax. They should be sprayed with mold release prior to putting the melted wax in if you want to keep the containers for future use. Otherwise you can cut the rim of the container off and tear the plastic when you want to remove the wax.

### Bylaw Amendments

Your LCBA board has updated our associations bylaws. They have been sent to all current members by emailed and by U.S. Postal Service for those who do not have email .

Any changes to the bylaws must be reviewed and approved by the current association members. Please be sure to read them over and direct any comments, questions, or concerns to one of the board members below. We will be voting on them at the November general meeting.

If you did **not** receive them please let us know and we will get you a copy.

Nancy Ograin	541-935-7065	<a href="mailto:nancy.ograin@gmail.com">nancy.ograin@gmail.com</a>
Katharine Hunt	541607-0106	<a href="mailto:keehhunt@gmail.com">keehhunt@gmail.com</a>
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Francis Rothauge	541-520-8391	

## Varroa mite alert!

### An important announcement from Dr. Ramesh Sagili:

Hope all of you had a relatively successful bee year with strong hives and significant honey production, and have prepared your hives for successful overwintering. I just wanted to take this opportunity to alert / caution you about possibility of high mite populations in the colonies this year due to an unusually long bee season. As you all are aware we had a long bee season this year (at least in the Willamette valley) as a result of warm weather that prevailed for almost more than 7 months. Longer brood cycle (abundance of larvae) usually results in higher mite populations, as the mites get a greater opportunity to breed and increase their populations relative to bees. Most of you might agree that this year was a year with longest brood cycle seen in the recent past (I have been in Oregon only for the past 6.5 years, so can't go beyond that number). It has been reported that mite populations could increase exponentially (up to about 50 fold increase) in years when the brood is present in colonies almost round the year (Martin 1998).

The economic threshold to treat *Varroa* mites in general for temperate areas is considered to be about 3% or higher in Fall, but as economic threshold depends on several factors it is not ideal to always rely on this magic number. In Oregon during the past six years we have documented mite intensities ranging between 3% and 5% in Fall (August sampling). We observed significantly higher mite intensities this year (2015). The average mite intensity observed in backyard beekeeper colonies was 7%, whereas average mite intensity documented in commercial beekeeper colonies was about 3%. In few backyard beekeeper colonies we observed mite intensities as high as 32%, which is alarming.

If you treated your colonies for *Varroa* on time during July or August then probably you may have your mite populations under control, but still I urge you to monitor mites one more time before overwintering to make sure that the treatments that you used were effective and your current mite populations are not at damaging levels. If your mite levels are still high then please consider using an oxalic acid treatment if feasible when there is no brood (possibly during November).

If you did not use any *Varroa* mite treatments yet, then please assess the mite populations using alcohol wash or powdered sugar method as soon as possible and consider treating your hives with oxalic acid when there is no brood in the colonies. Oxalic acid was recently approved by EPA and is available from the bee supplier Brushy Mountain Bee Farm (<http://www.brushymountainbeefarm/?gclid=CLzrqIrB98cCFUiEfgods-gJ6w>).

Following are some consequences of inadequate or no *Varroa* mite control this fall:

- a) Bee population may decline significantly or the colonies might totally collapse.
- b) Colonies that survive the winter will start upcoming year / season with higher mite loads and hence could reach damaging levels soon by late spring or summer.
- c) High mite infested colonies may contribute to higher mite drifting via robbing bees to other beekeeper colonies and your existing healthy colonies, as your mite infested dead colonies may be robbed by other strong colonies and aid in greater mite dispersal.

Also, please continue feeding protein to your colonies if pollen stores are not adequate in the colonies. Protein feeding not only helps with brood rearing, but also helps boost the immune system of bees. We have observed colonies to consume protein until October 25 in the Willamette valley and few other locations in Oregon when the weather is still OK (temperatures around 55 to 60° F).

Following is a question relevant to *Varroa* mite biology that an Oregon beekeeper asked me few months ago.

*continued on page 5*

*Varroa Mite Alert continued*

**Question:** How many days is the female *Varroa* mite outside of the capped brood before it re-enters another cell for reproduction? Do the young female mites that emerge along with the new bees also take the same amount of time to re-enter another larval cell for reproduction?

**Answer:** The time a female *Varroa* takes to re-enter (re-infest) a new cell depends on the availability of older larva (ready to be capped) to enter, and also on the number of bees in the hive at that point of time. One study showed that on average female mites take about 4 to 6 days to re-infest new larval cells. In a lab study, female mites that were artificially reintroduced into new cells with appropriate aged larvae (ready to be capped) immediately after emergence from a cell were able to reproduce successfully without any problems. Young female mites that emerge along with the foundress mite (parent mite) need time to achieve full maturity and hence may take a little more time to enter a cell for reproduction than the parent mite. Research pertaining to these new young mites is scarce, hence providing an average time for infestation is difficult.

Regards,

**Ramesh Sagili**  
**Oregon State University**



**Bee Fondant Recipe**  
by Judy Scher

One of the most important winter chores is to lift the hive body to check if it's light in weight. If so, it is low in honey stores. In the winter and early spring your bees will starve if they consume all of their honey reserves or they move to

the edge of the hive where they no longer contact honey frames. If I have a light hive when the bees are too cold to fly, I feed a solid source of pure carbohydrate in the form of fondant candy. It is very easy to apply on one of those 50 degree days where you can quickly lift the hive cover and place the candy directly on the frames or inner cover. My bees love fondant more than anything else I provide at this time of year. It's soft and, if they decide to store it, they don't have to spend energy evaporating water from it. It's fun to make, just be sure you don't eat it before you get it to your hives!

**BEE FONDANT**

(Note: **Make small batches.** 4 cups sugar to 1 cup water is a good amount)

1 part water: 4 parts sugar

(by volume or weight - I find that it doesn't matter which, in this case.)

1/4 teaspoon vinegar per cup of sugar

(If using 4 cups sugar, use 1 tsp vinegar.)

Put in pan and heat and stir until it comes to a boil.

*Don't let sugar burn! If it turns brown or dark tan, it will make the bees sick.*

Boil for 3 minutes with cover on pan.

Boil uncovered until soft ball stage\* (starts at 234 degrees F, ends at 243 degrees F).

Turn off heat and cool to 200 degrees F.

Whip with a whisk until white (give it 5 – 10 minutes).

Pour onto waxed paper on cookie sheets.

Cool undisturbed.

Cut up into squares, separate with waxed paper, store in plastic bag in freezer.

*When feeding bees, warm fondant to room temp and put on top of frames or around hole in inner cover. Do not expose bees to cold for more than several seconds.*

\* The "soft ball" sugar stage is described in wonderful web site, "The Science of Candy". It describes the sugar stages with videos: <http://www.exploratorium.edu/cooking/candy/sugar-stages.html>



## October Beekeeping Tips

by Chuck Hunt, LCBA Member

1. All mite strips should be removed some time in October, depending on which type of mite strip was used and when it was placed in the hive. Grease patties will help to

control tracheal mites over the winter and can be kept on your hive all the time.

2. Entrance reducers, if used, should be on the hives. All hives need to be tipped forward slightly to shed rain over the winter. Hives should also be placed off the ground and be provided with wind shelter.

3. Late feeding can sometimes continue until mid or late October. Feed light hives a mixture of 2:1 sugar and water. Bees should have 50 to 60 pounds of honey for the winter.

4. Successful wintering depends on a good hive population with good health, a good and productive queen, and adequate stores of honey for the winter. Make sure your hive has these requirements and next spring you can watch the bees burst from the hive ready for the new season.

### Top Bar Woes, (from a Top Bar Novice)

By Polly Habliston, LCBA Treasurer

We were slow figuring out what was happening when our top bar hive suddenly “erupted” one evening about 5 p.m. on a cool Wednesday evening in September. Instead of settling in for the night, as was

their usual routine, our bees were swirling, buzzing, almost acting like they were preparing to swarm. But this was September! In fact, at first we thought all our hives were acting weird, because bees were “dancing” behind every hive, not in front of them. This continued until past 7:30 that night. By 9:30 p.m., they were settled, but the next day, it all started again. At that point, we realized it was just the top bar – the other hives were acting normal, but bees were spilling out of the top bar, swirling up 20-30 feet in the air, buzzing, buzzing. It wasn’t yellow jackets – we didn’t see fighting. In fact, the few yellow jackets in the vicinity were almost knocked back by the movement of all those bees. We ached for the bees. We hated to see so much energy expended. The other hives were busy bringing in pollen, but the top bar bees just seemed “frantic.” They continued all that day, finally settling in at dark, but started in again Friday. By Friday afternoon, it looked like things had settled down. All this time, we were trying to figure out what was going on. One logical suggestion was that we’d had multiple queens and this was their way of saying “farewell” as the hive adjusted for winter. That made sense to us.

We’d started the hive from a swarm in the spring, and throughout the summer, as the hive grew, we’d had brood stretched throughout the length of it. Perhaps we did have multiple queens. But by Saturday, we noticed yellow jackets going in and didn’t see any guard bees intercepting them. We decided to close off the opening with a robber screen of sorts, and even as we attached the screen, saw 4 yellow jackets come out. An hour or so later, we decided the only bees flying in were robbers, and opened the hive. Anyone who has lost a hive to robbers knows the sick feeling we had as we saw every top bar cleaned out. There were no dead bees. There was no honey. A hive that had seemed robust just 6 days earlier was now just filled with empty wax top bars. These bees just vacated under our watch. They didn’t assemble on a close tree, as so often happens with a swarm. We never saw a cloud of bees float off. There were no swarm cells on the top bars.

We’d never seen anything like this before, and still aren’t sure what happened. We have a lot of questions. What prompted the exodus? Did yellow jackets kill the queen? Without a queen, are bees capable of organizing like that and taking off? Why didn’t they defend better? Admittedly, we hadn’t closed off the bung hole, but it was the only entrance to a 28 bar hive that we thought had enough bees to defend itself. We knew yellow jackets were going to be a problem this year. We baited traps early in the spring and moved them close to the hives in July. We’d spent many hours swatting in front of the hives and had reducers in place on the Langstroth’s since July. This was our first top bar hive, and we have a lot to learn, but this lesson was a painful one!

**Polly** - We have heard of this happening to several other members with other types of hives, including Langstroth. There are so many things going on in a hive it’s hard to say what exactly happened. Sometimes we just never know. Your bees definitely absconded due to conditions either inside or outside the hive. You can do everything right, but things still can happen. Don’t get discouraged and do try again next year.

LCBA Editor

## Busy Bee - "Giving Back to the Hive"

Last month LCBA participated in the Master Gardener Fall Festival. LCBA volunteers were Rebecca Hale, Jenny Buckley, Polly Habliston, Kevin Hopf and Katharine Hunt.

Judy Scher did a presentation at the August Klamath Basin Beekeepers Association on "Under Appreciated Products of the Hive". She will be presenting this talk to LCBA next January.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered their time and energies. LCBA encourages community outreach to talk about bees and if you present to a group or volunteer at an event, please be sure to let me know .

[pamseaver2000@yahoo.com](mailto:pamseaver2000@yahoo.com)



Rebecca Hale & Kevin Hopf

## Upcoming Events & Announcements

### Oct 17th - Oregon Honey Festival

Ashland Springs Hotel, Ashland Oregon

### Nov 6-8th - Oregon State Beekeepers Fall Conference 2015, Oregon Garden Resort, Silverton, OR

Click on link below for all the information

<http://osba2015.orsba.org/>

### Kelly's Beekeeping Blog: "Lane County Hiveways"

Follow Kelly as she does her inspections, observations, and other beekeeping activities.

<http://lanecountyhiveways.com/>

**Florence Garden Club** - visit their face book page at

[www.facebook.com/FGCOR](http://www.facebook.com/FGCOR).

## THE SECOND ANNUAL Oregon Honey Festival *Saturday, October 17, 2015*

Marie Simmons, Author | Dr. Ramesh Sagili, OSU Bee Lab  
Dr. Susan Kegley, Pesticide Expert | John Jacob, Old Sol Bees  
Dr. Lynn Royce, Tree Hive Bees | Karessa Torgerson, EAS Master Beekeeper  
Eric McEwen, Diggin' Livin' Apiary | Laura Ferguson, College of the Melissae  
Katherina Davitt, Beekeeper & Educator | Joe Jordahl, Beekeeper

Meet Local Beekeepers! Honey Tasting! Activities for kids!  
Live music + drawings! Kids 8 and under FREE

Ashland Springs Hotel 10-4:30PM

\$15 at the door // \$12.50 at [EventBrite.com](http://EventBrite.com) or [OregonHoneyFestival.com](http://OregonHoneyFestival.com)

Sponsored by: Shastina Millworks | GloryBee Foods | Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians  
Old Sol Bees | the Ashland Food Co-Op

## Be a Part of LCBA Leadership

We are actively seeking members to serve on our leadership team. This is a great way to become more involved in our association and to get to know our members. New fresh perspectives and ideas are needed.

Elections for the 2016 board will be at our November meeting. Our current board members are willing to run again, but we would like to encourage others to consider running for a position. We have one new candidate, Ross Mills, running for a board position.

Please contact one of the nominating committee members if you would like to run for an office or have any questions about a position.

Tentative Slate of Officers:

President: Pam Leavitt  
 Vice President: Max Kuhn  
 Secretary: Jodi Wiktorowski  
 Treasurer: Polly Habliston  
 Board of Directors: Ross Mills, Francis Rothauge,  
 Larry Scoville, Kelly Goodwin

Candidate statements will be published in next months newsletter.

## Duties of the Officers & Directors

**President:** The President shall be the principal executive officer of the Association and shall preside at all the meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors.

**Vice-President:** In the absent of the President, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President and also any other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board of Directors. Maintain the inventory of property belonging to the association.

**Secretary:** The secretary shall keep the minutes of the meeting of the Members and of the Board of Directors and also perform any other duties as may be assigned by the President or by the Board of Directors.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds of the Association, make payments for debts incurred by the Association, and produce an annual budget to be approved by the Board. Also perform any other duties as may be as assigned by the President or by the Board of Directors.

**Directors:** Directors shall attend board meetings and act on behalf of the membership in all matters before the Board.

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## Western Apicultural Society Conference Recap

By: Mike France, LCBA Member

The majestic Flatiron Mountains just outside of Boulder, CO greeted the attendees of the Western Apicultural Society Conference with raw power and beauty. I was fortunate to

have the opportunity to attend this informative event which took place October 1-3. The tone of the conference was set by one of the Thursday morning speakers, Jim Doan, who is a commercial beekeeper out of New York State. His recent loss of bee hives made him realize this is a new era of beekeeping and the old ideas no longer apply. Jim's talk, "The 10 things that are different in this new era of beekeeping" focused on the changes beekeepers are encountering.

Highlights from Jim Doan's observations:

1. "A swarm today is not worth the time of day". Beekeepers have to re-queen almost 100% of all swarms caught and are no longer seeing typical swarming behavior.
2. Beehives are not superseding like they used to – they don't even know they are Queenless.
3. Queens today have a much shorter life span – You have to check every time you visit the hive to see if there is a laying queen. You can no longer rely on capped brood.
4. Hives need to be fed lots of syrup. Hived bees did not have to feed so much years ago.
5. You must feed bees pollen patties. The average is 17lbs/hive/year – also feed them Honey B Healthy.
6. Hive Beetles – They are more of a problem than ever. (regionally).
7. Take hives to the woods for a rest after pollination contracts–It's best to move far away from agriculture areas.
8. The time spent managing your hives has increased. Beekeeping requires more active management.
9. Varroa mites - Miticides that once were working effectively are no longer so effective. One theory is that miticides are not as strong as they used to be; another theory is possible mite resistance. In addition, the miticides might be neutralized by other chemicals brought into the hives.
10. Systemic pesticides are what's amplifying the other 9 issues.

While these views are Jim's observations, much of the program was dedicated to speakers who presented a current picture of the intersecting and conflicting issues of beekeeping, farming practices, environmental stresses and the potential for collaboration between competing interests. Much information was shared about the harmful effects on honey bees from the widespread use of chemicals, including insecticides, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides. If these chemicals were not enough to contend with, there is also the introduction of systemic neonicotinoids that has alarmingly increased the health risks associated with honey bees. It's not just the chemicals but the synergistic effect of sub-lethal doses of multiple chemicals that can increase the risk for bee mortality.

Of course you cannot have a beekeeping conference without much discussion of the varroa mite. Although this continues to be a major concern, it is encouraging to hear about the many research efforts that are looking to find a way to control the varroa.

Some of the groups dedicated to the collaboration effort of improving the condition of honey bees who presented at the WAS Conference included: *Project Apism*, *Bee Informed Partnership*, *Honey Bee Health Coalition from the Keystone Center* and the *Pollinator Stewardship Council*. It is encouraging to hear about the coordinated efforts to save our favorite pollinator, the honey bee. Please look up their websites to see the focus of each of these groups.

Other good news came from Dr. Marla Spivak of the University of Minnesota who talked about pesticide-free landscapes being created by individual home and land owners, small and large businesses and local governments. These are flowering areas that eliminate the "food deserts" that some bees face. Changes in landscaping practices and monoculture farming are being encouraged in order to bring a balance back to the environment and give bees readily available pollen and nectar sources.



Honey tasting bar at the conference

continued on page 9

*conference continued* The final day brought a change in topics, which included how to use honey for health and wellness. Dr. Ron Fessenden spoke about the benefits of raw honey for boosting metabolic processes in humans. Dr. Allen Dennison reviewed wound healing for humans using honey and Dr. Dan Smeak presented similar information for medicinal uses of honey for our pets.

The conference ended in the best possible way-- with a honey bar. Over 25 jars of honey brought by attendees were set out from lightest to darkest to taste test and compare varieties. The most unusual tasting honey to me was radish blossom and the most delightful was the fireweed honey brought by beekeepers from BC, Canada.

Make plans to attend the Western Apicultural Society Conference when it visits Hawaii in the fall of 2016 or Davis, CA in the fall of 2017. You will hear some amazing speakers talking about current honey bee issues and meet incredible beekeepers from all across America.



### “ Ten Things TO DO NOW To Help Your Bees Survive Winter”

by Dr. Dewey M. Caron

1. **KNOW YOUR MITE NUMBERS:** Test your bees to know their varroa mite level as they hunker down for the winter. You still have some time to treat them (unless you have a non-treatment philosophy).

Queens are winding down their egg laying as colonies prepare to over-winter. When mite population loads are high, the hive can get overwhelmed. Essential oils or formic acid treatments still can reduce mite numbers; Oxalic acid drip treatment, once the brood is further reduced, is another treatment option.

2. **WINTER STORES:** Evaluate honey and pollen stores for the winter. You should look in the top of hives to confirm that the bees have strategically positioned capped honey above a compact brood area between boxes or within the lower box. As the bees move up through winter, they consume these stores. For brood boxes, the best order for frames from the outside to the center, is honey, then pollen, then brood.

3. **FEED:** Feed bees now if they are light on stores. Feed one or more gallons of heavy sugar syrup per hive per week until they stop taking it in due to cold temperatures.

4. **DRY FEED:** If colonies are still light on stores and as the weather becomes cooler and rainy, switch to dry sugar, sugar candy or fondant candy. Monitor hive weight thru the winter and feed if necessary.

5. **WEATHER PROTECTION** Protect hives from the wind and rain. Some beekeepers move colonies under shelter; others opt to use covers (like recycled political signs, corrugated tin or plywood) that overhang the hive top by a foot or more all around. This helps keep moisture out of the hives and also provides bees with a space for cleansing flights in rainy weather.

6. **MOISTURE CONTROL** Consider placing moisture control above the hive boxes to act like a sponge to draw moisture off the colony. An extra rim filled with moisture absorbent material (wood shavings, absorbent fabric, insulation materials) with ventilation to the outside, extra deep hive covers, or insulation material directly on top of the frames are ways to control excess moisture accumulations.

7. **VENTILATION** Insure good hive ventilation with space for moisture to rise and exit the colony by moving outside frames slightly off the edge of the box. Consider leaving the bottom screen open with a dead air space beneath the hive; if you close the bottom, tilt the hives slightly forward so moisture does not accumulate at the bottom.

8. **REDUCE ENTRANCES** If you have not already done so add an entrance reducer to protect the colony from mice, which sometimes seek shelter in a nice warm hive for winter. Mice can do a lot of damage to comb, as well as urinate inside the colony.

9. **SECURE HIVE COVERS** Anchor hive covers with a stone or brick. If hives are directly exposed, consider providing a winter wind break (wooden barrier, hay bales, fencing etc.)

10. **GET OFF THE GROUND** Get hives up off the ground to help combat moisture problems. Place hives up on palettes, cinder blocks, etc., if you do not already use a hive stand. Dead air space beneath the hive is a good insulator.

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