

Don't Give Varroa a License to Kill!



OREGON Class K
License to Kill
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Restrictions
Untreated Hives
Varroa destructor
Your Bee Hive
AnyPlace, USA

Mite Keeping 101

By Morris Ostrofsky, Oregon Master Beekeeper & LCBA Member

Our April meeting general topic was scheduled to be "Mite Keeping 101" by Morris Ostrofsky. Morris' slide show is posted on our website and he has written up the following information on this topic.

Mite Keeping 101 addresses the fact that beekeepers all keep mites. Without any action beekeeping can quickly morph into mite keeping. Since Varroa mites are in our hives, the question is will the population take control turning us into mite keepers rather than beekeepers.

This program presents the biology and the tools that can be used to keep beekeepers and their bees in control of their hives. The beekeeper's goal is to get to know varroa mites, determine their numbers and how to manage them.

The reasons why mites are a problem now (varroa bombs, viruses, compromised immune systems, low population and no "fat" winter bees), along with various ways varroa mite indicators both outside and inside the hive are described. Since all colonies have mite, what is important is to know how many mites are present and at what point they reach a treatment threshold. There are various methods to determine mite load: alcohol, ether, powdered sugar jar sampling; brood sampling and natural mite fall. There are also strategies to manage mites. The Honey Bee Health Coalition publication, [Tools for Varroa Management](#), discusses both the various methods to sample mite loads and management strategies. This publication is organized by life cycles of the bees (dormant, population increase, population peak and population decrease) and then what methods are highly, moderately and least effective during each phase. Use this link to locate this resource.

Also available is another new tool: Honey Bee Health Coalition's [Varroa Management Tool](#). This helps beekeepers make informed varroa management and treatment decisions. This tool will walk you through the decisions you need to make to determine how best to manage varroa mites in your hives.

Each beekeeper must decide what action they want to take. He encourages beekeepers to use July 15th (once finish extracting) as the deadline to start fall management control techniques. Overwintering successfully is highly dependent upon being proactive about varroa control. Since the approval of oxalic acid beekeepers have a safety net. This acid can be used in November and December when colonies are broodless and is very effective at targeting the phoretic mites.

The take home message of Mite Keeping 101:

- Monitor your mite loads whether you plan to treat or not.
- Know your mite load at the time you treat.
- Follow the product directions EXACTLY.
- Talk to experienced, successful beekeepers to learn what has worked for them.
- Ultimately it is your decision; just do something.

Tools for Varroa Management:

<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroa/>

Varroa Management Tool:

<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroatool/>

Mite Keeping 101 Slide Show

[Click here](#) to access.

Varroa Mite Biology

[Click here](#) to access.

Learn about the biology of the varroa mite.

Slide show presentations are posted on our website on the "LCBA Talks" tab.