

Central Coast Beekeepers' Alliance

MEETING MINUTES for Monthly Meeting – Monday June 20, 2016, 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Erin and Scott Holden's Residence, Atascadero, CA

ATTENDANCE TOTAL: 30

CCBA MISSION – to foster the health and well being of honeybees by supporting best beekeeping practices through networking, education, and raising public awareness.

PRACTICUM: HIVE INSPECTION

Presented by: John Chesnut

HIVE #1 Inspection:

- Saw day old eggs, so we know queen is present and active, under normal circumstances could stop inspection now, knowing she is there
- No shake in this hive, only cured honey, so bees are not getting nectar right now
- Shake – is uncapped and drips out when frame is shaken (thus the name)
- This is a classic summer hive – devoting all resources to brood so no resources for honey
- Since there are probably Italian bees they will breed themselves to starvation (unlike other varieties which will slow the brood process)
- Don't feed these bees, crowd them instead by not adding more frames, this may slow the brood process
- When opening the hive, spray with vanilla water (vanilla or anise extract in water spray bottle – works like smoke. Vanilla is cheaper than anise (but that can be used too) – it masks the alarm pheromone and can be better/safer than open smoke this time of year
- Pollen frames will stay pollen frames forever
- Capped honey is being eaten back – bees tend to eat back in a organized fashion, look for dry cells next to capped cell – if the bees were adding honey, there would be concentric circles of honey, nectar, shake
- Warre hives are foundationless – used to harvest wax more easily

HIVE #2 Inspection:

- First task to check that queen is laying eggs
- There is a decent amount of drone activity in this hive – drones can freely enter any hive
- If hive is going into swarm mode, lots of drones will visit, when arriving at hive they will touch antennae with guard bees
- Queens mate in air – will take drones on a chase so she can select the fastest drone
- Queens can't produce offspring with drones from same hive, so must mate with drones from other hives
- This have has a queen cup, but this did not turn into queen cell, does not appear there is a queen – John recommends putting eggs from the other hive into this hive and seeing if they will make a new queen from eggs
- Old comb is darker because queens have “dirty” feet
- *Swarm process:*
 - *BEES fly when queen cells are capped, so 8 days from then till queen hatches*

- *Then three days more for new queen to harden*
- *The 1-3 days for new queen to take mating flight*
- *Then 3-4 days for queen to start laying in quantity*
- *** the problem with emerging supercedure in late June is that you will need to supplement with capped brood to keep population up while this process runs, bees may age out in this time and need younger bees to make royal jelly and draw comb – it is ok to transfer nurse bees to the hive while waiting for queen to get started – they are not territorial*
- *A young queen may lay multiple eggs in one cell till she gets the process figured out*
- *When transferring eggs into a queenless hive:*
 - *Look for just laid eggs, still translucent*
 - *Notch the comb so bees will notice the damage, go to repair and find the eggs and make into queen*
 - *Put these frames of eggs in center position in the center super for max bee coverage*
 - *By day 5, - the bees should pull queen cells, DO NOT lift the frames out to check as you may damage – just look in between for queen cell*
 - *If there is a queen cell wait another 8 days for queen to hatch and another week or so for queen to harden, mate, and start laying*
 - *** So wait at least 15 days to check the hive after adding eggs***
 - *75% of mated queens return, but not all of those are well mated, so 50% chance for queen to make it successfully*
 - *Bees up to 2-3 weeks of age can make royal jelly, then those glands convert to make invertase enzyme used to convert glucose to sucrose in honey making process.*

FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION REGARDING VARROA MITE MANAGEMENT

- *John does not remove drones, problem with drone removal is can increase mite population is not done on tight schedule*
- *John treats with oxalic acid and formic acid and ALWAYS treats AUGUST 1st. Formic is OK in Los Osos but might off gas with heat in north county too much.*
 - *Oxalic Acid is good substitute for heat, dangerous to people but not dangerous to bees, organic acid.*
 - *Amatrax is the gold standard treatment, in past needed a pest control license, but now can get 10 strips without license, it is a hard chemical but is good tool for “proofing” the hive – if you want to make sure the formic or oxalic has done its job can add one or two strips and see what mites come out.*
 - *Formic is a simple carbon ring (so is oxalic – it is a physical poison that creates a crystal that tears the mites feet off).*
- *In September hive starts to produce winter bees (which are feed differently) and will live 6-9 months, so those bees need to be healthy, so treat in august to clear hive and ensure queen can raise healthy bees in September that will last through winter.*

- *John monitors for mites with powdered sugar in screened shaker. He uses two gelato containers tapes together with a screen in between. Collect 1/4 cup of BROOD bees (= about 150 bees, but NOT QUEEN), add a little powdered sugar, shake hard for one minute, turn over shaker and let bees out, than put sugar in water (it turns transparent) and look for mites. If MORE than 8 mites per 150 bees (6%), THEN TREAT.*
- *Bees follow exponential growth curve, peak is at Summer Solstice, after that starts to drop, after this the working part of beekeeping starts. In spring bees outbreed mites, but after July the works starts.*
- *Mites are drawn to drone larvae since they have a longer brood cycle and can breed longer. Every hive has mites, but question is if hive has so many mites is can*

**John C. has Mann Lake budget deep supers for sale, \$9.00 each, 10 frame –. contact him if you would like to purchase.

EXTRACTING from Warre Hives

How to extract on foundationless frames, very difficult to spin without breaking until a cocoon cycle has gone through (cocoon hardens the wax and makes it possible to spin) or wrap with stainless mesh from hardware store to hold wax.

CLUB BUSINESS

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

- Meg taking minutes
- If people want to be notified of club events, classes, etc., please put email on signup sheet
- Facebook – Rob’s old Facebook account for the club cannot be updated (locked out no password access) so please don’t use this account and don’t respond to comments to that account.
 - New Facebook page is “CentralCoastBeekeepersAllianceSLO”
 - New page has two administrators to avoid lock out situation
- Meeting date for Facebook account and website updates -
 - CCBA has decided on making a separate website, new website address is: centralcoastbeekeepers.net, swarm list is now posted there
 - Website content will need to come from somewhere else
 - Cynthia says that Facebook gave a message that the old Facebook page is now a dead page, ideally we will take this page down
 - *** on second consideration, there will be NO meeting, will do this work by email, John will work on contact form for membership

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Balance is \$ 581.34 as of today
- New member fee is \$10 – CASH ONLY. Dues are due now, please give to Dale
- Anna will be purchasing tables from this account for upcoming events CCBA will participate in

SWARM LIST

- Still maintaining swarm list – add your name if you want to be called
- Swarms were slowing in May but are increasing again in June
- Bruce and Mike are contact for swarm list
- Anna got call about swarm in West Paso near Peachy Canyon, it is in a wall, but they will open the wall, does not want to pay, but would like someone to take it out

OTHER ACCOUNCEMENTS

- Dadant is moving to new location.
- Anna bought a hand crank honey extractor but does not need it, so should club buy it? Group agrees to buy \$200.00. Scott and Erin offer to store for north county. Meg will hold John C's old one for SLO and south county
 - Info about club extractors should be on website. Only available to CCBA members, and there should be a loaner deposit to make sure it is returned
 - Most bee clubs have an extractor rental – Marin has a rental program but with motorized extractors
 - CCBA will rent for \$5 plus \$25 security deposit will be paid, will have to sign it out, 3 day rental
- CHANGING CITY ORDINANCES ABOUT BEEKEEPING – is anyone interested in working to change?
 - LA City just passed an ordinance allowing bee keeping
 - Incorporated Cities have ordinances, so different regulations in different places
 - John C says a bee club tried this about a decade ago, and their approach brought to other folks attention that it was illegal to keep hives. Board of Supervisors, county council told them not to support as it would open up liability. Should make sure there is some strong support by some supervisors – talk to them before taking action
 - In SLO county it is allowed but regulated, basic rule is 200 feet from public road, John encourages beekeepers to register with the County
 - Anna feels this is a different era and there is more attention about the need for pollinators,
 - Jodi, Dale, Sara, Meg will help Anna
- Sierra Club – publicizing against Neoniconanoids, sierra club bring lawsuit against

Club Goals are:

- 1. Networking – support each other in beekeeping**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Public Awareness**

How we are meeting goals:

NETWORKING

- Through club meetings

EDUCATION

- John H, will lead a month practicum
- Next practicum is May 21 in Atascadero – see John to sign up
- John C – making nuc hives, will take a select group for that – on morning of June 25, charge is \$70, will get a nuc (has 6 or 7 places)
- John C will host honey extraction in an afternoon in late July where folks can bring their honey to harvest
- John H is doing a harvesting class in Santa Maria Hancock – three Saturdays, starting July 9
- There is a Natural Beekeeping conference August 19-21 in Pasadena – www.honeylove.org
 - Michael Bush, Les Crower and others will be there
 - \$305 before July 17

PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Participation the recent events:
 - Earth Day April 2016 – in El Chorro Regional Park. Had a table, talked to lots of visitors, was productive but A LOT of work, need more people to help, otherwise it is too long of a day
 - Conservation Celebration at Atascadero Zoo in April 2016 – good attendance
 - Cambria Bee Faire May 2016 – decent attendance, fun group, Jon C. found out that Cambria High School would like to host bees, Anna would like to do this festival again – even more positive than Earth Day
- Upcoming Events:
 - Pollination Celebration – June 25
 - Need educators - people to sign up to host at table – see Anna
 - Need vendors – honey, candles, mead – see Anna
 - Need speakers – John C says he will speak and bring observation hive
 - **Seed savers will be there with lots of good bee forage plants
 - Golden Oak Honey Festival – October 22, Jodi is coordinating, needs help
 - Lavender Festival – there will be a talk by Gordon about lavender and honey so good connection, festival is from 10-5, so long day to do booth

NEXT MEETING – July 18, 6:30 PM, hosted by Kathy Longacre at 6440 Corral de Piedra, SLO, near Price Canyon Road and Hwy 227

- Will start right at 6:30 with hive inspection