

Central Coast Beekeepers' Alliance

MEETING MINUTES for Monthly Meeting – Monday August 15 2016, 6:30 PM

LOCATION: SLO Grange

ATTENDANCE TOTAL: 33

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

Club Goals are:

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

PRACTICUM: WHAT'S HAPPENING FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS?

Presented by: John Chesnut

- Going forward into fall beehive populations will begin to dwindle in number
- At first cold snap in November, you can begin to lose hives
- “lose your bees in the fall”
 - New beekeepers may lavish attention in the fall, and import bees, etc to save a hive
 - Better approach may be to dispatch the queen in a weak hive and combine those bees with another hive
- The bees are hungry now and will go through stored honey quickly
- As bees empty comb, take the boxes off, to store comb, take out of the box and spread out so there is air circulation. Honey comb can store thru winter, brood comb is more likely to be attacked by wax moths
- In colder areas comb can be stored outside after first freeze, but needs to be put back on as soon as warming and build up in spring before wax moths get active again
- In coastal areas hive build up starts by January 1st as nectar flows start in mid-December with Cape Ivy, Arroyo Willow. In North County nectar flows start later and will start with arroyo willow. Make sure to put drawn comb back on hive as soon as these nectar flows start
- Late season blooms have little nectar in August, but bees are still harvesting pollen.
- There is a late fall bloom in SLO County, around this time, Queen may stop laying, then bees will start storing nectar again since they are not raising brood
- If queen stops laying early then hive population can drop significantly going into fall/winter which puts them in greater risk of failing
- Bees start to harvest honeydew from aphids nectar drip at this time, also oak and pine honeydew. Oak honeydew is high in tannins and ash solids, so if bees are foraging exclusively on honeydew they can get dysentery (looks like nosema) – this is tough on bees' metabolism and can put them at higher risk for nosema and other issues. (In Europe pine honey is considered a specialty).

- During August some syndromes can happen:
 - Bees will abscond, especially small hives or hives with ant issues
 - Usurpation can happen at this time, Africanized bees can invade a colony, kill the resident bees and take over the hives resources. There would be a swarm on the outside of the hive, not bearding, but taking over
 - Fall swarms, some true swarming at this time, but often won't establish, too hard for them to obtain enough food to make it through, so either need to supplement them, or kill the queen and combine the hive with another hive

- Fall is a normal time for combining hives
- John counts bees in a hive by counting bees on the "seam" (space between frames) – a single full seam is about 2500 bees, so want to see at least 5 seams at this level
- Another fall event is drone removal. On the coast drones are removed in the third week of September. At this time you will see worker bees carrying drones and ejecting them from the hive – this marks the transition from the summer colony to winter colony
- In north county drones can be ejected due to hunger starting in early August and later
- When removal is happening there may still be drone larvae in the cells at this time, but after late September worker bees will remove drone larvae and eat it – this is source of protein for workers. If they are very desperate, they may also eat worker larvae
- John does not leave much honey on his hives, but often ends up feeding in October, especially if the top box is not completely full of honey. On the coast but also over the grade our nectar season starts so early, that we don't see starve out in March during start up the way the rest of the country does. Brooding up takes A LOT of energy. Here we have arroyo willow, which has nectar that is half sugar, so bees here have a source of food in March.
- Good to pull frames and boxes off as they empty the frames so you are left with two frames, if not bees will move up into middle and leave bottom empty in the spring which makes it harder to utilize the equipment. If you want to leave supers in place (because you have no place to store) you can put an inner cover above the main supers and then leave other supers above – bees will go up and patrol these boxes but these are not actually part of the hive
- John reverses hives in the early spring (February) rather than in winter, so that when they are brood up, it puts space above for bees to move up into. Pulls empty box off the bottom and puts on top.
- FEEDING BEES
 - Feed in the fall, if bees are hungry – wait until the comb is dry
 - Two materials to feed
 - 1) "SUB" such as Ultra bee powder. Sub is high in protein.
 - 2) Ways to feed are:
 - a. Leave powder out in protected place
 - b. Make patties with oil and inverted sugar – oil and invert sugar keeps patties soft. John starts feeding this in December as supplemental protein since bees need this to make larvae during build up. John does not feed in the fall to fatten bees for winter,

because it can attract ants, and also he does not want to encourage them to make brood right now going into winter (Gordon prefers to feed in fall to keep healthy bees)

- c. Strong sugar mix – for fall feeding, 2 parts sugar to 1 part water (either by weight or volume – 1 cup is a pound). John puts a mark on any container then fills with sugar to mark, then starts adding hot water until volume comes back up to mark – that makes a 66% or 2:1 solution. This is a good small mix – you don't want more water, thicker is better, 2:1 mix will still flow through a feeder but it is a minimal amount of water for bees to evaporate off in cooler temperatures. Use white sugar from smart and final or Costco, make sure dissolves fully.
- o If you have less than 5 seams of bees and comb is dry, then you need to feed, so need to check, because you don't want to feed if you don't have to. Or at least wait until it gets cold and ants go away.
- o Make sure to install a robbing screen to ensure to install a robbing screen to prevent robbing, as it is more likely to happen when feeding. The robbing screen allows the entrance odor to be separated from the physical entrance. John puts these on long before feeding, when bees start getting hungry
- o Equipment to feed:
 - Drill hole in lid, drill small hole and invert with mason jar of syrup – this is easier but need to make sure
 - Bordmin feeder – goes in entrance – John does NOT recommend as this method is more like to result in robbing
 - In-frame feeder – need to put corks or wire inside so bees wont drown
- Honey nectar or invert sugar is highly acid in nature. Honey is 4.5pH. Advantage of an acid reaction in sugar syrup is it does not spoil. 2:1 syrup does not spoil as quickly. It is closer to the pH that the bees are used to. John uses ascorbic acid (get from canning supplies) to invert sugar.
- Mix sub into sugar syrup. Bees have in honey crop, feathery fans that can strain pollen or pub and store as beebread. So sub and sugar syrup mixed to make feeding more efficient.
- Can also place “mountain camp” (candied sugar that lasts longer) on waxed paper in hive

QUESTIONS:

- How to prevent absconding? John finds it almost always has to do with ants, so have an aggressive ant program. John's ant program is:
 - o Borax - take a pill bottle and make a thin solution of sugar syrup with 2% solution of borax. Drill ant size hole in lid, ants will carry back to their nest.
 - o Some folks have had success using powdered cinnamon around hive
 - o Barrier – uses tangle foot on hive stands.
 - o Uses ½ inch EMT tubing for a raised hive stand – John will give Cynthia a photo essay to put on the CCBA website.

- Another option is “hop guard”, can get on Mann Lake, but only with applicators license (may be hard to get in California)

CLUB BUSINESS

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

- New form on website for new members
- Book list on website, if anyone wants to recommend a book, email Cynthia

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Club now has \$441.34 (after paying Anna \$200 for extractor)
- Anna will also soon purchase some folding tables
- New member fee is \$10 – CASH ONLY. Dues are due now, please give to Dale
- \$1 donation per person when we meet at the SLO Grange

SWARM LIST

- Still maintaining swarm list – add your name if you want to be called
- Bruce (south county) and Mike (north county) are contacts for swarm list

NETWORKING

- Sign up to get on email list

EDUCATION

- 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 in 2016:
 - 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
 - Pollination Celebration at the grange – June 25
 - moderate attendance
 - Lavender Festival – Paso Robles, city park, very good attendance
- CHANGING City Ordinances – Anna would like to start an effort and see where it goes. Look at the steps the LA group took for the new beekeeping ordinance. Interested in helping – Brian Larson, JerriSue and Michael, Bruce
- Upcoming Events:
 - Golden Oak Honey Festival – October 22, Jodi is coordinating, needs help

- CCBA will have table – need volunteers to help
- Dale will head up a seed bomb table

OTHER ACCOUNCEMENTS

- John Hupp will be teaching a bee diseases and parasite class in October – four Saturdays, through John Hancock College
- Club Extractor – Erin Holden has one Atascadero for loan \$25 deposit, two week limit, 2 frame hand crank, two frame
- John always extracts in April and again in May so that he can bracket the black sage nectar which starts third week in April. Honey extracted at end of May is spring Black Sage honey, before toyon comes on which is a dark viscous honey. Fall honeys tend to crystallize very easily.
- IS there room to post bee related items/honey/equipment for sale on CCBA website?

Meeting Adjourned

NEXT MEETING – September 15, 6:30-8:30 PM, Meg Henry's house, 2569 Quail Lane, Los Osos CA, off Bayview Heights Drive