

CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPING ALLIANCE



Mission Statement: In the San Luis Obispo County, California bio-region, to foster the health and well-being of honeybees by supporting best beekeeping practices through networking, education and raising public awareness.

IN THIS ISSUE

- [Club Updates](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [What to expect in your hive in January and February?](#)
- [#beekeepinghack](#)
The simple guide to lighting your smoker
- **Have a question? Ask the Club!**

Club Updates

-Become a Member!

*See [page four](#) for more information
See fill out [this survey](#) (~3 minutes)

-Register your hives

[SLO County Apiary Registration](#)

It is free!

“Per the California Food and Agriculture Code, all beekeepers operating within the state of California must register annually with their chosen home county.”

-New leadership

*Have an hour or two a month to help out? Send us an [email \(slocoba@gmail.com\)](mailto:slocoba@gmail.com) or attend the next meeting.
*Upcoming meeting to discuss the future of the club.

Upcoming Events

Start thinking about purchasing queens and nucs!

February:

Thursday 2/9 5:30-7:30 (5:30-6 social time)
Santa Margarita Lions Club
(9610 Murphy Ave., Santa Margarita, CA.)

March:

Next Newsletter
Meeting-TBD

CONNECT WITH US

Email:
slocoba@gmail.com

Website:
www.centralcoastbeekeepers.net/

Facebook:
facebook.com/groups/ccbaslo

What to expect in your hive in January and February?

The following is drawn from [Jeremy Rose's](#) book "Beekeeping in Coastal California" with permission.

What the bees are doing?

- Queen increases egg-laying
- Expanding brood nest during warm weather
- Forming a tight cluster around the brood as the temperature drops
- Foraging on early nectar and pollen sources between rain events
- Rapidly consuming honey
- In February can double or triple in size (may need to add boxes)
- Drawing out foundation

What the beekeeper may want to do (based on a two-deep brood box hive)

- Do not to disturb hives unless necessary during inclement weather
- Monitor hive weight and adding [sugar syrup](#) (click to see how) and pollen supplements if needed.
- Ensure clean water is present
- Observe brood for signs of [disease/pests](#), (K-wing, nosema, varroa mites, or stress)
- Insert empty drone brood frames, Removing full drone brood frames (February)
- Review health by looking for solid (good) or spotty (not so good) brood patterns

Common Problems

- Starvation
- Condensation under the lids and drips on clusters
- Varroa mites cause parasitic mite syndrome
- Spotty patterns due to a lack of nutrition, virus, and/or mite problems



CONNECT WITH US

Email:
slocbba@gmail.com

Website:
www.centralcoastbeekeepers.net/

Facebook:
facebook.com/groups/cbaslo



Lighting your smoker



Have a hack you would like to share? Please send to: slocbba@gmail.com

#beekeepinghack

The Simple Guide to Lighting your Smoker

Although it appears commonsensical, just light the dang thing, having a cool smoke that lasts your entire apiary visit is both an art and a science.

So, why use smoke?

Smoke does two things to bees—it puts bees into an emergency mode (think a tree on fire) and it blocks the spread of pheromones.

First, when bees smell smoke, like humans, they immediately think of danger and evacuation. Since bees cannot carry their young away from fire, they grab the next most valuable thing—honey. Bees will begin to gorge on honey in case the hive needs to abscond.

Second, the guard bees that do see the danger of humans and not the threat of fire let off their own protect and attack pheromone. However, the smoke blocks the spread of the pheromone and prevents the beekeeper from being attacked by an angry mob of bees.

How to light your smoker?

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to light a bee smoker:

1. Gathering the necessary materials including your smoker, some fuel (such as dry leaves, pine needles, hay, pellets, burlap, etc.), and a lighter. There is much debate about the “[best](#)” kind of fuel (some claim blue jeans and marijuana).
2. Next, load the smoker with your chosen fuel. Fill the smoker about halfway, leaving enough room for air to circulate and help the fuel burn. Keep some more fuel close by.
3. Light the fuel. Hold the flame to the fuel until it starts to catch and smolder.
4. Once the fuel is burning, pump the bellows repeatedly to encourage a healthy flame to build.
5. Once the flame is well set, add some more fuel loosely to fill the rest of the smoker. A thick white smoke should begin.
6. Once the smoker is producing a steady stream of smoke, you're ready to use it. Make sure the smoke is “cool” so you are not puffing flames, high heat, or ash into your hive.
7. Use a puff of smoke near the entrance of the hive and on the top of the hive once the lid and covers are removed. Use sparingly.
8. Here in dry California, beekeepers often keep their smoker in a metal bucket when not in use and have water or a fire extinguisher handy in case a fire starts. Be sure that all embers are out before putting the smoker away.

Adapted from [NYC Beekeeper](#).

CONNECT WITH US

Email:
slocbba@gmail.com

Website:
www.centralcoastbeekeepers.net/

Facebook:
facebook.com/groups/ccbaslo

Become a CCBA Member for 2023-2024

Want to support your local beekeeping club? Here is an easy way to make sure we have the funds to continue serving SLO county beekeepers and the community.

We have two requests:

1. Fill out [this survey](#) (~3 minutes) so we know who you are and can update the contact list.

(<https://forms.gle/MpxV6YKqbJ3YoHdY7>)

2. Pay \$20 annual membership fee. This is per household.

All funds go toward supporting CCBA activities (e.g. renting meeting space, speakers, materials for shared projects, etc.)

Fee can be paid via:

- Venmo (see below)
- Check--Make payable to Central Coast Beekeeping Alliance; PO Box 42, Templeton, CA. 93465
- Cash--at our next meeting.



CONNECT WITH US

Email:
sloccba@gmail.com

Website:
www.centralcoastbeekeepers.net/

Facebook:
facebook.com/groups/ccbaslo