

# CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPING ALLIANCE



Carrizo Plains (Photobotanic.com)

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.

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## 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 \(slocba@gmail.com\)](mailto:slocba@gmail.com) or attend the next meeting.

\*Upcoming meeting to discuss the future of the club.

## Upcoming Events

**Have you purchased your queens and nucs yet?**

### *March:*

Thursday 3/9 5:30-7:30 (5:30-6 social time)

Santa Margarita Lions Club

(9610 Murphy Ave., Santa Margarita, CA.)

Theme: Queens, Queens, Queens

### *April:*

Thursday April 13 6-8pm

Oak Creek Commons Great Room

635 Nicklaus Street, Paso Robles

Park on Nicklaus St. and follow signs into the complex toward the Great Room

Theme: Bee-friendly local plants

CONNECT WITH US

Email:

[slocba@gmail.com](mailto:slocba@gmail.com)

Website:

[www.centralcoastbeekeepers.net/](http://www.centralcoastbeekeepers.net/)

Facebook:

[facebook.com/groups/ccbaslo](https://facebook.com/groups/ccbaslo)

## What to expect in your hive in March and April?

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

### What the bees are doing?

- Hives are increasing population
- Swarming
- Recovering from Varroa mites, viruses, protein deficiency
- During poor weather bees are rapidly consuming stored honey
- Storing surplus honey

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

- Requeening hives that show persistent spotty brood patterns or Varroa mites
- Making early divides to prevent overcrowding
- Adding honey supers to prevent overcrowding; checkerboarding supers (see page 3)
- Monitoring for Nosema
- Raising queen cells

### Common Problems

- Weak hives due spotty brood patterns
- Overcrowding results in swarming
- Nosema weakens the hive's forager population
- Varroa mites cause parasitic mite syndrome
- Spotty patterns due to a lack of nutrition, virus, and/or mite problems
- Argentine Ants
- Spontaneous loss of queen bee
- Honey bound—Hive becomes queenless after running out of space to store honey



Honeybound frame—Note the brood (brown in the middle); all of the other cells have honey or pollen. The queen has no place to lay eggs, which may lead to swarming.

(Photo: <https://www.tumblr.com/tagged/backyardbeekeeping>)

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Honey band above brood. Queen will not cross the band to lay and may also lead to swarming. (Photo: See [here](#))

## #beekeepinghack Checkerboarding to ensure space for queen egg laying

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\***

### Opening up space for your bees

It is recommended to checkerboard supers above the brood nest. Checkerboarding brood will disturb and likely harm the hive.

#### What is checkerboarding?

Bees choose an area to hold their nectar/honey, usually right above the brood. From this spot they build outward filling more and more of the box. This filling in can prevent the queen from having room to lay, which may lead to swarming.

To checkerboard, remove alternate frames of honey from one super and replace with frames of (ideally) drawn empty comb. For example, in your first super you may remove frames 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 (which are all full of honey) and replace them with frames of empty drawn comb. When you're done, the even-numbered slots have honey, and the odd-numbered slots are empty.

Take the frames of honey from first super and put them in the second super in the same position they were before, that is, in position 1, 3, 5, 7, And 9. This time, the even-numbered spots have frames of empty drawn comb, and the odd-numbered slots are full of honey. If the box is not full, you can still checkerboard the frames that are full, although it may not be as necessary. When stacked atop one another, the boxes look like this from the side:

Full	Empty								
Empty	Full								

#### Why checkerboard?

With the flourishing of flowers, especially this year with our rains, a hive will begin to expand quickly. If nothing is done to manage the increase nectar intake, the bees can actually fill in areas where the queen needs to lay. Additionally, the bees can create a honey band above the brood nest (see photo above), which signals to the queen that there is no more room; she will not cross the honey band to lay. With no place to lay, the queen may decide it is time to swarm. Soon, only half of the bees will be left in the original hive with a new queen.



Photo: See [here](#)

Have a hack you would like to share? Please send to: [slocbba@gmail.com](mailto:slocbba@gmail.com)

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**When should I checkerboard?**

It is best to checkerboard when the weather is consistently above 60 degrees, usually in the early spring (so now in South County or soon in North county). This will prevent the beekeeper from being caught off guard and losing a strong hive to swarming.

**Where do I checkerboard?**

Checkerboarding is done in the one or two supers that are directly above the brood nest. The boxes may be of any size—but they should be the same size.

**What are the results?**

Done properly and at the right time, checkerboarding will:

- Prevent or delay swarming
- Increase hive population
- Produce a larger crop of honey
- Eliminate the need for invasive swarm-control manipulations
- Prepare the hive for winter without supplementary feed.

Adapted from Rusty Burlew ([Honeybee Suite](#))

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**Become a CCBA Member for 2023**

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.



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