

Items of interest to beekeepers July 15

Clubs, please forward to your members, or give them the list of items in this mailing and my email address so they can sign up if they wish. Thanks.

IN THIS ISSUE ---

SIGN UP QUICK! THIS IS TOMORROW - ABF NEXT 'CONVERSATION WITH A BEEKEEPERS" WEBINAR
USING OXALIC ACID
ANTS
LOOKING FOR A IMPORTANT HISTORICAL ARTICLE
WANT BULK SEED TO PLANT POLLINATOR HABITAT?
INDOOR FARMING: AGRICULTURE'S NEXT REVOLUTION?
BOOKS
LINKS
EVENTS

SIGN UP QUICK! THIS IS TOMORROW - ABF NEXT 'CONVERSATION WITH A BEEKEEPERS"

The ABF's "Conversation with a Beekeeper" sessions continue:
New Conversation with a Beekeeper Session-
"Federal Action Affecting Honey Bees and Pollinators- A Discussion" - July 16, 2015

Register today for ABF's Conversation with a Beekeeper Webinar

The ABF Education Committee has been hard at work developing new ways to keep its members engaged and informed in between ABF annual conferences each year. To this end, the ABF is pleased to announce another session in the 2015 Conversation with a Beekeeper Webinar Series. This series is free to ABF members. To register, please go to the ABF website at www.abfnet.org, and log into your profile. You will find the link for registration under Education & Events/Conversation with a Beekeeper Webinar Series. If you have any questions, please contact Valerie Lake at valerielake@abfnet.org or 404.760.2875.

Federal Action Affecting Honey Bees and Pollinators- A Discussion
Thursday, July 16, 2015
8:00 p.m. ET / 7:00 p.m. CT / 6:00 p.m. MT / 5:00 p.m. PT / 4:00 p.m. AKST / 3:00 p.m. HST
Gene Brandi, ABF Vice President and Fran Boyd, Sr. Vice President, Meyers & Associates

You may not know that the American Beekeeping Federation President Tim Tucker and Vice President Gene Brandi are constantly traveling to D.C. to meet with Senators and Congressmen about the Federal action affecting the honey bees and other pollinators. Join Gene Brandi and Fran Boyd, with Meyers and Associates, for a discussion on two of these important actions: EPA's Proposal to Mitigate Exposure to Bees from Actuely Toxic Pesticide Products and the "National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators" by the Pollinator Health Task Force.

Thank you for your continued support of the American Beekeeping Federation!

American Beekeeping Federation
3525 Piedmont Road
Building Five, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30305

This one is extremely important too, and comes from another excellent newsletter that beekeepers should be aware of (if you aren't already) - Phil Craft's "PhilCraftHiveCraft.com". Having just received his most recent offering, I want to pass on this item about use of oxalic acid for mite control. He also makes important points about off-label (read "illegal") home brews. Here's the bit on OA. Look for follow-up on his website in the next few days.

USING OXALIC ACID

Posted to PhilCraftHiveCraft on June 26, 2015

This is a question, along with my reply, that I received as a result of my June 20th post regarding the registration of oxalic acid as a varroa mite control product. I appreciate the question, as I have been hearing a great amount of discussion among beekeepers on how to avoid purchasing a labeled product by mixing up the chemical themselves.

A beekeeper in Kentucky writes,

Phil,

Myself and others have been referred to Amazon.com to purchase oxalic acid, since the bee supply companies can't sell it in most states yet. The problem is, CAS# 144-62-7, or Oxalic acid dihydrate (the crystalline form), not wood bleach, is marketed online as being 99% pure. So I was very surprised to read from you that the approved solution for bees is 3%. I don't think very many people are aware of that. Any suggestions?

Phil's reply

I am sure that a number of U.S. beekeepers have been using oxalic acid for years, just as many have been using (and I'm certain some still do) homemade formulations of formic acid. Though purchasing and using non-labeled forms of either chemical for varroa mite control is illegal, the employees of state pesticide departments are very busy monitoring the application of legal pesticides, and it is rare for a beekeeper, especially a small scale beekeeper, to be cited for what we call off-label pesticide use. However, the odds of getting caught are not the only consideration.

The issue you inquire about, of getting chemicals in a proper, safe, and effective concentration, is one of the major reasons for pesticide labeling regulation. Before a product can be registered, a great deal of research goes into determining the optimum concentration and method of application for both safety and effectiveness. I have heard horror stories of beekeepers burning off the tips of their fingers or damaging their lungs while handling full strength formic acid.

Continue reading on PhilCraftHiveCraft.com →

This useful items comes from the Alameda County (California) Beekeepers newsletter under the section "Beekeeper's Corner". This particular area is a collaboration between newsletter editor Laurel Przybylski and Jerry Przybylski (sorry guys, I have NO idea how to pronounce that!)

ANTS

ANTS

We care about ants because we care about our bees.

Our biggest problem is probably those Argentine ants, *Linepithema humile* (formerly *Iridomyrmex humilis*), that emigrated from Argentina to port cities on most of the continents and ocean islands. They hitched a ride on cargo. Once established in California, they expanded their range from San Diego north. In fact, they're a single mega-colony of genetic sisters that cooperate and drift from nest to nest.

These ants are about 3mm long by 1mm wide, so can infiltrate bee hives through gaps between boxes, top vents, and screen bottom boards. They're after both the protein and the honey in the hive. They'll also go for the sugar in your feeder, and protein supplements. We don't want those ants driving the bees away from the food we took so much trouble to prepare.

Ant colonies grow in spring and summer, and decline in fall and winter. In the city the abundant garbage resource (refuse bins/cans, and litter discarded into the streets) fuel strong colonies. The books tell us that strong honeybee colonies can cope with ant invasions. Severe ant invasions can weaken colonies, and cause them to abscond. The energy the bees expend defending against ants could have been spent raising brood or putting up honey.

Ants eat Varroa mites! They'll eat the mites that fall through your screen bottom boards onto counting boards. So, when ants are present, Varroa infestation levels inferred from monitor-board counts will be inaccurate.

Non-interventionist purist beekeepers let the ants and bees work it out. Their goal is obtaining the strongest possible bee genetics through natural selection. After all, bees in bee trees have been coping with the local ant populations for generations.

Pro-treatment beekeepers may treat with petrochemical insecticides like fipronil, hydramethylnon sulfuramid, or even "Chinese Chalk" (pesticides deltamethrin and cypermethrin in Chinese chalk are illegal in California). Products can be found in the hardware store, or home-depot... Some "listed" pesticides require a pest control permit. Review the product documentation and MSDS (Materials Safety Data Sheet) if you plan to use them. Be aware of their effects on children or pets. Be aware also that they may kill beneficial insects too.

Pro-organic beekeepers (for lack of a better name) usually fall somewhere in between. The non-petrochemical ant poisons and ant repellants include:

Repellant

Cinnamon spread around hive-stand legs: Reports of effectiveness vary

Wood ashes from your fireplace or stove: Very high pH causes burns: reports of effectiveness vary; less effective when wet

(Food grade) Diatomaceous Earth: grinds up leg joints: effective as a powder but less effective if it gets wet

Poisons

0.5 to 2% Boric Acid ant bait in 1:1 sugar syrup: Poisons brood in the nest: Can take weeks to cause colony to collapse ; risk to pets, snails, etc. Boric acid is less toxic than aspirin (compare the LD-50 dose), but should be used with caution. The Internet has recipes for Borax ant baits too. Boric acid may be purchased in pound quantities in the garden department of stores near bug and weed killer products.

.5 to 2% Boric Acid in peanut butter or grape jelly: see above.

Active Dry Yeast sprinkled on ant colonies: Disrupts the ant's digestive tract in pupa causing

death: Effectiveness unknown since this one is new to me.

Cream-Of-Wheat powder sprinkled on ant colonies: Expands with water in ant's digestive tract causing death: Effectiveness unknown since this one is also new to me.

Barriers

Water or oil filled moats around hive-stand legs: must be inspected and renewed often. "Bridges" are often a problem when leaves, weeds, sticks or lawnmower clippings accumulate in the container. Cans develop leaks. Wood legs can rot out in water. Motor oil in soil is a contamination problem. Metal hive-stand legs work better. Automotive grease on hive-stand legs: Must be inspected and renewed from time-to-time. Wind blown material can stick to the grease.

Cobwebs, grass, weeds, and lawnmower clippings can bridge barriers, so be alert to these problems.

An inverted cup coated inside with grease at the top of a grease-covered leg is more reliable than grease covered leg alone. (Make sure the ants can't infiltrate via the center of the hollow leg.)

This scratches the surface of the topic.

LOOKING FOR A IMPORTANT HISTORICAL ARTICLE

Bob Noel at Honey-B-Healthy wrote to ask if anyone can help him find this article, Can you help?

In 2004, Michael Meyer, a commercial beekeeper from Springfield, MO told us about the drench method of feeding sugar syrup. He had read about it in the 1980s in the American Bee Journal, an article written by Ancel H. Goolsbey. Colonies returned from almond pollination in California were lethargic and not taking syrups, He tried force-feeding the bees by drenching and after a few 8 - 12 ounce drenches (applied directly to the brood nest per colony) the bees perked up and began to readily take the feeding syrups. Mr. Goolsbey died in Spokane, Washington in 2005 at age 91.

If anyone can help us find a copy of this article, please get in touch with Bob at bob@honeybhealthy.com.

WANT BULK SEED TO PLANT POLLINATOR HABITAT?

In her weekly news summary, Communications Director Beth Roden at Bayer CropScience announces a new collaboration between Bayer and Ernst Conservation Seeds, the largest native seed producer and supplier in the eastern United States, to provide bulk seed to individuals and organizations that want to plant pollinator habitats. Ernst Seeds created its own seed mix as part of this collaboration, one of many since the launch of the hugely successful Feed a Bee (<http://feedabee.com/>) initiative.

Feed a Bee partners will receive a pollinator seed mix from Ernst Seeds that includes wildflowers that bloom from spring to fall, providing important nutrients for pollinators all season long. Some of the most popular pollinator attractant plants in the mix include slender mountainmint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*), wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) and purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). The seed should be planted according to USDA Pollinator Program guidelines at a rate of four pounds per acre.

Ernst Seeds sells over 400 species of native and naturalized seeds and live plant materials. Its production operations include more than 8,000 acres in northwestern Pennsylvania, additional farmland in Florida and cooperative growing relationships in Maryland, North Carolina and Oregon.

Beth also passed on this fascinating article about research at Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center in Dallas -

INDOOR FARMING: AGRICULTURE'S NEXT REVOLUTION?

<http://www.wfaa.com/story/news/local/dallas-county/2015/07/06/indoor-farming-agricultures-next-revolution/29798309/>

BOOKS

Still no books list. I'm up to my ears in wrapping up the August issue of the Western Apicultural Society Journal and need at least a week's worth of 48 hour days! Where DOES the time go? I will get that list done soon, I promise. But let me stop trying to be specific until things settle a bit.

LINKS

These links will take you to important websites. Reprinting the items gets too voluminous, so I encourage you to visit the originals for some good reading any time.

Winnie the Pooh Guide to helping British bees: http://www.friendsofthehoneybee.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/E2463_BeeBooklet_Web.pdf

A good information site to teach children and beginning beekeepers: <http://www.serenataflowers.com/pollennation/flowers-bees-honey/>

UC-Davis on-line Newsletter: http://elninobeelab.ucdavis.edu/apiculture_newsletter.html

Apis newsletter - PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE. The Apis newsletter is now found at <http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/home/?u=9296a3543dc631c8a50086511&id=ec6bf7d517>
It can also be accessed through <http://apis.shorturl.com>

<http://beecare.bayer.com/service-center/publications/beenow-magazin>

California State Department of Food and Agriculture blog - plantingseedsblog.cdfa.ca.gov

Honey Bee Health Coalition - www.honeybeehealthcoalition.org

Pollinator Stewardship Council - pollinatorstewardship.org/?page_id=349, with the most recent one posting at the top of the page

Project Apis m. - www.ProjectApism.org

Washington State University on bee health - www.extension.org/bee_health

WSU 'Green Times' newsletter - <http://cahnrs.wsu.edu/blog/2015/01/wsus-green-times>

Colorado State University Pollinator Protection office -
<http://www.cepep.colostate.edu/Pollinator%20Protection/index.html>

EVENTS

The following events are all happening in the Oakland area of California. If you are within reach, put them on your calendar now. Note also that President Judy Casale is still looking for folks willing to help with plans for the Alameda County Beekeepers' 100th anniversary in the spring of 2016. Email her at visualeyes108@yahoo.com.

1. Sunday, July 19, 1-3 pm: Bee Hive Inspection

Location: Oakland CA

Cost: \$30

Learn how simple it is to do a thorough hive inspection! We will cover all the tools and how to use them correctly. We will go into a hive and show what everything looks like: eggs, larvae, capped worker/drone brood, capped honey, and pollen. You'll learn how to assess if your hive is the right size for the amount of bees and if you have a fertile, laying queen.

Instructor: Jennifer Radtke has been keeping bees in her backyard for 9 years, and has developed the beekeeping education program at the BioFuel Oasis. She is former vice-president of the Alameda Co Beekeeping Association.

Register at: <http://biofueloasis.com/workshops/>

2. Sunday, August 23, 1-4 pm: "Putting the Squeeze on Varroa Mites!"

Location: Oakland, CA

Cost: \$40

If you haven't learned about varroa mites yet, NOW is your last chance. In August the varroa mites increase and your bee population decreases, this class will show you how to detect varroa mites and the size of their infestation in your hive. Learn to keep bees alive and prosperous without resorting to pesticides, knowing that hives around you will collapse and die if mites are not controlled. We'll open up a live bee hive and demonstrate detection and preventative measures (including the sugar roll test and powder sugaring your hive), so you will be prepared to do it in your own hive in the next couple months. We will also cover drone comb frames, oxalic & formic acid treatment, and more. Everyone, from new beekeepers to those with years of experience, will find this class invaluable.

Instructor: Jennifer Radtke.

Register at: <http://biofueloasis.com/workshops/>

3. Saturday, August 29, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. : ACBA Randy Oliver Workshop

Location: Berkeley (exact location will be sent to participants)

Cost: \$60

Instructor: Randy Oliver has been a professional beekeeper and active researcher studying practical applications for both commercial and hobbyist bee colonies since 1980. He has 1000 hives in Grass Valley, California. In addition, he scours scientific papers for practical beekeeping applications. Find out more at <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/>.

Classroom instruction followed by hands-on demonstration with live hives. Topics to include:

8:30-10 What's new

Current research and studies being done by Randy and his colleagues

Recent developments in IPM (integrated pest management) and Varroa control

10:00-11:30 Hive management for amateurs in urban Alameda County

How to know if your bees are healthy

Ensuring proper bee nutrition and health

Getting colonies strong for spring
Spring management: swarm control and honey production
Making splits: how, when, and why
11:30-12:30 Queen rearing for amateur beekeepers
Queen rearing, breeding techniques, and survivor stock strategies
Nucs, why we all should have them

1:30-4 Hands on

TO REGISTER, first, please send an email to Jim Veitch to reserve your spot at jveitchv@gmail.com. Second, to guarantee your spot, mail a check made out to ACBA to: ACBA c/o Jim Veitch, 2140 Ward St., Berkeley, CA 94705. You can also bring a check to the ACBA meeting. Space will be limited to the first 20 participants who are paid up and your check will not be cashed (or your money refunded if paid in cash) if you end up on the waiting list and a spot does not open up. You can cancel up to a week before the workshop.

4. January 31–September 20, 2015: Bees: Tiny Insect, Big Impact

Location: Oakland Museum of California.

A new exhibition takes a look at the wildly diverse and intricate world of one of the most important creatures to human agriculture and the natural environment, through family-friendly experiences, hands-on activities, and media. Hurry to see this exhibit before it closes.

This one is a good way off but important enough to note now -

5. October 24 - 25: The Four Pillars of Honey Bee Management (Nutrition; Honey; Varroa; Winter)

Location: Bee Culture Conference Center, 640 West Liberty St, Medina OH

Two full days of great speakers and solid information. Register and find more information at www.BeeCulture.com.

Archived "Items...." are available on request.

To be removed from this list, just hit 'Reply' and put "Unsubscribe bee list" in the Subject line.

Disclaimer:

These items are circulated as being of interest to beekeepers. The sender has no vested interest in them, pro or con, and does not engage in censorship of what information beekeepers should or should not have access to.

Fran Bach, Western Apicultural Society Journal and Washington State Beekeepers newsletter editor

509-573-4245

febach3@gmail.com