

Lewis County Beekeepers' Association:

December 2011 Newsletter

In This Edition:

- **Upcoming LCBA Events**
- **Notes from LCBA's November 9, 2011 Meeting**
- **Notes from Jim Bach, WSBA Secretary**
- **LCBA News & Announcements**
- **Cooking with Honey: Holiday Recipes**
- *And Special Attached File: Pat Swinth's Bear Story – Text & Picture!*

Upcoming LCBA Events:

* **December 14, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.:** our 3rd Annual Holiday Potluck at the Newaukum Grange – please mark your calendars and get ready to share good food, good fellowship, door prizes, & more! After dinner: brief monthly meeting & our traditional Beekeeping Q&A. We'll discuss the question of ordering package bees, take your suggestions for 2012 speaker topics, hear an Extension services update, and more.

Please Bring: a dish of food to share & a plate, cutlery, & cup to eat/drink from.

The Grange has tables & chairs, 3 ranges, a refrigerator, & plug-ins for hot pots.

LCBA will provide coffee, tea, hot chocolate, & napkins.

Directions to Newaukum Grange, 104 Browns Road East, Chehalis, WA

from I-5, Exit 77:

- **After exiting, take Hwy 6 West.**

- Left onto Riverside Rd.
- Riverside Road turns into Shorey Rd.
- Stay on Shorey Road until stop sign at Hwy. 603: Grange is across the street.

Questions? Contact Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary, at Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com, or by phone: 360 880 8130.

January 12: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 – 9 p.m., Old Chehalis Courthouse

- **Speakers:** Tim and Sharette Giese
- **Topic:** Taking Bees on the Road – How the Woogie Bee Pollination Service Works
- **Business Meeting & Bee Q&A**

February 8: LCBA Monthly Meeting, 7 – 9 p.m.

- *Tentative – this will be confirmed in January Newsletter*
 - *Darren Gordon, “House of Bees,” on planting a bee-friendly garden*

Notes from LCBA’s November 9 Monthly Meeting:

- **At our November 9 meeting:** we watched *Bees: Tales from the Hive*, a 54 minute, 1998 film journey inside the life of a hive, which featured amazing close-up footage of queen mating flights, wasp invasions of hives, swarm behavior, and the life cycle of the honey bee. Sharette Giese brought popcorn – thanks, Sharette!
 - *If you missed this meeting but would like to see the video, please contact Susanne (see contact info at end of newsletter) about borrowing it. Sharette brought it home for her family to see and will bring it to our December potluck.*
- **Brief Post-Movie Business Meeting**
 - Bob Harris reportee that a member had a quadruple bypass; surgery went well. He is doing well and asked Bob to bring his greetings. He’s hoping to attend the potluck.
 - Should LCBA order package bees in case we have losses this winter and to help any new members starting beekeeping next spring? Norm reported that we should be able to get a good discount price if we have a sufficient order. Bob will call

John Edwards at Ruhl and get prices to note at our December potluck. In the past, Ruhl Bees has not required deposits from our group. Susanne will send a special email asking members to let us know if they are interested by the potluck. We will need a firm commitment, and we will need a location for members to pick up bees.

- Norm has heard stories from members about yellow jackets. Bob Harris went from 11 robust colonies to just four. The yellow jackets started in and revisited. Rob Jenkins went from 7 to 2 colonies. It happened so fast that the damage was done – perhaps within three days. It may be a result of our strange weather patterns: this happened around the time of the first freeze, after which the yellow jackets surged in activity. Norm surmised that this was also around the time the drones were being kicked out. Possibly the drones, as prey, attracted the jackets. John Panesko asked if hanging traps would work but others thought that they would not.
- Jon Wade and Brandy DeMelt put out the call for members' dues and also introduced our new Suggestion Box. Do you have ideas about events the club could host, speakers / topics we could bring, or anything else bee club related? Please use the Suggestion Box and let the Board hear from you. It's also cool to talk to us 😊
- **Feeding bees in very cold weather:** If it drops down to 30 degrees, should you still feed? NO – below 50 degrees, don't open your boxes.
- *There was more, but your Scribe's computer froze up ☹ More news next time.*

Notes from Jim Bach, WSBA Secretary on Honey Supers, Yellow Jackets, Over-Wintering Strategies, and more. . . .

Jim shared these comments after reading our November newsletter.

Hi Susanne and colleagues.

I thought I'd send some comments on the newsletter just to add some thoughts that I've learned over the past 30 years.

Nine frame brood nests or honey supers: Always put ten frames of foundation into your boxes until they are fully drawn, then remove one and equally space the others to 9 frames. Often the bees draw a lot of wild comb if you use only 9 frames of foundation. I don't use "metal 9 frames spacers" because then I can only use fully drawn combs in those boxes. My finger width between the top bars makes a nice 9

frame spacing. Or use one of the spacing devices sold as M00964 - \$18.75 in the Dadant catalog, or HD-587 - \$19.95 in the Mann Lake supply catalog. 9 frame spacing also results in wider combs making it easier to uncap honey for extraction. You may need to move combs around, or reverse them to get them drawn equally on both sides.

Yellow jackets: These insects live on protein the first six weeks of their lives. They eat other insects and carrion. After that they live on carbohydrates. They will attack bees at the hive entrance and quickly bite off the head of the bees, and suck the nectar from the bee's honey sack. Later in the fall they are more abundant and seek to enter the hive to get the honey. I've never seen yellow jackets in the brood rearing area of a hive, they always go to the corners of the frames after the honey. Some beekeepers have put a cup or two of sugar syrup into open large pop bottles and set them on hives in the apiary. I've been surprised how many jackets will enter the top and drown. I've used gallon plastic milk bottles with two or three 1/4" holes (drilled or cut with a knife) 8 to 9 in. above the bottom. I haven't found the correct sugar/water content to make them very attractive, but they do attract some jackets. Set the bottles on the hive tops or place them outside the apiary. I've also heard from beekeepers who hang strips of bacon over a large pot of soapy water; claims that it works well.

Wintering single deep box colonies: It is possible but not recommended. If possible winter it over another hive. I use a peg board bottom board (used for making spring top nucs) or use 1/4 in. plywood surrounded with 3/4 x 3/4 to 1 in. wide rim (with 1.5 in. entry in front). Cut 4 or 5 saw kerfs x 4 inches, in the center to allow the heat from the bottom colony to keep the top one warm through the winter.

Remember that colonies in smaller hives, such as a single story, will reduce their colony size to obtain the characteristic egg shape cluster. So you will have a smaller colony in the spring. They will winter a larger cluster when placed over another colony as suggested above.

Reversing brood boxes: I don't recommend this technique for swarm prevention or to get the queen to go into the bottom box. This management practice destroys the bees natural pollen and honey orientation within their hive. To get the queen to move down in the late spring, just move two frames of eggs and young larvae (and usually the queen) down into the center of the bottom box. And you can move emptier frames toward the center of the top box to enhance brood rearing there.

Feeding bees: What is mother nature's bee food? Honey, not sugar syrup. Only feed syrup if you need to feed Fumidil-B for Nosema apis or ceranae. If the bees didn't store enough honey to get through the winter, you can combine them with another colony, or feed 2:1 sugar/water syrup if you just must get them through the winter. All colonies that are 10 combs of bees or less should be wintered over another colony or combined with them. Then make splits the following spring to get your colony numbers back up. If you must feed use cane or beet sugar, not corn syrup. Bees winter more comfortably on honey than sucrose.

Wrapping hives: It is not absolutely necessary unless you live in a very windy area - not usual in western WA. Always have a top entrance - 5/16 to 3/8" x 1 to 1.5 in. wide. This allows natural heat rising in the hive to carry off the excess moisture. Feed colonies in late August and early September so the bees have a chance to dry down the syrup (by Sept. 15) before they actually cluster for winter. This eliminates the condensation of moisture from the syrup. I usually feed one gallon of Fumidil-B syrup in a feeder, or pour 3 cups of the 2:1 syrup over the colony, 3 times, and two hours apart. Don't pour in so

much syrup that it runs out the hive entrance. Using this method, the bees lick each other off and clean the syrup off the frames and comb, and more bees get the treated syrup. The 2nd and 3rd feedings necessitates the bees store the first feeding of syrup in the center brood combs to lick up the rest of the syrup. More individual bees get the treatment in this manner, reducing the Nosema in the winter cluster. You get the same Nosema control without using a full gallon of syrup.

Ordering queens and packaged bees: Be advised that if you order April queens or packages you may have significant queen mating problems because of possible late spring weather in California. I'd advise you get early to mid May queens and packages. The weather will have warmed up in western WA making your effort more in time with available forage. I even get queens as late as June 15, which works very well.

Where to buy queens: You won't get "greater genetic diversity." The US gene pool is too narrow, and has "bottle necks" according to the science of Dr. Steve Sheppard at WSU. I'm looking into possible sources in Canada.

Nuc or package bees: Actually, it depends more on how many dollars you have available to spend. If you buy either or both in mid to late May, the nuc will build up faster since it should have four combs covered with bees and a laying queen, while the package queen isn't laying and is not on drawn comb. Either will become a proper colony depending on the genetics and behavior of the queens. You should see a 12 to 15 bee queen retinue if you have a highly attractive queen. Less than ten bees in the retinue will result in poor colony build-up and poor wintering. Depending on spring weather in western WA, you really want to start a colony when you'll have good flight weather and available forage - mid to late May. The colony will build up faster in the warmer weather.

Good newsletter Susanne!!!

Jim [James C Bach, WSBA Secretary, WAS Treasurer, jcbach@fairpoint.net]

LCBA / WSBA News and Announcements:

Christmas Shopping? LCBA Member Rob Jenkins makes cool yard art out of found iron! He had some lovely bee-themed garden stakes at the Onalaska Apple Fest. Contact Rob at ironimagery@tds.net; 360 978 4200.

Got Mead for the Holidays? Need Beekeeping Supplies? Visit Honey Hut at Centralia Deli Steakhouse & BBQ, 708 Harrison Avenue in Centralia. Call Tim Weible, 736-1015, for more information about supplies and prices. Tim has pretty much everything you may need by way of supplies in stock: suits in small to XX, gloves, boxes assembled or unassembled, supers, wax and plastic foundation, frames, tops, bottoms, smokers, tools, and books. The Honey Hut also sells local honey, and even mead, in addition to serving genuinely awesome brisket.

Need Help With Your Bees? Don't Bee Shy – Contact a Bee Mentor:

- If you'd like to be connected with a honey bee mentor in your area, call Susanne at 360 880 8130 or email Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com.

- If you need help with Mason Bees, check with Kimo Thielges (kimosabe@compprime.com), or Ted Saari (KNT98632@q.com).

Would You Like to Volunteer as a Bee Mentor? Bee mentors take calls, answer questions, and may visit members' bee yards. If you're interested in serving this way, please call Susanne at 360 880 8130 or email her at Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com.

Free Swarm & Colony Removals by our "Bee Team." If you – or someone you know – has bees in a structure and wants them removed but not killed, please call a member of the Bee Team (we don't remove bees in winter, but can get you on our list for spring). This service is free, though we accept donations to support our educational programs.

Can You Help In 2012? Want to ride along on a removal? It's fun, free, educational, and saves bees from the exterminator! Call us (360 880 8130) or email Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com – it's a great experience!

Growing Places Farm needs beekeeping supplies: If you have gear, especially bee suits and visors, that you can spare, please call Lynn Ford, 360 807 4304, or email lford@gpfep.org.

COOKING WITH HONEY:

If you're looking for a simple but truly tasty holiday dish, try this:

Whiskey & Clove Honeyed Ham (12 servings) (Recipe courtesy of "Home Is Where Your Honey Is: A Collection of Recipes" from the National Honey Board. Visit www.honey.com!)

I brought this to our Holiday Potluck last year, and though I've put it in the newsletter before, a number of people asked that I run this recipe again, so here it is! The alcohol in the whiskey cooks off, leaving a pleasant flavor behind.

Ingredients: 3/4 cup of **honey**

1 – 1 ½ Tablespoons bourbon whiskey (OR substitute 2 teaspoons of
vanilla extract

½ teaspoon ground cloves

1 bone-in, fully cooked, spiral sliced ham—about 5 lbs.

Process: In small bowl, combine **honey**, bourbon, & cloves till well blended

Place ham, cut-side down, in roasting pan

Brush with **honey** mixture

Cover pan with foil

Bake @ 275 degrees F 1 hour or till heated through

Remove foil from ham and increase oven temp to 425 degrees F

Brush with **honey** mixture

Bake 10 minutes or more or till ham is golden brown

Remove from oven and place on serving platter

Pour juices over ham

Honey Glazed Lamb Roast

Ingredients:

3 to 4 pounds boneless leg of lamb, trimmed

salt and pepper to taste

3/4 cup **HONEY**

3 Tablespoons lemon juice

3 Tablespoons onion, minced

2 Tablespoons parsley

2 Tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped

2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, chopped

2 Tablespoons fresh sage, chopped

2 teaspoons lemon peel, grated

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°

Place lamb on a cutting board skin-side-down. Season with salt and pepper.

Combine **honey** and lemon juice. Blend well. Brush lamb with honey mixture.

Mix together onion, parsley, herbs, lemon peel, garlic and salt until well combined.

Sprinkle lamb with herb mixture. Roll and tie lamb. Brush with remaining honey mixture.

Line a roasting pan with foil. Spray with cooking spray. Bake lamb on a roasting rack 20 to 25 minutes per pound for medium rare.

Serves: 8

Honey Apple Cake (serves 24!)

Ingredients for the cake:

4 large eggs

3/4 cup **honey**

1 1/4 cups sugar

1/3 cup canola oil

1/4 cup water

2 1/4 cups unbleached flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

3/4 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon allspice

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 cups apple (such as Cortland, Macoun, or Macintosh), peeled & finely chopped

1 cup walnuts, finely chopped

Ingredients for the Topping:

1/3 cup **honey**

Directions:

Heat the oven to 300°, then generously butter a 10-inch bundt pan.

In a large bowl, combine eggs, honey, sugar, oil, & water, beating with an electric mixer until well blended, about 3 minutes.

In another large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, & salt. Add the apples and walnuts and toss to coat evenly.

Add the liquid ingredients to the dry mixture and beat until smooth, about 2 minutes.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan.

Bake 70 to 75 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean.

Cool the cake on a rack for 5 minutes, then invert the pan onto a plate to remove the cake.

Top the cake by spreading on the 1/3 cup of **honey** & sprinkle on the 1/4 cup of walnuts, pressing them down gently with your fingers.

Allow the cake to cool completely before serving.

Gluten-free pumpkin honey spice cookies (makes about three dozen cookies)

Ingredients:

2 cups gluten-free flour blend

1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon guar gum powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup **honey**

1/2 cup softened butter

1 cup pumpkin puree
1 large egg
1 cup chopped pecans
2/3 cup dried cranberries

Directions:

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease or line with parchment paper three cookie sheets.

In a bowl, whisk together dry ingredients.

On a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or with a hand mixer:

* cream together honey and butter

* Beat in pumpkin and egg (mixture will look curdled but will smooth out when dry ingredients are added).

* On low speed, mix in dry ingredients until blended; mix in pecans and cranberries.

Drop tablespoons of dough on prepared cookie sheets; leave 1 inch between them.

Bake 15 minutes or until firm to the touch.

Cool on pan 5 minutes; with spatula, transfer to wire rack and cool completely.

* Use a store-bought blend or make your own blend by combining equal parts white rice flour, tapioca starch and potato starch or cornstarch.

Serve & enjoy!

Respectfully reported—bee happy!

Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary: Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com; 360 880 8130

