

Lewis County Beekeepers' Association: *July 2010 Newsletter*

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Upcoming Events:

Weds., July 14, Summer Potluck & Monthly LCBA Meeting: 6 p.m, not 7 p.m.!

- *Where: Bob Harris' Rose of Sharon Farm [contact information removed from online edition]*
- *When: 6 p.m. – not 7 p.m.! Please note different time, but don't worry if you can't make it by 7 – just come on over.*
- *Please bring:*
 - *Food to share, a chair, plate, & cutlery. For food, please bring whatever you like. Of course, recipes involving honey are always welcome ☺*
- *Bob will have a grill ready to go and will provide cold drinks.*
- *July Meeting Agenda: This summer potluck will be mainly for socializing, with a short agenda:*
 - *Update: How Have Our Bees Doing In This Crazy Weather Year?—Troubleshooting Q&A*
 - *Update: August Elections for LCBA Board of Directors (see News & Announcements, below, for a preview)*
 - *Update: Southwest Washington Fair. The Sherwoods have reserved a table; we need to discuss what to display, who'll help staff it, & when.*
 - *4H Program Update*
 - *Treasurer's Report (dues, anyone?)*

- *Review of the minutes of 6/9/10 Business Meeting (if we remember)*

Weds, August 11: Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m. WSU Extension Classroom, Old Chehalis Courthouse

- * *Speaker: Dr. Tim Lawrence, County Director, WSU Extension, Island County*
- * *Topic: Human Dimensions of Colony Collapse Disorder & Their Impact On Honeybees*

Dr. Tim Lawrence knows Dewey Caron's and Jim Bach's work, and he will add to our growing understanding as he brings his own research-based perspective to the issue. Prior to taking his position in Island County, Tim was a post-doctoral research associate leading the Honey Bee Health Program in the CAHNRS Department of Entomology in Pullman. Tim worked with beekeepers, growers, and others to identify issues related to the health and viability of honeybees and their pollination efficiency. In his new position, he will be working on honeybee-related topics regularly.

- *Business Meeting: LCBA Board Elections, Beekeeping Q&A, & Other Business. For information on our Board Elections, see News & Announcements, following minutes of our June meeting.*

August 30 – September 2: Washington Apicultural Society of North America (WAS) Annual Conference, Salem, Oregon. There's still time to register!

Dewey Caron, our April speaker and WAS President, encourages everyone to come to the WAS annual conference. Dewey recommends the sessions on Wednesday, September 1: a short course by Larry Connor in the morning with a program in the afternoon that includes Kim Flottum, speaking on producing and selling specialty honey and varietals.

Dewey notes that if you can only attend for one day, there is a special daily fee to help make that feasible: in that case, he recommends the full day program on Thursday, September 2. For current WAS information re: fees, program, registration form, speaker schedule, etc., visit <http://groups/ucanr.org/WAS>: if you have questions, you can also contact Dewey at: carond@hort.oregonstate.edu.

News of Our Bees

Several members have written to describe how their bees have fared as cool, wet, unseasonable weather has continued through June and into early July. Please bring news of your bees to report at our July potluck meeting!

VP Norm Switzler has bought 50 pounds of sugar; as of July 4, Norm is feeding his bees. His honey stores are low, and as he has removed swarms and inspected hives, he has been seeing very little brood. **Cecelia Boulais** reported that as of two weeks ago, “Although the bees were quite active and flying in with pollen, there were no honey reserves in the supers. Not even much comb drawn out. Following Norm's example of offering honey rather than sugar water, we slipped one frame of capped honey in the super on my old hive. Put 2 frames of honey in the super on the hive of swarm we captured last month. Many of mine are near empty on honey reserves now even though they were heavy before.” Around the same time, **Brandon Clayton** wrote in: “FYI, there should be enough honey in a wet super to keep [bees] going through a couple more days of rain. This will prevent last minute starvation, and now is the time to super.”

It will be very interesting to see how everyone's bees are doing as of mid-July! Here's hoping the sun will start to shine and our bees will have lots to feed on.

If you have questions about your bees, don't suffer in silence! Contact Susanne (360 880 8130; Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com), and she will put you in touch with one of our “bee mentors.”

Minutes from our June 2010 Meeting

Announcement from LCBA President Bob Harris: Bob has passed his state exam and will be sworn in on Saturday, June 12, after which he will officially be “Deputy Bob.” He'll be back at our regular meetings starting with our summer potluck at his farm in July—see the upcoming events, above.

Chehalis Farmer's Market: Bob asked whether anyone in LCBA would like to sell material at Bob's booth under LCBA auspices. Bob was going to the Farmers' Market board meeting and was available to present requests from LCBA members. (Post meeting note: those still interested can contact Bob; thought it is too late for special requests for this year to be brought before the board, selling honey or other bee-related products may be possible.)

June Presentation: Gardening to Attract Honeybees

Honeybees are hard-wired to roam and forage, but we can plant flowers, vegetables, and fruit to attract them to our gardens. LCBA member and Master Gardener Peter Glover put together a Power-Point, including illustrations and websites, to help beekeepers identify plants they might consider including in their gardens. Peter's PowerPoint will be available on the soon to be unveiled LCBA website. What follows is a brief summary of his talk, and then a list of the sample bee-attracting plants which LCBA member and Master Gardener Cecelia Boulais brought to the meeting to show us.

- **Helpful books:**

- *Nectar and Pollen Plants of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest*, by D.M. Burgett, B.A. Stringer, and L.D. Johnston. The authors explain, among much other useful information, that alders are early producers of pollen; that, later in the year, three varieties of maple yield nectar and pollen; and that cherry trees and willows are very attractive to bees.
- *Plants of the Pacific Northwest: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska*, by Pojar and McKinnon: this is a better book for detail and color pictures, but it lacks pollen and nectar information.
- Jason also noted a book called *Honey Plants of North America*.
- **Helpful / interesting websites:**
 - http://www.britishbee.org.uk/files/BBKA_Shrubs_for_Bees_3-way.pdf. This is a British website that highlights shrubs attractive to honeybees. Our moist, cool climate in Southwest Washington is enough like that of the British Isles to make this information relevant to us.
 - <http://www.pollinator.org/pdfs/PacificLowlandrx8>: “Selecting Plants for Pollinators.” Input your zip code in this site, and you will get a PDF file of Pacific lowland plants that attract bees. This site features information about native bees, not honeybees, but many of the plants are relevant to honeybees as well.
- **Some myths—or, at least, exaggerations:** it’s often said that honeybees flock to plants with white, yellow, blue, and purple flowers, but will not visit those with red and orange flowers. Peter showed several photographs that Susanne took featuring honeybees flocking to red azaleas. Also, some say that honeybees prefer “simple” to double plants, but a photo of a honeybee working an (orange) double narcissus suggested that this, too, is exaggerated.
- **Among the plants Peter highlighted are:**
 - Flowering plum, apple trees, and even blueberry bushes (favored by native bumblebees, but honeybees will also visit these);
 - Pineapple bush; Summersweet; Rockspray cotoneaster; Kale; and Rapeseed.
- **Flowers he featured include:**
 - Zinnia; New England Aster; Cosmos; Sunflowers; Purple coneflower; Black-eyed Susan; Purple Prairie Clover; Baby Blue Eyes; and Globe Gilia.

- **Culinary Herbs, if we let them flower, will attract bees:** Chives, Oregano, Mint, Rosemary, Sage, Parsley, Thyme, Lavender.
- **Commercial Seed Mixes That Attract Bees:** Territorial Seed offers a honeybee seed mix. Other plants noted above are also available through Territorial; Territorial's seeds are available at Kaija's, and Kaija's will order seeds for customers if they are already ordering that plant, thus saving us shipping fees.

Robert Tuininga asked if is there a list of plants that are *toxic* to bees, or plants which, like rhododendrons, produce toxic honey? This sounds like a good topic for a future meeting. . . .

Cecelia Boulais followed Peter's talk with a demonstration of sample plants that attract bees. Bruising their leaves gently enabled members to smell them. Among the plant samples Cecelia passed around were:

- Borage—has blue flowers, simple shape, attracts bees
- Monarda – bee balm or bergamot
- Linden trees – a.k.a., tilia
- Kale or any over-wintering brassica
- Hellebore, or the Christmas Rose, also known as “the London Rose,” will feed bees as early as late December
- Coyote willow and also pussy willow: the early willow is the important one because it comes so early in the spring, when bees are first foraging.
- Rugosa rose – a wild rose from Japan, very hardy; it can be viewed at the Salkum demonstration garden
- Chives
- Sage
- Yarrow
- Fireweed – yields a nice honey
- Golden chain tree
- Hawthorne tree – Cecelia had a pink hawthorne tree branch (so, again, it's *not* just the yellow-white-blue-purple colors that attract bees!)
- Parsnip with a white flower
- Mole plant, also known as “gopher purge plant”: this has milky sap and tiny yellow flowers. It makes seeds at the same time as it is blooming. Cecelia's skin is sensitive to it, and she notes that it is important to wash it off to avoid rashing—but bees like it very much
- Clovers
- Evening primrose / mullein / Echinacea
- Snowdrops: Cecelia noted that snowdrops get “mobbed” by bees!

Vegetables that Cecelia has found to attract bees: squash, cucumbers, and beans. Late-blooming fruit trees like quince are also attractive to bees.

Tammy Edwards suggested that we visit “The Melissa Garden” on the Internet: http://www.themelissagarden.com/TMG_Vetaley031608.htm. This is a website that gives common names, Latin names, type, honey & pollen yields in pounds per acre, lists if it has nectar or pollen, and if so, what kind and color.

Warning: Sheila Gray noted that the Melissa Garden does include some plants on our Southwest Washington “no-no weed list”: noxious weeds that are banned for garden use, but that also attract bees: Scotch broom, tansy, thistle. Jason says that scotch broom yields horrible honey!

Bob Covington brought borage to give away. Thanks, Bob!

Kenny Walker brought tobacco plants that he uses in his smoker. Usually he works his bees without smoke, but when he really needs to calm them, just a puff of his ornamental tobacco will calm them down. His ornamental tobacco plants were very small now—last year, grew to six to seven feet tall with leaves size of elephant ears—this year, very small, given our weather. He harvests it in September/October, and plants die off; he dries the leaves and then later crushes them for use in smoker. Animals don’t bother the tobacco plants, he reported.

Theresa reported that bees love artichokes if you let them bloom; the bloom is huge, and she sees the bees all over them.

Many thanks to Peter and Cecelia for their informative presentations!

Treasurer’s Report: Sarah Roebas gave our Treasurers Report: we have \$1531.90 in the bank, so please, be sure to pay your dues!

Swarm capture technique: Pat Swinth demonstrated a device to get newly installed swarms that have gone into a hole in a wall to come out: a colony that’s been in a structure for a while, this won’t work. The device has a triangular shaped mesh net, shaped into a funnel, and with a hole in the end just big enough for a queen to go through. To use it, position it next to the hole on your structure where the bees are coming and going. This way, the bees will be diverted and go through the funnel and into the box. He’s tried several of these, and for most, he got the queen. When the bees had gone through the funnel, then she went out after them. When it’s a new swarm, they’re all flying bees. But you want to get the queen, too, and this device helps with that. So the device diverts the bees from their normal opening hole and into the structure you want them in. The hardest thing is filling in all the possible holes.

Colony Removals: Norm reported on an upcoming colony removal. These events tend to be early because the bees tend to be sluggish and clumped together when it is cool out—then they are easier to handle. Those who would like to ride along on a colony removal should contact Susanne (360 880 8130).

Moving bees from one part of your yard to another: Norm suggests: think twice before moving your bees, as this disorients them, and they will look for their new home. You will have hundreds of angry bees flying around. It may be best to wait till you put your bees to bed for the winter to move them. If you are going to move them, do this early in the morning or in the evening, when it is cool, and put a board against the opening so that they must re-orient when they enter and exit.

Jason's Queens: Jason reported that the Russian queens he brought from California did nothing for about two weeks. About half of them finally did a mating flight; the other half needed to be replaced. But after that, when he got the packages, the queens were fine. Partly the issue was bad weather for mating flights, not only here, but in California. Next year, they will hold off till the last week of April to get their bees.

Re-Queening Issues: Norm shared a story from Dave Smith, who had put a queen box into a hive without a queen. This queen had been marked with a blue dot to signal that she was one of this year's newly bred queens. The next day, the bees were all over her box. Dave was concerned the candy stopper was too far in for the workers to get to her, so he opened the screen to chip away some of the candy, and he saw a blue blur fly past his eyes as his queen flew out! He thought she might be found by workers and brought back to the hive, and it seems as if that was what happened, because within a week, the bees were bringing plenty of pollen back to the hive. A member asked whether she might not yet have been bred? Norm thought that that was unlikely this late in the season.

If you buy a queen with attendants, always take the attendants out before you hive the queen; the workers will attack the attendants, and that hostility will transfer to the queen. So be sure to dispose of the attendants.

There is a queen breeder on the Olympic Peninsula. Would it be better to have a locally raised queen? Possibly: they might be better adapted to our weather.

Demonstration hive model: John Panesko brought in a miniature, very portable demonstrative hive model which he made (nice job, John!). Norm used it as a prop to demonstrate some of the techniques we talk about to help the "newbees" among us to visualize what's being described: the telescoping top, the super boxes, the inner cover which tops the brood boxes (which is where to put a queen excluder to keep eggs from being laid in the super boxes), the bottom board with little shelf for a landing area for the bees. It's also a good idea to have a "bee escape" hole below the supers so that they don't have to work their way down two boxes or more of frames to get out.

Mold in Honey Supers: Cecelia explained how, after the floods, she found honey-laden super frames she'd set aside had gotten a thin grey film of mold. Can the honey be salvaged? Norm said it could be cleaned off: set it out in the yard, scrape off the caps, and let the bees smell it. The bees will recycle the honey and don't seem to suffer ill effects. However, Norm would not sell or eat the honey himself. Kenny noted that hydrogen peroxide might be an effective way to clean mold from frames.

Dealing With Ants: The best approach to ridding hives of small ants is simply to beat them off. The large ants are a (no pun intended) bigger problem: Norm once sprinkled fine powder of boric acid around the base of the hive. As ants walk and preen, the acid gets on their exoskeletons and eats away at them, after which the ants “leak to death.” He hasn’t had problems with ants since then, about five years ago. Another member has had success by sprinkling cinnamon around base of hives where ant trails went by: that worked to keep ants out.

LCBA ANNOUNCEMENTS:

LCBA Board Elections: At Our August 2010 Business Meeting

This August, LCBA will be two years old! That means that, under our LCBA Bylaws, August is time to hold our first elections. The available offices are:

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership Coordinator

Terms are officially two years, but the Bylaws provide for putting officers’ terms on a staggered schedule, to help preserve institutional history and stability. Thus, starting in 2011, the President, Treasurer, and Membership Coordinator will be voted on in odd-numbered years, and the Vice President and Secretary will be voted on in even-numbered years. That means that in 2011, whoever is now elected President, Treasurer, and Membership Coordinator will be up for re-election again.

Our current officers are:

President: Bob Harris
Vice President: Norm Switzler
Secretary: Susanne Weil
Treasurer: Sarah Roebas
Membership Coordinator

All current officers have said that they are willing to serve again, but each one is fine with stepping down if anyone else with new ideas and fresh energy would like to take a turn. If you are interested in running and have questions about what’s involved in a particular board job, please call or email the current officers and ask!

How to Nominate Someone for the LCBA Board: Contact our Nominating Committee. Dave Smith and Roy Schaafsma [contact information removed from online edition] have agreed to serve as our Nominating Committee, per the bylaws. If you would like to run for an office, you are welcome to call or email Dave and/or Roy to

nominate yourself. If you would like to nominate another LCBA member, please check with that person first to see if he or she is willing to serve. Also, officers must be current on their dues payments, so please check that your prospective nominee is current on his/her dues before nominating someone.

There will be a “last call” for nominations from the floor at our August business meeting prior to the elections, which will be held by secret ballot. The election part of the meeting will be chaired by the members of the nominating committee.

Are you interested in being more involved with LCBA, but would rather not be an official Board member? That’s fine, too: please contact any current board member (see list above) and let us know! Also, if you have ideas about speakers for LCBA meetings, initiatives that we could undertake as a group, ways we could get the word out to local beekeepers who are not yet connected with us, or other ideas, please bring these up, either at a meeting or to a board member.

Need Help with Your Bees? Call LCBA Secretary Susanne at 360 880 8130 or email Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com, and she will put you in touch with a mentor in your area.

Free Swarm & Colony Removals: Swarm/colony removal is a free service that LCBA, as a nonprofit educational organization, offers the public. See list of beekeepers, above, to call if you—or someone you know—needs help removing a swarm of honeybees. Also, if you’re interested in riding along on a removal to observe and learn more, give Susanne a call (see # above): it’s free, fun, & educational.

We Need Help with Swarm Removals: Norm and Dave are looking for people in Morton, Mossyrock, Longview, Rochester etc. to take calls for swarms; some of the bee team members are getting calls that would be an hour’s drive. Heather has a list of people from East Lewis County; call her, and she will pass it on. Norm has an ad in the *Nickel*.

SW Washington Fair: It’s coming! The Sherwoods would like to co-locate with LCBA again, and they will need volunteers to handle questions. Last year, the Sherwood’s/ LCBA’s exhibit won the prize for the best educational exhibit at the Fair! If you’d like to take part in the fun this summer, please call Susanne at 360 880 8130.

Want Bees & Equipment? [2012 note: see our website for beekeeping supply options.]

Looking for Used Beekeeping Equipment? Give LCBA Members Tim & Sharette Giese a Buzz [contact information removed from online edition]. The Gieses have used equipment still available: complete hives, a variety of sizes of boxes and supers, queen excluders, feeders, and nuke boxes.

Washington State Beekeeping Association Beekeeper courses: Bob Harris, our president, is the contact person for this and all WSBA classes: if you are interested, email Robert@Roseofsharonfarm.com. The apprentice class is not hard or long; the Journeyman and Master Beekeeper courses, however, are much more involved. WASBA hasn't given a master beekeeper certificate for years. 5 years experience and 30 service points are required, and the prospective Master Beekeeper must write a paper; since WASBA added that requirement, no one has done it. Also, students need some lab experience.

LCBA Website update: Hopefully coming this summer: more news at our July 14 potluck meeting. Please email Susanne (Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com) with ideas about what you'd like to see on our website!

Request from Fords Prairie 4-H: Does anyone have older equipment that they would like to **donate** to the Fords Prairie 4-H Beekeeping project? If you'd like to help LCBA member Lynn Esposito help these kids get buzzing, please email her at: Lynn.Esposito@lewiscountywa.gov.

LCBA Swap Meet—real or virtual! Got bee equipment to sell, swap, or give away? Email or call Susanne—see above. Have a “bee wish list”? Email that, too.

LCBA T-shirts and caps: Queensboro has lowered their prices on LCBA T-shirts, long-sleeved shirts, caps, etc. They offer an unconditional 10 year guarantee and will replace items if they get torn or broken. To order online, visit <http://www.queensboro.com> and use our LCBA logo number: **11342127**.

Respectfully reported,
Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary