What kills our bees in Lewis County?

Varroa Mite and secondary infections
Wasps and hornets
Moisture issues and Nosema
Moisture control issues will be addressed at our September 9th meeting.
Wasps and hornets are feasting on our bees, their larvae, and their honey

A Yellow Jacket trap

Close up inside of the trap
Bees can rob and often do this time of year

We are currently in a dearth. You may need to feed your bees.
Varroa Mites
So how should we treat for mites?

• Last year, Dr. Dewey Caron stated to LCBA that treating for mites in September is too late.
• This year, he stated to LCBA that there are dumb ways to treat for mites and smart ways.
• Dumb would be treating exclusively and often with a hard chemical, such as Amitraz.
• Smart would be using an integrated pest management system that uses organic acids.
Ross Conrad
Ross Conrad, a natural beekeeper

• Ross states that Varroa mites don’t necessarily kill a hive, but weaken it so that other stress factors and diseases, such as viruses, kill the hive.

• Ross also states starvation is often a result of a hive overwhelmed with mites.

• Ross uses a six step method to control the mites in his hives.
How does Ross control mites?

• Buy queens that are less susceptible to mites. Russian, Minnesota Hygienic, Varroa Sensitive Hygiene, and Survivor Hives.

• Make Nuc colonies in the spring to break the brood cycle.

• Use screened bottom boards. In conjunction with powdered sugar and garlic powder methods. These methods only affects mites on bees, not in the brood.

• Trap mites with drone comb or sticky paper. This can be used with pheromone traps using methypalmatate.

• Organic Miteacides. Use Sucrocide, Oxalic acid, Formic acid, Essential oils and Thyme, and Hop Beta acid to kill and control mites.

• Change to a smaller comb size, and regularly pull out old comb.
Screened bottom board with a Varroa trap drawer

Mite Away Quick Strip
I have changed my thought process some as I have gained experience and confidence in keeping bees. Personally, I treat my hives, but I am now much more likely to use organic treatments.

As a club, we are here to learn from each other and to respectfully share our experiences and thoughts, so what are your thoughts on summer maintenance?