

# SO\*BA Bee Buzz

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association Newsletter

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Archived copies of the newsletter can be found on the website [here](#).

## Medford Beekeepers Needed!!!!

The City Council **hearing to decide if beekeeping will be legal in Medford** will be held on **Thursday, April 16, 2015 at 7:00 PM**. The Council will make a final decision on the amendments after the hearing.

Attend if you can for solidarity in numbers, or come prepared with a two minute testimony. If you can't attend, **please submit comment** to the Council at [planning@ci.medford.or.us](mailto:planning@ci.medford.or.us). Include the file number (DCA-15-014) on all submissions to the Planning Department.

A copy of the proposed ordinance can be found here: <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=3415>

Many thanks to **Jesse Botens** for his very hard work and to **The Bee Girl** organization, along with many thoughtful bee loving community members and beekeepers who made this happen.

## SOBA Facebook Group

SOBA now has a Facebook group for you to ask questions, discuss beekeeping, or post pictures.

Join us here:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/1418688815101076/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1418688815101076/)

## Bee Class Sale at Shastina Millwork

The SOBA Beginning Beekeeper Class is **SOLD OUT** with people on the waiting list! It promises to be an exciting day learning about bees and beekeeping.

**Shastina Millwork** is holding their annual **Spring Sale April 18-19** to coincide with the class. Stop by and check out their 8-frame and 10-frame hive equipment and beekeeping supplies, and say **THANK YOU** for **donating a complete 8 frame hive setup to the class raffle as well as lots of donuts and bagels**. We are fortunate to have a premier hive component manufacturer here in Rogue Valley that is so supportive of our local beekeeping community.



877-789-7526

**The Spring Sale**  
CASH ONLY EVENT

APRIL 18th, 19th

We will be open immediately following the SOBA new beekeeper school on Saturday 12 – 6pm and Sunday 10 – 2pm

LOCATED AT

Corner of Ave G and Agate Road – White City

8250 Agate Rd. White City OR 97503 541-324-7718 cell phone number (directions)

## New SOBA Vice President!

**Ron Padgett** is our new vice-president!

The vote was extremely close, which just proves how lucky we are to have two such wonderful choices.



Each member voted by placing a ballot into a hole in the inner cover of a beautiful hive box that **Bret** made. Gorgeous workmanship!

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## Reminder to Review the Constitution and Bylaws

As part of the process of becoming a Domestic Non-Profit and active Affiliate of OSBA, we are updating the SOBA Constitution and Bylaws. A draft version can be found on the website ([www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/constitution-and-bylaws](http://www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/constitution-and-bylaws)) and will be emailed to all members. We welcome questions and comments at the May meeting, or via email to [sobeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:sobeekeepers@gmail.com).

We will be **voting** on adopting the Constitution and Bylaws at the **May** meeting. If you cannot attend, you can vote by sending an email stating "I approve the revised Constitution and Bylaws" or "I do not approve the revised Constitution and Bylaws".

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## Don't Forget to Help with the Bee Loss Surveys

Dewey Caron encourage beekeepers (and bee hosters!!) to submit your loss/survivorship information on line. It will only take 10-15 minutes. This year he is asking for your losses by hive type and hive origination and for a bit more information on your management, including varroa mite control (if any) activities. Access the **online** survey between March 16 and May 9th at the [Pacific NW Annual Loss Survey \(PNWals\) 2015](#). You can also download and complete a [paper survey form](#).



### Pacific NW Annual Loss Survey (PNWals) 2015

Thank you for your participation with the 3rd annual Pacific Northwest Honey Bee Loss Survey developed by Portland Urban Beekeepers Association. We understand that there are other regional and national surveys out there. The Pacific North West is a unique area on the forefront of sustainable apiculture and as such it is important to know what is happening.

And please don't neglect the **BeeInformed National Survey**. The Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) is a USDA/NIFA (U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture) funded project. We want you to BEE INFORMED.

Greater beekeeper participation means a better data base for comparison of information; last year 222 Oregon beekeepers managing 50,691 colonies provided information. The 2014 BIP survey will be available the entire month of April (as it was last year). **IT IS VERY EASY AND WILL TAKE ONLY A FEW MINUTES OF YOUR TIME.**

If you have not yet participated, go to the website, [www.beeinformed.org](http://www.beeinformed.org), click on the "Sign Up, Participate" button and sign up with your email address. You will get a reminder to fill out a survey during the April survey period.

And be sure to visit [BeeInformed](#) often to see what beekeepers, besides yourself, are doing to help reduce losses.

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## Why Do Some Farmers Choose to grow GMO Crops?

Contributed by Dewey Caron

Genetically modified crops – do you believe they are “good” for agriculture or are “bad” for us? Maybe you believe Monsanto and other big ag companies force farmers to use GMO seeds and then lose money because they unnecessarily have to spend money on pesticides to grow GMO crops? Or you might believe GMOs and treated seeds are simply the latest technological advance designed to bring us cheaper food? [which we all know we want]. There is of course a wide middle ground between such viewpoints.

Snake River ID Sugar Co. Chairman Duane Grant recently talked about the experience the cooperative’s member-growers in Idaho and Oregon have had with Roundup Ready sugar beets. Sugar beets are genetically modified to withstand the herbicide glyphosate, which Monsanto, and other companies, sell as Roundup. He said that co-op members, for which he is also a grower, planted 178,000 acres of GMO sugar beets last year. Duane stated that growers’ cost of herbicides has dropped from \$66 per acre to \$11 per acre since they switched from non-GMO sugar beets in 2008. The cost of hand labor has dropped from \$60 an acre to zero, since field weeding is no longer needed. He continued that although the price of seed has increased, from \$44 to \$143, yields have also increased. Overall, the net margin increase has been \$122 per acre and the switch to GMO sugar beets has meant a \$22 million benefit to the cooperative and its members.



A meta-study — which reviewed 147 other studies — found that by growing GMO crops, farmers have reduced pesticide use by 37 percent. At the same time, farmers’ profits have increased by 68 percent. So the bottom line – the reason to grow GMO sugar beets - is basic economics. [Information and statistics from editorial of Capital Press, Jan 30, 2015)

Like many other activities in life, farming is about choice. Some farmers choose to grow GMO crops as is their right, just as other farmers have the right to choose to grow organic or conventional crops. This can be a challenge as there is a risk of accidental transfer of GMO pollen from one crop to another.

Note: Governor Kitzhaber sought to have ODA regulate where GMO crops might be grown in OR. There is such a “voluntary” plan now in effect in the Willamette Valley as regards GMO canola. Voters in Jackson and Josephine Counties have said no GMO crops in their Co, which currently is on hold as the matter is now in court. Will the governors proposed legislation work? Will the courts uphold the voters choice? Is there a better plan? **Let your state senator/representative know your views as the guessing is this legislation will be subjected to considerable modifications this spring legislative session.**



## April in the Apiary



April can be a tricky month. In wet years, starvation is a risk, and in warm dry years, swarming can be an issue. Strong hives can be divided with natural queen cells or purchased queens. If the hives have decent stores and splitting them is not desired, many beekeepers begin to add honey supers. If combs need to be drawn, feed heavily at this

time. The goal is to have combs built and big bees in time for the main honey flow when the blackberries bloom.

Know what your mite loads are! Do not guess! If mite levels are high, do something about it now. There is no sense in supporting a sickly hive only to have it completely fail in August.

Each spring we need to verify that colonies are queenright, healthy, and well fed so they can build up to maximum populations by mid to late May.

- Spring is usually when starvation occurs... Find light hives by lifting (tilt one side up) and feeling its relative weight. Feed light hives — syrup is okay now. If they're starving, make it a thick syrup; for brood stimulation, thinner. You can also transfer excess frames of honey from overly heavy hives to lighter hives.
- Change out (or at least clean) the bottom boards that the bees have been using since last summer and exchange them for clean, dry bottom boards.
- When reassembling the hive, if the lower brood box is mostly empty (which is often the case), you can reverse its location and put it on top to provide expansion room.
- You may want to requeen weak hives and make divisions out of strong hives. April is the best time to make divisions to make a robust honey crop the current year (some start in March).
- Determine your varroa mite load and whether its population should be reduced.
- Swarm season starts with the flush of new growth on plants and trees, and will continue into June.

*Adapted from ORSBA—see [http://orsba.org/htdocs/this\\_month\\_april.php](http://orsba.org/htdocs/this_month_april.php) for more details.*

*Featured photograph courtesy "Fir0002/Flagstaffotos"*

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## Events

**Curry County Master Gardeners Sale** is **May 9 from 10 AM—5PM** at the Gold Beach High School, 29516 Ellensburg Avenue, Gold Beach, OR. Contact **Saloma Clarence** at [salomadee@gmail.com](mailto:salomadee@gmail.com).

This month **Ashland** beekeepers will get together at the **Standing Stone** in Ashland on **Thursday April 23 at 7 PM** instead of the 16th, to allow folks to attend the Medford City Council meeting.

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## SOBA Members' Corner

Mark Coyl is interested in buying 100 lbs of bees wax. Call him at 541-226-5965.

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The **Southern Oregon Beekeeper Association** meets at 7:30 pm on the first Monday of each month at the Southern Oregon Research & Extension Center in Central Point. Come early to the meeting (6:30) and watch a hive inspection demonstration (March—September).

**Email:** [sobeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:sobeekeepers@gmail.com)

**Phone:** (541) 862-1604

**Website:** [www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org](http://www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org)



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