



SO*BA Bee Buzz

December 2014

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association

Next Meeting: Monday January 5 at 7:30 PM at Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, 569 Hanley Rd., Central Point. OR ([map](#))

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It's Time to RENEW your SOBA membership!

It's a good time to renew your SOBA membership for 2015. You can use PayPal on the website or send a check to SOBA. See the [Join SOBA](#) page on the website for details.

Sources for Local Bees

Appligate Apiaries
Andrew Watson
541-846-0404
boradabeedoc@gmail.com

Old Sol Apiaries
John Jacob
541- 582-2337
oldsolbees.com

Julian Lewis
541- 535-5817
lewis_adams_00@yahoo.com

David Alassa
541- 858-6824

If you would like to be listed here, email sobeekers@gmail.com

SWARM CALL LIST

Members on the 2014 Swarm Call List have been contacted via email.

Current SOBA members who would like to be on the Swarm Call List, please email sobeekers@gmail.com with "Swarm Call List" as the subject.

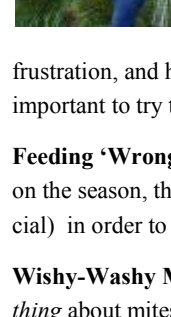
Newsletter Contributions

Do you have information that you would like to see in the newsletter?

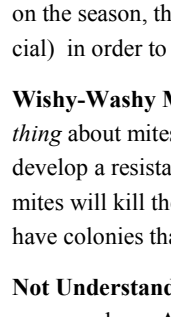
Send it to sobeekers@gmail.com with "Newsletter" as the subject.

PICTURES NEEDED!!

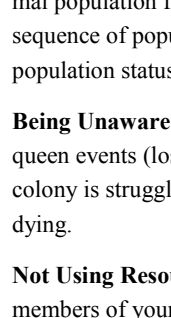
Five Common Mistakes Beekeeper Make



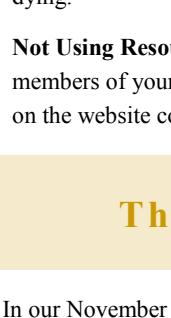
At our December meeting, Karessa Torgerson of *Api-Curious* (www.apicurious.com) gave a talk on "*Five Mistakes Beekeepers Make*". Karessa is an EAS Master Beekeeper, serves on the Oregon Master Beekeeper committee and teaches and mentors for the program.



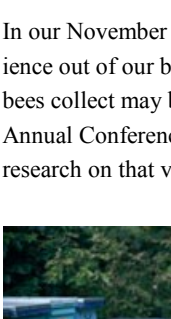
Our first hives can serve as our 'tuition' as we learn what not to do as beginners. Beginning beekeepers lose about 60% of their hives, compared to an average of 30% loss overall each year. It is very expensive to lose a colony, in lost dollars, frustration, and heartbreak. Many new beekeepers can give up after a season or two of losses, so it is important to try to remove some of the roadblocks to being successful.



Feeding 'Wrong' is the first mistake addressed. You need to understand the needs of the hive based on the season, the weather, the forage available, and the spring buildup plan (hobbyist or commercial) in order to determine if you need to feed your bees, and then feed appropriately.



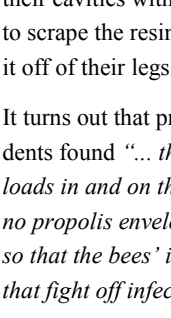
Wishy-Washy Mite Management is a common mistake. It is so important that you are doing *something* about mites. It does not have to be a synthetic treatment. It will take a long time for bees to develop a resistance to varroa mites and reach a balance between parasite and host, but until then the mites will kill the bees. Recent research has shown that beekeepers who do nothing at all and have colonies that collapse will have bees that abscond and take the mites with them to other apiaries.



Not Understanding Swarms. Swarms have a great impact on both the mother hive and the new swarm colony. A swarm six-weeks before nectar flow will mean that neither hive will have the optimal population for collecting the resources it will need to survive the winter. Karessa explained the sequence of population loss and the risks encountered for both hives—see the [chart](#) of post swarm population status in the website article.



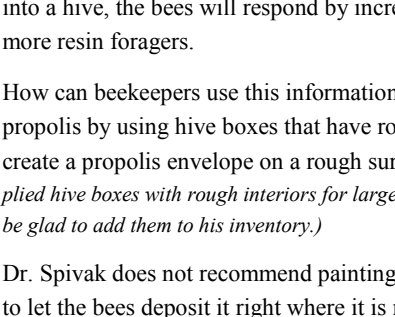
Being Unaware of Queen Status. [The Bee Informed Partnership](#) surveys suggest that hives with queen events (lost or failing queens) are three times more likely to die. If you are unaware that your colony is struggling, and you are not doing anything to support it, your colony is at a greater risk of dying.



Not Using Resources: It is difficult to learn beekeeping by reading books - you need to reach out to members of your club and to other beekeepers to take advantage of so much experience. The [article](#) on the website contains a list of Karessa's favorite resources.

The Benefits of Propolis - To the Bees

In our November meeting, John mentioned that he has been concerned that we may be breeding resilience out of our bees. In particular he mentioned that breeding to reduce the amount of propolis that bees collect may be a mistake. One of the speakers at the 2014 Oregon State Beekeepers Association Annual Conference in Seaside was Dr. Marla Spivak at the University of Minnesota who is doing research on that very topic.



Dr. Spivak is a MacArthur Fellow and the McKnight Distinguished Professor in Entomology at the University of Minnesota who is studying the benefits of propolis to bees and the effects of agricultural landscapes and pesticides on honey bee and native bee health. She has a great TED talk called [Why Bees are Disappearing](#). The following information is excerpted from her talk at the conference and from an article that is available from her lab: [The Benefits of Propolis](#).

Propolis is plant resins that bees collect and deposit in the nest cavity. Feral bees coat the inside of their cavities with a rather thick layer of propolis. Propolis is hard for the bees to collect—they have to scrape the resin off the leaves, pack it on their hind legs, and then get help from other bees to pull it off of their legs. They must have a good reason for going to so much trouble.

It turns out that propolis has very amazing health benefits to bees. One of Dr. Spivak's graduate students found "... *that bees exposed to a propolis envelope for just seven days had lower bacterial loads in and on their bodies, and had 'quieter' immune systems compared with bees in a colony with no propolis envelope. In other words, the propolis in the colony was killing off microbes in the nest, so that the bees' immune systems did not have to gear up and make peptides and cellular responses that fight off infection.*"

Dr. Spivak's lab also found that the bees may be able to self-medicate. If you introduce chalkbrood into a hive, the bees will respond by increasing the amount of propolis in the hive by sending out more resin foragers.

How can beekeepers use this information? Perhaps we should be encouraging our bees to gather propolis by using hive boxes that have rough surfaces on the inside. The bees will be more likely to create a propolis envelope on a rough surface. *(I spoke to Stewart at [Shastina Millworks](#), and he has supplied hive boxes with rough interiors for large orders recently. If there is interest in doing so for hobbyists, he will be glad to add them to his inventory.)*

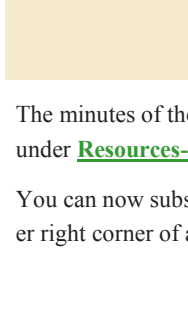
Dr. Spivak does not recommend painting the inside of hive boxes with a propolis extract—it is easier to let the bees deposit it right where it is needed. She also does not advocate feeding propolis, which is a powerful antibiotic, to bees. Bees do not eat propolis and feeding it to bees has not been shown effective against disease in the lab.

See also [Bees 'Self-Medicate' When Infected With Some Pathogens](#) and check out more research topics, and how to videos, at the [University of Minnesota Bee Lab](#). There's also a series called [Bees at the Brink](#) that contains a great article on Dr. Spivak in the [Star Tribune](#) (part 4).

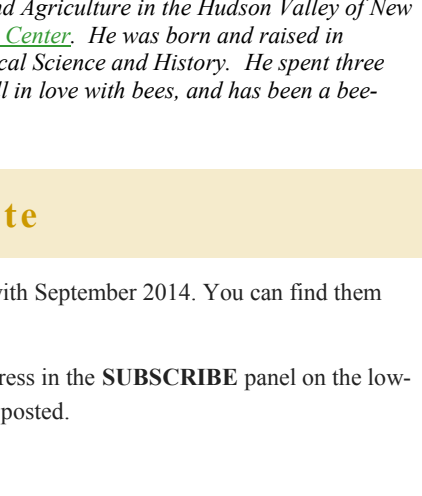
February Speaker: Beekeeping in Africa

The SOBA meeting on February 2 will feature a presentation by Dan Carr on Beekeeping in Africa.

Dan Carr will talk about his experiences working with the wonderful beekeepers and farmers of Malawi and Uganda. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in a rural village called Mwazisi in northern Malawi from 2007-2010. He learned to keep bees from a Malawian school teacher, and together they started the Mwazisi beekeepers association.



After returning to the United States and managing Stone Barns' bees for three years, he was invited by the USAid Farmer to Farmer program to go back to Africa to work on a special project with a beekeepers cooperative in Kasese, Uganda called the Liberty Development Foundation LIDE-FO. We will talk about the differences between African and western bees and the most suitable hives for Africa, and the wonderful people Dan had the pleasure to work with in the Warm Heart of Africa (Malawi), and the Pearl of the Nile Uganda.



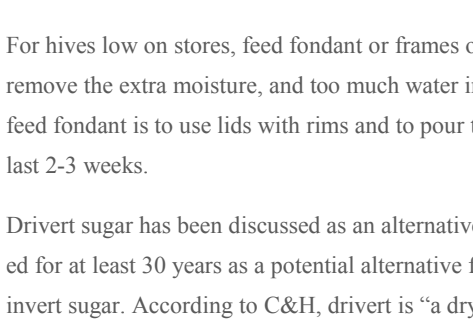
Dan Carr is a Livestock manager and head beekeeper at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in the Hudson Valley of New York. He manages 30+ hives and teaches a variety of beekeeping classes at [Stone Barns Center](#). He was born and raised in Broomfield Colorado, and graduated from the University of Montana with a BA in Political Science and History. He spent three years as an agriculture and environment Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi, where he fell in love with bees, and has been a beekeeper ever since.

New on the SOBA Website

The minutes of the SOBA monthly meeting have been added to the website beginning with September 2014. You can find them under [Resources->Meeting Minutes](#). The Minutes are in PDF form.

You can now subscribe to the posts/articles on the website. Simply enter your email address in the **SUBSCRIBE** panel on the lower right corner of any category and you will receive an email copy when a new article is posted.

November and December in the Apiary



Here in the Northwest, excessive moisture in our hives is one of the biggest concerns. Make sure lids are watertight, that hives are tilted so water drains out and away, and that there is sufficient ventilation. This is even more important in January when brood rearing and metabolism increase hive moisture.

If you are not sure that the bees have enough ventilation, on a warm day (45 degrees or above) quickly check the inside of your top to see if it is wet or has mold. If so, consider adding a shim, stick, or thin piece of wood between the top and inner cover. You can also staple a screen to the bottom of an empty super or hive body, fill it with wood chips or other absorbent material, and place it between the inner cover and the lid.

At this time the bees are clustered together in dormancy, except for those periodic warm spells that allow the bees to break their cluster, move closer to stored honey, and make those all important cleansing (defecating) flights.

These periodic warm spells afford the opportunity to visually assess the health of our hives and to do emergency manipulations, if necessary. As a rule, never open a hive during the winter unless there is a good reason and the temperature is at least 45°F. Work around the cluster rather than through it. Take note of the colonies that are flying little or not at all during these periodic warm spells. Do a cursory check for weight (lift the hive to assess) and to determine whether or not the hive is alive (place your ear against the wall, thump it with your hand, and listen for the buzz).

For hives low on stores, feed fondant or frames of honey, or possibly retire the colony. Do not feed syrup at this time. Bees cannot remove the extra moisture, and too much water in the bees diet in conjunction with confinement leads to dysentery. An ideal way to feed fondant is to use lids with rims and to pour the fondant directly into the void. These lids can have up to 5 pounds of feed and last 2-3 weeks.

Drivert sugar has been discussed as an alternative to regular fondant (or dry sugar) on the OSBA Pulverized. Drivert has existed for at least 30 years as a potential alternative for emergency feed. It is composed of 92% finely pulverized sucrose along with 8% invert sugar. According to C&H, drivert is "a dry fondant sugar used in icings and pan-coated confections."

For dead-outs, determine why the hive succumbed (usually queenlessness) and make sure frames are free of scale from American foulbrood. Shake out the dead bees. Then clean and return the equipment to storage.

Check your apiary occasionally — especially after a wind storm. Make sure that the lids are secure and verify that animals (e.g., mice, bears, and humans) have not been bothering (e.g., chewing, eating, or vandalizing) the hives.

December is a great time to plan for the year ahead. Build and order equipment, replenish supplies, place your order for queens, packages, and nucs, and stay warm!

Adapted from our friends at the Oregon State Beekeepers Association by [Bee Girl](#) with additions by John Jacob at [Old Sol Apiaries](#) and reprinted with permission.

SOBA Members Corner

The **Oregon Master Beekeeper** program is full for 2015 in our area. You can join the waiting list for 2016 at the [OSU OMB site](#). If you have at least 3 years of experience beekeeping and would like to be a mentor so that there can be more students in the Rogue Valley in 2015, contact [Carolyn Breese](#).

Ashland folks are getting together at the Playwright Pub (258 A St, Ashland) on **Thursday January 8 at 7 PM**. We get together on the second Thursday of each month.

Michelle DurlerEmail: mmdurler@gmail.com is looking for locally sourced beeswax. Send her an email if you have some to sell.

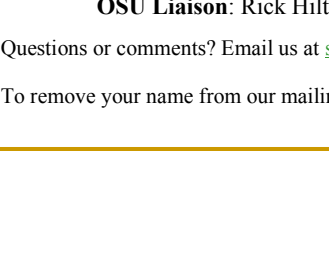
Sub-Regional Bee Club News

Illinois Valley Bee Club

When: Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM
Where: Kerby Belt Building, Kerby
Contact: Ron Padgett - padgett25@frontiernet.net

Douglas County Bees

When: First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 to 8:30
Where: Douglas County Courthouse Room 311
Contact: for any questions phillthebeeguy@gmail.com



The **Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association** meets at 7:30 pm on the first Monday of each month at the Southern Oregon Research & Extension Center, 569 Hanley Rd., Central Point. Meeting location changes will be noted in the newsletter. Come early to the meeting (6:30) and watch a hive inspection demonstration (March—September).

[Join us on Facebook](#)

Email: sobeekers@gmail.com **Website:** southernoregonbeekeepers.org **Phone:** (541) 862-1604

Officers:

President:	John Jacob	Secretary:	Dana Rose
Vice President:	Carl Lorenz	Treasurer:	Cheryl Housden
OSBA Regional Representative: Sarah Red-Laird			
OSU Liaison: Rick Hilton			

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