

# 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](#).

### Save the Date



**Spring Bee School** will be held on **Saturday March 19** from 9 AM to 4 PM. The Bee School Committee is already hard at work contacting speakers and making plans for the best class ever!

Spring Bee School focuses on information for new beekeepers, but there is always great information for more experienced folks too. Stay tuned for more details!

## December Beekeeping

In southern Oregon, excessive moisture in the hive is a big concern. Consider using a telescoping cover instead of a migratory lid so that the lid is watertight. If the bottom board is solid, the hive should be tilted so that water drains out and away.

Make sure there is sufficient ventilation by using screened bottom boards, and ventilation holes in the top feeder or a small top entrance. Providing a top entrance also allows the bees a warmer entry area that is closer to the cluster. Good ventilation is even more important in January when brood rearing and metabolism increase hive moisture.

Be sure that you have a 'quilt box' or some other absorbent material under the top cover. The bees create warm moist air as they maintain the heat inside the hive. This air condenses on the cooler lid and drops back down onto the bees as water. By adding a quilt box or absorbent material, you ensure that the water does not drop onto the bees.

One easy method of adding an absorbent layer at the top of the hive is to 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. It's a lot less messy, and a lot easier to swap the wood chips out for drier ones, if you sew up a cheesecloth pillow (or use an old pillowcase, socks, or pantyhose(!) ) instead of loose wood chips.



For a more elegant approach, you can [build your own quilt box](#).



For added insulation, and to provide a surface for condensation other than the wooden lid, you can place a thin sheet of insulating material above the quilt box.

December is a great time to plan for the year ahead. Build, repair, and order equipment, replenish supplies, place your order for queens and nucs, and [read!](#)

## Slatted Rack

At our December meeting, we had a demonstration of woodenware used in winter hive configurations. One component in the demo hive that drew a lot of attention was a slatted bottom board or slatted rack.

The slatted rack is placed between the screened bottom board and the bottom hive body. It provides the following:



**Insulation:** The air space at the bottom of the hive keeps the bees cooler in summer and warmer in winter. The brood nest is separated further from a drafty entrance and thus easier to keep warm.

**Ventilation:** In hot weather, bees can hang out on the slatted rack instead of filling up the spaces between the frames. They have more space to fan when it's hot. This allows better air flow through the hive especially when used with a screened bottom board.

**Protection:** The solid piece of wood at the front of the rack reduces drafts at the entrance and protects the comb against robbers and wax moths. Without the rack, bees will beard on the front of the hive to help cool the hive, so the rack also affords the bees protection from dive-bombing yellow jackets.



**Swarm Prevention:** The slatted rack adds extra space in crowded hives and, because the bees are not as packed together, it reduces the heat in the hive. This results in a reduction of the swarming tendency.

**Increased Brood Area:** The queen is more likely to lay eggs all the way to the bottom of the frames in the bottom brood box, because they are further away from the light and drafts at the hive entrance.

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## Bee Host

SOBA has been contacted by a farmer in Applegate who would like bees on his property. Here's his email:

*Hello friends at SOBA, I am reaching out as a farmer in the Applegate with interest in supporting bees and ecological restoration. Are there local beekeepers that would want to connect and possibly utilize our farm as one of their bee farming sites? We would be interested in hosting in exchange for honey. We live on a small apple orchard and a large annual farm, we are Clean Green Certified and not using synthetic pesticides or fertilizers.*

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## 2016 Membership

SOBA membership runs from January 1st through December 31 each year, so it's time to RENEW! You can get more information, and renew online, here:

[www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/join-soba](http://www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/join-soba). Membership provides

- use of club honey extractors
- optional inclusion on our swarm call list
- access to our lending library
- voting rights for group use of funds and other decisions
- reduced tuition fees for the Spring and Fall Bee Classes

Any membership received between now and December 31st will be applied to 2016.

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## Events

Ashland beekeepers will get together at the Public House (formerly the Playwright's) in Ashland at 7 PM on **December 17**.

If you are aware of any events in southern Oregon that are bee or beekeeping related, please send an email to [sobeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:sobeekeepers@gmail.com) and we will add it to the event calendar online and the newsletter.

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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).

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