

SO*BA Bee Buzz

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association Newsletter

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Mark Your Calendars!

Medford Beekeeping Amendment Hearing Scheduled!

Medford is amending its Beekeeping Ordinance to allow beekeeping within the city limits!!

Sarah Red-Laird (beegirl.org) has been working with the Medford Planning department on a draft of a beekeeper friendly amendment to the current ordinance.

The first hearing will be in front of the Planning Commission on **Thursday, March 26, 2015**. The hearing starts at 5:30 p.m. (PC makes recommendation)

The second hearing will be with the City Council on Thursday, **April 16, 2015**. The hearing starts at 7:00 p.m. (CC makes final decision)

Location: Medford City Hall Council Chambers, Room 300, City Hall, 411 West 8th Street, Medford

Nominations for SOBA Vice President

The position of Vice President for SOBA is open. A call went out for nominations for a new Vice President at the February meeting. Please email sobeekkeepers@gmail.com, or use our Contact form on the website and submit your nomination, or volunteer as a candidate!

John will announce the candidates at our March meeting and ask them to introduce themselves. The vote for Vice President will take place at the April SOBA meeting.

The duties of a Vice President are to lead our monthly meetings when John must be absent, and to help on SOBA projects when needed.

Bee School Speakers

Registration for our April 18th Beginning Bee School is now open. You can register online, or send in a registration form to the address listed on the web page. The speakers this year are:

Dr. Dewey M. Caron: author of [Honey Bee Biology](#), Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware and an Affiliate Professor in the Horticulture Department at Oregon State University.

Sarah Red-Laird: Founder and Executive Director of [Bee Girl](#); American Beekeeping Federation, Kids and Bees Program Director; International Bee Research Association, Bee World Program US Ambassador

Morris Ostrofsky: retired biology instructor and one of only 5 people to have been certified as a [Master Beekeeper](#) in the state of Washington.

Program:

- **Beekeeping Basics – Bees, Equipment, Hive & Apiary** -- Dewey Caron
- **Applying Basic Bee Biology** -- Sarah Red Laird
- **Managing Honey Bee Populations for Greater Honey Yield** -- Morris Ostrofsky
- **Introduction to Bee Colonies** – weather permitting - rotate (every 15 min)
 - **How to Open Colonies** -- Morris Ostrofsky
 - **Looking for (Evidence) of Queen** -- John Jacobs
 - **Evaluating Honey & Pollen Stores** -- Sarah Red Laird
 - **Understanding the Brood Frame** -- Dewey Caron
- **The Rogue Valley Bee Season** – Sarah Red Laird
- **Varroa Mites & Diseases** -- Dewey Caron & John Jacob
- **Fun Facts About Bees** -- Morris Ostrofsky
- **Additional Bee Inspection Time** (if weather permits for those who want to stay) -- Dewey Caron

Better Bee Forage

by Dewey M. Caron

Here it is the first month of the year and we are likely looking forward to the flowering season. If you have had an opportunity to watch colony entrances, you probably have noticed some pollen already coming in – not much and certainly not every day but something, especially for bees in urban/suburban apiaries. The January SOBA minutes indicated flight in all 3 SOBA colonies at the OSU extension office in Jacksonville and I bet they have been bringing in some pollen in January.



There are a number of efforts underway to help restore the pollen and nectar smorgasbord that bees require. For urban/suburban bees this is not as critical, but for pollinating bees (monocultural almond bloom coming on in February) and bees in agricultural areas (GMOs and neonicotinoids mean [unfortunately for bees] weed-free crops) diverse pollen sources are critical. How critical – some folks are saying the continuing heavy overwintering and seasonal bee colony losses might PRIMARILY be lack of forage and proper bee nutrition.

Here are some major efforts:

- **Project Apis mellifera (PAm)** has garnered a number of donations and grants to assist the almond pollinators. They have a MAJOR project underway. (Check out their website projectapism.org under section forage) .
- **President Obama's federal initiative** has already resulted in a bee forage/nutrition summit (and exposed how far some federal agencies are not yet aware of BEE needs for clean forage) but also some stories how diverse federal agencies, such as the US Postal Service, are planning to plant more bee-friendly vegetation around their facilities.
- **Time out for colonies** following especially difficult [for bee nutrition], pollination rentals (for example: blueberry, cranberry, cucumber and watermelon, seed crops such as the Madras area carrot and onion seed pollination) has been demonstrated as especially helpful as colonies begin to show the effects of rentals to these crops the next generation following removal from the crop itself. Bees need clean forage.
- John Jacob and his successful OR Tax Court appeal to insure **tax incentives for using EFU land to house bee colonies**, who are indeed livestock. Washington State is seeking to make permanent a tax incentive (worth about \$100,000 to 100 WA State beekeepers) to lessen tax payments on sugar used for bee feed and pollination rental fees by classifying beekeeping as a farming/ranching business.
- **Simultaneous blooming benefits to bees in almonds** are being tested by Ramesh Sagili of OSU with an Almond Board grant. His study examines bee blood and hypopharyngeal gland development (as measures of bee health) for bees getting only almond pollen vs bees in almonds with access to other forage (primarily raphani mustard). This first year study seeks to illustrate the effectiveness and benefit to the bees from simultaneous forage with no negative of decreasing the almond yield.
- A study over two seasons in Minnesota and South Dakota showed that farmers could **plant a cover crop** and get a decent yield (and more money from their fields) instead of leaving their corn or soybean fields fallow (or with corn stubble) over the winter period. Winter camelina and canola both were effective cover crops in the study. Canola will not be possible in the Willamette Valley due to a ban from possible genetic contamination of radish, turnip and other valley crops) or possibly in the Rogue Valley if the GMO ban in Jackson and Josephine Counties is held up (Ban, voted in by county residents, is currently being challenged in Jackson Co. Court – Canola is a GMO crop.)
- And on a minor scale – OR Master beekeepers have developed an informative brochure on **planting bee-friendly flowers** and it, along with a seed packet, may be distributed to state residents opening an Umpqua bank account this next spring.

Stay tuned – lots happening in this part of the Bee's World.

Dr. Caron taught at the University of Delaware for 40+ years and now holds an Affiliate position (volunteer) with Horticulture Dept (the bee unit specifically) at Oregon State University. He is active in Eastern and Western Apiculture societies and national bee groups. He is the Vice President of the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association and served as President in 2010. He serves on the board of the Western Apiculture Society and is an honored speaker at SOBA programs whenever he is available..

Oregon Honey Festival 2015

The 2015 Oregon Honey Festival will be held in October 17 in Ashland, with pre-festival events on October 16. The mission of the festival is to educate people about bee-culture through taste. Dr. Lynne Royce of [TreeHiveBees](#), Dr. Susan Kegley of the [Pesticide Research Institute](#), Marie Simmons, award winning author of **Taste of Honey**, John Jacob, of [OldSol Bees](#) and Laurabee Ferguson are next year's speakers.

The festival organizers are seeking beekeepers, teachers, researchers, volunteers and vendors again this year. For further information contact them at [541.512.1266](tel:541.512.1266). For updates on the festival take visit the Facebook page (Oregon Honey Festival) or www.OregonHoneyFestival.com !

Swarm Call List

If you are a member of SOBA and would like to be included on the 2015 Swarm Call list, please email sobeekeepers@gmail.com with the subject "Swarm List" and we'll add you to the list.

Events

Ashland beekeepers will get together at the Standing Stone in Ashland on Thursday February 12 at 7 PM.

The **Ashland Public Library** in partnership with the [Pollinator Project of Rogue Valley](#) will present a free showing of PBS NOVA **Tales from the Hive** on **March 4** at **4 PM**.

NOVA chronicles a year in the life of a bee colony with stunning images that take viewers inside the innermost secrets of the hive. The documentary team spent a year developing special macro lenses and a bee studio to deliver the film's astonishing sequences. These include the "wedding flight" of the colony's virgin queen as it mates in mid-air with a drone; the life-and-death battle between two rival queens for the colony's throne; and the defeat and death of a thieving wasp at the entrance to the hive. The show also explores such mysteries as the famous "waggle dance" with which scout bees signal the exact direction and distance of nectar sources to the rest of the hive. A vivid picture emerges of the bee's highly organized social life, revolving around the disciplined sharing of construction tasks, the collection of nectar, and warding off

How To Videos on the Website



The latest posting from the Western Apicultural Society recommended a series of "how to" videos for making bee equipment by Santa Clara Valley Beekeepers Guild member Vince Endter. I added them to our website: [how-to-videos](#). Let me know if you find them useful.

SOBA Member's Corner

David Aiassa has new and used 8 frame hive boxes for sale. [541-858-6824](tel:541-858-6824).

If you are interested in helping a new beekeeper and SOBA member in Central Point install a NUC in a Langstroth box into a Top Bar Hive, please email sobeekeepers@gmail.com.

February in the Apiary

In our area, February brings increasingly warm weather and signals the end of the quiescent time in the bees' yearly cycle.

If you need new bees, NOW is the time to order. [Locally grown NUCs](#) are your best option:

It is also time to make sure that your equipment is purchased or repaired and ready for spring. [Shastina Millworks](#) is a local company that makes bee hives. The [Grange](#) carries 8 frame equipment and beekeeping tools. Paint a different graphic on each hive to help the bees locate their own hive.



Take a beekeeping class. The [SOBA Beginning Beekeeper](#) class is scheduled for April 18th and is a chance to learn beekeeping and meet area beekeepers.

Colonies can starve in late winter and early spring just before flowers bloom. If the weather is above 55 degrees, you can open the hive quickly to move honey frames closer to the cluster. Bees can starve even if there is plenty of honey in the hive if the honey is too far away from the cluster. If the hive is no longer heavy, you can feed drivert sugar on the inner cover as described in February. Alternatively, you can replace empty frames with full frames of honey stored in the fall for this purpose. Do not use syrup until the daily high temperature is above 55 degrees.

If you are trying to build up hives for maximum honey production, you can also feed pollen substitute. However, you are encouraging brood production which will put further strain on diminished winter food supplies. It may be better to wait for the first part of March when the weather may be warmer and drier.

If you have wrapped the hive in tar paper for the winter, and provided a super filled with insulation as described in the November post, you should remove both once the weather is above freezing at night.

In good weather, the bees can begin to bring nectar and pollen to the hive from early blooms. Strong, successful hives may begin to think about swarming late in the month. Pick a nice sunny day to perform a thorough inspection for eggs, brood pattern, disease, and stores.

Also be sure to check out the [Beekeeping Tips for February and March](#) on the ORSBA site.

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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