

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](#).

Fall Bee School August 1

Register Now! Our **Fall Bee School** will be held on **Saturday August 1**. **Dr. Dewey Caron** will head the roster of speakers. The talks will focus on how to best prepare your bees for **winter survival** and **spring buildup**. There will be two sessions for more experienced beekeepers:

- **How to Produce Fat Fall Bees** – Dewey Caron
- **Fall Means Quality Queens**— John Jacob
or Issues of Fall Management—Dewey Caron
- **Fall is the Time to Reduce Varroa Mite Loads**—
Morris Ostrofsky
or How to Make Bees Pay Their Way—John Jacob
- **Five Common Mistakes Beekeepers Make** —
Karessa Jorgenson

www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/news-and-events/fall-bee-school-2015

Time to Extract that Honey!

Current SOBA members may check out the club honey extractors. We currently have one motorized and two manual extractors.

Contact Joe Jordahl at [541-621-5241](tel:541-621-5241).

Election of Club Officers

We will elect the officers for the next year at our September meeting. The nominations so far are:

- President:** John Jacob
- Vice President:** Ron Padgett
- Treasurer:** Cheryl Housden
- Secretary:** Ellen Wright

Dana Rose has decided to take a well-deserved break from the Secretary position. Email nominations for any position to sobeekeepers@gmail.com.

John Jacob's Recipe for Homemade Apiguard

John's recipe for an organic, thymol based treatment for Varroa mites is now on the website [here](#). This is a great treatment for summer/fall, after honey has been pulled.

Old Sol Grease Patty:

- 10 lbs. Thymol Crystal (John buys Thymol in crystal form from Wintersun - a chemical supply house.
- 15 lbs. stiff cooking oil (Crisco) (For an organic alternative, use Spectrum shortening which can be found at ShopNKart)
- 24 lbs. drivert sugar
- 144 cc. tea tree oil
- 144 cc. wintergreen oil
- 48 cc. lemongrass oil

Serve 25 g on a beer coaster in brood area.

For mixing instructions, check out the post on the website:

www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/how-to/old-sol-bees-recipe-for-homemade-apiguard

July is Mite Checkin' Time!

Contributed by Dewey Caron

In the [PNW Winter Loss Survey](#) this past April, 250 Oregon and Washington backyard beekeepers provided information on monitoring bee colonies for mites, including 12 SOBA members. Thirty-seven percent (37%) said they did not monitor for mites. Twenty seven (27%) sampled pre-treatment and 30% sampled both before and following treatment. Thirty-seven percent used sticky boards, 20% visual inspection of adults and 21% visual inspection of drones, while 17% used sugar shake and 5% used alcohol washing as their sample method. Many who used the sticky board mite drop also visually inspected for mites. Most of the monitoring was done in July, August and September.

As we progress with our BeelInformed survey and monitoring activity, we find that the best way to really tell what is happening relative to mite numbers is sampling colony mites via adult bees. Sticky boards can be a backup to adult monitoring but with debris and difficulty in counting, sticky boards simply do not provide a close enough estimate of total colony mite numbers to provide a good assessment.



Likewise, visually inspecting adults or closely examining drone brood is not accurate enough to help tell us what is happening in the hive. Most of the (phoretic) mites on the adult bees are on the underside of the abdomen, wedged between segments of the adult abdomen and simply not visible unless individual bees are picked up and examined very closely. In August and September, most colonies are simply not rearing enough drone brood to use that method to assess mite numbers.

So how do we use adult bees to determine mite pressure on our colony? The most accurate and fastest, easiest method of sampling adults is to collect a 300 adult bee sample and “wash” the mites from their bodies. Collect adults directly into a wide-mouth jar by drawing the jar downward over the bees clinging to a brood frame or shake 2-3 brood frames into a honey bucket, dishpan or other convenient collecting device and scoop out a ½ cup of adult bees. The ½ cup sample should be put into a jar to which the solid lid is replaced with a screen mesh lid. Next, add rubbing alcohol (caution flammable so do away from the hive and especially a smoker) or a low sudsing soap such as automobile window washer fluid or finely powdered sugar (confectioners’ sugar is OK) to the jar (enough liquid to cover the bees or 2 tablespoons of sugar). The jar with bees and fluid or sugar should then be shaken vigorously. Shake and roll at least one minute.

When using powdered sugar, put the jar in the sun for another minute or more and then re-shake. Pour out the liquid through a coffee filter or shake out the sugar like you would a salt shaker into a white collecting container (pan, dish or picnic plate). Mites removed from the adult workers will be obvious in the liquid filter or in the sugar shaken out (you can mist the sugar with water to dissolve it to more easily reveal the mites). To check your accuracy, add more alcohol/soap/sugar and repeat a 2nd time. The number of mites per 100 bees will quite accurately tell you the size of the mite population present in the colony. To get the number of mites per 100 bees, divide the total mite number by the size of the sample (count the number of dead bees of your sample when using alcohol/soap) or use the convention that ½ cup = 300 bees -- so divide the number of mites by 3.

It is good to have a June sample, a July sample and then immediately after supers are removed, or early August if you are not harvesting, take a sample of each colony. If you have more than 10 colonies, take a sample from every 3rd colony. If you find your mite number no higher than 3-5% (i.e. no more than 3-5 bees/100 adult bees in your sample), it indicates you have relatively little risk that mites will significantly impact your colony overwintering. However sample again in September and October as the mite numbers on adult bodies increase dramatically as brood rearing slows in the fall. This is the time when we need healthy, relatively mite-free bees to rear the fat fall bees colonies need to overwinter.

If mite numbers are higher, (the higher the number the greater the risk that mites might negatively impact overwintering success), you should consider a mite control (chemical or mite reduction technique or begin to prepare for the possibility of winter colony loss). OR-WA backyarder loss rate last winter was 29%, for the 12 SOBA members returning a survey it was 27%. Using the wash/shake method post-treatment also is the best way to determine if what you have been doing, or elect to do in August/September, really is effective in reducing mite numbers to the 3-5% level.

See pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey-results/2015-survey-reports/ for details on losses and what SOBA beekeepers are doing that might be helping to keep loss levels at the lowest levels.



Can it Get Too Hot for Bees?

At her recent Spring Management class, Sarah ([BeeGirl](#)) told us that when bees get too hot, they shut down production - the queen stops laying and it's all hands on deck to bring water into the hive. The bees will spit the water inside the hive and fan it to create a swamp cooler effect. Many of the bees may collect on the front of the hive to help reduce the interior temperature in a process called 'bearding'.

[The Phenomenon of Bee Bearding](#) contains a good explanation of bearding, and suggests several things that can be done to help the bees when the temperature is over 100 degrees. *"In extremely hot weather, when the hive's internal temperatures can rise to excessive levels and the hive population is so great, bees make their way out and cluster outside the hive in a huge numbers, here they can try to escape from the heat and remain cool. Honeybees do this mostly to keep the inside of the hive from overheating and killing the brood (immature bees), and to help regulate the brood nest temperature. Brood and too many busy bees in the hive increase heat output. It is a simple way to regulate the internal hive temperature."*

[Keep Summer Bees Cool](#) emphasizes the importance of providing ample water and ventilation for a hive: *"When it's hot in summertime a full size colony of bees will use a lot of water...a lot more than you think. At a minimum they'll use a quart a day. Maximum, a gallon a day. For every colony you have. Think of how much that is for 10 colonies for a week of hot, hot weather. At the very least, that's 10 quarts a day, for seven days...70 quarts...nearly 20 gallons of water, minimum if you allow for some of that water to evaporate naturally. When large colonies start collecting a gallon a day, you have 70 gallons you have to have available...that's more than a 55 gallon honey drum plumb full in just a week."*

[HoneyBeeSuite](#) has several posts on how to [Maximize Ventilation in the Hive](#) and on [Beekeeping in the Dog Days of Summer](#).

A short **summary of approaches**:

- Provide ample water.
- Use a screened bottom board, a [slatted bottom board](#) (my favorite!) or slatted rack, a small upper entrance, and a Vivaldi inner cover or screened inner cover for optimal ventilation.
- Place the hives where they will receive some shade in the heat of the afternoon.
- Since super hot days coincide with the height of robbing season here in southern Oregon, leave the entrances reduced but provide a second or third entrance or ventilation hole in the upper boxes.
- Make sure there is ample space in the hive. 8 frame boxes have a good amount of extra space. You can remove a frame in a 10 frame box to increase air circulation.

Bearding or Washboarding?

If you see bees hanging out on the front of your hive, they may be bearding. But check closely. Are they rocking back and forth? Maybe they are washboarding—a very mysterious bee activity! **Check out** this [Bees Washboarding](#) video.

From **Katie Bohrer** and Jeffery S. Pettis. USDA-ARS Bee Research Laboratory, Bldg. 476 BARC-E, Beltsville, MD 20705 :

- Marked worker bees began washboarding when 13 days of age, with a peak in washboarding occurring when workers were 15-25 days of age.
 - Washboarding behavior increased from 8:00am to 2:00pm and remained elevated until 8:00pm and was even noted to continue past dark at 9:00pm.
 - Washboarding behavior appears to be age dependant with bees most likely to washboard between 15-25 days of age.
 - Washboarding increases during the day and peaks through the afternoon.
 - Workers may respond to rough texture and washboard more on those surfaces as we found an increase in the behavior from bees on glass, wood, and slate but further testing is needed to confirm this. The function of this behavior remains to be elucidated.
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Education and Outreach

On July 11 and 12, SOBA had a table with the new demonstration hive at the **Children's Festival in Jacksonville**. We were a great hit - there were crowds of kids around the table especially when the brood in the frame began hatching

The bees were one of the highlights of the Children's Festival. Thank you so much for all the time, effort and talking you put in. You really reached a lot of people. Thank you!!!
Geni Hilton— head of the Science Tent .



Next up—**SOBA at the Jackson County Fair!**

Events

Ashland beekeepers get together at the Playwright Pub in Ashland at 7 PM on the second Thursday of each month . We had a great turnout for July!! Next meetup is **August 13**. Come talk about bees!

SOBA will have a booth with the demonstration hive at the **Jackson County Fair** July 22-26. If you are interested in helping out at the table, email sobeekeeper-

SOBA Members' Corner

Shana Rose [707-548-5646](tel:707-548-5646) (shoshannama@gmail.com) is a beekeeper from Hawaii who is in southern Oregon for the next 3 months. She would love to find a mentor or someone who needs some volunteer help in their small or medium sized apiary so that she can gain some seasonal experience while here since it's all just one long season in Hawaii. She would be very grateful to anyone who wishes to share the wonders of beekeeping in Oregon with me for any amount of time, and would be happy to do the same for other beekeepers that visit Hawaii.

Chelsea G. at csrg65@gmail.com would like to buy bulk **beeswax**.

Derek Shetterly at [541-621-5533](tel:541-621-5533) (provoice@woolybuggerproductions.com) would like to host bees on his property in Medford. He lives on a 1/4 acre lot that backs up to a large field, in a neighborhood full of mature landscaping in East Medford. The lot is very easily accessed and he doesn't have a dog.

If you are a SOBA member and live in Medford or Eagle Point close to I5 and have secure space for our **extractors**, we'd love to talk to you! Joe Jordahl currently manages the extractors, but would like to find another person to help with some or all of them. Email sobeekeeper@gmail.com if you are interested.

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: sobeekeeper@gmail.com

Phone: (541) 862-1604

Website: www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org

Facebook Forum: www.facebook.com/groups/1418688815101076/



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