

SO*BA Bee Buzz

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association Newsletter

Save the Date! 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.

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

Honey Bee Colony Loss Survey Preliminary Results

The Bee Informed Partnership (beeinformed.org), in collaboration with the Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is releasing preliminary results for the ninth annual national survey of honey bee colony losses.

Responding beekeepers reported losing 42.1% of the total number of colonies managed over the last year (total annual loss, between April 2014 and April 2015). This represents the second highest annual loss recorded to date. **Survey Details**—beeinformed.org/results/colony-loss-2014-2015-preliminary-results/

Among backyard beekeepers (defined as those who manage fewer than 50 colonies), a clear culprit in losses is the varroa mite, a lethal parasite that can easily spread between colonies. Among commercial beekeepers, the causes of the majority of losses are not as clear.

"Backyard beekeepers were more prone to heavy mite infestations, but we believe that is because a majority of them are not taking appropriate steps to control mites," vanEngelsdorp said. "Commercial keepers were particularly prone to summer losses. But they typically take more aggressive action against varroa mites, so there must be other factors at play."

Analysis Article—www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/05/150513093605.htm

Protect Your Bees Against Vector Control



Register with Jackson County Vector Control to **protect your bees from aerosol spraying for mosquitoes**. JCVC covers both Jackson and Josephine counties.

This is an important step for beekeepers within city limits as well as those out in the county.

To register, call **541-826-2199** or use the **Contact Us** page on the [JCVC website](#). Be sure to include

- your name,
- phone number (for follow-up),
- address, and
- the reason you are requesting an exemption from spraying for mosquito control (bee hive on property).

Your address will be entered into their GIS system. The spray will cease 300 feet from your tax lot boundary. However, JCVC has the right to ignore this request if there is a health emergency. They will try to notify those people who have registered if spraying is to be done in this situation.

JCVC uses ANVIL® 10+10 ULV. The label states "This product is toxic to bees exposed to direct treatment on blooming crops or weeds. Do not apply to blooming crops or weeds when bees are actively visiting the treatment area, except " if the mosquitoes are a threat to animal or public health. **Anvil 10-10 is in the category of pesticides that are the most toxic to bees.**

JCVC also uses Pyronyl Crop Spray. The label states that it is "relatively non-toxic to Honey Bees. To maximize this benefit, apply early in the morning or late in the evening".

Spring Bee School Re-cap

Our Spring Bee School was a great success. The class sold out a week in advance, the speakers were fabulous, and the feedback from the students was extremely positive. Presentation materials from the class are on the website [here](#).

Contributed by Dewey Caron

At the SOBA Bee School mid-April, I started our program by discussing bees, bee hives, apiaries and some basics of feeling comfortable around bees. It is not the bee race (mostly we have a selected Italian bee available in the US), the bee hive (Langstroth removable comb or fixed comb top bar/warre hive) or bee source (hives can be started by buying packages, nucs, by splitting (dividing) an existing colony or with a captured swarm) but our **attention to basic colony care , feeding and effective mite control** that will ultimately make the difference in whether our new colony will grow in population, draw comb, raise enough brood and prosper through the spring and summer and become strong enough to overwinter until next spring.



This has been the spring to start colonies by hiving a swarm. The mild winter meant fewer overwintering losses (I will have our OSU annual overwintering survivorship report soon after analyzing the April survey results), together with our mild spring, which has provided abundant pollen and nectar foraging conditions, has resulted in numbers of swarms. Reports of colonies swarming more than once have been common.

For beekeepers, swarms represent a good opportunity to start a new colony, especially if the swarm is not from one of your hives. They are “free” bees. Like a new package or nuc hive, swarms (and hive splits) can benefit from beekeeper attention to improve their chances of overwintering successfully. Early swarms and

bigger-sized swarms have the best survivability odds but using smaller swarms to bolster weaker overwintered colonies or putting several swarms together to develop a stronger colony are all welcome apiary additions in the spring.

One unique feature of a swarm-capture developed colony is they are going to have a queen issue to resolve. Primary swarms (first swarms to issue from a colony), have the older, original hive queen. Original queens will soon be superseded. Once hived, some will not properly requeen, ending up queenless. Afterswarms or secondary swarms may have multiple virgin queens and will not be queenright (i.e. have mated laying queen) for 2 or more weeks. Some of the earliest hive-swarms result in no or poor virgin queen mating due to variable spring weather and lack of sufficiently large enough drone populations.

As appliers of bee biology, we recognize that swarming is colony reproduction – one family becomes two (or more) when the parent colony swarms. Reproduction is basic to living organisms. Good bee stewardship includes reducing the possibility of our colonies swarming. Realistically however we must recognize we are dealing with basic reproduction. Additionally since we lack good clues that a colony is preparing to swarm until they have started (and often are well into) swarming preparations, our success in halting swarming is and remains a big challenge.

Early springs such as this one represent both the challenges of stopping swarming and the opportunities of hiving swarms to make new colonies. I hope you have more of the latter and fewer issues with the former. For all those newbees attending the SOA Bee School good luck this season and be sure to visit the club bees before the meetings to continue learning how to master them and prosper in your new beekeeping adventure.

EAS Youth Scholarship

The Eastern Apicultural Society is offering a youth (18-25, or 30 for military personnel) scholarship that will provide financial assistance for the selected candidate to attend an annual EAS conference. Check for details here:

www.easternapiculture.org/master-beekeepers/youth-scholarship.html

Pollinators in Peril Talk



Dr. Marla Spivak shares her insights into the current plight facing honeybees and some of the latest research into honey bee biology and behavior at a presentation in Minneapolis. Dr. Spivak holds a McKnight professorship in entomology at the University of Minnesota and directs the Bee Lab there.

[Pollinators in Peril on YouTube](#)

“She feels that if you really want to understand what’s going on with bees – and what can be done to help them – you have to keep your focus on the food.”

www.minnpost.com/earth-journal/2015/03/marla-spivak-grasp-our-bees-plight-and-prospects-stay-focused-food

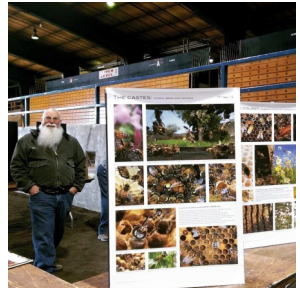
SOBA Education and Outreach



On May 2 and 3rd, SOBA shared a booth with [BeeGirl](#) at the **Master Gardener Spring Fair** in the Jackson County Expo building. We fielded LOTS of questions about bees and beekeeping, and handed out cards with information about SOBA. Shastina Millwork was almost next door and sold many more starter hives than they expected. All in all a great day! Thank you to **Marianne Heater, Cheryl Housden, and Kip Skelton** for acting as SOBA Ambassadors!

Then on May 7, Russ Williamson, Guy Appleton, and [BeeGirl](#) held down the fort at **Ag in the Classroom** as hundreds of elementary school children gathered around the demonstration hive provided by Bee Girl and marveled over bees. I was impressed at the knowledgeable questions! The children had obviously learned about bees and pollinators in their classrooms.

Next the Farmer’s Market! We plan to have a table at the **Ashland Farmers Market** the first week of June.



Updated Bylaws and Constitution

The updated Bylaws and Constitution for SOBA were approved at the May meeting. They are posted on the website here: www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/constitution-and-bylaws

SOBA Facebook Group

SOBA has a Facebook group for you to ask questions, discuss beekeeping, or post pictures. There have been some great discussions already, and amazing photos. Join us here: www.facebook.com/groups/1418688815101076/

Events

This month **Ashland** beekeepers will get together back at the **Playwright Pub** in Ashland on **Thursday May 21 at 7 PM**. Come talk about bees!

SOBA Members’ Corner

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.

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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