

# SO\*BA Bee Buzz

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association Newsletter

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### December Speaker

On **December 7** the SOBA meeting will be at the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center.



**Simon Hare, Josephine Co. Commissioner**, will speak on **opening public lands for beekeepers**. Mr. Hare is working with Sarah-Red Laird (BeeGirl) on a policy to allow beekeepers the same rights to public lands as cattle ranchers have. He will have information on how much land in Josephine County is currently accessible to beekeepers, and how to go about accessing it legally. He will also share the plans he and Sarah have for developing a model for the rest of the country on land access for beekeepers.

### Ugly Sweater Contest and Cookie Potluck!

There will be an **Ugly Sweater contest** at our **December meeting**. The top three entries will win a jar of BeeGirl Spring Honey! Bring a batch of your favorite cookies or other holiday treat.

We will also have a **winter hive configuration demonstration** at the December meeting. We will bring in examples of the hive components that have been mentioned at our meetings (quilt box, Vivaldi board, etc) and set up a few example configurations

### Good Record Keeping

Dewey Caron has a new article on **keeping good records** on our website. He would like to have more SOBA beekeepers participate in the **PNW Honey Bee Survey** in 2016. The survey is a very important tool for determining effective management practices in our area. Review your notes and make sure you have what you need to fill the survey out next April!



You can search for '**beekeeping record keeping**' and see several ideas on record formats. Search images also – there are many scanned in examples. You might also consider using the free **Hive Tracks** application as an online record keeping strategy.

### Bee City USA for Medford



D'Arcy Castro spoke at our November meeting. She is spearheading an effort to get **Bee City USA** designation for Medford.

If you would like help, or to receive updates, email [sobeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:sobeekeepers@gmail.com) and we will send your contact information to her.

## November Beekeeping

We had a great question and answer session at our November meeting.

### **Does anyone know about the new research on the use of mushroom extracts to reduce the virus load for honey bees?**

Sarah talked about the work of Steve Sheppard at Washington State University on fungal treatments. In some tests the varroa mites have exploded and exuded a white substance as a result of the fungus treatments, but the results are difficult to replicate. (<http://crosscut.com/2015/02/can-mushrooms-save-honeybee/>)

### **How long a hive can be opened when it is 65 degrees or less?**

It is now too late to open the hive except to add driver sugar to a feeder box right under the top. All reconfiguration and consolidation of the hive should be completed by the end of September. Opening the hive now would break the propolis seals and make it hard for the bees to restore the hive to the temperature they need.

### **Should frames of uncapped honey be removed from hives at this time?**

It is now too late in the year to remove frames of nectar. Opening the hive and reorganizing frames would do more damage than removing possible moisture. It is quite possible that the cells hold honey, but the bees did not have enough time or resources to cap it. If you shake a frame and the nectar does not spray out, the contents are close enough to honey that moisture is not a problem.

### **Should the solid panel (sticky boards) of screened bottom boards should be left in or out for winter?**

Sarah mentioned that she had just posted an article from Bee Craft magazine on the subject (<https://www.facebook.com/BKids.BeeCraft/photos/a.321041041265556.66141.321037741265886/912938298742491>)

It depends on how well your hive is ventilated. In our area, moisture is more of a concern than cold. Hives need good ventilation to prevent them from getting damp. If you are not using a Vivaldi cover or other top venting, then you should leave the board out. But if the hive is well ventilated and close to the ground or in a very windy location, you can add the solid board. Ventilation is key to handling moisture in the hive.

### **How deep should the wood shavings in a quilt box be?**

Risa says she uses several inches. She staples window screen to the bottom of a honey super, fills it with shavings or other absorbent material, and adds it to the top of the hive under the cover. She has ventilation holes at the top of the hive. The bees create warm moist air as they generate heat to keep warm. That air rises to the top of the hive, condenses, and falls back onto the bees. The absorbent material under the cover will soak up the moisture so that it does not affect the bees. The quilt material will be moist at the top, so it is easy to see if it needs to be changed out.

Burlap, old socks, and old towels can also be used as absorbent material to soak up the condensation. Try stuffing panty hose with cedar shavings to make quilt pillows! Bret offered to give members cedar shavings at the December meeting. Bring a container.

### **Should we still be feeding bees?**

No liquid syrup should be given at this time of year to the bees inside the hive or with open feeding. It is too cold for them to reduce the syrup to honey for storage. The extra moisture in the hive from uncured sugar nectar is bad for the bees.

You can feed driver sugar. Google 'winter candy for bees' and you will see recipes for sugar blocks. The driver sugar will also work to absorb moisture. Do not feed pollen patties until next spring. They are used to boost brood production.

Risa makes sugar bricks from a recipe from Miller Compound Honey Bees and Agriculture with a few modifications. Risa's recipe will be posted on our website. The recipe does not have to be cooked – it involves mixing driver sugar with apple cider vinegar, essential oils, and citric acid. The winter bees eat the sugar, saving the honey to feed the spring bees and the new brood.

### **What about using Top Bar hives in this area?**

Sarah pointed out that top bar hives were developed in Kenya for African bees. Bees in Africa have forage all year long, and they migrate with the flowers. They vacate hives regularly to change areas, and will move into hives when the forage in an area returns to bloom.

European honey bees like the ones used by beekeepers in the US are not migratory and are not particularly well suited to top bar hives. Their preferred home is a cavity in a hollow tree. You can use a Langstroth hive without the foundation in the frames to create natural comb. Use starter strips and an 8 frame configuration.

### **What do you do if you have a lot of yellow jackets near your apiary?**

Set out pheromone traps for the yellow jacket queen in the early spring when the dandelions begin to bloom. If you can trap the queen when she emerges, you have reduced the number of nests in your area by one.

Use yellow jacket traps later in the year to reduce the population, but they will not solve the problem. One way to destroy a nest is to find the entrance hole and place a large glass vase or jar over it. The yellow jackets do not try to burrow a new entrance under it, as they would if you covered the entrance with a board. Leave the jar on the nest until all activity has ceased.

## Pints for a Purpose



The Bee Girl organization has been selected for Standing Stone Brewing Company's **Tuesday December 1st** "Pints for a Purpose" event!

The event runs from 5-10 PM, and \$2 from every pint sold goes to support the mission of empowering and inspiring communities to conserve bees and their habitat.

Come hoist a pint and chat with Sarah about bees!

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## SOBA T-Shirt SALE!

SOBA T-shirts are now only \$10! Contact Cheryl Housden at the meetings, or email [sobeekeepers@gmail.org](mailto:sobeekeepers@gmail.org) if you would like one.

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## SOBA Member Market

If you are a current member of SOBA and would like to advertise bees, equipment, honey, beeswax, or other hive products on the website, please [contact us](#) with your information and a picture or logo.

Check out the current offerings on the website:  
[www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/soba-market](http://www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/soba-market)

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## Events

**Ashland** beekeepers will get together at the Public House (formerly the Playwright's) in Ashland at 7 PM on **November 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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**Facebook Forum:** [www.facebook.com/groups/1418688815101076/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1418688815101076/)



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