

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

News Release MCBA

Vol. 95 Issue 1 – January 2013

MCBA Motto: “Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers”

Winter 2013 Calendar of Events*

January

January 5-12 Pennsylvania Farm Show

January 8 - Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

January 23– General Meeting in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 pm.

February

February 6 – New Beekeepers Class (See attached flyer) and 4-H club meeting

February 12 - Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

February 20– General Meeting in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 pm.

March

March 12 - Executive Board Meeting, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

March 13 – New Beekeepers Class (See attached flyer) and 4-H club meeting

March 20– General Meeting in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 pm.

March 30 – Package Pick-up

*See complete detailed 2013 calendar attached



Winter Feeding or Early Spring Feed

Are your hives low on stores? If so, winter feeding is in order. Do not feed sugar syrup during cold weather. The bees can't access the syrup, and the extra liquid may promote dysentery. Remember that bees only void outside the hive and therefore must 'hold it' until a warm day on which they can take a cleansing flight. The water in liquid feed may cause them to bust their gut. The best winter feed is, of course, honey. But NEVER feed commercially produced honey, as it might contain American Foul Brood spores. In the absence of honey DO NOT feed brown sugar or molasses. These sugars contain indigestible materials that will also fill a bee's hindgut. Rather, fondant or sugar paste should be used (see recipes at the links below; however, some beekeepers recommend against using high fructose corn syrup in some fondant). Alternatively, commercial prepared fondant (icing base) can be used, but make sure it does NOT contain cornstarch, which is not digestible by honey bees.

Fondant can be used in two ways in the hive:

- To provide a *carbohydrate reserve* for the hive, place the fondant patty on the top bars of the top super of honey, so that as the bees move up through the hive over winter, they move closer to the fondant. On days when the temperature allows, the bees will come up to feed on the fondant if they need it.
- For *emergency feeding*, place the patty directly over the cluster.

SIGN UP NOW – NEW BEEKEEPERS COURSE!

Registrations are now being accepted for the 2013 MCBA New Beekeepers course. See the attached schedule, or go to montcobeekeepers.org for more information and to sign up.

In either case, cover the upper side of the fondant patty with waxed paper to retard dehydration.

<http://www.bamboohollow.com/fondant-recipe.php>

http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Beekeeping/Recipes_for_the_Bees#Fondant_Bee_Candy

Contributed by Vincent Aloyo

SAVE THE DATE AUGUST 10, 2013 – AN EVENT TO REMEMBER

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association (MCBA) will be hosting the 2013 Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association Annual Picnic on August 10, 2013. The Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS) is also holding their annual conference in the area, at West Chester University, on August 5-9. MCBA will invite all EAS attendees to the PSBA picnic. EAS is expected to draw beekeepers from all over the Eastern US, Canada, the Caribbean, and the world to the Delaware Valley and we hope that many local beekeepers will also attend the picnic.

MCBA has chosen an extra special picnic venue - the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania. The Morris Arboretum is the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of PA and caters to the family-friendly interests of children and adults. In addition to guided tours of the gardens, sculptures and water features, the arboretum offers the Tree Adventure, Garden Railway, Horticulture Center, Miller's Cottage & Grist Mill, etc. The Arboretum is conveniently located, has excellent facilities and will offer several guided tours, without additional cost, to attendees. The Arboretum also has a large apiary, the Langstroth Bench and honey bee library collection. Please visit the arboretum's website for more information and video 'tours' at www.business-services.upenn.edu/arboretum/index.shtml.

This event will replace our annual MCBA picnic. It is potluck and as always it is free to MCBA members and their families. Come help us welcome our visitors to the area.

We need your help to make this event a success.

Please consider volunteering for one of the following: parking, greeters, set up and clean up, pamphlet editor or pot luck coordinator. Contact Priscilla at 215-643-2418 or cillab@earthlink.net to sign up.

Another Side of Beekeeping

At this time of year our bees are (hopefully) well fed and tucked away for the season. We are making our winter purchases of equipment and supplies, taking advantage of free shipping offers and holiday sales. We are looking forward to spring, and the start of new packages, splits, new queens, and of course a new batch of honey.

Another side of beekeeping that can be just as rewarding as keeping bees can be planned for this time of year. In fact, it's a part of the bee's world that is essential for their life and relatively easy for us to be part of.

Providing the plant life that bees need for food connects you to your bees in an important way and can provide nourishment for you too. Planting many types of forage in close proximity to your hives makes the bee's life a little easier. For you, it can be visually appealing and a tasty treat.

You don't have to start off in a big way especially if space is an issue. You don't even have to have a "green thumb" as most plants are fairly forgiving. The winter is a great time to plan your horticultural bee projects for the coming spring and summer season.

Consider these plant and horticultural ideas:

1. Grow some of your own food. These days it's easy to make a vegetable garden of any size. You can go big by turning over a sunny spot on your lawn, building raised beds or by just using containers. Plant fruits and vegetables that are nutritious for you and the bees.

2. Fruit trees are easy to grow and many require very little maintenance. You will need to plant a few trees to allow for pollination. There are many dwarf varieties available to fit any size property if space is an issue. Some fruit trees require no pollinators at all and bees will still work them.

3. Blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, and other brambles are easy to grow and with a little control take up very little space. They can also serve as a hedgerow along your property line to not only provide tasty treats for you but also provide food and cover for small birds.

4. Remove a portion of your lawn and convert it to meadow. Meadow flowers and plants are a rich source of pollen and nectar and provide cover and habitat for many living creatures. You can start with a small design by laying out a garden hose or use flags to form a shape that is appealing to your eye. Remove the grass and plant a meadow seed mix suitable for your area. Establishing a meadow takes some time and effort but within a year or two your meadow will need very little maintenance.

5. Do you have an area that stays fairly wet or receives a lot of storm water runoff? This is an ideal location to plant a rain garden or form a bog. Many bee loving plants do well in this type of environment. The damp or wet soil provides moisture that bees require in the hive. The plants grown in the garden provide a natural filtering mechanism and help absorb excess storm water runoff.

6. Herbs are another source of food for bees. They are simple to grow and come as annuals and perennials. Kitchen herbs that are allowed to go to flower will be covered with bees. Basil, thyme, oregano, and rosemary all get a lot of bee attention. Try planting them in containers near your kitchen. Just remember to let some go to flower. You will discover many bee visitors by your kitchen door. You can also plant them for ornamental interest in your flower beds.

7. There are many ornamental trees, shrubs and plants that are favorites of bees. They come in all shapes and sizes and have bloom times that vary throughout the year. To save money you can start with younger plants, but remember to take into account their mature size. The horticultural world is filled with catalogues offering everything from seeds to full size plants. Flip through

some of them. They're a good way to see pictures of the plant and know the growing requirements needed.

The internet is a great place to research the "how to" for the topics discussed in this article. There are many sources of information starting with the many extension offices throughout the country.

If you already keep bees or know someone who is interested and is just not ready, having a bee friendly garden is a great way to invite workers to visit your home and allows for an up close and personal way to enjoy them. So use these winter months to get involved with another side of beekeeping.

Contributed by Eli Glick

Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Research Service Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics and Physiology Laboratory

Honey Bees With Varroa-Sensitive Hygiene

Honey bees pollinate over 100 crops in the U.S., and they are extremely vital to agriculture. Unfortunately, the bees are being attacked by tiny, exotic parasitic mites, *Varroa*, which feed on bees developing inside the hive. Large infestations of mites weaken or kill whole bee colonies. To protect bees, the Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics and Physiology Laboratory developed a genetic strain of bees that is capable of fending off *Varroa* mites. The bees have a trait termed *Varroa*-sensitive hygiene (VSH), a specific form of nest cleaning behavior focused on removing the *Varroa*-infested brood. Introgressing the genes that constitute the VSH trait into previously susceptible honey bees provided resistance to the *Varroa* mite.

After the VSH trait was developed, a multifaceted approach was used to transfer the technology to the beekeeping industry. The primary means of transfer involved a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with Glenn Apiaries, which made the technology available to other queen breeders. This in turn allowed the technology to be utilized by other honey bee breeders who receive VSH semen for breeding through Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs). The result was that the VSH trait has been widely distributed as a publicly available breeding stock, with at least 25% of the queens now sold carrying the VSH trait.

The rate of adoption is surprising to many in the honey bee industry because of the habit of beekeepers to buy the strain of queen they have always used. The value of this to agriculture is significant because of the role honey bees play as crop pollinators. Pollination of U.S. crops by honey bees has been valued at \$15 billion annually, based on estimates by Cornell University scientists. Improving bee health by the transfer of VSH technology has limited the loss of effective bee pollination by

sustaining the availability and vigor of bee colonies. A conservative estimate of just one percent of the industry's value represents a value of \$150 million to U.S. agriculture.

Contact: Dr. Bob Danka, (225) 766-9280,
bob.danka@ars.usda.gov

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Hops Protect Honey Bees From the Scourge of Mites

Well-known as a key ingredient of beer, hops are used to balance the sweetness of the malt ingredient and provide aroma. Thanks in part to scientists at the [Agricultural Research Service](#) (ARS) in Tucson, Arizona, hops are also protecting the nation's honey bees from their most dangerous foe.

Varroa mites, tiny parasites that feed on the bees' blood-like hemolymph, wipe out nearly one-third of the nation's private and commercial bee colonies each year. The danger to American agriculture is significant—honey bees pollinate more than \$15 billion worth of crops annually across the country, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Although synthetic miticides have been in widespread use, *Varroa* populations have become resistant to the chemicals, prompting beekeepers and scientists alike to seek alternative controls. As part of a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with an industry partner, [Gloria DeGrandi-Hoffman](#) and her colleagues at the ARS [Carl Hayden Bee Research Center](#) in Tucson demonstrated that hop beta acids (HBAs) can be used safely and effectively as a miticide.

Their studies began in 2005, when [BetaTec Hop Products, Inc.](#), a subsidiary of J.I. Haas, approached the lab looking for a use for HBAs, a byproduct of processing hops for beer. BetaTec knew that HBAs can kill mites on plants, and wanted to determine whether the acids might also work for *Varroa* mites.

Initial petri dish experiments were promising, so the lab entered into a CRADA with BetaTec to expand the studies, conducting colony trials in Arizona and California.

In the process, the researchers tried different application methods, ultimately settling on HBA-coated cardboard strips hung from a frame in the hive's center. Bees walk on the strips, pick up the HBAs, and spread them among the adult population of the hive through bee-to-bee contact. Mites on bees carrying the HBAs die and drop off.

The trials showed that while lethal to *Varroa* mites, the HBAs had no adverse effect on worker bees, their queens or brood, and are environmentally benign. Because the HBAs are water-soluble, they do not bind to the bees' wax or leave a residue in the comb. This means the strips can even be used during honey flows without affecting flavor or quality. The bees eventually chew up the strips, removing them from the hive. That prevents residual amounts of the miticide from remaining in the hive, which could hasten mite resistance to the compound.

DeGrandi-Hoffman was involved in all phases of the research. She constructed a mathematical model of the population dynamics of *Varroa* mites in honey bee colonies and used it to determine the best time of year to apply the HBAs so the mites don't overwhelm the colony.

While it is difficult to completely eliminate mites from a colony, all that is needed to protect the hives is to keep the level of mites below a certain threshold, according to DeGrandi-Hoffman. "If you can keep the mites from going into exponential growth, you're golden."

The lab also conducted experiments to determine the optimal amount of HBAs that could be used without harming the bees, as well as the right concentrations to put on the strips. BetaTec provided various formulations that were used in the process.

The lab's work guided the design of the product, which DeGrandi-Hoffman said is an effective miticide. "We need to keep coming up with new ways to control *Varroa* mites, and this is a tool in our arsenal."

As a result of work completed under the CRADA, BetaTec began commercializing the miticide under the brand name HopGuard. The product has been approved by the [EPA](#) for use under the Section 18 emergency use exemption in selected states, and BetaTec has started a registration process that will enable HopGuard to be used to control *Varroa* mites in honey bee colonies throughout the U.S.

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Eastern Apicultural Society's Annual Conference and Short Course in 2013

West Chester University
West Chester, PA
August 5 - 9, 2013

The EAS Planning Committee for the 2013 Conference & Short Course is proud to introduce not one, but two, keynote speakers for our annual event!

Dr. Mark Winston, [Simon Fraser U](#) & Mr. Brian Snyder, [PA Association of Sustainable Agriculture](#)

The keynotes will be delivered on Wednesday, August 7, 2013 . . . but wait, let me take a step back for those of you who haven't been to an EAS Conference week before.

The format of this annual event follows:

- The "Short Course" normally spans Monday and Tuesday. In 2013, two tracks will be offered and there is an extra day for some of the course topics to overflow into Wednesday.
- On Wednesday, though, the Conference and Workshop Series begins with the keynote addresses and ends with a social gathering at a near-by picnic ground.
- If you're not too tired by quittin' time on Thursday, you should attend the annual Auction Dinner, which is a fundraiser for the research grants that EAS awards each year.
- Throughout most of the week, your favorite vendors of beekeeping supplies, books and gadgets will be on hand with their wares. In the same vendor area will be bee fabric for the quilters, bee art & jewelry and much, much more!
- And, oh yeah - there's a HONEY SHOW with prestige and prizes to be won. Admit it - you're proud of your bees' work! So bring it, enter it and show it off!

- By Friday, you will have met so many new and interesting people, you will want one last chance to get together with them before it's over - the Annual Banquet!

Pennsylvania's own Maryann Frazier is ably organizing the program for Wednesday through Friday. Invited speakers are confirming their intention to be with us and pinning down the titles of their talks and workshops. Check the [EAS website](#) often for confirmed speakers, lodging information and other updates.

There's so much to see and do in and around West Chester, PA that you may want to make it your family vacation! Spend a day or two touring together in Philadelphia, Valley Forge or Dutch Country. By Wednesday, they'll know their way around on their own and you can get back to the conference! Or stick around an extra day at the end and enjoy the PA State Beekeepers Association Picnic, complete with a "hive crawl" and mead tasting, in a nearby urban area on Saturday August 10.

Pennsylvania beekeepers will welcome you warmly! See you in August!

Peanut Butter Honey Drops

Preheat oven to 350°

Combine:

1 cup peanut butter

1/3 cup honey

1 beaten egg

1 tsp. baking soda

Drop by teaspoons on greased cookie sheet.

Bake 5 – 7 minutes.

MARKETPLACE



To advertise in Marketplace: If you have beekeeping-related products to sell or services to offer, please send your advertisement to the newsletter editor at: News@montcobeepers.org

In order to promote or advertise beekeeping classes or products and services in the MCBA newsletter or on the MCBA website, you must be a member in good standing.

Beekeeper Wanted

Normandy Farms Estates is one of ACTS Retirement -- Life Communities located on more than one hundred acres along Morris Road near De Kalb Pike (Rt. 202) in Blue Bell, PA. The Landscape Committee of the Residents Association would like to have a beekeeper bring one or more hives to our community and to sell the honey produced here to our residents. It would be necessary to meet with our director Jeremy Neely and with the committee to discuss these arrangements. Please contact Alice Rogerson of the Landscape Committee by email at alice_rogerson@yahoo.com if you feel that you would be interested.

Southeast Pennsylvania Hands-on Beekeeping Class

This course is scheduled for five Sunday sessions from February thru July at Worcester Honey Farm. Only 25 people for each group of classes will be accepted and advance registration is required.

The instructor is committed to present a knowledgeable and enjoyable, interactive, and intensively hands-on workshop. We are friendly and encourage you to contact us throughout the course for advice, help, or a sympathetic ear.

Become comfortable opening and working your hives, touch bee's shoulders to get them to move over, hive a swarm from a crabapple tree, bring your honey to extract on the last class, and inspect hives—there will be hives set up with typical beekeeping problems such as laying workers—and resolve any problems found. All this plus beekeeper camaraderie and tasty appetizers.

To reserve a spot or get more information, see www.pabeekeeper.com
Contact information:

Email: HandsOn@pabeekeeper.com

Phone: 610-584-6778.

Southeast Pennsylvania SPRING PACKAGES

Available for Pickup Saturday, March 30* or Saturday, April 20*.

(* Actual date depends on weather.)

Order your packages now for pickup Saturday, March 30* or Saturday, April 20*. At 2:00 P.M. on the day of pickup, see a demonstration on installing package bees. Conveniently located in the exact center of Montgomery County near Valley Forge, Norristown, and Lansdale turnpike exits. Package includes 3-pound workers with Italian queen. For questions, ordering information, or status of bee deliveries, see www.pabeekeeper.com.

Contact information:

Email: packages@pabeekeeper.com

Phone: 610-584-6778

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Dues are applied on a calendar year basis. January 1st to December 31st

New membership _____ Renewing membership _____

MCBA DUES \$10.00 per *household per year \$ _____

**PSBA DUES \$20.00 for one person per year or \$25.00 per household per year \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

*Household = 2 adults and all children living at one address.

**PA State Beekeepers Dues are recommended in order to encourage research on bee health, and promote efforts to dissuade local township and boroughs from restricting beekeeping. You will also benefit from the 10 annual state newsletters and information sharing.

Mail to: MCBA PO Box 203, Hatfield, PA 19440 or renew online at www.montcobeekkeepers.org

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MCBA Motto: "Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers"

MCBA OFFICERS and Executive Committee Members – 2013

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MCBA WEBSITE!

www.montcobeekkeepers.org

Check out the MCBA website for news updates and items of interest. Pass the address to anyone you know that may be interested.