

THE HIVE TOOL

Volume XXXIII

June 2009

**PUBLISHED BY
THE CENTRAL MARYLAND
BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
FOUNDED 1973**

President's Frame

June brings the heart of the nectar flow, so we can expect some dramatic growth in the colonies this month. Dave Papke gave us a good idea of what to expect when it comes time to harvest the bounty. He was one of our trio of presenters this month. We tried a new format for our monthly meeting with multiple presenters in a "round robin" format. Since we have so many good topics to talk about, we thought it might work out well to have more than one speaker, and everyone seemed pretty happy with the format. Dave Papke covered the ins and outs of preparation for the major flow and harvesting the honey from the hive. Arthur and Barbara Gruver facilitated a good discussion of the various flora available to the honey bees during this period. Jerry Fischer enlightened us on the magic of swarming.

June's meeting will be held on the Tuesday, June 2nd, at 7PM. This month we will have Lloyd Snyder lead a discussion on the making of mead and honey beer. Honey has been fermented into mead for quite a long time, but it can be a bit tricky to get it right. Lloyd will be able to give us a few pointers on successful mead making considering he has won a few awards at the Maryland State Fair over the years.

There are a few opportunities for those of you that are interested in conveying some of your beekeeping knowledge to the general public. Greg Strella, the Farm Manager from the Great Kids Farm at the Bragg Nature Center, has invited any beekeeper to co-lead a workshop at the farm on June 13 with Tim Wilt. Tim has been working with Greg for a while to get some colonies started at the farm. There will be a weekend of workshops at the farm June 12 and 13, so there should be a fairly good showing of people that we could introduce to beekeeping. Greg's contact information is as follows: Greg Strella Farm Manager Baltimore City Public Schools Great Kids Farm at the Bragg Nature Center 717-350-3730. Another opportunity is with Patricia Paul at the Stansbury Park in Dundalk. She is building a nature program at the park and is looking to have someone run a beekeeping workshop sometime this year. The intent is to inform kids and families about the basics of beekeeping in the hope of spurring some interest and potentially some additional beekeepers in the area. She can be contacted at 410-284-7076.

Enjoy your bees!
David Gill-Boucher

REPORT FROM THE CMBA MAY 5 MEETING

President David Gill-Boucher introduced Jerry Fischer who said that bees in Maryland were about one month behind. Three pound packages (about 10,000 bees) were picked up April 25, instead of the expected April 4, and the weather has returned to cool and raining. The first chance you get, you must look to see that the queen has been released out of her cage. If the bees are balling the queen (clustering around and trying to sting her) you may need to use a different release method, such as a push-in cage with attendants, where the queen can start laying before she is released. A package of bees is not made of bees from one hive, but from many hives, so the bees are not sisters, and do not know the included package queen as their queen.

As soon as possible, adjust the frames, to have no more than 3/8" of space between them, or the bees will fill in empty space with comb. Keep the syrup on new packages.

Regarding the nectar flow, in St. Mary's County, they have already had 2 weeks of good bloom with black locust trees. These trees are blooming in Annapolis right now. If you did your work in March and April, including putting supers on, beekeepers should not have to go into hives that much in May. The bees do better with less interruptions. Don't go into your hives in wet or harsh weather. If the foragers are home, "you stay home."

David Papke announced that he has 30 plastic foundation frames that he wants to pass on. He also gave the dates for his remaining two workshops: the last Saturdays in June and August. Steve McDaniels said that the way to get bees to use plastic foundation is to coat them with bees wax. He melts wax in a large container and uses a paint roller, to roll the melted wax on the foundation. Plastic foundation without this wax is not eagerly drawn by bees.

David Gill-Boucher asked for volunteers to help plan and coordinate the summer picnic.

David Papke spoke on preparing for, and harvesting the main nectar flow:

Preparing for the nectar flow is much like other aspects of beekeeping – anticipation is the key. In this case, anticipating what the bees need/require to store a surplus of honey for you to harvest. Getting a super on your hive early is a good idea. I get a super on early in April, before the dandelions bloom. Not so much for honey production (although some hives fill it right away), but for

swarm control; the colony then has plenty of room and I'd like to think this helps relieve overcrowding. Monitor colonies weekly through April and add the second super when the bees are actively working the first. Continue monitoring the activity in the supers and add a third (or more if you're lucky) before the locust bloom in May. Speaking of the locust bloom, learn the nectar-producing plants in your immediate area and when each blooms. It's nice to know what nectar sources are used by the bees in creating your special honey.

A word about queen excluders. Use them or not at your discretion; there are reasons both for and against their use and necessity. I like them because I want to keep my honey supers free from brood to make extracting easier and as an abatement for wax moth (moth do virtually no damage to comb which has never had brood raised in it). If using an excluder on a super of frames with new foundation, leave the excluder OFF until the bees are actively drawing the wax on the frames. For some reason, bees are reluctant to cross an excluder to draw new wax. So, let them get started first and then add the excluder under your super.

I harvest the honey crop near the end of June (sometimes leaving partially filled supers for the bees to finish off). Any honey the bees make for the remainder of the year is theirs for the winter. It must be noted however that colonies often LOSE weight in July and August's dearth of nectar; they actually use up any honey they've stored. Could a colony starve in late summer? Hmmm, good question?

Back to harvesting. I recommend using a bee escape to clear the supers of bees if you only have a few colonies. They are not expensive and certainly work better (read: easier for the beekeeper) than the brush and run method. After putting on a bee escape the super is usually cleared in a day or two. Make sure there are no holes in the supers where robber bees could enter and steal your honey. A quicker alternative is some kind of bee repellent (several available on the market, ALL smell bad). You'll need a fume board to go on top of your supers. Don't use smoke when using bee repellent; you don't want bees eating honey, you want them leaving your supers, which they will do in 5 or 10 minutes. Keep your stack of harvested honey supers covered in the bee yard (hope it's a BIG stack). Again, you don't want to encourage robbing. These are some basics for beekeepers to remember regarding the honey flow.

Jerry Fischer spoke on swarms:

Swarms are programmed and can't really be controlled. He told when they happen and generally why (crowding). He said to not cut out all queen cells ("as the books tell you"), but to cull the small dark ones, leaving the big good-looking "peanuts". At one question he pointed out that yes, queen cells do look like peanuts, about that size and color. He described how they are basically very gentle, showed how you could pass your

hand slowly right through a swarm. To other questions he answered how to get a swarm into a box, showed off his swarm catcher (a converted Shop-Vac can). He mentioned one way to get the swarm into a hive is to shake them in. He also noted that the swarm takes the queen, not the other way around, and in fact may return more than once if she doesn't come with them.

Arthur and Barbara spoke on flowers for honeybees:

When you know the flowers that bees use in your area, you can learn when nectar is coming in. Bees having access to plenteous natural nectar and pollen sources are healthier, produce more honey, and do not need to be fed syrup except in emergency situations. Honey used to feed bees, is ideally their own honey, saved for this purpose. Do not feed bees honey from an unknown source, since it may have AFB spores. Bees are part of the pollination process, in which flowers reward bees with nectar and pollen, and bees' fuzzy bodies collect and transfer pollen from one plant to another.

A handout was given indicating the male and female parts of flowers, and how bees move through the flower, transferring pollen from the anthers to the stigma, and how many flowers require insect pollination to set seed, and to make abundant fruit. The handout also listed a bee calendar for Maryland plants (see www.msbeea.org under "Papers" for the same calendar.) Bees are choosy, selecting the floral sources that provide the richest nectar or most desirable pollen for their hive's needs. Plants blooming now were shown to help beekeepers identify them. Most fruit bloom which usually takes place in April produces abundant nectar, and of course the queen moves into high gear in laying brood. The black locust and tulip poplar trees create the main nectar flow in May, but rainy, cold weather can interfere with this flow's success.

Beekeepers may want to plant nectar sources for bloom in June-August, when there is less native bloom. Trees are ideal sources because of their abundance of bloom and vertical use of space. Basswood, Persimmon, Golden Rain, Tree Lilac and Bee Bee trees are useful for this summer bloom. To attract bees to a floral source, an area of 60 sq. feet or more is ideal. Bees will not usually go to just one or two flowers, of even a heavy nectar producer.

Books to help identify flowers, and to learn the appearance, size, and cultural requirements of specific flowers were shared. Only plants growing in their ideal conditions will produce abundant nectar.

BEE FORAGE PLANTS FOR JUNE

Arthur B. Gruver

Although the weather conditions have been mixed, we have had enough warm weather to bring the plants mentioned in the May [Hive Tool](#) into bloom. Some will continue blooming into June.

It is now wonderful weather to take flower walks. Be sure to take your camera and record bees at work bringing in nectar or pollen to your apiary or someone else's.

From our records, June bee forage is extensive. Starting with the herbaceous plants: White or Dutch Clover continues, the Sweet Clovers, both White and Yellow, Hairy Vetch, Poison Ivy, Canada Thistle (which is considered a pest and undesirable in Maryland,) Dogbane-- found commonly in areas disturbed by construction, Butterfly Weed-- beautiful orange flowered close relative of the Common Milkweed which also blooms during June, Mountain Mint-- wonderful long blooming and easily controlled mint, Oregano, several of the Cucurbit group normally grown in family gardens such as Cantaloupe, Pumpkin, various squash such as Butternut, Zucchini and Yellow Crookneck, Anise Hyssop, Asparagus, Lavender, and Multi-flora Rose, a pollen source.

The following shrubs are among many that bloom in June: Japanese Holly, Privet, Red Raspberry, and Blackberry. The June blooming trees include Tulip Poplar (if it didn't finish in May) the Basswoods or Lindens, Persimmon, and more Hollies.

Please share with me your bee forage observations—especially any additional bee forage plants in your area that start their bloom during June. Contact me at abgruver@verizon.net.

FROM OUR BEE YARD

Roger Williams

(This column was submitted in March, 2009, but it seems appropriate to print it now, since April-June is an ideal time for making splits.)

“One and One make.. Six?” - Wherein the author has learned something of bees.

“Birds and bees”. There is something in there about procreation and increase, and, more specific to this article, about building up stock. Here is stock I can really invest in, maybe even get a reasonable return! But how to get the increase from the hives I had, that was the issue. Last I looked, it seems the bees wanted to *leave* in swarms, not stick around to make me the Baronet of Beedom.

After our earlier combining of two hives into one due to a lost queen, we were back up to two running colonies again with the gift of a swarm from David Papke, our mentor-in-chief. It was the beeyard Olympics, with our resident Russians ahead of his Italians, but the Italians

catching up fast. Then came the dearth, and the game was over. No nectar, nothing for the bees to do, no comb building, only replacement brood, and that with a surly attitude. No one was happy.

In late July, I took it in my head that this was a great time to make splits, the idea of making 2 hives from one. I had missed the appropriate window, early April, due to the queenless issue. I needed more gear, some brood and/or bees, and another queen. I had the first two, so for the third I went to visit Jeff Davis, who raises and sells Russian queens in Seven Valleys, PA (717 428 9489). Jeff's queens are bred from breeder queens he gets from the USDA. He has built up his own semi-controlled breeding yard by getting Russian queens to every beekeeper he can find within 12 miles of his own operation in order to try to keep his breeding lines as pure and controlled as he can. The USDA has their own island for that reason. Still, Jeff breeds for success locally, not for purity of line, using no chemicals for the last 5 years. If a hive doesn't make it for whatever reason, that line was not meant to be.

Jeff opened the door of his big diesel pickup, motioning me into the other side, and hoisted his withered frame into the truck with his good arm. Cigarette dangling from his lip, he twisted the key, brushed the scraggly hair out of his eyes, lifted his left leg up by the knee so his foot rested on the clutch pedal. Though West Nile virus crippled half his body 3 years ago, his mind and his knowledge of bees are untarnished. I came home with 4 queens, some honey, and an untold wealth of information and lore. One doesn't forget a visit with Jeff Davis.

The day had been carefully orchestrated. Before I went to Jeff's, I had taken 4 new hive bodies, moved 2 frames of bees and brood, one of and honey into each from my 2 good hives, and filled the rest of the space with new foundation. This “nuc”, or nucleus hive, is about the size of a package of bees or a small swarm, albeit in a regular hive body. Received wisdom had said that by the time I got back, the older workers would have flown back to their original hives, and the young non-flying bees in those new hives, realizing they were queenless, would readily accept a new queen. The stars were aligning. Home again, I was ready to insert the queen cages.

Three queens went in smoothly, the happy humming workers gladly greeting their new monarch, investigating gently, attentively. The fourth hive was a different story. The workers were not happy to see this pretender to the throne, not lady-like at all, in fact. More like street brawlers on Roller Derby, the bees were all over the queen cage immediately, and not in a nice way. Tension was in the air, I could hear the difference. I wondered about it, but after removing her once, with some guilt in the back of my mind put her back in the hive in her cage anyway. I decided they just needed some quiet time to get to know each other.

By morning, all the hives were happy and quiet - and one new queen was dead in her cage. There was only one explanation. On checking more carefully, what I deduced proved true: I had inadvertently brought the old queen over with the two frames, though she didn't show herself then. The workers, still with their original queen, were not about to accept this interloper, and took care of her in no uncertain terms. Quiet time indeed, for one. I was chastened.

Now I had 4 new queen-right nucleus hives, a strong old one, and a strong old one with no queen. I couldn't bear to call Jeff and reveal my incompetence while buying yet another queen. My failed palace coup had left a well bred monarch dead, and there was no hope in me.

However, in the queenless hive there were still eggs less than the requisite 3 days old, so I took another chance. The bees in that hive had just what they needed to raise a new queen, and if they failed, I could always combine hives later. The gamble paid off - six weeks later I saw capped brood in that hive. My fairly radical 1-3 split was working - so far, anyway. The winter was still in front of us.

By the late fall, when they simply stopped taking the 2-1 sugar/water syrup due to the low temperatures (Oct/Nov, low 40s during sunny days), all four colonies were only slightly larger than when I split them, covering 4-5 frames. I had question about them making the winter, given the low state of the stores. In Las Vegas, they call it "long odds". All the new hives went into the winter in one deep super, with an empty above. In the empty, on two thin strips of wood I put a ½ gallon jar over the inner cover hole for feeding, and filled the cavity with straw for insulation and humidity control. Such a small colony and with low stores, a nuc is a less than ideal way to carry bees through the winter. I was hoping a lot, and gambling on the Russian bees' reputation for being able to deal with long and cold winters by cutting population and holding it down until later in the spring.

I checked the hives every reasonable day I could, at about 2 week intervals, just lifting the bottle to look for activity, filling it if necessary. Jerry says that if you see bees at the inner cover hole in February, it means they are about out of stores. Those bees were that way in November, and were still there in February, all clustered around their version of the sandwich cart at the worksite. I hardly ever let the sugar syrup run out.

During the warm spell in February, I opened all the hives for Jerry's "look-see". Two of the new hives had dwindled noticeably, covering about 3 frames total. I was pretty sure they were candidates for joining with other hives, if they survived at all. But the warm spell let them all get a good shot at the 2-1 syrup I was feeding. In March, when it was warm enough to take everything apart for a good look and a house cleaning, the stronger of the new hives seemed to have more capped honey than they did in November. That was a surprise.

Since the dearth was on when the splits were made, I have had to feed those 4 new hives since early fall last year, at least 40 lbs of sugar each into March, 2009. Had the splits been made in the early spring as the books say, or in May to prevent swarming, the hives would have filled themselves out in the nectar flow and been in good shape, with minimal feeding. There is always next time - and plenty still to learn ... More later from our beeyard (rogerw@nordlink.com)

FINDING A GOOD HOME

Barbara Gruver

In the February 2009, [Hive Tool](#), I wrote how our family started with bees in 1976. We then lived in a Baltimore row house, so we contacted Larriland Farms, a pick-your-own farm in Howard County. They were delighted to have us put our bees on their farm to pollinate their fruit crops. We started with ten packages of bees and all went well, until the day when we came to inspect our bees and we found large quantities of dead bees in front of each hive. We were aghast! Most of the forager bees were dead. We questioned the farmer, Larry Moore about his use of pesticides on his fruit trees. Yes, he had used Sevin, but our bees would just have to get used to it!

We told him we had to move our hives immediately. He arranged for his daughter and son to help us move the bees to a safer location on his farm. But during the move at night, the truck hit a one foot deep drainage ditch and one hive broke open and bees boiled out. In putting it back together, Arthur received many stings.

Soon we found that a friend of a friend, Mr. John Upchurch, welcomed us to put our 10 hives of bees on his property. His land had a stream where our children could play, and it also had tall blooming tulip poplar trees. We located our hives under the tulip poplars and watched in wonder at the nectar elevator as bees flew straight up to the blossoms and then down to the hives with their liquid gold.

The next winter, we tried moving one hive, that needed feeding, into our Baltimore row house garage which was located on the alley behind our row house. It didn't take too many days before we heard a knock on the door. It was a policeman.

"Are those your bees?"

"Yes."

"Those bees have been reported. They are a nuisance, and you must move them."

We considered moving this hive to our attic where the bees could fly out the window high above the street level. But the attic had no floor, nor a proper stairway. We could imagine angry bees making us try to flee, and we didn't want to crash through the ceiling. So that option was ruled out. We also considered putting them on the roof of the

garage, but that also had problems. So we moved that hive to join its sister hives at Mr. Upchurch's land.

Then one day, we saw an ad in the Baltimore Sun listing land for sale in northern Harford County. I drove out to see it and was delighted. Arthur came out the next day, and we made the decision to buy 15 acres that had fields, forest, a one room cottage, and an intermittent stream. In 1977 we moved our 10 hives of bees to the south-facing wood line on our newly purchased land. The bees thrived and we split all of them to make 20 hives. We had a lot of honey to sell! Some customers bought 12 gallons!

We continued to live in our Baltimore row house for six more years, driving out to our Harford County property on weekends and for several weeks at a time during the summer to work our bees and to tend our gardens. Bees, children and we all enjoyed our land. In 1983 we built a house along the same south-facing wood line that had sheltered our bees, and we and our bees have enjoyed living here ever since.

REQUEST FOR YOUR INPUT IN THE HIVE TOOL

Consider what about bee keeping is fascinating to you. Please send articles, ideas, photos and recipes to Barbara Gruver at abgruver@verizon.net or call me at 410-692-2051.

Neighbors: The Good, The Bad and The Ignorant

By Larry Connor

Reprinted from Bee Culture May 2009

Many of us have some stereotypes about our neighbors and their attitudes about bees and beekeeping. These examples are probably ALL wrong, but here are a few of the ways beekeepers think their neighbors will react when bees are moved next door!

1. Your neighbor will fight you every step of the way if you put a colony or two in your backyard.
2. Your neighbor will run to the city/town/township manager and file a formal complaint about your bees.
3. Your neighbor will run to an attorney after their rock throwing child is stung to take everything you own and then some.
4. Your neighbor does not know what he or she is talking about.

You may not realize it, but your neighbor has some stereotypes about bees and beekeepers. And about you:

1. Your bees will hunt them down and sting them, and they will have to call the ambulance to save their lives.
2. Whenever they plan an outdoor party, you intentionally bring in billions of bees to torment their guests.

3. You carefully train your bees to visit their birdbath and swimming pool.
4. You do not know what you are talking about.
5. You are an idiot for keeping bees and cannot possibly be talked to.

My goal here is to break down some of the stereotypes about bees and beekeepers as well as with bees and the general public. There is no secret that most people, including some in your own family, are afraid of bees. Some of this fear is probably based on genetically programmed instinct, since most folks have some natural vibrations against things that go *buzz* and sting. But a great deal of the fear has been learned from parents and from teachers. I remember a teacher going into a fear-driven panic attack when a bumble bee queen flew into the classroom. She did one thing right by turning off the lights and letting the queen fly toward the window. But she certainly emphasized the risk (however remote) of being stung, and failed miserably at turning the uninvited classroom visitor into a really skillful learning opportunity. She could have instructed the class to sit quietly and discuss what the queen was doing, looking for a nesting site or food but not looking for delicate six-year-old children to carry off to her nest and feed to her babies! Then during recess or as part of science, she could have taken the class out to the edge of the playground and watched the bees working on the dandelions or goldenrod, depending on the time of year.

I have worked with excellent teachers who turn the visiting bee into a class lesson - a positive learning situation. The result is pretty amazing. The children from these teacher's classrooms are often the ones who want to see inside a beehive, and some even start keeping bees with their family. As one who has worked with third and fourth graders a great deal collecting and studying insects and especially bees, I can tell you that the number that are afraid of the bees are so because someone worked hard to implant that fear into them at a much younger age.

If you are setting up your first colony this Spring, or you have been keeping bees all your long life, here is a simple review of some of the things beekeepers can do to work nice-nice with the neighbors.

A. Don't advertise your bees - Out of sight out of mind works for placing your bees on your property. Back when I was on the faculty at (The) Ohio State a beekeeper explained that he was having battle with a neighbor and had aimed the entrances of his colonies so that the bees would have to fly over the neighbor's garden. For some reason the neighbor did not like that, and rightly so. Personal squabbles should not include bees. This brings up an interesting fact of bee behavior we need to keep in mind. Bees will fly out low to the ground and then rise in altitude and then fly 20 to 100 feet up in the sky, above the treetops. They do not routinely fly along the ground unless actively foraging. This provides us with a biological

recommendation - get the bees to fly UP as soon as they leave the hive. Position the hive with the flight entrance facing a hedge, fence or even an artificial barrier, such as a big piece of burlap hung on a clothes line. Up, up and away girls, you don't need to fly over the rutabagas!

Just as important as the upward mobility of the foragers, a flight deflector puts the bees in a setting out of the view of the neighbor, perhaps behind the garage, in the back of your lawn/ garden, or somehow positioned so the bees are not detected, either as a hive or as a returning forager crashing into the neighbor pulling weeds in the vegetable garden.

B. Do talk to the neighbors - In this post Colony Collapse Syndrome/Heightened Media Awareness (CCD/HMA) environment, it is likely that your neighbor knows a great deal about the problem with disappearing bees. Use that as the opener for an adult conversation. "Have you noticed how few honey bees we have in the neighborhood? I've been having problems with the pollination of my cucumbers, melons, raspberries, apples (fill in the correct answer), and have made arrangements to get a colony of very gentle bees to pollinate local gardens. Let me tell you where I plan to place them so they don't bother anybody."

Once you have bees, a few jars of honey to each neighbor will produce an amazing amount of positive public relations. Add a set of gift candles in the Fall, and a few items the bees pollinated from the garden, just to drive the point home. Invite your neighbor to a local beekeeper's meeting, and give them a beesuit to wear as they watch you work your bees. These are small items, but with a huge payoff. Turn your neighbor into your friend, ally, and unexpected PR person when you are not there to defend yourself. Mentor their children about bees. Show them all how to remove a stinger if they are stung.



With the house, the fence and the tree providing protection from neighbor's gazes, the beekeeper was challenged by the large open lawn. Her solution was to put a burlap screen on poles to shade the bees and to screen them as well. (Photo provided, with thanks, by Rich Wieske, Royal Oak, Michigan.)

C. Summer Water - This may be the most common reason people complain about bees and is not always the easiest to solve. Bees need water in the Spring when they liquefy crystallized honey for brood rearing, and for cooling the hive when the temperature rises. Bees are often seen at birdbaths, the dog's water dish, and at swimming pools. You are wise to use a watering system on your own property to divert water collection, but bees need certain mineral salts to function. Consider the flocks of butterflies gathering water at wet spots. They are actually gathering essential ground minerals they need to live. Bees are much the same, looking for essential elements for their developmental needs. That means there is something in the water at the birdbath, dog dish or swimming pool that is lacking in your clean water source. Experiment with natural mineral sources (at low levels) and determine what your bees like to visit.

As far as swimming pools, you may not want to put bees on property near a swimming pool, since it is a bee magnet. Try some floating sponges the pool owner can put into the pool while not swimming so the bees can crawl up and fly home.

Many beekeepers build watering devices with floating vegetation and a rocky/stony area where the bees are able to land, gather water, and fly home. This may use rainwater supplemented with a hose with a very slow leak.

D. Offer to move your bees during neighborhood parties - Why tempt fate? Move your colony to a temporary location when your neighbor's daughter gets married in the backyard. If there are honey bees around, you can quietly explain that you moved your colony, so there must be some wild bees in the old bee trees, and isn't that wonderful the bees are returning to the area. This will show the neighbor that you are being reasonable and caring for them.

E. Local Zoning - Recently the cities of Vancouver (BC), Ann Arbor (MI) and Cleveland (OH) have enacted regulations that allow beekeeping in their limits (as well as a few chickens). This obviously shows the impact of the "eat local" movement as well as the CCD publicity. It is time that elected officials recognize the role of bees in pollination of urban gardens in areas where burned-out, bombed-out blocks are more productive in agricultural use rather than in unrealistic land speculation (especially in the current economy). The proliferation of urban gardening cooperatives and programs are adding bees and beekeeping to the skill set they are teaching. This is certainly long overdue and must be promoted in small communities as well as large.

F. Wasp and Bee Confusion - Even new beekeepers are confused by non-honey bee pollinators, and need a good course in bee ID. I suggest you start a collection of bees of different species. Show honey bees of different races to show the color variation. Alongside put some wasps, hornets, bumble bees (in different sizes), winged ants, and any special look-alikes in your area. For fun, put

in a few beeflies and other insects that mimic honey bees in size, appearance and behavior. Educate the neighborhood kids first, since they are likely to share this with parents and then the adults will want to see.

Some beekeepers use the argument that it couldn't be their bees that are causing the problems at the neighbors. Rather than taking a position, share what you can about identification and general information about stinging insects.



View of the hidden hive, with plenty of work room for the beekeeper and a few friends. The bees are encouraged to fly up and out with this setup. (Photo provided, with thanks, by Rich Wieske, Royal Oak, Michigan.)

G. Learn what a defensive behavior is, and when it is time to replace the genetics of a hive. Here is a simple table of bee behaviors and the acceptable (desired) and unacceptable (time to move the bees or replace the queen):

H. When there is a problem - I am not an attorney, but I know most issues with neighbors involve either a misunderstanding or a deliberate attempt to provoke. There are some personality types that will not respond to reason and logic - and I have seen that in both sides, beekeeper and beekeeper's neighbors! If you happen to have such a neighbor and have no plans to move, I suggest you develop a full set of notes (dates, times of hive introductions, working schedule, genetic make-up of your bees, number of stings you received while working the bees, any problems with the bees (queenlessness, robbing) and anything you think might help. Set up a video camera to show how peaceful the bees are when you work them. IF you know of some problems in the neighborhood (open soda-filled trash cans at a local park, fair grounds or amusement park), add notes, photos and

videotape of your observations.

Years ago I had to appear in small-claims court for not paying a snow removal contract (of a condo association). The property manager and I had tons of documentation that the snow was never removed, and the judge shut me up as I spread out all the documentation in front of him when he ruled against the contractor for not doing the job. Having a full set of notes and a diary of sorts goes a long way in court. Remember, I am not an attorney, but I know what worked for me in this court case.

Finally, there are times it is better to locate the bees somewhere else. In the past year I have been amazed how many small farmers want you to put bees on their property, and will work with you to protect them. Bee clubs should have a dating-service like matching program for beekeepers and property owners, and offer an annual meeting to discuss the nature of a good relationship.

This Summer Dr. Connor is offering two classes at the family farm near Kalamazoo. They will be on New Beekeeper Essentials, a season-long class at the farm for small groups of beekeepers. The second program will be a three-day course in queen rearing and bee breeding. For information go to www.wicwas.com or email LJConnor@lol.com.

Receiving “The Hive Tool” Electronically

The CMBA newsletter “The Hive Tool” is available via email. The electronic version reduces mailing costs and labor. It also provides color graphics with much better resolution and helps save the environment.

So if you missed the check box on the application or if your internet connectivity has changed recently. Just send an email requesting the change to the editor at Irsnyder@clearviewcatv.net.

Also if you are missed an issue or are a new member and would like to read some of the older issues they are available on the association website www.cmbeea.org.

For Sale

I have a Dadant 4 frame electric variable speed extractor for sale. It is complete with stand. I have had it for two years. The total cost for extractor, stand, and freight was around \$786. I would like to sell it for \$375.

Marty Rankin 410-549-0171
gretchenscottage@yahoo.com

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

David Gill-Boucher, President 410-357-9476
Jeanne Deignan-Kosmides V. Pres. 410-833-6067
Alex Flanagan, Secretary 410-472-1702
John Harmon, Treasurer 410-771-1701
Jerry Fischer, State Bee Insp. 410-562-3464
Oregon Ridge Nature Center 410-887-1815
David Papke, Past Pres. 717-246-2339
Lloyd Snyder, Editor 410-329-6671
Editors E-Mail - Irsnyder@clearviewcatv.net

Be sure to check out CMBA's web site at
www.cmbeea.org

Lloyd Snyder – Editor
4747 Norrisville Road
White Hall MD 21161

DATES TO REMEMBER

General Meeting – June 2, 2009 – at Oregon Ridge Nature Center. 7:30PM. Lloyd Snyder is the speaker for this meeting and will talk about making Mead, Beer and many other fermented beverages with honey.

Board Meeting – June 15, 2009 – 7 PM at Oregon Ridge Nature Center.