

May 2003

Boulder County Beekeepers Assoc. Newsletter

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Spring Tips by Bruce Kelsch

Requeening I was out today [April] to make some splits and to requeen every hive I have. It takes a while to requeen 50 colonies but it is worth it to me. I know some will think I'm crazy and some are nervous about requeening. I can remember being very nervous about it, and to be honest I still am to a certain extent. This is a process that you can get used to over time. However, let's say during the year you discover a hive that is queenless or is a drone layer. Personally, I will make it queen right because generally the honey from the brood chamber is dark and the wax is hard to uncap. What I do is pick out a strong hive and find the queen. When I find her, and this can take some patience so don't get discouraged, I'll take the frame she is laying on plus one more frame with brood and place it right in the middle of the queenless hive and never look back. The queen and her attendants are battle hardened and will not let any bee from the queenless hive bother her. It works every time. Oh, the hive you took the queen from will raise their own queen and she'll be laying in about a month and you won't lose that much honey. There is another technique that I've tried when I couldn't bring myself to take a strong queen and introduce her to a queenless hive and that is to take 2 frames of bees and brood with freshly laid eggs and place these two frames on the very ends of the hive. This will work on a queenless hive because bees think it's just the frames with pollen and honey on them and they won't try to destroy any queen cells the attendants will produce.

Seems complicated? You have to try some of these things to become an experienced beekeeper. *Continued on page 2*

Paul Aravis

We regret to share that Paul Aravis, County Agricultural Agent, passed away last month. Paul was instrumental in developing Boulder County's Master Beekeeping program. He will be greatly missed by this community. A memorial gathering was held at Julie Finley's home on April 27th. To send a note to his wife, Dory, you may mail it to: c/o Boulder Cty Extension, 9595 Nelson Rd. Longmont 80501. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the following: Larimer Humane Society, 6317 Kyle Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80524; The Nature Conservancy, 117 E. Mountain Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80524; or World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Events Calendar

June 21 BCBA Picnic, Left Hand Park
Longmont

August 2-9 Boulder County Fair
Talk with Marion Ellis is cancelled.

The BCBA Website:
www.bouldercountybeekeepers.org

Join the Beekeepers Net: send a message to
beekeepers-request@village.org

Spring Tips, cont.

Nectar flow Two years ago we had a pollen flow around the 15th of February. This is a little odd but that was when the pine and maple decided it was time. As far as honey flow is concerned, last year it started about the 5th of June and ended around the 22nd. of August. One sure way to find out if the main honey flow is on open your hive and watch for the bees to do the 'wiggle'. If you're still not sure, pick up a frame, tip it upside down and shake it. If nectar comes out then the flow is on. What I do in the Fall to see if the flow is still going, I'll take a small amount of honey to the bee yard and put it about 20' from the hives. If, after 10 - 15 minutes goes by and no bees are robbing, then the flow is still going. If, however, the bees are all over the honey it is time to harvest. The flow is over no matter if the alfalfa is still blooming. The alfalfa plant is temperature sensitive. If the conditions aren't right especially night time temps the plant simply does not produce nectar.

BCBA Picnic

At our Spring meetings, 41 people signed up for the BCBA picnic. Mark your calendars and don't forget! The picnic will be Saturday, June 21st at 11:30 am at Left Hand Park, 1800 Creekside Dr., Longmont. Meat, hot coals and paper goods provided, please bring a dish to share. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at city parks. Questions? contact Dixie George, 303-776-3657 or June Eakin, 720-890-1131.

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*thank you, Mery Molenaar and contributors
to receive newsletter via e-mail send me a note*

New Colorado Honeybee Pest

Pat Butler has prepared a paper to inform Colorado beekeepers about a new pest, the small hive beetle (SHB) which was first found in Colorado in 2001 and persists in that apiary despite 2 years of treatment. Based on reports from U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers and other observers, it seems unlikely that SHB will become as serious a problem in Colorado as it is in the southeast, where it has caused considerable damage to apiaries and honey crops. But because we have so little experience with SHB, it is important for Colorado beekeepers to be on the lookout for this pest (in adult and larval stages) and let others know if it is found. It can be managed with a combination of practices, such as hive location, honey house and super sanitation, and chemicals. The paper, available on the BCBA website, provides background information about SHB and its life cycle, how to identify it, the damage it causes, possible control strategies, experience with it in Ohio and Colorado, and steps beekeepers can take to minimize its potential damage.

Wanted/Sales/Etc.

Bee a helper - get a helper: A Boulder woman interested in the fall beekeepers class would like to observe hive management this summer (in exchange for helping the beekeeper), before embarking into beekeeping herself next year. She's very enthusiastic and has read up on beekeeping. Ask Pat Butler for contact info.

Hedgerow Farms is looking to purchase used beekeeping equipment. In particular, they need a hive tool, smoker, bee veil, feeder, foundation and 2 supers. Amanda Cather, Hedgerow Farms, 303-666-6397.

to place a notice, send to the editor, June Eakin