

October 2004

Boulder County Beekeepers Assoc. Newsletter

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Hobbyists Report Honey

Five hobbyists reported their honey harvest from So. Boulder, NE Boulder and Denver. Three beekeepers got 40lbs/hive and 2 got 25lbs/hive. Everyone noticed that the bees seemed late getting their honey cured and capped. Could this be a factor of our cooler, wetter summer? Was dampness hindering curing, rainy days cutting into foraging time?

Stock Show

Can you tell a worker from the queen or talk about wasps vs. honeybees? If yes, you qualify to be a "Bee Ambassador" at the Stock Show! If you signed up at the meetings, expect a call in December, or visit our website soon for the latest information on volunteering for the Stock Show.

Treatments for Varroa

If you used ApiLife-Var or Succroside in your hives this season, please drop a line to Pat Butler. She used both and would like to compare notes. Pat is at: butler@csd.net

CBA Meeting

The Winter meeting of the Colorado Beekeepers Assoc. will be Saturday, December 4th at the Raintree Hotel in Longmont. Dianne Sammataro is scheduled as the main speaker. She is a current researcher at the Tucson Bee Lab and co-author of *The Beekeepers Handbook*.

Extractor fixed

The honey extractor that the Extension office rents out to beekeepers has been repaired. Call Amy at 303-678-6268, to rent it.

Gleanings from the "Pumpkin Patch"

by Phillip Bradbury
Philbee's Honey Farms

These calm late summer days, warm colours, and long shadows give us time to be contented and connected to our bees, and to reflect on the bounty the summer has brought. With all the rain & beautiful honey flow this season how could we not revel in the abundance of life?

They say that "a swarm of bees is worth a load of hay" this Spring started with a big buzz as I received lots of calls from the Extension Office for swarms on the loose; many from an area just North and West of 3rd & Main in Longmont. Working for the Engineers office for the City & County of Denver, I couldn't get to all the swarms...thanks to the many of you who rescued the swarms and gave them happy homes. Many other Denver city agencies know me as the "bee-guy" so I had my share to capture from Denver parks and ... cont.

CBA Meeting Dec. 4th

**Deadline for January newsletter
December 20, 2004**

**NW Stock Show
January 1 – 23, 2005**

**Next BCBA Meeting
February 8, 2005, 7pm
Left Hand Grange, Niwot**

Gleanings...

even a recreation center (some kids wanted to throw a football at that one). I am amazed as to how many wild colonies are around... My swarm catcher gizmo with a shop vac and Langstroth sized box finally paid for itself. Many of the swarms were small; some could be cradled in my hands, ever so gently, laying them across the combs like putting a baby in a cradle. I felt their excitement and eagerness to begin anew. So I kept combining them, before too long I ran out of equipment to house all the gals. Perhaps many of you had similar experiences? Did you notice that many swarms were taking up residence in odd places? I got a few calls to remove bees that had set up housekeeping in walls, in rafters, and even under the cornice of the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple just kitty corner from the Capitol – whatta site for Gov Bill to see right out his back door!! Most of these were impossible to deal with unless the homeowner was willing to undergo some extensive remodeling. So it was a great opportunity to sing the bees praises and let Nature take her course.

Havin' bees on a farm always makes me nervous as "stuff" doesn't go into bloom as early as I'd like & there's usually acres and acres of just 1 or 2 crops and yet the gals always find pollen and nectar from somewhere...I suppose it's a matter of Faith. Every week or so I would visit the quietness of the bee yard & hearing the gentle hum of the bees always brought a smile..."the most precious gift is their summoning the beekeeper to the gladness of June, to the joy of the beautiful months when flowers keep holiday for events in which bees take part...they are the soul of summer..." A quote from M. Maeterlinck's excellent book "The Life of the Honey Bee" (1927). Adding supers is also part of the "soul of summer". The bees filled them out nicely. I am always a little skeptical when someone comes up with a

"new way" to get the most out of the bees, so I am experimenting with a "new fangled" cut comb system called "Bee-O-Pac" it is a pre assembled plastic frame where the comb is punched out of the frame when filled, there are 16 per frame & 8 frames to a super, snap on the lid & presto. The cost averages about 35 cents per comb section. I peeked in recently; the bees seem to be filling them in although I'm not too sure if the bees are completely happy with this get-up. I'll give 'em more time & report back later.

As a member of "Colorado Proud" I answered the call for "Colorado grown products" for the cook off at the State Fair in August. Five Colorado grown crops are put in a basket & the cooks make yummy dishes. For the second year Philbee's Honey Farms provided honey, which went into dressings, glazes & a dessert sweetener.

All in all this was a decent year, out of 5 established colonies & 3 beginning colonies from 6 swarms, the surplus amounted to 329 lbs.

If you are a sideline beekeeper like me, you don't get rich keeping bees, & I do get good prices for my honey by selling mostly to my work mates, family & friends. Of course keeping bees is fun. The best part is talking about the bees & all they do for us.

Thinking back over the season, things don't always go as I think they should in the bee yard; some lessons are found in things like: better swarm control... I should quit fussing about locations, and I promise to be better about meeting the needs of my winged friends.

Still, the sense of achievement outweighs all of the hard work, at times I wish I could live for a thousand more years & see a thousand more Springs when I can set out to do it all over again. There is something about the anticipation of yet another season, that I could never tire of it. All of the tribulations lose significance when I am tending one of my

Gleanings...

bee yards, at home with Nature and at peace with myself.

Finally, lets give Thanks for the bounty of our bees & the beauty Colorado provides. Thanks for the balance that the bees teach us. Now it's time to catch up on all those bee magazines stacked in the corner... I'll see you at the first meeting in the New Year... philbee

P.S. Please make sure you have enough "meds" for your bees & of course be sure you bees have plenty of winter stores, I think we're in for a real winter unlike the warm ones of the past few years...

AFB Loss - by June Eakin

In very early June, I noticed one of my hives was not doing well, much of the capped brood had dark sunken caps, some perforated. I dipped a grass straw into several cells and pulled out a string of mucus. There was no rotten smell, but I suspected AFB. I sent a sample to the Beltsville Bee Lab and in 10 days, they returned a verdict confirming AFB. This is the most destructive of the brood diseases and is the reason that apiary inspection laws first passed. The hive was on Pierco frames. After much research and soul searching, I decided to kill the hive with Sevin, for its residual effect, because I was leaving for a trip in 3 days. At night, we sprayed each frame, then sealed the hive and removed it from the apiary. Three weeks later, I wrapped and bagged the frames and put them in the trash. There is some talk about cleaning Pierco; it involves a lot of work and I didn't want to take a chance. Burning is out of the question, so my best option was to hope they would stay covered in the landfill for 50 years!

I grieved the loss of my girls, but my other three hives seem to have avoided infection. I treated the remaining 3 hives with TM-50 immediately upon confirmation of the AFB. How did they get AFB? I use my own equipment and the swarms I collect are hived onto foundation before combining. My guess is that my bees got into a feral infected hive and brought it home. Contact me for more information about how to send a sample or dealing with AFB infection. My thanks to Tom and Pat for their advice during my first major beekeeping catastrophe.

Fall Tips

It's past October 1st, do you have your mouse-guards on? Keep mice out of your warm hives on cool nights with a simple device: 1/2" wire mesh cut to fit snugly over the entrance. Just bend the ends around the sides to hold it on.

You can freeze extracted honey (leave headspace in the container); thaw and it's ready to go, no crystallization. Also, freeze the supers that your bees didn't finish. Keep them in your extra freezer, then return to the hive for finishing next Spring.

Storing dry comb over the winter? Freeze it first for at least 24 hours to kill wax moth eggs. Keep supers closed up and they will be safe without chemical moth repellents.

Clean propolis easily from plastic queen excluders by freezing them. When you bend the plastic, the propolis pops off.

The BCBA Website:

www.bouldercountybeekeepers.org

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

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