

December 2005

BOULDER COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOC. NEWSLETTER

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Colorado Beekeepers Association Winter Meeting

Dr Marla Spivak speaking about Hygienic Bees and Kim Flottum on "The Backyard Beekeeper"

The winter meeting will be held at the Longmont Radisson Hotel and Conference Center (formerly The Raintree) at 1900 Ken Pratt Blvd. on December 9th, 10th and 11th. A round table discussion about various aspects of beekeeping with Dr. Spivak and Mr. Flottum will be held at 7:00 pm. on the 9th. This is a good opportunity to meet with the speakers and other beekeepers in an informal discussion.

Starting at 9a.m. on the 10th, National Honey Board staff will speak, followed by Kim Flottum, the editor of Bee Culture magazine, discussing his new book, The Backyard Beekeeper. Lunch is at 12:00, see John Hartley for tickets for lunch at the Radisson, or on your own in area restaurants. At 1:00 Lyle Johnson will give an industry update and indicators for the upcoming almond pollination season. At 2:00 Dr. Spivak will discuss the Minnesota Hygienic breeding program in relation to varroa mite resistance, American foulbrood and chalkbrood

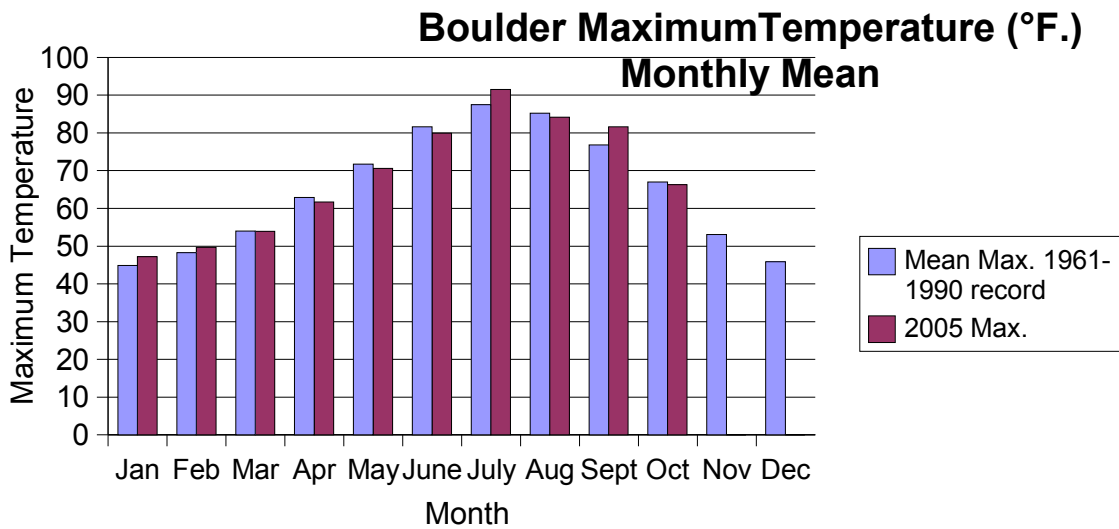
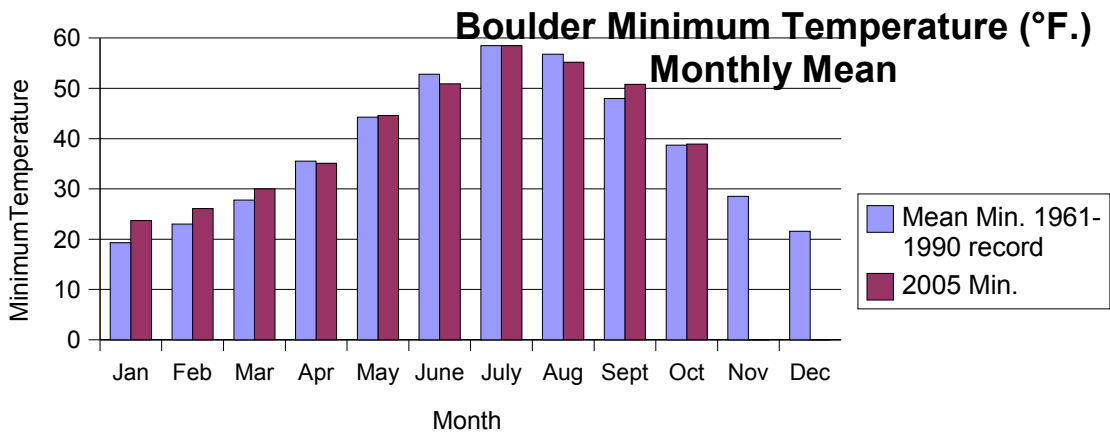
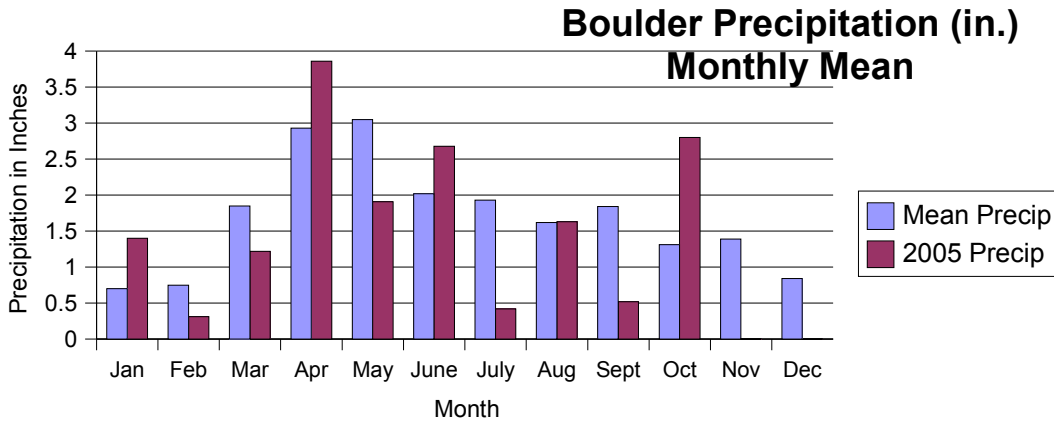
resistance. There will be a CBA business meeting at 9:00 am. on the 11th.

The cost of the program is \$20. Membership in CBA for beekeepers with fewer than 12 hives is an additional \$20. Membership includes a subscription to the quarterly newsletter of the CBA, Bee Notes. Conference fees do not include lunch as reported in the October BCBA Newsletter. For questions, call Paul Limbach at 970-876-5489 or Al Summers at 303 702-0202.

2005 Boulder County Climate

This year we had a warmer than average start to the year in January, February and March. April, May and June were cooler than average. Most of the summer was at or below average temperature (except for that stretch of scorching July days) and September was above average. In terms of precipitation we had a wet January, April, June and October, with dryer months in between. If we have average precipitation for the rest of the year we will have about 18.5 inches of rainfall. Compare this to the drought years of 2000 (15.96), 2001 (18.28), 2002 (13.88) or the wet year of 2004 (27.17).

Sort of makes the term average seem less useful, doesn't it? Climate source: NOAA Climate Diagnostics Center <http://www.cdc.noaa.gov/Boulder/>



Jim Sherman Receives Award

Jim Sherman, long time beekeeper, has been awarded the Eugene Caffon Crittenden Award for his dedicated, versatile and conscientious work over the past 40 years at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Boulder. Over the years Jim has held many positions at NIST including instrument maker and shop planner. He will travel to Gaithersburg, MD to receive his award on December 7th. Jim is a 2nd generation beekeeper and currently has the maximum 3 hives allowed in the City of Longmont along with his wife, Betty. Jim's brother Ken, also keeps bees in the Berthoud area. Congratulations to Jim – he's been at NIST longer than this award has!

Volunteers Still Needed

Our Treasurer, Carol Streamer is still looking for one to three volunteers who are interested in auditing the 2005 records and helping her prepare for the February and March 2006 meetings. Several people have stepped up to help out but she could use a few more. Many hands make light work! Please call her at her cell phone number (720) 323-6838 or e-mail her at faststream@livewirenet.com.

Making Homes for Solitary Ground Nesting Bees

Pollinators, whether they are our imported honey bees *Apis mellifera*, or any of the native species of bees, butterflies, birds, bats, moths and other insects, are essential to a functioning ecosystem. Without pollination by living creatures, many flowering plants will cease to exist. You can help to provide habitat for some of our native pollinators by creating nesting sites for ground dwelling solitary bees. First, look for existing ground

dwelling bees. On a warm day, usually the warmer parts of the day, look for bees flying low over well drained bare ground, especially if the bees appear to be searching for something. These bee nests will look like a small area of unearthed soil around a small central hole. The diameter of the hole varies with the species but is usually around 3/16 inch. These bee nests will give you an indication of the kind of soil and topographic orientation this species prefers. I saw one building its nest in the sand between the rocks in my walkway as I was bringing in the groceries. If you can't find any, build your own by piling up a sand or sandy loam soil. Try placing these piles in a variety of areas that will receive different amounts of sunshine. Don't walk on, dig or disturb the mounds. Keep the plants trimmed back because the mounds will need direct sun.

Bumblebees need a small hollow – not necessarily underground – in which to nest. They will often use an old rodent hole complete with rodent hair. I once saw a nest with hundreds of individuals at the base of a cottonwood tree. Some people have buried clay jars up to the neck to create this space. From the Xerces Society, a simple wooden box, with internal dimensions of about 7" by 7" by 7", made from preservative-free lumber may also work. Drill a few ventilation holes near the top (covered with door screen to deter ants) and some drainage holes in the bottom. Make an entrance tunnel from 3/4" plastic pipe, marked on the outside with a contrasting color, and fill the box with soft bedding material, such as upholsterer's cotton or short lengths of unraveled, soft string. The box must be weather tight; if the nest gets damp, the larvae may become too cold, and mold and fungus will grow. Choose an undisturbed site, in partial or full shade, where there is no risk of flooding. The box should be on or just under the ground. If you bury it, extend the entrance tube so it gently slopes up to the surface. Put your nesting box out when you first notice bumble bees in the spring, or

when the first willows and other flowers are blooming, and be patient. There is no guarantee that bees will use your box. Only about one in four boxes gets occupied. If it has no inhabitants by late July, put the nesting box into storage until next spring.

Once you have nesting sites, you should think about food sources. Plant a variety of plants with a variety of flower sizes to feed insects with varying sized mouth part. In your garden, plant successive plantings of a crop so that there are flowers available for a longer period of time. Make sure there is a pesticide free source of water and mud. Rethink your opinion of weeds – don't allow invasives but non invasive weeds may have flowering characteristics that offset the characteristics that made us call them weeds in the first place. Allow mown areas to become set-asides and colonized by flowering plants. If you have to mow, mow when the bees are not so active, when it's cool, overcast and windy, or late in the evening. These ideas were adapted from the Xerces Society and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Beekeeping Equipment for Sale

This offer consists of equipment to build 4 complete hives. Included are: Supers....deep, medium and shallow. Some have foundation, some have comb, some are just frames. Top and bottom boards, inner covers, queen excluders. Small, 4 frame, radial extractor (with drill to drive it). Some new foundation in boxes, some new, unassembled frames. Misc nails, pins, frame reinforcers, swarm catching buckets, spring feeding equipment, mite board, smoker, home made 2 person hive moving equipment. Hand tools, hot knife, fume board, smoker, gloves, gauntlets, helmet and veil, frame spacer, canning jars with rings& lids. Books, magazines,

catalogs.

Asking \$500 + 3 gallons of honey from your operation. CONTACT: Michael Soudant, Lafayette, CO 303-665-9803 (H) 303-687-0330 (voice mail) Msoudant@aol.com (E-mail)

To all those of you who have just finished the class, this is a good opportunity to get started before next spring for an economical price!

Have Your Newsletter Emailed

Please email me at Sara.McGimsey@RangeMaps.com with the email address you would like your newsletter to go to and we can save a tree (a shrub, maybe) and some postage.

BCBA Newsletter

Editor & Publisher

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To place a notice, ad or article, send to Sara McGimsey. Contributions are welcome. Tell us about your experiences-humorous, scary or productive - with your bees! Next issue is February 2006 and the deadline for submissions is January 26.