



BUZZWORD

West Sound Beekeepers Association <http://www.westsoundbees.org/>
Proudly serving bees, their keepers, and the public in Kitsap County, WA

Refreshments



Due to Late Publication, March Meetings are shown

Tuesday, March 20

**6 PM Beeginning Beekeeping Class
The Honeybee and Her Products**

7 PM Regular Meeting

Program: To be announced

Saturday, March 24

**12 noon Beeginning Beekeeping Class
Beekeeping Equipment**

Meeting Schedule:

Business Meeting

Tuesday Mar 6, 2012

6 PM

Queen Rearing Group

**Meets after the Business
Meeting**

Bee-ginner Beekeeping

Tuesday, Mar 20, 2012

6-6:45 PM

Regular Meeting follows:

7 PM

Bee-ginner Beekeeping:

Saturday Mar 24, 2012

12 Noon

**Meetings at Stedman's
Beekeeping Supplies in
Silverdale**

WSBA LOGO CONTEST

**Get out the pencils
and paints and help
design the much
needed logo for
WSBA**

<http://tinyurl.com/88fxrt>

What's inside:

Presidents Message.....	2
Editor's Corner.....	3
Library Note.....	5
Best Feeder.....	6
Winter Examination.....	7
WSBA Calendar!.....	9
Weigh to Tell Stores.....	10
Sage Advice.....	12

Message from the President:

Spring is on its way! I'll be feeding bees shortly to stimulate the queen into starting laying. It's time to get the hives nice and established for what we all hope will be a great honey year! With the recent cold temperatures following our unseasonably warm winter, I am a bit concerned about the quality of the stores left in the hives. So, on the next warm day I will be doing inspections and then start figuring how much sugar will be purchased to get them through to a nectar flow. Like many local beekeepers, I will be hoping for a much better blackberry flow this year. I hope the warm winter bodes well for the summer!

I also want to extend WSBA's welcome to all of our new beekeepers who are taking our annual beginning beekeeping class. I would encourage all of you to come early and stay late to ask as many questions as you can! We have many experienced beekeepers willing to share their experiences and lessons learned with you to aid in your success. They can act as a mentor to you and you won't get a better education anywhere. So, welcome! Also, if you are planning on starting from packages this year, and you haven't already reserved yours, I would suggest doing so as soon as possible.

Recently, there have been a number of articles discussing the quality of the honey market in the US. It finally being revealed that a large percentage of honey that consumers purchase at many grocery stores is very questionable in quality. Contaminated with adulterants and imported by unscrupulous honey brokers from international sources through murky third party trade routes, what passes for honey on the shelves of your local grocer is a terrible example of what honey is. Many people simply don't have an idea of what "Real" honey tastes like. From personal experience, I can tell you that many people that try our honey express amazement that honey can be that good! As we beekeepers know, of course it is that good! But since most peoples experience is limited to the imported artificial "honeys" found in major grocery stores, it is quite possible they have never experience honey as it actually tastes.

In case you aren't aware, the result of these unscrupulous honey brokers and the artificially suppressed price their "product" commands is ever increasing pressure on beekeepers. As we see over and over again, local beekeepers have to develop connections and marketing strategies capable of educating potential clients and finding ways to market their honey in a way to deal with the price expectation created by this glut of cheap "honey". These business skills are hard learned and almost as important as successfully managing bees if the beekeeper has a business that she/he wants to succeed. Of course, a potential customers tries your honey, there is no going back for them!

There is a significant amount of honey politics. There are groups charged with lobbying regulatory bodies on behalf of beekeepers and their honey. I encourage each of you to investigate these efforts and watch exactly what is going on with honey in our country. It is incredibly important to not only commercial beekeepers but also small scale honey producers and consumers that these regulatory bodies develop a definition of honey and crack down on illegal and questionable imports.

TJ Jorgenson President – Westsound Beekeepers



Editor's Corner: What's For Dinner?



There's not much happening in the bee yard this time of year, but the busy times will soon be upon us. Here in the PNW the bees don't have many winter days that are warm enough to fly and find something useful to do. Since we can't change the weather, we can try to make sure there are bee friendly plants available for when they do get a chance to get out. February's Speaker, Dana Coggin, head of Kitsap County's noxious weed program, gave an excellent presentation on our county's stance towards many plants perceived to be invasive and detrimental. As a bonus we also learned that many of these plants are excellent nectar producers and often are present in numbers high enough for lucrative honey crops. Dana was very personable and informative, not to mention sympathetic towards beekeepers. I don't think my

personal, liberal, and doubtful views on invasive plant biology changed, but I learned many things and was impressed in a favorable way.

Most of these 'invasive' plants that beekeeper's love so much, bloom in late summer when bee populations are high, making it possible for them to lay up a honey surplus. At this time of year it is a different story and a bee should consider herself lucky to find something good. On the day after the meeting I took a short walk around my neighborhood to see what was in bloom. I saw many plants blooming and, in spite of temperatures under 50 F, some honeybees working them. Here are the best bee plants I saw, *none* of which are considered invasive species!



Witch Hazel

Spring crocus are a good supply of pollen and are good at naturalizing themselves in lawns and gardens.



The witch hazels are interesting shrubs throughout the year and are often covered with interesting pollinators in late winter.

One thing honeybees are hoping to find is pollen and it has long been known 'round these parts that any day a bee can fly there is pollen available somewhere if only they can find it!

These willows were growing along the edge of the beach and despite the low temperatures were the most popular bee plant I saw on my walk. Willows are among the heaviest producers of Winter

pollen, although only the male trees produce the pollen. Both male and female trees secrete nectar which is also popular at this time of year, but females tend to secrete more.



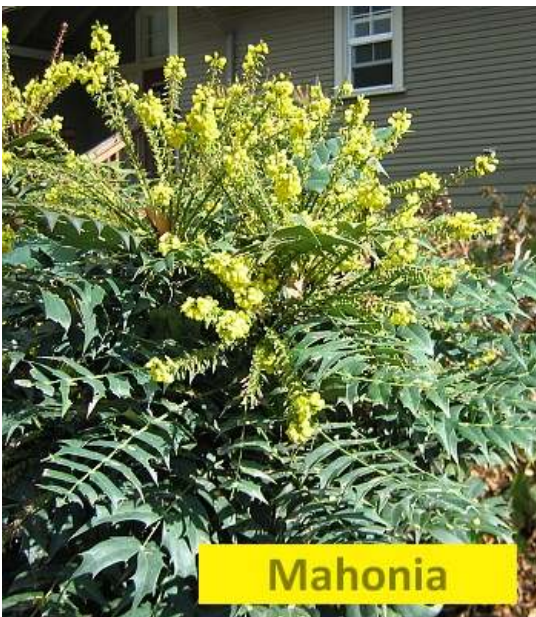


You might (correctly) think this is a female willow flower even if you don't have keen eyesight – plenty of bees but no pollen on their legs!

Willows are heavy pollen producers, perhaps the heaviest you are likely to see and I am disappointed I did not see any males on my short walk. All the pictures of plants in this article were taken the day after the meeting.

Most flowering plants, unlike willows, have male and female flowers on the same plant. Some have the male and female parts as separate flowers on the same plant and others combine the sexes in what are called 'perfect' flowers.

These waxy leaved evergreen shrubs bearing sweetly fragrant flowers are of the genus *Sarcococca*. They grow in the shade and can even thrive under cedar trees, which is pretty amazing. It has to be a bit warmer before you'll see the bees visiting these!



This is one of the many cultivars of Mahonia, the native species of which is known as Oregon Grape. There was a Carniolan bee on this plant when I took the picture. I have seen large plantings of Mahonia flowering in Renton on April 15th. Many times, the various cultivars and individuals of a given species will flower at different times during the season. Spread the love!

The Mahonias will grow in shade, but secrete more nectar in sunnier situations.



The various Heathers bloom over a long period and are popular with both Honeybees and Bumbles. This big bumble is a queen!

For the new beekeepers reading this, I will mention that the reason bees need pollen is that pollen supplies the real nutrition in the hive. Pollen is mostly protein and so are bees. Honey and nectar are sweet and provide the energy to stay warm and active, but pollen and the protein it represents are essential to making a strong bee body. Processing protein is essential to the production of the royal jelly which sustains the queen since she has to eat her weight or more in protein each day, especially when egg laying is happening at full tilt. The eggs themselves are highly proteinaceous. Those nurse bees also have to make sure the developing larvae have enough protein to grow into full sized bees. How much pollen do you think it takes to raise an average of a thousand bees or more each day in the peak laying season? I have read that the average bee colony needs about 50 pounds of pollen each year!

At this time of year honeybees start raising the Spring bees. Bees adapted to the region will have pollen stores galore and a strong incentive to gather more. Sadly, many of the honeybee strains we see locally are imported from the Californian pollination areas and tend not to store much pollen. So what happens when these bees start raising brood and the weather keeps them hivebound after they run out of pollen? They will focus the protein into the older brood and cannibalize the eggs and youngest brood. This why you should either try to keep high pollen storing bee strains and/or supplement their natural intake with disease free pollen collected in times of abundance, possibly extended with pollen supplements available from bee supply companies and usually fed in the form of patties.

Since, like the bees, we are often kept in our hives, I mean homes, by inclement weather you might consider reading the free 150 page Australian PDF on honeybee nutrition: Fat Bees Skinny Bees instead of cannibalizing your young. <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/downloads/05-054.pdf> (My apologies, it takes a while to put together an article and it sometimes affects my judgment.)

I will conclude this article by mentioning that the local Filbert and related Hazelnut cultivars abundantly produce pollen and are a favorite of mine and the bees. The nuts are delicious too!



Note from the Librarian about the association library.

For those that take advantage of the bee association reading library, I wanted to let you know that 25 books have recently been added to the shelves. You can visit the website to see the current book and video list.

If you haven't used the library, it is very easy. Each book has a checkout card, put your name, date, and phone number on the card and leave the card in the card-box on the shelf. Bring back the book the following month or earlier. (You must be a current paid member to check out a book, but we allow unpaid members to return them.)

When you return the book, find the card, fill in a return date and cross out your name. Then put the card in the book and the book on the shelf. Video checkouts are the same. These direction are also posted on the library bookshelf. The organization of the library books is currently 'random'. I hope to find an Library assistant to help with that task.

If you have used and abused the library by not bringing a book back on time, then shame on you. Please return the book so others can check it out.

If you are interested in becoming an assistant librarian, Please contact George the Librarian.

Best Feeder

I have tried all sorts of feeders. Some have leaking problems, some have robbing problems, some end up with lots of dead bees, some are messy, and most of them get me more stings than necessary when refilling.

I have finally found the one I like more than any other. The bad news is that it is not for sale. The good news is that it is extremely cheap and easy to make.

To make one, obtain a metal quart jar lid. I prefer the lids from Classico spaghetti sauce jars that Costco carries. Eat the sauce and save the jar and the lid. Next go to Ace hardware and find 1/8 inch brass tubing inserts. They are about 3/4 in long and have a flared end. They are in the miscellaneous plumbing bins and cost less than 50 cents.

You will need a soldering gun, small package of rosin core solder, a drill, and a drill bit slightly larger than 1/8"

To construct a feeder, Drill a hole in the center of the lid. Solder the brass tubing insert into the lid so the brass tube will be sticking out of the jar when the lid is on. Make sure not to solder the hole in the brass insert closed.

You use them just like a top feeder. I have had no issues with bees plugging up the hole like they do on the lids with lots of punched holes. They also do not seem to plug up when I do not get the sugar fully dissolved. I also have a board that I lay on the inner cover with holes so I can place up to 4 jars at a time. With the board, I do not get any flying insects in my face when replacing empty jars with full jars. These also work great for feeding nucs. I just drill a small hole in the cover of the nucs. If I pull the jar, the bees plug up the hole in the cover.

I just tried a plastic lid by skipping the solder and melting the brass tube into the plastic lid. It seems to stick but I do not know how long the attachment will last until I start using it. Also, Carrying a tub or bucket full of 12 glass jars filled with sugar syrup is heavy. I think plastic jars would work just as well and be lighter to carry.

As a note, this lid is not my idea. I saw it in a picture on the scientific beekeeping website. George the Librarian



The Need for Late Winter Examination

Adapted from an article written by Doug Colter in March 1998 for the Alberta Beekeepers Association

Each year, you try to do your best to assure the presence of a healthy, young queen of preferred bee stock, to provide adequate food reserves, to maintain disease-free colony conditions and to provide winter protection for all of your colonies. At this time of year, it is important to check on your colonies during a late winter colony inspection.

The purpose of a late winter inspection is to answer several important questions

1. Is a colony alive or dead?
2. How available are the food reserves to the cluster?
3. What is the health status of the colony?

Quite simply, a dead or severely dwindled colony should be dismantled and moved out of the apiary to a bee-tight storage area or closed up until it can be moved out. This will effectively eliminate the dead or weak colony from becoming a potential source of diseases or pests to neighboring colonies due to robbing or drifting behavior. Later examination of the hive equipment may allow for determination of the cause(s) of the colony's demise.

Queens generally begin egg-laying in mid- to late January and brood rearing will expand if sufficient pollen stores are available within the cluster - even when outside temperatures are below freezing. Winter survival problems can arise, even with adequate food reserves, when the cluster cannot maintain contact with its food reserves. Generally, the cluster will not leave the brood to maintain contact with its food reserves. This is especially the case with small clusters that can cover only a few frames.

Sometimes, the cluster will simply eat its way in one direction, lose contact with its food reserves and starve in one corner of the brood chamber. The cluster may be able to expand during mild weather breaks, but due to a sudden return of cold temperatures, cannot move quickly enough to get into contact again with its food reserves. As a result, a large number of small colonies can die in January and February. This can even happen in more populous colonies if food reserves are inadequate or improperly positioned in the hive.

Prior to the actual examination, you should assemble everything you may need beforehand. You must be able to assess each colony quickly and respond accordingly to each situation observed. With your smoker ready, gently pry up the inner cover. Use a little smoke to calm the honeybees. Leave any adhering honeybees on the cover and put them aside, exposed side up.

Look down between the frames in the top box to check for adequate honey reserves in contact with the cluster. A fully capped frame of honey equals about 6.5 pounds of food reserves. The colony, in a standard hive, should have from four to six frames of honey in contact with the cluster. Such a colony should be secure for another three to four weeks.

Colonies that have sufficient but improperly positioned food reserves can be quickly adjusted. Move combs of honey to the cluster, rather than the other way around. If you need to center the entire cluster to surround it with food reserves, you must move the frames as a single unit. Do this as carefully as possible so as not to break up or disturb the cluster.

Do not remove frames that contain pollen.

If you need to feed a colony, honey is best at this time of year. A frame of honey, saved during the harvest, for each colony is an ideal source of food. You can also use granulated honey. However, in both choices, disease free sources must be used.

Placing an inside frame feeder filled with granulated honey or dry granulated sugar, in position adjacent to the cluster, is an effective way to feed bees.

Feeding sugar syrup at this time can cause excessive moisture, and possibly dysentery problems, especially in small colonies. It can also chill the bees, cause the cluster to become restless and can stimulate food consumption. Any sugar syrup that you feed should be warm and as concentrated as possible (2:1 sugar-water) and limited in volume initially.

If you determine there is a shortage of pollen near the cluster, a pollen substitute or a pollen supplement should be provided.

Sometimes you may find a colony that is near starvation. The whole cluster appears restless and shivering. If the colony is worth saving (considering labor and time involved versus expected results), there are a few alternative methods you can use to try to salvage the bees. Use of a frame feeder may not be effective as the bees may be too weak to move to the feeder.

You can also provide a frame with warm syrup or honey poured into the cells. When the bees appear to have recovered, you can then place a frame feeder filled with honey or dry sugar next to the cluster. Another quick-fix remedy is to use frames of honey. If the honey is capped, you may have to remove the cappings to allow the cluster quick access to the honey.

Where colonies are populous, many beekeepers provide extra feed by using a division board or frame feeder filled with granulated honey or warm sugar syrup. Some fill empty brood combs with syrup using a sprayer. Others prefer to feed granulated sugar placed onto the inner cover, leaving the feed hole open to allow the honeybees access to the sugar. However, feeding sugar - dry or syrup - at this time of the year is stressful for the colony. When you provide supplemental feed, you should limit the amounts initially, gradually increasing the quantity on your next visits. Feeding large amounts at one time will usually have a negative effect on colony build-up. The colony has to divert energy to handle the sugar rather than to rear brood and maintain hive temperatures. The brood nest may also become "plugged" with excess syrup, interfering with egg-laying by the queen.

Another method that has been used to feed a colony until other forms of supplement can be applied is the "candy-board." If you do use this method, it is recommended to use the soft or fondant formulation. One problem of the candy board is the same as when granulated honey or dry sugar is used to feed colonies. The honeybees do need some moisture to allow them to liquefy the sugar. There may be sufficient moisture in the hive from the condensed water vapor produced by the cluster as they respire. If you would like to try fondant, a recipe is found in the January 2009 newsletter on the WSBA website.

There is a need to monitor your colonies for the presence of bee diseases and parasitic mites. The best time to monitor and to sample your colonies is now. For information on sampling and detection methods, consult IPM recommendations under "beekeeping articles" at the WSBA website.

The late winter inspection with its necessary adjustments and/or supplemental feedings of honey, sugar, pollen substitutes or supplements will generally assure the survival and normal development of your colonies until natural sources of pollen and nectar are available. When winters are severe, you may have to inspect your colonies every two to three weeks and apply additional food reserves.

Mid-winter to late winter checks, if done quickly and carefully, will not greatly stress your colonies. Removing the hive cover will not cause problems but disturbing the cluster can. Winter losses due to inadequate food reserves can be prevented by your inspection of each colony as early as possible. However, if many colonies require feeding at this time of year, you may have to re-examine your winter preparation schedule to ensure adequate food reserves in future years.

2012 WSBA FUND-RAISING CALENDAR

A 2012 Fundraising WSBA Calendar is now available!

Calendar includes:

- ~ Recipes for honey bees and their keepers
- ~ Seasonal tips and thoughts from WSBA members
 - ~ Photos
- ~ Areas for your monthly beekeeper notes
- ~ Schedule of WSBA's 2012 meetings and events

Each calendar is only \$10 with half of every sale donated to West Sound Beekeepers Association.



Email your order to biz@kimredmond.com and you'll be able to pick up your 2012 calendar at the next WSBA business or general membership meeting.

Don't Forget To Renew Your Membership!

Membership Renewal Form: http://westsoundbees.org/wsba_membership_form_2012.pdf

Yes! I want to be a member of West Sound Beekeepers' Association during 2012.

I have enclosed a check payable to West Sound Beekeepers Association or hand delivering cash.
Check all boxes that apply:

- \$24 annual Bee household membership dues (New member)
- \$24 annual Bee household membership dues (Renewal)
- \$34 Bee-ginner class fee (\$24 membership dues + \$10 for OPTIONAL study guide)
- \$_____ Donation to Library Fund \$_____ Donation to Scholarship Fund

NAME(S):

MAILING ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

Please return to:
Selena Clements, WSBA Treasurer
3268 Chase Rd Port Orchard, WA 98366

(9)

Weigh To Tell Stores

Reprinted from Roy Thurber's "Bee Chats, Tips, and Gadgets" Pictures by the editor

You wouldn't believe the amount of stuff –junk, gadgets, plus usable and unused equipment – I could drag out of the loft of the stables and basement. Whatever you can think of that was made during the last 50 years either I have it, I gave it away, or my wife, despite my cries of pain and protest made me take it to the dump. Still, many gadgets are needed around a beekeeping operation.

One that is needed at this time of year is a spring balance. Hive weights should be monitored carefully, lest your colonies consume all their stores before the weather opens up and new honey is being produced.

A two-story hive should go into winter with 10-12 frames of honey. This will bring the hive weight to around 135 pounds. Here in the Seattle area the weight doesn't drop much until the queen begins to lay again about the first of January. Then as fresh pollens become available in mid-February the queens start to lay flat out. The honey stores then disappear at an alarming rate. I have seen my scale hive's weight drop two pounds per day. Relying on a scale hive to judge all the hives in a yard really doesn't work, though. It does give you clues, but each colony is an individual and must be weighed one way or another.

Some beekeepers have tripod rigs to use in the weighing. They set the tripod up alongside the hive, hook a set of straps to the hive and hook a spring balance to the straps. A lever is attached to the spring balance with its fulcrum at the top of the tripod. You pull down the other end of the lever, raising the hive off the ground and registering the weight on the spring balance. This method is a wee bit unhandy and it can be expensive to rig a suitable tripod. It does render an accurate weight of the hive.

One alternative commonly used is to go down the row of hives hefting on the back of each one. It's not very accurate unless you have a lot of experience, but it is cheap and fast.

Another way to get an idea of the hives weight is to use the spring balance hooked under the back or side of the hive and pulled up by hand. Presumably you can double the reading to arrive at the apparent weight. This is more accurate than hefting and guessing, but there are two problems. First, if you compare the weights from the front and back of the hive you will see that the landing board's protruding from the front throws off the readings' Even when reading from the side, you will find that some hives seem to eat

more of the honey on one side of the hive, maybe because that's the warmer side. You can see that just weighing one side can be far from accurate.



I think there is no practical way to compensate for variations from front to back and side to side. However, if you will weigh one side of the hive, then the other, and add the results together, you can get a true weight of the hive. This is provided you just barely lift each side of the hive off its support, be it blocks or hive stand. If a hive went into winter weighing 135 pounds, for example, and you weighed it in late winter, the difference between the two weights would be the amount of stores it has consumed.

You could weigh a similar arrangement of empty equipment –supers, bottom and cover –add a reasonable amount for bees, pollen and brood to see just how much honey you have left in the hive. In my operation, if a given hive weighs less than 80 pounds, I start feeding immediately.

(I use a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ plywood underneath, with eyehooks to keep my results consistent, one hook slides into a slot for easy positioning, also a pair of movable slotted plywood pieces keep the board in place with bungee-tensioned strap. Takes about 2 min/hive. 110# capacity, new spring scale on ebay- \$20 including shipping! This hive is only 69 lbs, I'd better get a candy frame in there! -Ed.)





Stedman's Bee Supplies

**3763 NW Anderson Hill Rd
Silverdale, WA 98383**

(360) 692-9453

**Stedman's has
All Kinds of Beekeeping equipment,
Package Bees,
Honey,
And a fine
Gift Shop!**

Come on by!

Sage Advice and bits of wisdom from the Librarian

Advice for year 1

Take a beginning beekeeping class and attend as many local beekeeping meetings and events as possible. Start with 2 hives from packages in new equipment.

Overfeed your bees.

Open hives as often as it takes to get you comfortable.

When opening your hives, look at frames and bees, watch progress.

Catch and hive your swarms.

You want two double deep hives full of bees, half full of honey, half full of brood by mid July.

If the bees also fill up a honey super, that is a bonus.

You may also have two smaller hives if you caught your swarms or make splits to prevent swarms.

You are comfortable with your hives when you can open them and take out frames of bees with no gloves on.

Advice for year 2

Attend any beginning classes you missed last year.

Attend advanced classes if offered, attend apiary events.

Clean up and repopulate any hives that did not survive the winter. During spring buildup, take splits and maintain 2 nucs as well as your 2 hives.

Before the end of August, replace the previous year's queens with new ones you raise or purchase.

You should be able to harvest honey in Aug/Sept.

Inspections will be more important the second year.

Be more focused on Fall prep if you had hives fail the first winter.

Consider volunteering at a beekeeping event if you did not in year 1.

Advice for year 3

Attend local meetings regularly, look for meetings of interest at other associations.

Clean up and repopulate any hives that did not survive the winter.

During spring buildup equalize all hives and nucs.

Try to manage populations to get maximum populations of foragers before nectar flow.

Grow replacement queens working with your local association queen rearing group.

Consider an alternative hive or alternative bee race.

Start working to complete journeyman beekeeper certification.

Advice for year 4

Attend a state beekeeping conference.

Most of the mystery and fear has been replaced with fascination and confusion.

Expanding up to about 5 hives will help you experience more hives faster and will not take any more time to maintain than 2 does. (except, hopefully, at honey extraction time).

If you expand to 10 or 20 hives, your time requirements will go way up and you will change the way you keep bees just to save time.

Complete journeyman certification if you haven't already.

Advice for year 5 and after

Find out what you like best about beekeeping and focus on that.

Make the time to help new beekeepers follow in your footsteps.

Take an active role in your local or state beekeeping association. Try something new with beekeeping every year.

Note:

I have broken the progression into 5 years but you can take it slower or faster depending on your ability to invest time, effort and money. More time and effort in your early years will return rewards year after year.

George.