

Buzzword



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Next Meeting

January 21, 2003

Queen Rearing on a Small Scale

by Paul Hosticka

7:00 p.m. Stedman's
in Silverdale

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**A New Year
Message from the President**

January and a new year is upon us, ready or not. If you are like me you are not overly grieved to see the end of 2002. What, with in my case, higher than normal winter loss, and a horrible spring resulting in lower than average honey yields. Together with political and economic uncertainty and the drums of war casting a general malaise over us all we have ample reason to be hopeful for a better hand in 2003. As the prognosticators like to say, there will be easy comparisons to last year making anything less than disaster seem like an

improvement. The winter solstice marks the beginning of lengthening days and so far January has had a good share of seasonally warm sunny days. The filberts are in full bloom around here and to be able to go out and stand under a tree alive with bees and to hear the buzz from fifty feet off in January, brings joy and hope to a soul ready for better times. It has been an easy winter for the bees so far and with longer days and a bit of pollen coming in the door the queen will begin expanding her brood nest. In

another month or so the big spring build-up will be in full swing and with it the colonies' greatest annual demand for resources. About all we can do these days is keep track of colony weight, giving emergency dry sugar or candy to any starving colonies and culling out any dead or severely weakened colonies to prevent robbing. We can also stand under the filberts and listen to the buzz or happily watch as the girls boil out for a cleansing flight on a sunny afternoon. Be sure to smile, the sunshine is good for your teeth.
(contd. on page 3)

RECORD KEEPING

By Tom Barret (cssl@iol.ie) as posted to BiologicalBeekeeping@yahoo.com

As other list members have so eloquently put it, the hive and the queen are separate entities!

I have thought a little about it from a data processing view and I show below my initial 'back of the envelope' approach. As with many data processing exercises they usually get refined as you go along.

Each queen comes from somewhere and eventually goes to somewhere (maybe to that great big hive up in the sky!) so we need to keep track of her. Also as it is usually required to track the queen's characteristics such

as foraging, aggressiveness, swarming propensity, it is necessary to link the queen to the hive. It is also necessary to link any given queen with her ancestors, to track performance from one generation to the next and to assist with queen breeding decisions.

So as my first shot I would create a table for each queen storing the following information:
Queen Code
Mother's Code
Year of Birth
Hive # From: This records the first hive in which this queen held sway or say hive 'ZZZ' to

indicate that the queen came with a swarm.
Hive # To: This is the hive number which is the hive with queen cells when a hive has been split or hive 'XXX' to indicate that the queen has been disposed of.
Remarks: Always a useful field to have to record in plain English that which cannot be easily categorised.

Notes on the Coding System:
The coding system for the queen is purely arbitrary, but the code itself must not specify anything about the queen. For example if you marked the queen do not include this data

Membership Renewal

A new year is upon us and with it the time to renew your membership with WSBA.

Annual dues are only \$24 per family. Return it in the enclosed envelope.

Membership Benefits:

- * Monthly meetings
- * WSBA resource library
- * Monthly newsletter
- * Mentoring program
- * Beekeeping fellowship

"They breed, they brood, instruct and educate,
And make provision for the future state:
They work their waxen lodgings in the hives,
And labor honey to sustain their lives."

- Virgil, *Georgics*

FOR SALE

12 oz capacity jars with plastic lids included.
2.75 diameter x 4.75 high
Mason jar lids will also work

\$2.00 per case of 12
Contact: Al or Barbara

**Stedman's Bee
Supplies
360-692-9453**

BASICS IN NORTHWEST BEEKEEPING

Adapted from Ron Bennett (<http://members.aol.com/beetools/>)

In January and February, you should disturb the bees as little as possible. They will be in a tight cluster and you should not break their cluster.

Lift the hives to find any light ones and give those hives emergency feed of sugar candy or dry sugar. Dry sugar or sugar candy is best because the bees can access it with the minimum of time away from the cluster and consume it directly. With syrup feed, they must go to the feeder (breaking cluster and risking chilling themselves) and syrup has to be further evaporated for consumption by the bees. Continue to check for moisture on the inside of the outer covers. If you notice any condensation make sure you increase hive ventilation by placing some pebbles or twigs between the outer and inner covers.

Watch the flight intensity on warm days to spot weak colonies. Also pay regular attention to the front of each


hive looking for signs of disease. Deformed bees are a pointer to infestation by varroa mites. Bees crawling on the ground without any deformations may be an indication of tracheal mite infestation.

At the end of February, if you have determined that treatment for mites with miticide strips is warranted then treat for mites with Apistan® strips (one strip per five frames of bees). You should start your treatment for Varroa mites by mid-February so that you have completed treatment BEFORE you put on your first honey super in March. Early supering will help to gather the first honey flow of Maple, and give your bees the space they need to help minimize swarming.

Store your unused brood comb in a cool dry place and protect your bees and stored comb against mice. Drawn comb is one of your most important assets. It takes your

bees a lot of honey and pollen to generate a frame of wax. Plan and prepare equipment for the coming season. Now is the time to build frames and hive bodies. Remember you need to cross-wire wax foundation to keep it straight in the frames.

Pay your dues to your local bee association. (Hear that - send \$24 payable to WSBA to the Treasurer, George Purkett.) The association needs your support and you will benefit greatly from the combined wisdom of association members.

Buy your new colonies or order package bees. Packages are usually available only in the first and second week of April, so you need to have your equipment ready and your packages ordered in time. In the case of failing or poor queens one of the best management tools we beekeepers have is re-queening, so, if deemed necessary, plan and order queens for April 1st delivery. 

WARM CHOCOLATE HONEY TORTE

The Recipe Corner

1 cup (6 oz) semi-sweet choc. morsels
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup honey
4 eggs, separated
2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 Tablespoon instant coffee granules
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt

Line the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan with waxed paper. In a medium saucepan over low heat, melt butter; stir in chocolate morsels. Remove from heat; continue stirring until chocolate is melted. Gradually add honey,

stirring to blend. Lightly beat egg yolks; whisk into chocolate mixture. Stir in flour, coffee, baking soda and salt.

In large bowl, beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Fold 1/4 of egg whites into chocolate mixture. Stir lightened chocolate mixture into remaining whites; do not overmix. Pour mixture into prepared pan. Bake at 325F for 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted into middle comes out clean. Cool 5 minutes. Invert cake onto plate; remove paper.



...A NEW YEAR (contd. from page 1)

The holiday dinner and auction was, as always, a lot of fun and a great success. We brought in a total of \$964 and now we must find a good way to use it. Please give some thought to how we can best use these funds and offer your ideas at the next meeting. Thanks, congratulations and a hearty well done to all that organized and participated. It's great when we can have fun, do good work and avoid washing dishes all in one evening.

The library has some fine new additions so be sure to look over the new books and check them out. We have some classics on bee behavior and biology, some "how to" additions and an award winning comic book *Clan Apis*. This last is a great introduction to a bee's life cycle. It is suitable for reading as a bedtime story to young children, self-reading by older children or for grizzled old beekeepers like me who are suckers for a good story to get them blubbing like babes and marveling at the wisdom and harmony of nature. All of this is made possible by your \$24 annual dues so take advantage and learn and enjoy. Did someone say dues? It is the season after all so pay up early and avoid the guilt and constant haranguing and besides you will make George, our treasurer, a happy camper.

This month I have a slide show on how a small beekeeper can raise a few good queens. Hopefully you will enjoy seeing how the process goes and in any event it is always fun to see pictures of summer on these dark days of winter. So get out there on a sunny day and get some bee poop on your head. I'm told that it's better than Rogaine, and get ready for a really good beekeeping year, goodness knows we deserve one. See you Tuesday.

- Paul



PUTTING BEES TO SLEEP WITH MUSIC?

From: Ron Morison
To: New Zealand Beekeepers <nzbkprs@yahoo.com>

Here's one for the electronic wizards in the fire risk areas...another use for loudspeakers:

The beekeeping scientists Muszynska and Rybak from the Apiculture Division in Pulawy, Poland, reported in *Journal of Apicultural Science*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2002, a simple method which allows beekeepers to retain the bees on the combs and to prevent them from leaving the nest.

Sounds of 120 Hz, 450 Hz, and 800 Hz were emitted through 3 loudspeakers at 80 dB. The sounds were emitted as a rectangular wave in alternating cycles of 2 seconds of sound and 2 seconds of silence.

The loudspeakers were placed on the inner cover and the walls of the beehive. It was found that exposing the bees to 800 Hz sound immobilized the majority of the individuals on the combs, thus allowing the inspection of the colonies without resorting to the use of a smoker. The sound made the bees comatose, and the effect lasted for up to 10 minutes after the sound had been turned off. Muszynska and Rybak are happy to report that the bees don't suffer any long term damage from this treatment.



[Editor's Note: We recommend Pachelbel's Canon or Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata]

Visit our Association's new website at:
<http://www.WestSoundBees.org>

Please provide feedback by sending email to webmaster@westsoundbees.org

Email aliases are available to WSBA members. Email aliases allow you to have an email address at [westsoundbees.org](http://www.westsoundbees.org) - for example bob@westsoundbees.org. Email sent to the alias will then automatically be forwarded to your regular email address. If you would like an alias please contact the webmaster at webmaster@westsoundbees.org.

Refreshment Schedule

Jan: Paul & Susan Hosticka
Feb: Roy Barton
Mar: Betty & Walter Schicker
Apr: -open-
May: Joe Grubbs & Pamela Tarver
Jun: -open-
Jul: -open-
Aug: Summer Picnic

If you are unable to fulfill your commitment to provide refreshments for a meeting please notify Barbara Stedman by giving her a call at 360-692-9453 before the meeting date.

Master Beekeepers' Course
Simon Fraser Univ.
February 10-14, 2003
Vancouver, BC.

Cost is \$150, contact Dr. Mark Winston, Simon Fraser University Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6
Phone: (604)291-4910
or (604)291-3012
Fax: (604)291-3496
e-mail: winston@sfu.ca

Editor's Note:

Articles of interest to beekeepers and announcements of interest to Association members are welcomed and encouraged.

Submit articles and announcements to Stephen Augustine:

Email: saugusti@krl.org
Mail: 401 B Liberty St NW
Poulsbo, WA 98370

...RECORD KEEPING (contd. from page 1)

as part of the code, but have it as a separate field (data item) in the queen record. Similarly your hive coding system must not specify anything about the hive e.g. if a hive has an screened bottom board or is a Commercial Hive, this data must be specified in distinct fields in the hive record, and not as part of the hive code itself. It is vital that the above rule be strictly observed. OK, Data Processing lecture over!

Perhaps an example will help to illustrate.

Start with Hive **H1** with queen **Q1**. Let us say that this queen arrived with a swarm. Split the hive - the old queen stays in **H1** and the hive with the queen cells is **H6**. When the queen emerges she is coded **Q2**.

Let us now say that next year **H1** with queen **Q1** is split. the old queen stays in **H1** and the hive with the queen cells is **H8**. When the queen emerges she is coded **Q3**. Let us now say that next year **H8** with queen **Q3** is split. The old queen stays in **H8** and the hive with the queen cells is **H9**. When the queen emerges she is coded **Q4**.

Now say that queen **Q1** has become a drone layer and that we gave her the chop (sent her to hive **XXX**).

The entries in the queen table would appear


Queen #	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Date					
Birth Yr.					
Mother	--	Q1	Q1	Q3	--
From	ZZZ	H1	H1	H8	H1
To	H1	H6	H8	H9	XXX

as follows:

The above table conveys quite a lot of information, especially when linked to the hive table. If desired you may split the queen table into two tables to give more flexibility. One table would record the Queen #, The Mother # and Year of Birth, and the second table would record the Queen # and the hive she came from and the hive she went to. This would be helpful to avoid a lot of repetition of data (this is a major subject in the design of a computer system). The correct design of tables is the activity which determines the efficiency and ease of use of any system.

The above design can be amended to cater for moving a queen from one hive to another, combining hives, and doing queen breeding using, say Apideas (mating nucs), where a mother queen will generate many daughters. In this case have a transaction type in the table storing the queen movements.

A Hive Table will be designed to store data on each hive, and the queen table linked to it by the "To Hive" # to give information on the characteristics of each queen which are available from the hive table, e.g. honey yields, aggressiveness, propolis generation, comb building etc. Thus you could compare the performance of any given queen with her sisters, mother etc. and see how say aggressiveness varied from generation to generation. Note that two pseudo hives will be set up one coded **ZZZ** and called 'Swarm' and the other coded **XXX** and called 'Killed.'

Whether you are going to do this record keeping using manual methods or using a database, like Access, the principles are largely the same. Using Access you will need to write queries to generate genealogical reports on any given queen etc. but the above structure should answer most questions. And where you have only a small number of hives, visual inspection of the entries in the table may be adequate. So long as you do not have too many colonies to control, a manual system has a lot to recommend it. And even with a lot of hives, you can use it for a year or two and this use of it will generate a much clearer specification of what you really require. 



West Sound Beekeepers Association
10982 NE Tulin Rd
Kingston, WA 98346

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Queen Rearing on a Small Scale
 Tuesday, January 21
 7 p.m. at Stedman's