

# Buzzword



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**Next Meeting**

Tuesday, March 16,  
2004, 7:00 p.m.

**Observation Hives**

By George Purkett

At Stedman's in  
Silverdale

**OFFICERS & COMMITTEES**

- President:  
— Open —
- Vice President:  
Stephen Augustine 360-779-1210
- Secretary:  
Tricia Sullivan 360-779-1210
- Treasurer:  
Joe Grubbs 360-871-5308
- Educational Materials:  
Barbara Stedman 360-692-9453
- Librarian:  
Roy & Vickie Barton 360-613-0175
- Newsletter Editor:  
Stephen Augustine 360-779-1210

**Splitting Hives**

By Allen Dick from Alberta, Canada (<http://www.honeybeeworld.com>)

**T**here are a number of reasons for making splits and a number of ways of making them. The main reasons for making splits are:

1. To increase the number of producing hives either in the current year or in the following year.
2. To reduce the size of colonies to discourage swarming and to put off 'peaking' until the expected flow.
3. Control of mites.
4. To produce income from sale of nucs.

There are many ways to make splits, but most ways are variations on:

1. Splitting a two storey hive in half and
2. Selecting brood and feed from a colony (or colonies) and making up nucs or full size splits.

The time of year and size of

the splits will determine how much honey the splits will make in the first year, if any. It will also determine whether they will be trouble free or a waste of time, effort and bees. Generally the earlier and the larger the split, the more they will produce and the easier they will be to manage,



assuming that pollen and nectar are available in the field at time of splitting. A minimum of six weeks before a target flow is considered minimum lead time.

**Assess Hives to Split**

Brood must be available in all

stages in both brood boxes of a two storey hive for the first two types of splits to work well. One way of ensuring this is to reverse at least a week before splitting.

Hives for side by side and take-away splits should be selected by tipping the two boxes forward and looking on the bottom bars and floor. If on a 72 degree day there are no bees covering the bottoms of at least six frames, the hive is not ready to split.

**Side by side splits**

Side by side splits are made by placing two floors close together directly in front of a two storey existing wintered hive and placing one empty brood box on each new floor. One half of the old colony then goes on top of each. For cells, the other

(Continued on page 4)

**Elections/Nominations for 2004-2005**

Elections are coming up in April for:  
**President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary**

If you would like to nominate someone, including yourself, please submit nominations to Secretary, Tricia Sullivan

Phone 360-779-1210 or email: [secretary@westsoundbees.org](mailto:secretary@westsoundbees.org)

## Membership Dues are Due

A new year is upon us and it's time to send in those membership dues. Dues are \$24 per year.

Please fill in the payment slip and send in your dues to Treasurer Joe Grubbs.

"The wild Bee reels from  
bough to bough  
With her furry coat and  
her gauzy wing,  
Now in a lily cup, and  
now  
Setting a jacinth bell  
a-swing,  
In her wandering."

- Oscar Wilde  
(Her Voice)

## BASICS IN NORTHWEST BEEKEEPING

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

In March, we need to look at our colonies and make sure they are ready and helped to start building their population for summer vigor. Watch their stores and don't let colony stores get below 15 lbs. (3 full frames of honey). If they are low, feed the light colonies sugar syrup (1:1) or to balance out colonies with low stores, rob combs of honey from colonies with excessive stores and give them empty comb next to brood nest to expand egg laying.

To start rearing brood the bees need two things - honey and pollen. Some of the pollen sources are already in bloom (ornamental cherries, pussy-willows), but poor weather

can keep the bees from these sources, so you may feel it's necessary to feed a pollen substitute if a colony has no access to pollen.

It is a little early to get good queens, so you could unite queenless colonies to those needing bees. A weak hive will grow slowly and not produce a good honey crop, but by combining it with another colony, you will build a strong colony right away. However don't combine a diseased colony with another colony.

If we have a warm day, now is a good time to clean the bottom boards.

If you have indications of foulbrood in some colonies dust those colonies three times in seven day intervals

with a 3/4 oz. portion (about as much as you can scoop with a hive tool) of terramycin in powdered sugar, concentration TM-25. To make your mixture, combine one 6.4 oz package of terramycin with 2 lbs. of powdered, not granulated, sugar in a one-gallon zip-lock bag and mix well. Store unused mixture in the sealed zip-lock bag in a 3# coffee can in the freezer. Terramycin turns tan to brown when it goes bad.

If you used Apistan strips remember to remove them after 42-48 days of treatment. Look for colonies with nosema, usually hives are streaked with brown feces on the front, and treat with Fumidil-B per the supplied instructions.



### MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, FEBRUARY 17, 2004

#### Treasurer's Report:

- \* Joe Grubbs was not present so there was no treasurer's report. Dues are \$24 per year, please pay them to Joe soon.

#### Announcements:

- \* Discount coupons for Bee Culture and American Bee Journal magazine are available.
- \* The Washington State Bee Conference will be held in October in Spokane.
- \* Apimondia 2005 will be held during August in Dublin, Ireland.
- \* Stedman's will have packages of bees and queens arriving on April 10th for about \$40. Call Barbara to order now.
- \* Roy Barton and Mike Johnson are teaching the Beginning Beekeeping class on February 21st from 9 to 3:30 p.m. at Stedman's. Call Barbara for reservations.

#### Old/New Business:

- \* Ideas for future programs are: apitherapy by Chanetta Ludwig and parasite control.
- \* Jim Willmann made a motion to have a monthly door prize for meeting attendees during the meeting. We could spend up to \$25 each month on a prize. Seconded. Passed unanimously.
- \* Poulosbo Library has requested a speaker to give a presentation in the Sept./Oct./Nov. at the library. Please contact Stephen if you are willing.
- \* Bob Martello submitted his resignation as President effective immediately. As Vice President, Stephen Augustine agreed to assume the President's responsibilities until the April elections.
- \* Officer elections will be held at the April meeting.

#### Program:

- \* Jay Miller gave an informative program on Early Spring Management.

### For Sale

## Plastic Uncapping Tank



**\$50**

Contact Roy at  
(360)613-0175  
or by email at:  
[Roy@WestSoundBees.org](mailto:Roy@WestSoundBees.org)

# Flesh Eaters: Bees that strip carrion also take wasp young

Susan Milius in Science News, Week of Feb. 14, 2004; Vol. 165

A South American bee that ignores flowers and collects the meat from animal carcasses turns out to have an unexpected taste for live prey too.

This stingless bee, *Trigona hypogea*, carries off the youngsters left behind in newly abandoned wasp nests, says Fernando Noll of the University of São Paulo in Brazil. He and his colleague Sidnei Mateus have observed the bees swiftly cleaning out wasp broods. In an upcoming *Naturwissenschaften*, the researchers contend that such efficient raiding is "not aberrant behavior, but is merely a lesser known part of the bees' normal repertoire."

Most bee species buzz around flowers to collect nectar and pollen. Adults subsist mostly on nectar and save the protein-rich pollen as food for immature bees. Biologists, however, have reported some bees taking advantage of other resources, such as animal droppings and carrion. In 1982, David Roubik, based at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Ancon, Panama, published a detailed analysis of the lifestyle of a *Trigona* bee that requires carcasses for its protein. Roubik now lists four species as dedicated meat eaters.

Scoops on the bees' legs that in other species carry pollen are greatly diminished in these *Trigona* bees, and their mouthparts end in an unusual toothed edge. Roubik watched foragers in 2 days reduce much of the carcass of a large lizard to a skeleton.

Back at the nest, the bees manage the challenge of storing meat in tropical heat by mixing it with sugary liquids they collect elsewhere—perhaps from fruits, nectar sources outside flowers, or excretions of aphid-like insects. Microbes then break down the mix of chewed-up carrion and syrup into viscous goo, which nourishes the young bees. Says Noll: "It doesn't taste like dead meat. It's like flour and honey."

Since Roubik's work, says Noll, entomologists have assumed that the species ignore live prey. Noll and Mateus, however, describe three raids on the still-living young of recently abandoned wasp nests. Scout bees found the abandoned nest, and, within 2 hours, 150 bees were pulling out wasp eggs, larvae, and pupae. To harvest the pupae, the bees ripped off the caps of protective cells. The bees filled storage organs in their bodies with the chewed-up material and flew home. After 6 hours, the wasp nest was empty.

Roubik says that he has seen the bees collect toad eggs too. Despite this raiding, he calls the bees scavengers rather than predators. "They just feed off the fat of the forest," he concludes.

**Editor's Note:** *This article was sent to me by Jay Miller. I guess he wanted to provide a counterpoint to my last column in which I waxed nostalgic about the Edenic nature of bees. Reality stings!*

### Refreshment Schedule

- Mar:** Tricia Sullivan, Basil Gunther
- Apr:** Joe Grubbs, Horst
- May:** Jay Miller, Roy Barton
- Jun:** Betty & Walter Schicker
- Jul:** George Purkett, Mike Hoey

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.

### Buzzwords

Due to other commitments Bob Martello has resigned from the office of President of WSBA. Vice President Stephen Augustine will assume the President's responsibilities until the April elections.

Package bees will be available for pickup from Stedman's Bee Supplies on or around April 10th. Call Al at 360-692-9453 for more information.

The Beginner's Beekeeping class was held on February 21st at Stedman's and 14 people attended the class.

**Yes! I want to be a member of West Sound Beekeepers' Association during 2004. I have enclosed \$24 to cover my annual dues.**

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to: Joe Grubbs, WSBA Treasurer, 6021 Peterson Rd SE, Port Orchard, WA 98367**

## ...SPLITTING HIVES (CONTD. FROM PAGE 1)

methods are usually better.

In the case of a four pack palletized operation, splits can be made on the ground in front. Of necessity, the new hives will form a close-spaced row of four in front of the pallet. In the case that one hive is not strong enough to split, the other can still be split with no serious drifting resulting. The extra hives can later be removed from the yard and the remaining hives lifted onto the pallet.

We have also found that simply placing a floor on the ground beside each of the hives on the pallet and splitting onto it - while leaving the one half on the original stand -- works just fine. This reduces the lifting and the splits can be removed to another location later, on a cool day when they are not flying much. It doesn't matter on what kind of day these splits are actually made because even if the bees are flying, they will divide fairly evenly between the halves of the splits.

The queenless half should be given a queen, although, given 14 days, they will have their own - usually a fairly good one if populations and stores are good and the weather is co-operative. This can work very well with the right timing and conditions under the hand of an observant beekeeper.

### Introducing Queens into Splits

The most obvious way to introduce a queen to a new split is to simply look for the old queen, then insert a new mated queen or ripe cell into the queenless half which is right next to it. This is slow, frustrating work, unsuited to the scheduling of a commercial operation.

Another method is to wait until the fourth day and then look for eggs and add a queen to each queenless half. This does leave one split queenless for about a week, including introduction time. Moreover it requires two visits and the second one may be in the rain. If ripe cells are abundantly available, the simplest solution is to just

immediately (or within several days) stick a cell -- in a cell protector -- between the top bars of each split without checking for queens. The half that requires a queen will have one laying by about eleven days, and the other will likely reject the emerging virgin, but will sometimes allow the new queen to supersede the original. Acceptance rates with ripe cells is, on average, comparable to mated queens and the cost and labour is much less. Moreover you can easily raise cells from your own stock.

The main advantage of side by side splits is that if one is inserting mated queens, the work of identifying the queenless half is simplified greatly. The other is that this can be done on hot days when bees could not be transported without a mess. Extra hives can be moved out when convenient - possibly by another crew and truck when yards are available for them. Splitting can then proceed more quickly. The disadvantage is messy looking yards.



**West Sound Beekeepers Association**  
**3763 NW Anderson Hill Road**  
**Silverdale, WA 98383**  
<http://www.WestSoundBees.org>

#### Next Meeting

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 7 p.m. at Stedman's in Silverdale