

# BUZZWORD

WEST SOUND BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.westsoundbees.org>.

Proudly serving bees, their keepers, and the public in Kitsap County, WA and beyond!

OCTOBER 2012

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*Honey bees and a yellow jacket discover the hummingbird feeder!*

## UPCOMING BEE-RELATED EVENTS

### OCTOBER

#### **West Sound Beekeepers Association General Membership Meeting**

Date: Tuesday, 10/16/2012  
Time: 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
Location: Stedman's Bee Supplies  
3763 NW Anderson Hill Road  
Silverdale, WA

Topic: **WSBA OFFICER ELECTIONS & BUDGET APPROVAL**

It's time for the annual officer elections and your votes are important! Remember, as a member of West Sound Beekeepers Association, you play a vital role in helping with the direction of the Association by casting your vote.

Following the elections and 2013 Budget presentation/approval we hope to have time to discuss the many things you can do now to prepare your hives for winter.

## WSBA 2012 BEEKEEPER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to West Sound Beekeepers Association's 2012 Beekeeper of the Year:

# DAVID MACKOVJAK

\*\* For the latest news on ZOMBEEES – head to this website: <https://www.zombeewatch.org/> \*\*

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's unbelievable that October is already in full swing and the sun is shining! Beautiful weather makes for happy bees. I have been tracking our surviving colonies and all have ample stores due to a substantial blackberry flow this year. I always seem to underestimate how much the bees actually get until the end of the year. I am hoping that your honey yield was substantial and your bees are healthy. I hope everyone is already prepared and your bees are set for the winter that is due to arrive later the month.

As far as association business is concerned, our budget committee has returned an excellent operating budget for the coming year and it will be presented to the club at the regular meeting in the 16th for your approval. At that meeting, we will also be electing a new board. So, I would encourage each of you to attend, lend your voice, and help us quickly resolve our annual association business. We can then discuss over wintering strategies and perhaps the recent events concerning the widely reported "Zombie" bees. I'm looking forward to seeing each and every one of you there!

Lastly, it has been a pleasure serving as WSBA's president the last two years. It's been a privilege working with the wonderful and dedicated volunteers that make our association what it is. To watch so many people join and develop a passion for beekeeping has been a treat. I am proud of the work we have done as a board and as an association in fulfilling our mission. WSBA truly does build better beekeepers and a more informed public. For the efforts of WSBA'S many dedicated members, teachers, mentors, and leaders, I would just offer my sincere thanks and appreciation!

See you at the meeting!



TJ Jorgensen  
WSBA President

## SEPTEMBER MEETING NOTES

The September General Membership Meeting was a packed house in anticipation of a great presentation from honey specialist, Louis Matej – and he did not disappoint! Louis took us through the chemistry of honey, beeswax and pollen in a 40 minute power point presentation that even included information on honey judging! And he even provided us with some fascinating data including what influences not just the taste but even the color of honey, (do you know what it is?) It was an extremely interesting presentation and made for a very fun evening. Following the presentation there was a fruit and cheese platter featuring a variety of delicious cheeses provided by the kind folks at Mt Townsend Creamery (thanks Nik!)

# QUEEN REARING GROUP

West Sound Beekeeping Association

by David Mackovjak, Queen Rearing Chairman



The Queen Rearing group is open to all members who are interested in learning about the art of queen rearing or would just like to learn more about bee keeping. To be included in queen rearing correspondence please send me your name, phone number and email address.

David Mackovjak  
Queen Rearing Chairman  
[trimack@prodigy.net](mailto:trimack@prodigy.net)



(Editors note: David tells me the Queen-Rearing Group should start up again in either December or January.)

## TREASURER'S, AUDIT & BUDGET COMMITTEE'S REPORTS

No reports were available by the date of publication.


## TIPS FROM FELLOW BEEKEEPERS

If you follow the West Sound Beekeepers Association's yahoo group you will pick up some very useful tips. One such tip was posted by fellow beek, Joan Chissus. Republished with Joan's permission, here is Joan's input on how to clean beeswax:

*We use a crock pot, purchased at Goodwill for around \$5. All the wax goes in. Once it is melted we pour it through cone shaped painting sieves into plastic or stainless steel pans that amount to about a pound each. We put the pan on the scale as we are filling. As the wax cools it shrinks just enough to pull away from the sides of the pan and come out pretty easily. The blocks may have to be re-melted and screened a few more times to get it clean of debris, depending on how dirty it is when it went in. A glazed pot is easier to clean than a porous stoneware one.*

*You can heat it initially on high but let it cool a little before pouring into plastic...it can melt the plastic pan and you'll have a mess. If you use plastic pans test them out first and don't fill them to the brim. Been there, done that. Mini stainless steel restaurant pans are great...like what you see at a buffet restaurant.*

~Joan

 **BUZZNOTE:** If you have beekeeping-related tips, advice or great ideas you'd like to share please send them to [newsletter@westsoundbees.org](mailto:newsletter@westsoundbees.org). (Photos are always welcome!)



# BSI (Bee Scene Investigation)

Case of the White Crystal Death

Submitted by Special Field News Forager ~ Buzz Stingwrite



Having just concluded a Compost Tumbler for prototype hive barter, Darren and I proceeded to a reported bee scene we will refer to as Bill's Apiary. It was late September. Bill had reported finding a handful of dead bees with white crystals attached to their legs in one hive. This was an unusual description that warranted investigation.

We arrived at 1700.

Bill had just lit the smoker. He explained he had been feeding 1:1 syrup in quart jars above the inner cover. He found and removed dead bees inside the empty super covering the feeder on one hive and there are again similar symptoms in the same hive.

We approached Bill's Apiary. It consisted of 4 full size hives and has a great water view. Each hive was topped with an outer cover over a super above the inner cover. There were no piles of dead bees on the ground. All entrances had guard bees and low activity as expected for the time of day. Yellow jackets were in the area and scavenging whatever could be found on the bark groundcover. They did not seem to be challenging the hives.

We lifted the lid of the problem hive. The bees were agitated but not overly aggressive. The feeding jar was empty as it sat on 2 sticks holding it above the hole in the inner cover. Visible dead bees were on the inner cover. Small crystal or spear shaped specks were around the dead bees. The crystals varied in size but shapes were similar; they did not appear to be pollen or pesticide granules. The specks appeared more yellow than white in the current lighting. When picking up a few of the dead bees, the crystals were attached to their legs.

We had confirmed Bill's observations.

We noticed some of the dead bees were moving slowly; I should call them nearly dead, not fully dead. The dead and nearly dead bees appeared to be a mix of colors, some being more yellow and some much darker. This was consistent with the live bees around the feeder jar. Most of the dead bees were piled or grouped near one front corner. The dead bees were of mixed ages, some appeared old, some appeared young. The bees at the feeder jar hole looked healthy. A puff of smoke made them look happier.

We started scooping up and selecting dead bees for sampling. There were a lot of the yellow specks around the bees and around the outside edges of the inner cover. Bill retrieved a plastic container to collect the dead bees in. It was a good handful in all. Bill removed half that many the day before.

We removed the inner cover and proceeded to separate the three boxes and expose the bottom board. The bees in the boxes were not agitated. The bees stayed on the frames as we sat the boxes aside on their edge. The bottom board was very clean. There were a few specks on it but not many. No dead bees. No varroa carcasses. No wax cuttings. No earwigs, ants or dead rats. We scraped away the few specks. Spiders on the underside of the bottom board even looked healthy. The bottom board sat on cinder blocks. No crawling bees on the ground. Darren successfully stomped a few yellow jackets looking for a free meal (yellow jackets, not Darren). We reassembled the hive without incident.

## BSI (Bee Scene Investigation) continued

We decided to check the inside top of the other three hives for similar symptoms. Two of the hives had no specks and no dead bees. The other had yellow specks around the outside edge but not any dead bees.

{Do you have the desire to be a BSI agent? Can you solve this case of the white crystal death before reading further?}

Then we had a break in the case!

We noticed one edge of the empty super was not painted. It was yellower than the rest of the super. The yellow coloring appeared to be the same color as the specks. Bill noticed the edge was rounded. Darren spotted an imperfection in the box. The bees had been chewing on the edge of the wooden super where there was a small air gap caused by imperfect construction. The specks have been identified as bits of wood chewed off the super. They were around the edge and the bees dropped them after not finding the exit to fly them away. It looks like the specks of wood may not be associated with the dead bees.

Back to the problem hive.

Examination of the cover edges reveals rounded edges consistent with bee chewing. Confirmed, the specks are chewed pieces of hive. Bees often chew around cracks or sharp edges. But why are the bees dead.

{Did you figure that out? If so, perhaps you have what it takes to join BSI.}


Further inspection revealed the outer cover does fit down over the super when the jar is in place. (We suspected a large jar would hold the cover up creating a top entrance and entice robbing access to the top feeder.)

Then the final break occurred when someone laid their hand on the edge of the top cover and it rocked down. The top cover was warped. The warped cover has created a gap. Robbers were using the gap to get to the jar feeder. Bees were chewing on the wood around the gap probably getting ready to add wax and propolis to plug it up. The dead bees were a mix of the robbers and the hive defenders.

Sometimes the mysterious is not so mysterious!

The fix...has been left to the beekeeper to determine and implement.

BSI - Case of the white crystal death - case closed.

 **BUZZNOTE:** If you have questions about beekeeping and would like to see them published along with answers from WSBA's experienced beekeepers, please send your questions to: [newsletter@westsoundbees.org](mailto:newsletter@westsoundbees.org). (Anonymity is guaranteed unless otherwise requested.)

# THE BEAR vs THE BEEKEEPER

How to protect your beehives from bears and other bee loving critters

~Gary Jackson~

As a beginning beekeeper I quickly realized that this was going to be a very interesting hobby with many challenges: CCD, Varroa mites, pesticides, and a variety of other issues to be concerned with. What I did not think about was that my biggest challenge would be keeping the bears out of the bee hives.

My beehives are located on the Coyle Peninsula near the entrance to Dabob Bay. The area is heavily wooded full of wildlife including cougars and bears. The hives are in the middle of a fruit orchard with a wire fence which has kept the deer out but whenever the bears want to get in they just push it down and help themselves to the fruit.

After a lot of research I realized that there are many opinions and solutions to help avoid problems with bears. Everything from heavy steel fences to flashing lights is recommended but since my cabin utilizes solar power I decided to install a solar powered electric bear fence.

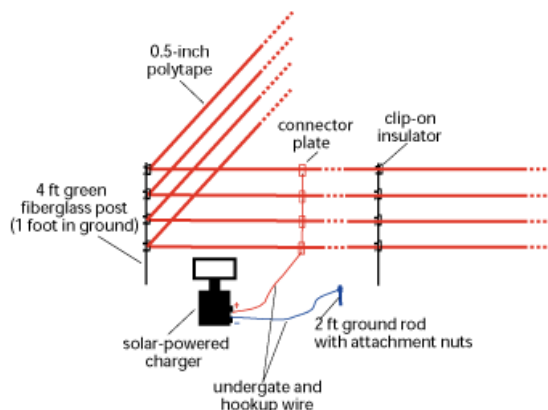
The purpose of the electric fence is not to harm an animal but rather to create a psychological barrier that will prevent the bear or other animals from entering a fenced area. The electrical zap is strong enough get the animals attention but if properly installed should not cause serious physical harm to it.

## Basic Principles:

The fence is connected to an electrical source (the fence charger) which provides a high voltage charge to the fence. The positive and negative lines are isolated from each other until an animal creates a path for the electricity to flow. In most designs, the negative line is connected to earth ground through a grounding rod which has been pounded several feet into the ground. The positive line from the charger is connected to the fence wires. The wires are isolated from ground by plastic insulators if using a steel post or plastic poles can be used.

The fence charger can be powered by AC (household) or DC (battery) power. If AC power is available, the overall cost will be much cheaper. Since most beehives in bear country are not near household power the DC powered units are used.

Electric bear fence showing active (orange) and grounded (blue) parts



(from <http://www.bestbearfence.com/>)

## THE BEAR VS THE BEEKEEPER (continued)

There are several systems that can be purchased that contain everything that is needed but I decided to save some money by obtaining the parts needed separately. The basic components are:

- Deep Cycle Battery
- Solar panel
- Solar Charge controller
- Electric fence charger
- Electric fence wire and poles

The way the system works is that the solar panel keeps the battery charged year-round and the battery provides the power for the fence charger.

There are several alternatives to this setup including AC powered chargers which are less expensive if power is available. There are also systems which have everything built into one package.

The fence has had the added benefit of keeping smaller animals such as skunks and raccoons out of the hive.


I have been able to protect my fruit trees as the fruit ripens by setting up a small electric fence around the tree and connecting it to the main fence surrounding the bee hives. It seems that once the critter gets zapped, they don't want to go near the orchard. This is the first year that I have had no crop loss due to raccoons or bears.

Bears need to be trained to avoid the fences so one method is to bait the fence with bacon which will entice the bear to sniff or lick the fence and get a strong jolt. Bears have an extremely good memory and once they get zapped they avoid electric fences.

I actually enjoy having the bears and other wild animals around and become concerned when bear sightings result in frantic calls to the wildlife agents to get them out of the area. Most bear problems can be avoided by not inviting them into the area with pet food located outside, bird feeders or unsecured garbage cans. In the case of beehives, the electric fence has proven to be an effective way to avoid having bear problems

I have created a YouTube video describing my system:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFtBqTXUKgk>

 **BUZZNOTE:** For fall feeding, combine 2 parts granulated sugar to one part hot water and stir well. Cover and leave for 20 minutes. If sugar has not completely dissolved, heat on stove for 5 – 10 minutes, stirring regularly, cover and allow to feed cool before serving. Serves 5,000 (or so.)



## OCTOBER RECIPES

### HONEY CARAMEL APPLE BUTTER

~Kim Redmond

24 medium apples, peeled, cored and chopped  
 1/4 cup water  
 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg  
 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

1 cup honey  
 1-1/2 teaspoons cinnamon  
 1/2 teaspoon ginger  
 20 - 25 caramels

Put apples, honey, water and spices in slow cooker and stir. Cover and cook on high for one hour. Reduce to low (not warm) and cook for 5 hours or until apples are very soft.

While still in slow cooker, whisk well to smooth out big chunks. Stir in caramels. Continue cooking on low, with lid off for additional 1 - 2 hours until well reduced, stirring occasionally to blend in caramels. You will still see small pieces of caramels.

Apple butter is ready when it mounds up on a plate and does not run or spread.

### HONEY LIME CHICKEN WINGS

~Kim Redmond

Zest of two limes  
 1/4 cup honey  
 2 large cloves fresh peeled, minced garlic  
 1/8 - 1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce (to taste)  
 Coarse salt

1/3 c freshly squeezed lime juice  
 4 tablespoons fresh peeled, minced ginger  
 2 tablespoon soy sauce  
 3-4 pounds chicken wing "drumettes"

Wash chicken and pat dry. Combine lime zest, lime juice, honey, ginger, garlic, soy sauce and Tabasco sauce in a one-gallon Ziploc bag, seal and shake to combine. Remove a small amount to reserve for basting.

Add chicken wings to bag, seal and shake to coat well. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours (up to 8 hours) turning occasionally.

Preheat oven to 425° F. Line 2 baking sheets with foil. Spray cooling racks with cooking spray and then place baking racks on foil. Remove wings from the marinade onto the racks. Baste with reserved marinade and sprinkle with coarse salt. Roast for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and baste with more marinade. Turn wings over, baste other side, return to oven and roast until cooked through, about 25 to 35 minutes. (For an extra kick, toss a shot of tequila into the marinade before adding the chicken.)



# NEW LIBRARY MATERIALS (YAY)

There are 5 new items in the Library this month thanks to Kim's effort with the fantastic 2012 WSBA Calendar. The calendar alone was wonderful on its own. That profits from its sale provided library materials was wonderful. I hope Kim repeats this effort to produce a calendar for 2013 and would encourage everyone within the association to help her in the effort. With the additional effort she is putting into the newsletter, I am sure she will be needing help in any way she can get it.

On the library shelves, you will find the following new items:

**Fifty Years Among The Bees by C. C. Miller**, 1915 (328 pgs) (2006 reprint)  
Review: This is one of the best beekeeping books written. There is a wealth of beekeeping information still applicable 100 years later. Also lots of detail and information of practices not currently practiced but important then. The book is written with a lot of personality and part journal entry so you get to know the author and his life and not just the bee facts. Also, it has great pictures.

**A Year's Work in an Out-Apiary by Gilbert M. Doolittle**, (1908) reprint (61pgs)  
Review: This is an excellent read for a second year beekeeper looking to expand beyond 2 colonies. At over a hundred years old, you will find information in this book many of the experienced beekeepers do not know or have not realized.

**Attracting Native Pollinators The Xerces Society Guide**, 2011 (369 pgs)  
Review: This is a great book to tell you what to plant to attract or support feeding of pollinators. Also, it has pictures and descriptions of pollinators. And it tells you how to plant and care for what you plant. This book bridges the beekeeper/gardener gap in which many of us fall.

**Scientific Queen-Rearing as Practically Applied Being a Method By Which The Best of Queen Bees Are Reared In Perfect Accord with Nature's Ways Gilbert M. Doolittle**, (1901) reprint (126 pgs)

Review: This queen rearing book was written as GM Doolittle Developed a process to raise queens using a reliable method. His methods form the basis of all queen-rearing in use today. This book tells what to do, why it works, and contains some insightful missteps to bring understanding into focus. If it had a few more pictures, there would be no need of other queen rearing books.

## **DVD-Movie Queen of the Sun (2012)**

Review: If you are a beekeeper and have not seen this movie, where have you been? This is a very visually stimulating and interesting documentary on the collapse of the honeybees. It brings many opinions to the discussion. I find the discussions with the colorful beekeepers and their approaches to beekeeping very entertaining.

~George the Librarian



**BUZZNOTE:** Do you have photos, recipes, advice or stories you would like to share in the 2013 calendar? Please send them to [biz@kimredmond.com](mailto:biz@kimredmond.com).

# ADVERTISEMENTS



Your bees called...they want you to stop at Stedman's!

**Honey Warmer for Sale.** Custom made by Tim Celeski these warmers use precise digital temperature controllers to de-crystallize your honey perfectly. Though compact, it heats 4 or 5 gallon buckets, or three dozen jars. Normally priced at \$300, I have one left priced for WSBA members is \$225. For photos and more information go to [www.beegeek.com](http://www.beegeek.com) or email: [tim@beegeek.com](mailto:tim@beegeek.com)

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Now is a great time to send in your 2013 dues. Member dues support the Association's goals of promoting better understanding and appreciation for honey bees and beekeeping by providing community awareness of the positive effects of beekeeping.

Being a paid member of West Sound Beekeepers Association also puts the Association's extensive library at your disposal, allows you the use of the Association's extractor, gives you the opportunity to have input on the direction the Association takes, makes you eligible to be an officer of the Association and puts you in touch with a lot of fun beekeepers! For only \$24 every member of your household becomes a member - what a great deal!

To join or renew your membership simply fill out the following form and bring it, along with your payment, to the next monthly meeting. Or you can mail the form with your payment to the WSBA Treasurer (address below.)

**\*\*PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WSBA\*\***

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE & EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form along with your check to: Selena Clements  
WSBA Treasurer  
3268 Chase Road  
Port Orchard, WA 98366