

# Buzzword



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**Next Meeting**

Tuesday, September 21,  
2004, 7:00 p.m.

Stedman's Bee Supplies  
Silverdale

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**One-Percenter Beekeeping**

Message from the President

**H**ello Everyone! With this rainy end to summer I hope everyone has their bees home safe, bumper-crop of honey spun, winter stores full, inspected, detected, medicated if necessary, with loads of vigorous young bees in that ideal winter yard. Now you can sit back with a nice cup of tea and wait out the winter until those loads of filbert pollen come rolling in, all the while sampling your precious golden harvest of summer past...Sound like you? Congratulations! You've mastered the fine art of beekeeping! Or were you just darn lucky?

Rainy late summer weather can present a serious challenge to beekeepers practicing their craft. I drove over a hundred miles to get our supers. It was a fine sunny morning when I left and a hot sunny afternoon when I returned. But in the mountains it was a different story. It was cold and dark. Torrential rain greeted me as I pulled into the mountain bee yard. I parked and began to read a paperback novel. It stopped raining ten minutes later. Working with haste, fumeboards, and the help of a misty cloud, I took off supers and excluders.

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Washington State Beekeepers Fall Meeting**

October 14-16, 2004 at the Doubletree Hotel, Spokane

**Presentations:**

- \* *Introduction to insects, native pollinators, and honeybees* by Frank Merickel, Entomologist and Curator of the Entomology Museum at U of Idaho
- \* *Introduction to sound apicultural research, controlled experiments, interpreting results* by Dr. Thomas Rinderer, ARS/USDA Baton Rouge, LA
- \* *Cold Climate Beekeeping* by Gary Reuter, Apiary Technical Assistant at U of M
- \* *Pesticides in the beehive, problems & alternatives* by Dr. Nick Calderone, Cornell University, Ithaca NY
- \* *IPM introduction and concepts* by Dr. Jeff Pettis, Cornell University, Ithaca NY
- \* *Introduction of new bee races, quarantine studies* by Dr. Steve Sheppard, WSU, Pullman WA
- \* *Russian Bee Breeding, Genetics, and Physiology Research* by Dr. Thomas Rinderer
- \* *AFB - Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* by Dr. Nick Calderone
- \* *Miticide Effects on Queen Health* by Dr. Jeff Pettis

**Cost:**

Friday and Saturday Seminars only - \$130.00  
Full package - \$368 for one or \$548 for two (includes lectures, meals and room)

Contact Collette Lehinger at 509-924-1001 or download the registration forms at [http://www.wasba.org/WA\\_State\\_beekeepers\\_meeting-10-04.pdf](http://www.wasba.org/WA_State_beekeepers_meeting-10-04.pdf)



Get well wishes go out to:

Al Stedman who had recent surgery to clear obstructed arteries.

If you know of a member who has been ill let us know at (360)779-1210

## ON WINTER'S THRESHOLD

Adapted from Ron Bennett and supplemented by Stephen Augustine

**B**y September you should be well into Fall management. The worst problem beekeepers face in late Summer and early Fall is robbing. Don't tempt robber bees by exposing honey. Don't work the brood nest unless necessary; stop if robbing starts. One of the best methods to minimize robbing and help your colonies stave off the yellowjacket onslaught is to reduce entrances to a bee space sized slot after hot days are over.

The major nectar flow is well over now and the bees are starting to wind their populations down for winter. But, the populations are still high and there are some flowers around (dandelions, Queen Ann's lace, Pearly Everlasting, Japanese Knotweed, and others) for the bees to work. For colonies that are light in stores feed them a heavy

sugar syrup (2:1 sugar/water by volume) until the colony's gross weight is about 150-180 pounds.

It is advisable to use a sticky board and monitor a 24-hour varroa mite-drop with mite strips. A count of 25 mites or less usually indicates that mite treatment is not necessary. However, if your hives are infested with varroa mites and if you have determined that mite strips are the best course of remedial action then the strips should be in the hives by now. Also remember to remove the strips within the specified time period (6-8 weeks) otherwise you will only be helping to induce resistance in mites, which will lead to future treatment problems for all beekeepers.

Keep on the lookout for American Foulbrood, Chalkbrood and Nosema. Watch for signs of tracheal mites by looking for bees

with the K-wing appearance or for bees crawling in front of the hive. Treat for tracheal mites as appropriate with either formic acid or menthol. However, remember that both these courses of action will require 60 degree or higher days of temperature for effectiveness.

Check your stored comb for wax moth infestation. Wax moths can ruin all of your precious combs in little time. You can effectively prevent wax moth infestations by keeping your supers bagged in large plastic trash bags. Freezing infested combs in a freezer will also kill all the wax moth eggs and larvae. You also need to protect any stored equipment and combs from mice. They will burrow through your stored combs, eat your combs (especially honey supers) and build nests in the boxes.



“One morning the long-expected word of command goes through the hive; and the peaceful workers turn into judges and executioners.”

Maurice Maeterlinck, 1901, from *The Massacre of the Males* in *The Life of the Bee*

## Old honey bee brood combs are more infested by the mite *Varroa destructor* than are new brood combs

By Giancarlo A. Piccirillo<sup>(1)</sup>, and David De Jong<sup>(2)</sup>

### Abstract

*Varroa destructor* preferentially invades larger honey bee brood cells. Consequently, it was expected that brood in old combs with reduced-size cells would be less infested than the brood in new comb cells. An old brood comb was placed in each of eight Africanized honey bee colonies, along with a new, naturally constructed comb (without comb foundation). The mean percentage of brood cells infested with *V. destructor* was significantly higher in the old combs (22.6%), than in the new combs (9.75%), even though the inside width of the cells was significantly smaller in the old (4.58 mm) than in the new combs (4.85 mm). Within the range where there was an overlap in the width of brood cells between old and new combs, which was from 4.5 to 4.9 mm, the old comb cells were over four times more frequently infested with mites than were the new comb cells. Some factor other than cell size makes old brood comb cells much more attractive to *V. destructor* than newly constructed brood comb.

*Editor's note: Makes you think about rotating those old combs out doesn't it!*

(1) La Universidad del Zulia, Maracaibo, Venezuela (2) Departamento de Genética, Ribeirão Preto, Brasil

### Céad Míle Fáilte

#### Apimondia 2005

Aug 21st - 26th  
Dublin, Ireland



It's not too early to think about Apimondia, especially since it's in emerald-green Ireland!

[www.apimondia2005.com](http://www.apimondia2005.com)

## ...Message From the President (contd. from page 1)

There was no threat of frenzy or robbing. It was too darn cold! Then it began to warm up and get bright. Bees started flying. The last supers came from my strongest hive, a double queen, so I had to take it apart to get the supers from between the brood boxes. A lot of young bees landed on me. As I was finishing the temperature plummeted and the rain came down! I picked the cold, drenched bees from my suit and gently shoved them into the hive entrance, packed up the truck and got the heck out of there! Three days later all the bees were happily located in their winter yard.

Skill or luck, who can say? The good beekeeper is skilled in timing. Things get done about when they need to and emergencies are deftly handled. Beekeepers have to take good luck when they can get it and make their own good luck the rest of the time. If you're pulling a couple hundred pounds from each and every hive and don't have to feed, medicate, or move your hives; if you never wear a beesuit or veil and always have good weather, well then maybe there's nothing left but for you to get another interest! But if you aren't living an impossible dream, then chances are you can still learn a thing or two...or make a small change in your routine that will make a little improvement. Eliot Coleman, master truck gardener, calls these little improvements "one-percenters" and says the best part about one-percenters is that they all add up! Most of the time they don't even cost you anything either! I want everyone in the association to have high expectations and be able to realize them. Every meeting is an opportunity to give and

receive one-percenters. Using the meeting as a place to exchange ideas only uses a fraction of our potential. Good ideas are forgotten, misremembered, or, worse yet, never spoken aloud! And if you didn't make the meeting, you're out of the loop entirely! That's why I am proposing we add a "bulletin board" to our fine website. This would be where anyone could post a question and others could post their answers or comments. All would be saved and we could look up any topics with a "search" feature. Good information and lively discussions could be read years after they were posted. Each of us would have a continual opportunity to enrich beekeeping awareness worldwide and throughout time, not to mention within our own minds! The bulletin board would also be a good place to organize group endeavors like a joint purchase of formic acid that would save everyone time and money. If someone wanted to take a couple hives to the mountains and hoped someone would invite them along, they could post that wish. Somebody else could then reply "come on up!" The possibilities are endless!

I hope I have your support to start the Bulletin Board Project. If approved, computer savvy people will be welcome to help design and implement the bulletin board on our website. Naturally we want to provide whatever assistance we can to our talented and dedicated newsletter editor, Stephen Augustine, because he is, after all, also the official Webmaster. I think the bulletin board will be a one-percenter everyone can use!

Hope to see you all at the meeting.

**-Basil**

### Refreshment Schedule

**Sep:** -open-  
**Oct:** -open-  
**Nov:** -open-  
**Dec:** Holiday Dinner

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.

### National Honey Month

September is the sweetest time of the year; it is National Honey Month. The biggest wakeup call for this tradition is for those who haven't done so is to think hard about marketing honey in creative ways.

The National Honey Board has rolled out a media kit to help beekeepers in this endeavor.

The kit includes a recipe release with four delicious recipes, color slides of two of these recipes, fact sheets about honey, sample cover letter and tips for working with the media. Order your free Honey Month publicity kit today by calling (800) 553-7162.

See the index of its newsletter, Bee-Mail <http://www.nhb.org/buzz/index.html> for more ideas including selling at farmers' markets.

*Malcolm T. Sanford  
Apis Newsletter*

### As Posted to the Bio-Bee Mailing List:

"Since 1998, the use of Butyric Anhydride (Bee-Go, Honey-Robber) has not been technically legal in any connection with any type of food for human consumption. The EPA revoked the specific "exemption from the requirement for a tolerance" for butyric, and this left butyric with no "approved food use". Any food exposed to any amount of butyric in any way would be considered "adulterated" under FDA rules, and cannot be sold for human consumption.

So, for those of you still using butyric, what part of "No Food Use" is unclear?"

*- Jim Fischer, makers of Fischer's Bee Quick*

## The Editor Rambles...

**A**s I did sugar shakes on all six of our hives two weeks ago I was evaluating the hives for their mite load and what treatment, if any, I would implement. With counts of 12, 2, 5, 4, 6, and 3 mites in samples of about 300-400 bees I decided to go the formic acid way on five of them and mite strips on the one with 12. What I think, though, is that I am most likely giving the hive with 12 mites a crutch and propagating weak bees.

At the July meeting there was some discussion of whether bees could survive without humans. Perhaps a better question would be whether humans could survive without bees. But to answer the first question it seems painfully obvious to me that bees are barely surviving because of what humans are doing.

The situation is largely exacerbated because of our habit of aggregating multiple colonies in bee yards—facilitating the transmission of disease

vectors and homogenization of the gene lines. Then I think about beekeepers with 2,000 and 20,000 colonies and can't help but think that the bees are doomed because of what we humans are doing. In the absence of humans the bees would sort it out with the mites and other diseases. They've done so for some 60 million years and most certainly do not need our "help".

On a different topic, this year revived for me the notion that quite often we learn more from mistakes than we do from successes.

Consider my recent experience with our neighbor downstairs. I set out a couple of freshly extracted supers for the bees to clean up on a 3rd floor balcony. Perhaps winter this year is going to be particularly harsh - but the bees sure got into a frenzy. In short order the bee yard and the space around the house looked - to non-beekeeper eyes - like killer bees were on the loose. Our neighbor got worked up into an even greater frenzy and called multiple people (including Al Stedman) and was apparently going to shortly call the

police. After covering everything back up and mollifying the frantic woman I'm back into beekeeping with a more subdued profile.

I don't feel like a complete idiot because I found out that even the best of us make silly mistakes (Paul Lundy has a story about how he lost half their honey crop this year). I also learned that in desperate times—such as the hour when I was calling around to see who could help me move our bees before the police came for me—other beekeepers are very understanding and more than willing to help.

On a personal note, thanks go out to Barbara Stedman who is always cheerful and exceedingly helpful with educational materials, Bill "1000-pound" Jones and Fred Kay for being excellent company to the mountain top and back, Paul Lundy & Lisa Knox for keeping me in touch with the broader beekeeping arena, Al for his cinnamon powder chalk brood cure, and of course the wonderful girls at *Bees By The Bay*.

- Stephen Augustine



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

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 21**

**7 p.m. at Stedman's in Silverdale**