



Rhode Island Beekeepers Association

The Newsletter of the Rhode Island Beekeepers Association
PO Box 31, Ashaway, RI 02804. <http://www.ribeekeeper.org>

Presidents editorial

This month is all about getting ready! We've toughed out that awful winter and now the bees can be seen bringing in pollen and this makes us itch for April showers and May flowers. What colors are you seeing? So far, my bees are bringing in white and yellow. The white is probably from skunk cabbage where the yellow is most likely from crocus, daffodil, and witch hazel. These are just a few that I've seen blooming and there's plenty more out there to come. What flowers can you identify? Come to the April dinner and find out!

The annual dinner will be held on April 18 at Chelos in Warwick, from 5pm to 10pm. Dinner starts at 6pm. This evening event's guest speaker is Don Adams who will talk about nectar sources around our area. Don has a colorful slideshow of flowers in bloom. He discusses where he has taken the photo and the time of the bloom. This lighthearted presentation will give you the context for the types of nectar and pollen sources that are available in our area which in turn will make it easier for you to make decisions when feeding, treating for mites, supering, etc.

Also on the agenda is the annual election. We have a vacancy for secretary, but all of the other officers have indicated that they will run again for reelection. So far there aren't any contenders; however, if you would like to run for office - either secretary or another position - please see the nomination committee (Kit Mayers or Jeff McGuire). Who can vote? Any member in good standing can vote. You must be present to vote. If you have other evening obligations you can just attend the business portion of the meeting which will be first up on the agenda for the evening.

What else should I be doing in March/April?

Don't forget the auction and raffle! Please call Celeste or Lisa if you have donations to make.

Paint, paint and more paint! Actually, what I mean is that you should be applying whatever finish you

March 2009

would like to use. Paint, boiled linseed oil, and paraffin wax are just some examples of preservatives that I've heard members say they use. Still others like the weathered look and don't use anything at all. The trick here is to plan your time to get it all ready. The reason that I bring up painting in particular is so you can make sure that the parts have plenty of time to air out before you put the bees in or add the parts to the hive. Sometimes the fumes can drive the bees out; especially packages!

Feeding is also on the agenda. By the time you read this the temperature has moderated and you can use sugar syrup and pollen substitute/supplement patties. Please read last month's newsletter for details. Try not to overfeed. We have a tendency to nurture. When we see the feeder is empty we want to fill it up thinking "they must be hungry." Keep in mind that bees are programmed to hoard. There is a good chance that they aren't hungry at all and that your sugar syrup is being promptly stored in the brood frames. Is that a bad thing? Yes and no. That's our standard waffling beekeeper answer to everything! Yes, it is a good thing if their stores are light. They need the syrup to raise the brood. So far, so good. But, the answer is No if they have stores leftover from winter and they are just hoarding. Remember that swarm control starts now. If you overfeed your bees there is a good chance that they will fill up most of the open space in the brood chamber with syrup causing a condition we call "honey bound." If the brood frames are filled with syrup (or honey) where then will the queen lay her eggs? Surely this condition will cause the bees to swarm. Like clockwork, starting around Mothers' Day. How do you make the decision to add more feed (syrup and patties)?

If the colony came through the winter look into the tops of the frames when you remove the covers and see if you can spot capped honey cells. If you can

see capped cells you probably have enough stores so a light feeding may make you feel better. They may not need anything at all! Just inspect weekly and put feed on only when you feel they are running low. If you see capped cells and you still aren't sure you can feed once weekly skipping a few days in-between to let them consume some of their stores. Stop feeding when you see lots of activity at the entrance and/or flowers blooming around your area.

If you are starting packages you must feed. You must give them light ratio syrup if you start the package on foundation. This is when you feed heavily and as much as they will take. They need the syrup to eat, survive, and most especially to draw out the foundation into honeycomb. If you have a frame or two of honey you can also put that in, but you will need light ratio syrup for the wax building activities. Over the years I have tried just honey frames but my observation is that there is nothing like light ratio syrup to get them to build honeycomb. You may be wondering what I mean by light ratio sugar syrup?

Light ratio sugar syrup is 1:1 sugar to water by weight. Here's an easy to remember formula. Think 10 - 5 - 2. Ten pounds of white granulated sugar mixed in five quarts of warm water will yield two gallons of syrup. You don't need to heat or boil the water as the hot tap on your sink is hot enough. Never use brown sugar or dark sugar as sometimes the "brown stuff" can be harmful to the bees. White granulated sugar is safe, clean and good for them.

Watch this newsletter for next month's articles on splitting colonies for expansion and backyard queen rearing. Splitting a colony is easy! Everyone can do it. There are a myriad of uses for a split such as expanding the apiary, bolstering a weak colony in the fall, queen replacements and just for the fun of it! Here's the plan. I will write an article in the next newsletter. There will be a presentation and "how-to" lecture at the May meeting. Then, topping it off with hands-on demonstrations will be Lou Chasse who invites you all to his apiary for a Saturday session (date to be announced). Your target date to make your own splits should be around Memorial Day so we will have gotten all of this article writing, presentation and hands-on demos done by then.

Garden School Day

Attention Gardeners! This Spring it's time to get back to your gardening roots - the GreenShare way! "GreenShare Garden School" is a day of workshops to help keep those thumbs green and the environment healthy! This time around we will be offering the event at Roger Williams Park Botanical Center in Providence, RI. With topics ranging from "Worm Composting" to "Vegetable Gardening", there will be classes to pique everyone's interest. Classes are by registration only, but the Botanical Center will remain open to tour. We will be having various partner groups (Ask a Master Gardener, Ask a Master Composter, RI Orchid Society, RI Begonia Society, RI Rose Society, NE Carnivorous Plant Society and RI Wild Plant Society) that will be displaying information throughout the Botanical Center to help answer those pesky gardening questions!. Everyone should take advantage of our free soil testing provided by URI Master Gardeners. Simply bring a sample(s) of your soil in a plastic bag or container to the event. Soil testers will analyze samples throughout the day. URI's Learning Landscape program will provide a children's activity.

Location: Roger Williams Park Botanical Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Date & Time: April 4th, 2009, 9 am -4 pm.

Format: A day-long series of workshops. Sign up for the full day or for either the = morning or afternoon sessions.

Fee: Full-day fee with pre registration \$30.00 (\$35.00 for day of) Half-day fee with pre-registration \$20.00 (\$25.00 for day of) Master Gardeners & Master Composters \$25.00/full day and \$15.00/half day) Please bring a lunch!!! Workshop Schedule (including descriptions) & Registration Form are at www.uri.edu/ceels/ceoc/documents/greenshareregistrationform_004.pdf

For more information contact Sejal Lanterman at Sejal@uri.edu or call 874-4453.

Lou's First Saturday Classes

Lou Chasse resumes his monthly classes the 1st Saturday in April. That day he'll run two classes dedicated to frame assembly; one class at 10am, the other at 2pm. His classes will then run from May to September at 2pm, 1st Saturday of the month.

Organic Beekeeping at the Pfeiffer Center

Upcoming Workshops and Visiting Presenters

http://www.chelseagreen.com/bookstore/item/natural_beekeeping

In the past year we have been able to add more seasonal beekeeping events to our calendar, as many participants had requested. We are grateful to our visiting presenters who share their years of experience and expertise with us. Here is an update on who they are and the workshops they will be offering in February, April, and July.

Ross Conrad of Vermont is the author of the widely-praised manual *Natural Beekeeping* <http://www.chelseagreen.com/bookstore/item/natural_beekeeping> (Chelsea Green, 2008). A 2007 article <<http://www.addisonindependent.com/print/551>> about him details his thoughts on Colony Collapse Disorder. On April 24-25, Ross will join Chris Harp and Mac Mead to present the Pfeiffer Center's annual Organic Beekeeping: Principles and Practices workshop.

We are very pleased that Ross will return on July 25 for our first-ever Summer Beekeeping Workshop. This will be a chance to explore seasonal topics such as working with swarms and preparing for the honey harvest, as well as general practices for ensuring your bees' health and vitality.

For more information or to register for any of these events, contact us <<mailto:lory@pfeiffercenter.org>> or use our registration form <<http://www.pfeiffercenter.org/workshops/register.asp>> .

Will Congress kill farmers' markets?

We found this in a Knoxville, TN, newspaper online. Links are to the bill and other informational sources.

This Bill was introduced by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT 3rd) and is likely to eliminate small/family farms who depend upon farm stands and farmers' markets for support.

We intend to get in touch with our DC representation here in RI today to protest this and ask that they vote against it. My recent correspondence with Reed/Whitehouse/Langevin does not make me feel hopeful they will vote against any Democrat-sponsored bill, but I will email a protest to them anyway.

http://blogs.knoxnews.com/knx/silence/archives/2009/03/will_congress_k.shtml

What this will do is force anyone who produces food of any kind, and then transports it to a different location for sale, to register with a new federal agency called the "Food Safety Administration" Hmmmmm? (Via a TennZen tweet) <http://cryptogon.com/?p=7362>. Interesting. A Bill co-sponsor's husband has Monsanto as a client.

<http://www.fcplfoundation.org/programswesupport/capitalbookfestival/authors/greenberg.htm>

UPDATE:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-875>

Here's the Library of Congress' Thomas: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:h875>:

Here's the Cato Institute's Washington Watch:

http://washingtonwatch.com/bills/show/111_HR_875.html#usercomments

UPDATE II: The bill would appear to even cover some fishing boats and potentially your downtown hot dog street vendors. More here:

<http://shepardpolitics.blogspot.com/2009/03/hr-875-would-essentially-outlaw-family.html>

Gardening classes

Spring is starting to warm up and there's no time like the present for a series of gardening classes. The Spring Gardening School at URI starts in just a few short weeks! Great topics throughout the 6 week session. Be sure to visit our website at www.uri.edu/cels/ceoc to download the registration form.

Also, please feel free to pass this info on to your fellow stewards of the planet!



Subscriptions

Most peoples subscriptions are due April 1st. You should have received an email or a postcard reminder.

Annual Dinner and Next Meeting

As mentioned in the editorial, the Dinner is April 18th. There is a registration form available online for you to use (<http://ribeekeeper.org/aprildinner2009.php>) or you can mail a check to PO Box 31, Ashaway RI 02804. Include a note with your name and the number of attendees.

Email addresses

If you've changed your email address, or added a new one, please let me know by mailing me at mike.southern@cox.net

Elections

We have a vacancy for General Secretary. Please see the nomination committee, Kit Mayers or Jeff McGuire.

Help is also required with the print and website versions of this newsletter.

RI Beekeepers Association OFFICERS

President

Everett Zurlinden, E. Greenwich, RI
(401) 374-4730
everett@beehavin.com

Exec. Vice President

Louis J. Chasse II, Saunderstown,
RI (401) 295-0888

Secretary

Position Vacant

Treasurer

Anthony DiGiulio, N Providence, RI
(401) 282-9443
ajd799@cox.net

Bee School Director

Betty Mencucci, Glendale, RI
(401) 568-8449
bmencucci@cox.net

E.A.S. Rep. Board of Dir.

Ed Lafferty, North Providence, RI
(401) 353-6644
fruihillapiaries@verizon.net

Librarian

Celeste Lafferty, N. Providence, RI
(401) 353-6644
fruihillapiaries@verizon.net

Newsletter Editor

Position Vacant

Farm Bureau Representative

Mark Robar
(401) 539-0434
www.tefarm.com

Apiary Inspector

Jim Lawson, Providence, RI
(401) 222-2781 x4519
james.lawson@dem.ri.gov

RIBA WebSite www.ribeekeeper.org

For the online list of officers go to: <http://www.ribeekeeper.org/officers.php>
