Rhode Island Bee Keepers Association

Newsletter

Vol. 4, 2nd Quarter Summer Issue 2012

Heather Mattila, Researcher on Honey Bee Diversity

The annual spring dinner took place on Saturday April 21st at the Twelve Acres Banquet facility in Smithfield, RI. The speaker was Dr. Heather Mattila of Wellesly College in Massachusetts where she is Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. A former student of Tom Seeley at Cornell University (who spoke at the March 2011 RIBA meeting on "Honeybee Democracy" (RIBA Newsletter, vol. 3, Spring 2011) to whose pioneering work on honey bee "democracy" has attracted national attention it is not surprising that her research is innovative. Jason Kerr introduced Dr. Mattila who has worked with Tom Seely as a post-doctoral student at Cornell University and was later employed at Wellesley where she began her own research with an initial 25 colonies, which then grew to 70 colonies at its peak. She has graduate students from Pennsylvania State and Indiana Universities. She began her talk with the simple expression of a scientist, "I love social insects."

(cont'd on p. 3)

Heather Mattila

Dennison Talk on Honey and Wound Therapy Goes 'Viral'

Dr. Allen Dennison, whose January talk at RIBA was featured in the last newsletter , received invitations from several beekeeping associations to speak on the subject as a result of the article. He was invited to the American Apitherapy Association's spring meeting in York, Maine, and he is invited to Martha's Vineyard and to two Bee Clubs in Denver, affiliated with the Colorado Bee Association. In Maine he recommended a local project to compare the activity of mupirocin (Bactroban (TM)), Medihoney (TM), and local honeys against staphylococci, both methicillin-resistant and sensitive, and other skin pathogenic bacteria. (cont'd on p. 2)

Swarm Prevention and Reduction

by Jane Mackenzie Dennison

Everett Zurlinden, RIBA former president, presented a talk at the May meeting at the Arnold Mills Community House in Cumberland on "Making Splits and Swarming." He explained at the outset that this talk is posted with slides and teaching tips on the website www.snetap.com (southern new England teaching apiary). He presented an outline of the subject.

Swarming means the hive is healthy and vigorous and is reproducing well. Swarming is NOT the mark of an inattentive or poor beekeeper. What the attentive beekeeper wants to accomplish are ways of decreasing the risk of the natural process of swarming. There is no guarantee that a hive won't swarm unless it is so sick with varoa mite disease that it is dying. Spring swarm season covers the spring build up and continues until the middle of July. Until that time it is best to be vigilant.

Swarm Prevention or Reduction 1) Slatted rack below bottom deep—providing room for the field bees to hang out and feel less crowded. 2) Using a honey super with frames in place as a slatted rack 3)Swapping Brood chambers to maintain laying space so the queen can continue to move up into the top deep. This can be repeated as often as needed. 4) Add honey supers early and as many as 2-3 supers per hive--place new supers under the more full supers to encourage bees to build out frames. 5) Springtime re-queening 6) Swarm control nuc—leave hive queenless for 3-10 days. Move queen and 2 frames of open brood out—nurse bees will become foragers. On day 10 cut out ALL the supercedure cells in the main hive, then leave them queenless for a few more days to avoid the risk of a hive of laying workers. By mid June or summer solstice, return the small nuc to the original hive.

cont'd on p. 5

Volume 4, 2nd Quarter

Summer 2012 Issue

Inside this issue:

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Join RIBA, Become a Member, attend informative meetings, Receive the Quarterly Newsletter

Send your name, address and phone number and $15 annual membership dues to:

RIBA Treasurer,

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P.O. Box 114014

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IF YOU ARE WILLING TO RECEIVE ALL COMMUNICATION FROM RIBA ELECTRONICALLY AND NOTHNG BY POST, PLEASE CONTACT

ANTHONY DIGIULIO AT: beeoddysey@aol.com.

THANK YOU,

RIBA Officers and Board

SUMMER PHOTOS

Send your photos for the next issue to cfluehr@ric.edu

NOT a honey bee colony! Wasp nest at Fluehr-Lobban's Bridgewater, NH home

Blackberry & Bee, Scott Langlais

Dennison and Wound Therapy

Erin Morse, Master Beekeeper and mentor of Portland, and USDA Grant Recipient, will work with several physicians at Maine Medical Center on a project which will run in parallel with one at Brown University. The Brown Project will involve Dr. Dennison, Rose Gutman of the Statistics Department, Kim Chapin of Microbiology at Rhode Island Hospital, and Len Mermel of Infectious Diseases. The project will compare antibacterial action of the above agents in the laboratory and on the arms of dialysis patients. The goal of the project is to establish low cost methodology to demonstrate applicability of local honeys to wound care practice world-wide. Grant writing is in progress. The RIBA board has authorized him to proceed with obtaining US government recognition of RIBA as a potential USDA grant recipient for this project. Aquaphor is sold at Walmart.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jeff McGuire, RIBA President
(jeffmcguire1@cox.net)

What a spring it has been with the nectar flow starting a good two weeks early and hives swarming a rate I haven't seen in a couple of years. For the most part packages have been building well with only a few queen problems reported. Swarming and the new queen left behind have been problematic with many reports of parent hives going queenless after a swarm. I split most of my strong hives as swarm prevention measure only to find they swarmed anyway. I'd pull out my hair if I had any. Swarm calls came from all parts of the state this year and many from people with multiple swarms. One home owner in North Kingstown had a feral hive in a tree that swarmed 5 times. The nectar flow so far has been very good and the bees are filling them nicely, the ones that didn't swarm on me that is. Remember to always put on at least two supers at a time as they can fill them very quickly and you don't want them running out of room. This time of year an extra empty super on your hive isn't a problem but having them run out of a place to put honey and start back filling the brood nest can be a big one. Remember that the lack of room for the queen to lay eggs is a cause of swarming.

I would like to thank all the volunteers these past months; it sure does make it easier with so many jumping in to help out. Christine Dwyer is following up her great work organizing our bee run by taking on the job of Program Director. She's got lots of great ideas that you'll all be hearing about soon. Speaking of the bee run, hats off to Everett Zurlinden and Ed Lafferty for driving the girls home safely. Many thanks also go to Paul Whewell. Paul has been helping Betty every year with her bee school. We all know how important it is to have another set of hands when working with big groups. As always, we appreciate Celeste Nadworny who does so many things it's hard to name them all. She ran another great auction at our Spring Dinner. Lots of people step up every day in our organization, and that's something to be proud of RIBA members

P.S. I know you want RIBA to save money. It would save printing and postage costs if you receive all of your notices and the Newsletter electronically. If you are able to do this, please send notification to Tony Digiulio that in the future you receive all communication by email or the RIBA website at: BeeOdyssey@aol.com. Thank you.

Heather Mattila cont'd

Professor Mattila is one of the young up and coming researchers on bees and like most of these researchers she sees the crucial relationship between honey bee researchers and practical beekeeping. Professor Mattila works on genetic diversity as well as the dynamics of swarming. This research was funded by the Essex County Beekeepers Association with a $5,000 grant. She has posed the question how genetic diversity improves the health and well-being of bees and colonies. Bees are polyandrous, an anthropological term adopted by Mattila meaning that females mate with more than one male. For the males mating is a one shot deal. This is interesting biologically. Males have an "explosive ejaculation" when mating with a queen; after mating he falls back and knocks off his genitalia and dies. Once mated the queen is virtually fluorescent and thus is a visible target for other drones. The average mating of a single queen is with 12 to 20 males. Asian species of honey bees mate with up to 100+ drones. Thus, bees are 'promiscuous' in human terms and this is an uncommon strategy in nature, Dr. Mattila reports. The extreme polyandry of honey bees stocks the colony with mostly half-sisters; the parallels to this are found in army ant colonies, leaf cutter ants which have in common with honey bees their strength in numbers that result in a dominance of their environment.

The multiple mating of queens actually is beneficial in that it brings in a high amount of genetic diversity from the multiple drone matings and thus colonies tend to be genetically healthier. Only 1% of other insects are polyandrous like the honey bee.

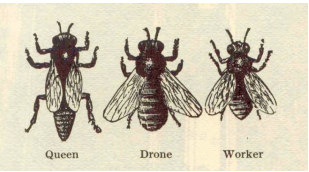
In Dr. Mattila's research the genetically diverse colonies showed more dramatic and rapid growth and by the end of the summer her research colonies had raised about 27,000 workers, while other hives only produced about 5,000 workers. She started with a kilo of bees in both. The forager rates in the genetically diverse colonies were also much higher—she noted a 30-55% difference. She followed these colonies through the winter and discovered that none of the single patriline colonies survived while the surviving non-patriline colonies averaged a similar overall survival rate for New York of 25%.

She further experimented comparing genetically diverse versus monogamous, less diverse hives in which she studied the waggle dance which she recorded by the use of a bee cam for recording their dancing in the hive. She compared their respective amounts of dancing through which they advertized the locations of resources. Once again she observed more diverse colonies exhibiting longer and more frequent dancing. Patriline colonies filled in with "tremble" dancing. She discovered that 'adventurous' bees tried out new dances and that more diverse colonies have more adventurers. Scouting specialists emerged from patriline colonies. Waggle dancing is a specialized task, and she was able to correlate more the more scout rich colonies with more waggle dancing;

Ovary development in females is often thought to be stimulated by queenless colonies and a low drone population, but in an average colony up to 20% of bees have a comparable ovary development. Ovary development visibly appears like thin strands, akin to sausage links. Ovary development is higher in patriline colonies. However, colonies with higher ovary development are less productive.

Dr. Mattila sampled pheromones in high dancing colonies where she found that the dancing pheromone stimulates foraging. She sampled workers as they were dancing to test for pheromones and found in multiple patriline colonies the prevalence of moyre dancing and dancing smells. She did this by marking individual dancing bees discovering that the longer dances—at about 45 circuits—resulted in the presence of higher pheromones. Low dancing she calculated at 13 circuits.

The genetically diverse colonies got sick but were sick for shorter periods of time. Disease in honey bees is reduced by genetic diversity. (cont'd on p. 4)



Mark your calendar early for the ANNUAL FALL DINNER

OCTOBER 7, 2012

Fall dinner meeting is Sunday, Columbus day weekend, at The Pines, North Smithfield

Speaker: Dr. Jim Tew

Silent raffle

(see notice on p. 10)

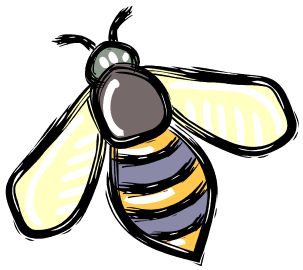
Schedule of Summer meetings

July 8: Shelly Arena, Glocester

August 12: Bob Davis, Chepachet

September 9: Lynn Davignon, Cumberland

Further details to follow with the monthly meeting notices sent to you either electronically or by post. (Please note the last paragraph of the "President's Message"



Heather Mattila cont'd

Honey bees eat honey and bee bread mixing these substances with their regurgitated stomach contents. There are lots of bacteria present, 103 core bacteria, many of which are used for fermenting wines, milk to make yogurt. The genetically diverse colonies contained thousands of bacteria and this has a probiotic effect on the hive assisting the honey bees' immune defense system.

Honey Bee queens may be in trouble due to low diversity rates in mating. Queen rearers need to maintain a gene pool from thousands of breeders. The threshold of genetic diversity for honey bees is anything above the average of 14 drone matings per queen. Swarms from diverse hives have a better prospect for survival. She noted the work of her collaborator John Snow at Wellesley.

There was a lively question and answer period following Dr. Mattila's talk.

Dennison on Honey and Wound Therapy (cont'd from p. 2)

Dr. Dennison has been invited to speak to beekeepers on Martha's Vineyard, and to Dr. Heather Matilla's Summer program at Wellesley College, dates to be fixed.. He will speak in Denver to two Bee Clubs of the Colorado Bee Association, on August 16th and again on August 18th. He advocates mixing local honey with Aquaphor (TM) in equal parts as a thickener and has participants make up their own samples in 2 oz jars for home use. Mixing honey with powdered pectin or Unpetroleum (TM), a vegetable shortening product, are alternate thickeners, less well-tested, for those who object to the possible side effects, physical or geopolitical, of using petroleum jelly. He continues to teach at Rhode Island Hosptial and Roger Williams Medical Center where he encourages the resident physicians in training to use of Medihoney (TM) on most skin wounds. Honey allows extended periods between dressing changes, between 2-7 days depending on the wound, which accellerates healing while reducing cost and patient discomfort.

RIBA Spring Ukrainian Egg Workshop, by Carolyn daughter of Anna Wolsonovich

In preparation for springtime, the Vernal Equinox, Passover, or whatever is your favorite rite of spring (bees flying and reproducing works), I conducted a "Pysanky" workshop for the benefit of RIBA members who wanted to learn this ancient folk craft. I was encouraged to do so by the strong interest in the this craft, involving the use of beeswax, at the EAS meeting in RI last summer. I conducted two workshops, both of which were fully booked, and one participant, the editor of BeeCraft magazine in the UK asked me to write an article for their holiday issue last December.

Six participants joined me on Saturday March 24 for the afternoon workshop, one RIBA member of Russian ancestry who knew about the tradition of the "batik" method of dyeing eggs using progressive applications of beeswax to retain the dyes where the wax has been applied with a special instrument, the "kitska" for 'writing' on the egg. Three participants represented three generations of women in the same family. I learned from my Mom.

Each person completed an egg during the 3 hour workshop in the style shown in the picture below, a simple "sunburst" design that dates back to pre-Christian times in the Ukraine. Archaeologists have discovered ceramic versions of this design as well as eggshell remnants of eggs produced using beeswax 2,000 years ago. Surely Ukrainians were avid beekeepers or collectors.

Top: Irina Morin, cfl; **below:** Shelly Arena, gen 3, 2, Celeste & grandma

RIBA NEWS

The RIBA Officers elected at the Spring annual dinner are as follows:

President: Jeff McGuire

Vice-president: Ed Lafferty

Secretary and Newsletter editor: Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban

Treasurer: Anthony DiGiulio

Member at Larger: Jane Dennison (elected unopposed)

Program Committee Chair: Christine Dwyer (appointment)

Webmasters: Bob Davis (transition Anthony DiGiulio)

FILLER FACTS—'Honey bee' in different languages:

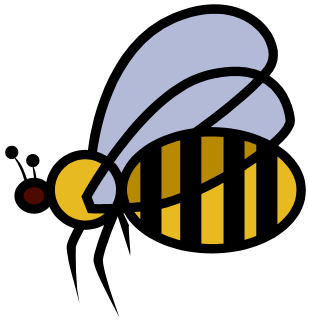
French: *abielle de miel*

German: *honigbiene*

Arabic: *abata*

Spanish: *abeja de la miel*

Esperanto: *abelo*



Everett Zurlinden on Swarming & Splits

(cont'd from p. 1)

Installing a laying queen

Allow 3-5 days for the new hive and queen to get acquainted. The candy plug is not a marshmallow. Do not poke a hole in the candy when introducing a new queen to an existing colony. You want her to be introduced slowly—allowing up to 5-7 days keeping the queen in her cage is okay. Always put the queen cage into the brood chamber or where the largest mass of bees are seen. If necessary you can hold the queen cage for up to 5-7 days with a drop of water placed onto the screen, but do not spray her.

Queen cells are a great way to have locally mated queens. They are commercially available 24-72 hours before emergence for about $6.00 each. Hang the queen cell between frames. Locally mated queens encourage the genetically beneficial polyandry of honey bees. The queen is likely to mate with 12-20 drones.

MAKING A NUCLEUS COLONY

You need: 1 frame of brood with eggs; 1 frame of emerging brood (capped); 1 frame of honey; 1 frame of pollen; 1 frame with anything (even new foundation)

Shake a couple of frames of bees from open brood (nurse bees) amounting to several cups of bees. Do not feed if there is honey in hive as the bees will make the hive honey bound. The bees will raise a new queen in 15-16 days and then she will fly out to mate and return, -- you will have another hive! Nucs made with nurse bees do not have to be moved to another apiary.

ADDITIONAL METHODS

Artificial Swarm #1—Use the basic recipe, but find old queen and put her into the nuc. Leave some eggs in the old hive and leave the queen cells—they will think that they have swarmed. This works in early April when there are not queens available.

Artificial Swarm #2—In the parent hive go back and cut all swarm and queen cells in 10 days. In 30 days recombine the nuc—no no need to use newspaper. The hive will determine which queen they want;

Cutdown Split #3—as honey flow ends, about June 10th—bees can get aggressive. Take all of the brood out of a 10 frame hive, leave new hive queenless;

Queenbank—can put above a hive over a queen excluder

Wax factory—nucs will build out a lot of frames quickly.

Overwintered nuc—(5 frame colony has a 40% chance of winter survival)—by July 10th put in a laying queen, feed and mite control.

COMPLETE INFO AND PHOTOS AT www.snetap.com

WALK-AWAY SPLITS

Everett conducted an outside demonstration of how to make a **walk-away split**:--This method guarantees that the old queen will stay with the old hive. A new nuc will only have nurse bees. You can move the colony and put a nuc in its place to catch the foragers. The colony, now without foragers, can be used for demos witho9ut fear onlookers getting stung. Why? Because bee foragers are aggressive when they are n longer with the hive. You will need a bee brush, a queen excluder, empty bee box, and 10 extra frames. Take 3 open brood frames—shake or brush off all the bees. The frames should include: 1 empty or capped brood frame; 1 honey or nectar frame. Push the leftover five frames into the middle of the parent box. Cover with the queen excluder and place the 5 pulled frames on top. Be sure the top frames line up with the bottom frames. Cover and let rest for about 1 hour. 1- 1 ½ hours later the nurse bees will have moved up to cover the open brood. Then you can introduce a queen or let them make their own queen. Take the top box away and you have created a new hive once you have replaced the frames in both hives. Return the parent hive to its original place to pick up the foragers that will be waiting.

Swarm capture, Amy Langlais

June Meeting Featured Demonstration on Mite Counting

The June meeting was held at the home of John Poland in East Greenwich (thank you for the hospitality!). After the business portion of the meeting Jane Dennison conducted a demonstration of mite counting without killing the bees as is necessary with the alcohol wash method

This method is simple. Add one tablespoon of powdered sugar to one cup of bees (about 300) taken from the hive to be tested. Shake the bees and sugar together, and covering the jar with a wire mesh lid (mesh large enough for the mites and small enough to keep the bees in the jar) shake the bees onto a white paper plate. Pour some water into the plate, the sugar dissolves,

And the mites will be visible for counting. Depending upon the age and size of the colony the mite can be assessed. A new colony from a fresh package should not have a high mite count. On the demonstration plate only one mite was visible, which is considered acceptable. This was a first year, however the 2 & 3 year old hives had 12-13 mites and need treatment. A hygienic, mite-free colony is nearly impossible in contemporary American beekeeping.

Late Spring Early Summer Honey Report

James Praski
James.Praski@ams.usda.gov

Jim would like to hear from you with your observations and any information regarding your hives.

New England weather for the months of March, April and May featured a pattern of cooler temperatures later in the spring and warmer ones earlier in the season. March was favorable for honeybees as between March 13 and 19 previous high historical heat records were exceeded in more than one thousand places in all of North America. Temperatures were generally much above normal for all parts of the New England region in April and May often with daytime temperatures in the high 60's and lows only in the 40's. Thus, many floral sources and ornamentals came on earlier than normal. The early spring ornamentals such as pussy willow, hazelnut catkins, skunk cabbage, poison ivy, swamp red maple, winter aconite as well as snow drops (*galanthus nivalis*), gave way to the later blooms as bees returned to their hives with their pollen sacks brimming with orange, yellow and cream colored pollen from crocus, daffodils, and witch hazel. Moisture levels until early June for the entire region have been lower than normal. Other primary early spring forging ornamental and floral sources for pollen and nectar are; sumac, dandelion, crocus, willows along with Acer rubrum (red maple) and silver maple. Bees across New England were also gathering pollen and nectar from; glory of the snow-snow drop (*chionadoxa luciliae*), jasmine, Siberian squill (*scilla siberica*), American elm (*ulmus Americana*) quaking aspen, alder, spice bush, sassafras, leather leaf, pin cherry, plum, blueberry and crab apple. Additional local sources currently are ground ivy (*glechoma hederacea*), chickweed (*stellaria media*) and dandelions.

In Southern New England, colonies rapidly strengthened. Nonetheless, some beekeepers continued to administer pollen supports and supplemental feedings on a need basis until combs are drawn out. In regard to established colonies, seasoned keepers try to make sure that they have ample room to expand and that honey supers are already in place. Since the queen lays usually at a rate of 1500 eggs a day, it is critical that there is enough food for the new brood. Seasoned beekeepers have noted that this situation presents a pervasive swarming problem this spring with reports of swarming as early as late March. Spurts of really warm weather have created for many keepers, fast fills of medium supers of honey this spring already, and honeysuckle and black locust are expected to produce a good honey flow.

Many keepers early on had observed pollen frenzies at the entrances of their hives, mostly cream colored and orange pollens as activity was intense. Regionally, the major portion of spring nectar flow emanates from chestnut and black locust bloom to which most of the black locust got washed away earlier than usual. Bees also collected from other pollen and nectar sources such as greater celandine, dogwood, honeysuckle, numerous clovers, mostly sweet clover, lilac, mustard, glossy buckthorn, hawkweed, mint, chive, black cherry, wild flowers and other flowering ornamental trees and shrubs. Purportedly, many hives have had good brood that has been hatching during this wet weather and the congestion is likely to stimulate the swarming impulse as swarms are expected to be prolific when we catch the next series of warm sunny days.

Clearly, the mild 2011-2012 winter predicts an earlier than usual spring 2012 swarm season. Swarm triggers are nectar stimulus, congestion of the brood nest, overcrowding, aging queens and varroa loading. Swarm prevention is helped along when you carefully limit your sugar feedings so that there are no more than 4 frames of honey or syrup per active brood chamber. In this regard, care should be taken when feeding so as not to overdo it and push the queen into laying more brood than the bees can cover, in the event of major cold weather occurring and creating chilled brood conditions. A common New England space management practice is to swap brood chambers. Swapping brood chambers can be done every time the upper most brood chamber becomes congested to the point that it is full of brood. This will promote 15 to 18% more brood production; however one must wait until the brood occupies most of the available space and there are enough nurse bees to keep the chamber warm when it is put on the bottom board. Most New England keepers believe that making nucs is the most reliable control method as it fools the bees into thinking that they have already swarmed. Keepers make the split and put the old queen into the split and the parent colony is left to make their own queen. Reportedly, keepers look for signs of drone production, as we often see swarms a month after drone cells appear. Many keepers, both hobbyists and commercial, have expressed a frustration about over wintering because purportedly,

Honey Report (cont'd from p. 6)

their bees going into winter were strong and had plenty of food but experienced losses after checking. Those hives that died were small in population going into winter and probably lacked the critical mass to maintain temperatures within the cluster. The second reason was starvation, especially in single colonies as they simply ran out of honey. Russian honeybee colonies looked to be the most enduring as they can survive on less honey and get by with smaller populations.

Weather for May featured a pattern that was more seasonal with normal temperatures for most of the month, but early June temperatures cooled in Southern New England. Higher moisture levels helped push earlier than normal ornamental and floral sources for pollen and nectar such as dandelion (*taraxacum officinale)* as well as ornamental Japanese or blood good red maple and crab apple. Dandelion (*taraxacum officinale*), and ground ivy was very productive this year. Its nectar is very tasty and produces golden honey that is strong in flavor and the pollen is orange in color. Additional early sources exhibiting early bloom were chokecherry (*prunus virginiana*), blackberry (*prunus serotina)*, pin cherry (*prunus pensylvanica)*, peaches (*prunus persica*), plums(*prunis Americana)*, apples (*malus*), as well as honeysuckle (*lonicerata tarian*), blueberry (*vaccinium)*, black locust, glossy buckthorn, hawkweed (king devil), chive, mustard and lilac. Early May cold, rainy weather with too little sun and 3-7 days of wet, cool weather was responsible for slowing spring buildup and nectar flows. The rainy weather the last two weeks of the month has slowed plant growth and farm plantings. So there have been few blossoms to pollinate and most orchards currently are not getting the needed pollination.

Spring is best known for the fruit bloom. Apple pollination was reportedly problematic as pollination hives were quickly placed into the orchards 2-3 weeks ahead of schedule, due to a very warm March and April, followed by cold and wet weather. Many regional growers reported a 25-50% possible crop loss due to freezing temperatures and wet conditions. Orchard pollination was completed approximately one month earlier than normal. Some keepers satisfied fruit grower needs especially apples, by setting up beehives no later than the 2nd week of May. This year pollination fees are set at $75.00 to $100.00 mostly $80.00 per hive with 4-hives per pallet and a 1- pallet minimum. Pollination hives were deployed to apples, blueberries and other earlier crops but were cut short by continual rain and cool temperatures. Pesticides continue to be a concern to all beekeepers. There have been many reported instances where beekeepers that provide bees to growers for pollination purposes have complained to their grower employers and their beekeeper associations with the concern of the practice of broadcast spraying of crop fungicides in a timely way that puts their pollination hives in high risk circumstances. There is an ongoing national dialogue concerning the issue of how much pollination services are being negatively affected by particular grower fungicide practices and how much there is a risk causal relationship in this regard.

Reportedly, hives experiencing superseded queens usually show offspring bees of a different coloring. Reports of swarm activity are already very high and problematic for those who did not make splits and put off supering because rain had dampened most beekeeping activity. According to reports, generally speaking, over wintered hives are doing extremely well with lots of brood building up with full foundation expansion and plenty of forging/worker bees. Reportedly, package bees from Georgia were in good to excellent supply and condition with queen quality slightly above average. Purportedly, this year there seems to be an issue with hive absconding, where by all the bees leave a hive, then in past seasons.

Bee on black locust, Scott Langlais

This current New England season has reported a smaller than normal domestic bees wax available on the wholesale and retail market. Scarcity will drive prices up. Sellers claim that most of the wax has been sold this year and little domestic wax will be available until this summer when honey harvesting resumes. Current wholesale prices quoted exclusively for white, cleaned beeswax are steady and for 1lb block units at $5.50 to $5.75 mostly $5.50 and for 50lb block units at $4.50 to $5.00 mostly $4.75. Price quotes taken for bulk orders above 50lbs are $2.20 to $3.50 mostly $3.50 for white/light, cleaned beeswax. Retail white and cleaned beeswax prices reported are $16.00 to $20.00 per pound. Many beeswax sellers have held their prices however, are reportedly very low on supply inventories. Demand at all retail/wholesale outlets remains good and honey sales remain firm. Prices quoted for retail 1lb bottled units were strong and quoted at $7.00 to $10.00 mostly $9.00 and occasionally higher inclusive of all varieties; for food service operations prices were strong with 5 gallon units selling at $175.00 to $215.00 mostly $200.00 occasionally higher for all raw and natural honey depending on variety and quality.

Most keepers have recently received package bees/nucs, so they are hopeful for a strong summer build up of their hives. Prices ranged from $70.00 to $100.00 mostly $85.00 for a 3 lb. package with queen. Reportedly, 3 to 5 frame nuclei colonies average $100.00 to $135.00 whereby nuclei colonies usually develop 5 to 6 weeks ahead of package startups with less Supercedure problems due to population imbalances before new brood starts to hatch. Purportedly, packages that loose queens can develop laying workers quickly. Demand at all retail/ wholesale outlets remains good and honey sales remain firm.

2012 EAS IN BURLINGTON, VT

AUGUST 13-17, UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, BURLINGTON

THEME: "BEES AND BEYIOND"

ALL of the "GREATS" will be there, visit their website

www.eas.org

ORDER YOUR RIBA T-SHIRTS FROM LAST YEAR'S EAS MEETING: RIBA LOGO, "GOT HONEY" MAKES A GREAT GIFT, $15 a shirt; Contact Celeste Nadworny at: fruithillapiaries@verizon.net

Beehives Atop the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in NYC

Yes, you read or heard correctly that the posh Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in midtown Manhattan is the latest NYC institution to get on board the beekeeping band wagon. Since beekeeping was legalized in the city in 2010-- thanks to the efforts of its major campaigner Andrew Cote who now tends the six rooftop hives at the Waldorf-hives have been installed on many rooftops and community gardens. Cote is also the founder of "Bees without Borders" and the newly minted New York City Beekeepers Association.

On June 6th the six hives arrived at the Waldorf in a luxury car (what else?) and were transported by elevator to the hotel roof. They join similar hives previously installed at the Hotel Intercontinental that followed the lead of its Boston affiliate. The hotel stated that the hives were installed for their own honey production and for the benefit of pollination in the midtown area. Once installed, the bees readily took to foraging in the area, not surprisingly heading for Central Park, but they will be a welcome sight at any flower pot set out on the front stoop .

The Waldorf chefs plan to incorporate honey-infused recipes into their gourmet menus. And the hotel management is planning to offer small pots of honey to guests as a special gift.

The Waldorf may have taken its lead from the installation of hives at the White House by Michelle Obama as part of her public green effort, and also for honey production for the White House kitchen and for special gifting.

BEEHIVES AT RIC Rescheduled

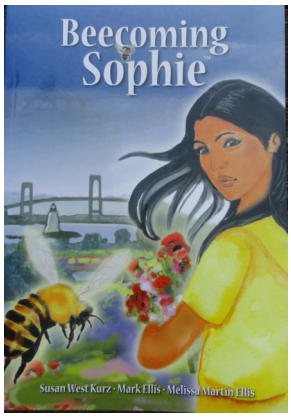
The installation of the beehives at RIC was delayed due to concerns raised by a few students. The relocation of the hives will be near to Building #8 at the east end of the campus adjacent to the School of Social Work. Plans to coordinate with the Henry Barnard School for on-site education are underway. For those interested in attending the summer installation, please contact the editor at: cfluehr@ric.edu.

FOSTER, RI FAIR

July 27-30, 2012

If you want to volunteer or sell your honey at the RIBA Booth contact Kit Mayers at

BOOK REVIEW: *BEECOMING SOPHIE (an illustrated short story for young people)* by Rhode Islanders Susan West Kurz, Mark Ellis, and Melissa Martin Ellis, Beeconscious Publishing, 56 Wright Lane, Jamestown, RI, 02835. Illustrated, 156 pages, $22.95, available at: www.beeconscious.com



This is a charming book for beekeepers to read and an engaging book for young people to gain an interest in bees. It is built around the personal story of Sophie, and Rolando the adopted children of a Jamestown couple. And the other central character is "Phoebee" a talking bee who has moved into a flower pot in Sophie's room in an effort to communicate with humans about the plight of the honey, bee and she has chosen Sophie to be her human advocate.

Sophie is a typical teen who is ignorant and fearful of bees until a very special queen bee PHOEBEE flies into her bedroom and takes up residence in her vase of flowers. To Sophie's astonishment the bee talks to her and relates the story of honey bees from ancient times to the present vulnerable conditions in which bees are now living. Sophie is both enthralled with her talking bee and turned into an advocate for a more bee-friendly and bee-healthy environment. By the way, Sophie lives in Jamestown, RI, is adopted along with her brother Rolando who is also a character in the unfolding story.

Sophie travels by bus to Providence once a week for her Adoption Network where she regularly meets Sokuen whose grandfather keeps bees in the city. That knowledge expands Sophie's horizon further and feeds her natural curiosity. The RI reader will enjoy the artistic rendering of scenes of Providence, especially around the Kennedy Plaza bus station area.

As suburban youth Sophie and her brother target their local environment and zero in on the "Sea View Golf Course" —dubbed "The Big Dead Green Zone" for all the pesticides they use— as a place they need to change to make the club more "beeconscious" (also the name of the publisher of the boo). Sophie and Rolando, who works part-time at the club, devise a scheme whereby they substitute wild flower seed for the grass seed the club plans to use to develop its manicured green for the golfers. The flower seeds transform the golf course into a wild flower garden, a beautiful double-page work of art in the book.

Needless to say the Golf Club is not amused and the "ecoterraists" get into trouble with their parents, but they are eventually brought around to the "kids" point of view and their important mission and join their effort.

The local TV stations have gotten wind of Sophie's daring re-seeding of the golf course and she receives positive public attention and reinforcement. Her parents install two hives on their property after searching their hearts and receiving an inspirational message from Queen Phoebee.

Meanwhile it is time for the high school dance which Sophie reinvents as an "Earth Day Dance" at which Sophie and her new friend-advocates perform the "Waggle Dance" thus making bees and beekeeping 'cool.' The logo for the dance reads: BEECONSCIOUS.

Sophie's story is utterly 'bee-coming' and is a delight to the eye as well as the mind. It is an effective way to introduce the plight of the bees, as well the well-known solutions to a youthful audience. I plan to donate my extra copy to the Henry Barnard School on the RIC campus as a tool for learning about the hives about to be installed.

As one who teaches about diversity, I am appreciative of the natural and effective way that the author has of representing multicultural youth and some of the issues international adoptees face in American society. These complex issues are addressed through this lovely story about bees and the environment. The book makes a wonderful addition to your beekeeping library, or a great gift to give to a special young person in your life. It is an excellent way to introduce them to the world of bees and their intimate connection to the well-being of our shared environment.

You can contact the local author and her beautiful, diverse family at: www.beeconscious.com

HIVE MANAGEMENT TIPS

by Bernie Bieder

beeman704@verizon.net

Tick Season All beekeepers should be aware of ticks. This past winter, one of the warmest recent memory, has been good for their incubation and explosion. Be aware that tick bites do not affect the human body's immune system, but you could be walking around unaware that you acting as a host for ticks. It is important that you inspect every inch of your body for ticks after a shower, and don't forget your pets as well.

A tick bite does not set off the body's immune system. It is necessary to inspect body all over. For those having garden problems w/deer, squirrels, groundhogs..and other plant eating varmints...check imustgarden.com for natural repellants.

Plant Damage Those of us who garden have been victims of the predation of deer, squirrel, gophers and other critters with appetites for our garden's bounty. I have had my share of chewed up plants and dug up bulbs. I would like to recommend that consult the internet website Imustgarden.com for natural deterrents of the above garden nuisances. I am trying the squirrel repellant and will report my results in a subsequent newsletter.

When you remove the outer cover of your hive and see large black ants scurrying around the inner cover-this could mean that the hive could be weak or on the decline...or that the ants like the honey The best way to get rid of this problem, and also if you have ants entering your house...just sprinkle powder such as Ajax or Bon Ami around the edges if the cover and point of entry around the house. Check on the health of the hive.

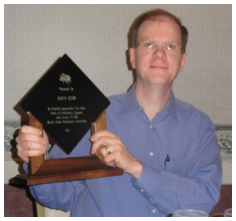
RIBA Service Awards to Jason Kerr and Jim Lawson

Two special awards were presented at the Spring annual dinner. Jason Kerr who has served as RIBA webmaster for several years and as coordinator of annual honey judging contests, was recognized for his service to the organization. Jason and Janet Kerr have relocated to update New York, and they will be missed.

Jim Lawson, long time state Bee Inspector, was also recognized for his service and advocacy for beekeeping in the state of Rhode Island. RIBA members can request an inspection from Jim by contacting him at 401-222-2781.

Jim Lawson, above

Jason Kerr, below



BECOME A PART OF RIBA'S DYNAMIC GROWTH!

CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING FOR A RIBA COMMITTEE TO HELP GROW AND IMPROVE OUR ORGANIZATION. THIS IS A CHANCE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORLD OF BEEKEEPING WHILE SUPPORTIING YOUR LOCAL

OCTOBER ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER

The annual Fall Harvest dinner will take place on Sunday October 7 at The Pines Banquet facility, 1204 Pound Hill Road, North Smithfield, RI. 11:00AM until 3:00PM. Tickets are $20, paid in advance to Anthony DiGiulio; there will be NO payment at the door. The guest speaker will be Dr. James Tew of Auburn University in Alabama (see bio p. 12).

In addition to the lecture and dinner, a silent raffle will be held coordinated by Christine Dwyer Contact: ChrisDwyer29@cox.net and consider a donation of items that can be raffled off for the benefit of our association. The number of raffle items will be limited so please drop off your donations before the dinner at Chris or Celeste's home. Contact Chris for further information. And thank you for your generosity.

LOOK FOR RIBA ON FACEBOOK & YAHOO

http://www.facebook.com/groups/ribeekeepers

http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/ribeekeeper

The RIBA Quarterly Newsletter wants to improve education for beekeepers & public understanding of the importance of honey bees; send your ideas & suggestions to the editor: cfluehr@ric.edu

Fall Dinner Speaker

Dr. James E. Tew is currently the Beekeeping Specialist for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University. Before retiring in 2011, Dr. Tew served as the State Extension Beekeeping Specialist at The Ohio State University for 34 years. Since1975, Jim has taught classes, provided extension services, and conducted applied research on honey bees and honey bee behavior - specifically pollination behavior. Additionally, he continues to contribute monthly articles for national beekeeping publications and has written: *Beekeeping Principles* and *Backyard Beekeeping*. He is a frequent speaker at state and national meetings and has traveled extensively to observe beekeeping techniques.

Jim has five grandkids who keep him spry and active. For enjoyment, he woodworks, photographs, and feeds ungrateful birds. He can be reached at: tewbee2@gmail.com , http://twitter.com/onetewbee, and http://www.facebook.com/tewbee2

HONEY RECIPE

SPICED HONEY BLUEBERRY JAM Thanks to Janet Suleski Kerr

* 2 and a half cups fresh or frozen coarsely chopped blueberries
* 2 and one half cups granulated sugar (amount can be reduced slightly if you prefer jams with more of a tart taste)
* 1 cup liquid honey
* 1 tablespoon lemon juice
* One-half teaspoon ground nutmeg (freshly-grated nutmeg tastes best. You can also add a bit more nutmeg if you like)
* 1 pouch liquid pectin

Place blueberries, honey, sugar, lemon juice and nutmeg in a large stainless steel or enamel sauce pan (note: use of a large pan is important, as this mixtures expands a lot when it reaches boil). Bring to a full boil over high heat and boil hard for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in pectin. Ladle into pre-prepared hot sterilized jars, leaving 1/4 to 1/2 inch of room between the top of the liquid jam and the lid. Process for 10 minutes per canning instructions.

Can be made with frozen berries

Source: *The Complete Book of Small Batch Preserving*, by Ellie Topp and Margaret Howard

RIBA MEMBERS WHO SELL BEES AND BEEKEEPING

Cottage Industry Apiary

Louis J. Chasse II, 295-0888

31 years RI manufactured fine woodenware with a 2009 price

Beehavin' Apiaries

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Honey, Bees, Beekeeping supplies

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225 Douglas Pike, Smithfield, RI 401-885-5172

***Note:* The Executive Board has established a standard fee of $25 per newsletter for a business card size advertisement in the Newsletter, beginning with the next issue. Other relevant ads will be accepted in future issues.**

RIBA IS AN ALL VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION—PLEASE FILL OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE BACK PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER AND FIND A WAY TO CONTRIBTE AS A VOLUNTEER TO YOUR ONLY BEEKEEPING ORGANIZATION IN THE STATE AND REGION THANK YOU!

RI Beekeepers' Association

We're on the Web!

www.ribeekeeper.org

Newsletter editor:
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23 Fort Ave.
Cranston, RI 02905
cfluehr@ric.edu

Headline

First Survey of RIBA Members (please return to address above or cfluehr@ric.edu)

Did you take a beekeeping course(s) with RIBA? _____ What year(s)? _____

How long have you been keeping bees? _____

How many hives do you maintain? _____

In which location(s)? _____

What percentage of hives did you lose, if any, in the last year? _____

If you could invent a job that would help RIBA, what would it be? _____

Ideas for Speakers? _____

Are you willing to volunteer a small amount of time to RIBA? _____

Contact info: