Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

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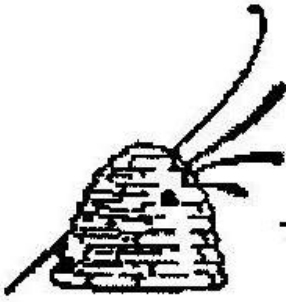
Beekeeping - Bee Stings By Joe Miller



At the Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association picnic, I told **Ann Harman** about a recent acute reaction I had to a bee sting. I was just going to check the top feeders on my hives and only wore my veil and gloves. As fate would have it, one of the lovely ladies of the hive decided to let me know of her annoyance at my presence by awarding my right bicep with a quick but fiery sting. I was shocked at first, but quickly scraped the stinger from my arm, dropped everything, and slowly backed away from the apiary. I did not give the sting a second thought, because I had never experienced anything other than a minor local reaction to a sting. I went straight to the house and took a Benadryl to combat some of the itching I knew I would soon encounter. I sat down at my computer to write my article for June's newsletter. The longer I worked on the article, the more uncomfortable I became. I noticed my throat felt unusually sore each time I swallowed. It reminded me of being a small child who didn't want to go to school. You know, uncomfortable, but not really debilitating. The expected minor local reaction (of itching) was now spreading from my shoulder to the elbow. Denial being the potent coping mechanism that it is, I took another Benadryl and continued to work.

Three hours after the encounter I began to notice that I was having some difficulty swallowing. Rather than go to bed and wake up dead, I convinced myself to get to the emergency room while I could still breathe. Once there, I was quickly given 30 mg. oral prednisone (a steroid) and a dose of intravenous Pepcid antacid. I was surprised to find out that this over-the-counter antacid is a very effective antihistamine. For the use as an antihistamine, the oral dosage is twice that recommended for a sour stomach.

Along with hive tools, duct tape, pens and notebook, I now have a small apothecary in my apiary kit, including two Epipens, quick dissolving Benadryl strips that are placed on your tongue, and Pepcid antacid tablets. I probably could have avoided all this hassle by taping a penny over the sting. It is written that a local reaction can be avoided by this method. Why it is supposed to work? I don't know. I've heard that copper has a neutralizing effect on the enzymes in bee venom.

Surprisingly, two beekeepers I most admire have given me the same advice. Here is what **George Imirie** had to say: "Get more stings!" **Ann Harman**, after hearing my tale, said "Get more stings, perhaps 200 a year!" This advice is supported by some of the worlds' best allergists! In contrast, they will occasionally recommend that you

"**Quit keeping bees!**"

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Bee Sting Reactions — By Kathy Miller

Paraphrased from

Dewey Caron's Honey Bee Biology & Beekeeping

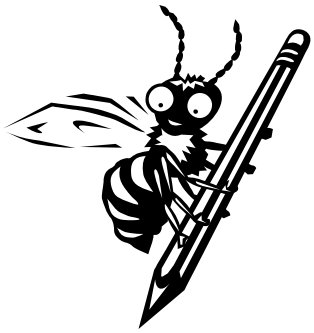
Reactions to a sting may be grouped into three general categories; **normal**, **allergic,** or **toxic**. A **normal** reaction to a bee sting has five components: pain, inflammation of a wheal, redness developing around a wheal, swelling, and itching. The amount of swelling and the discomfort varies a great deal in a normal reaction. The extent of the swelling may be nothing more than a bump, or it may be a large amount of swelling. If the swelling is confined to the site of the sting, generally it is classified as a normal reaction.

Allergic reactions can be grouped into 2 main types: **large local reactions** or **systemic allergic reactions**. The **large local reaction** form of allergic reaction is less life threatening, though complications like excessive swelling in the throat can cut off breathing. For the large local reaction, the application of an oral antihistamine such as Benadryl or chlortrimeton is usually of value. The absorption of the venom may be slowed by the application of ice to the sting site. The treatment for a sting allergy depends on the severity of the allergic reaction.

The **systemic allergic response** is the most severe allergic response and occurs immediately and usually includes shock, loss of consciousness, or fainting caused by low blood pressure. Such a reaction can be expected to occur in less than 1% of the population, but this sting reaction can be fatal. Other clues that it may be a systemic allergic reaction are the presence of symptoms distant from the site of the sting: all over body hives, itching distant to the sting site, fear or anxiety, abdominal cramps and weakness. In the systemic allergic reaction, the prescribed medication is an injection of adrenaline (epinephrine), which can be obtained through a physician. One brand name is **Epipen**, which allergic individuals may carry with them. If a sting reaction is severe, an individual should be transported to a medical facility as rapidly as possible for treatment.

A **toxic** reaction is a result of too much venom introduced in too short a period for the system to handle. Healthy individuals can tolerate several hundred stings without a life-threatening toxic reaction. Factors such as a person's health, body weight, and age are interrelated as to how many stings might be tolerated. Toxic reactions may initially cause high blood pressure, and can cause kidney failure.

Did you know honeybees fly 10-15 miles per hour and visit 50-100 flowers in each pollination visit?



Honeybees must visit two million flowers and fly 55,000 miles to make one pound of honey.

In This Issue

NPBA 2008 Meetings

Culpeper County Extension
101 South West St.
Culpeper, VA

August	No meeting
September	7:30-9:00 p.m.
October 16	7:30-9:00 p.m.
November 20	7:30-9:00 p.m.
December	No meeting

Hive Works— For August

By Ann Harman

Keep maintaining ventilation. Heat and humidity is beyond belief. Be sure your bees have a good water source and not the neighbor's bird bath.

Keep the grass and weeds cut in the bee yard. Cut in the evening after bees have gone to bed. Bees get crabby in August—wear a veil when mowing. Don't let the discharge from mower or weed whacker blow at the hive.

Inspect your hives to see if you need a new queen in September. Order now for delivery sometime between September 1st and 15th.

During August, the smartest things you can do is stay out of your hives unless absolutely necessary. The bees are basically unemployed and bored—so you are their target!

If you need to protect any unused brood comb from wax moth, use light as a deterrent, not paradichlorobenzene (PDB) which many books recommend. Store with light 24 hours a day.

Keep those grease patties on for tracheal mite control. Strong colonies can use them up quickly in this weather.

Check to see if you need to order Fumagilin-B for September feeding.

Robbing can be a big problem in August. If you inspect a hive and robbing starts, run quickly and take all the covers off ALL your hives and the robbing will stop. Replace covers at dusk.

What's Blooming this Month?

Ann Harman's list of plants blooming in August:

garden flowers	white Dutch clover
garden veggies	coneflowers
herbs and mints	wing stem
chicory	ragweed
Queen Anne's Lace	early goldenrod
boneset	Spanish needle
sumac	wildflowers

Asteracea (daily-like flowers)

Honey Recipe for the Month

Deli-Style Coleslaw

1 head green cabbage, shredded
1 green bell pepper, diced
2 Tablespoons pimentos, diced
1/2 teaspoon celery seed
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/3 cup honey
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup mayonnaise

Directions

Combine all ingredients in large bowl; mix well. Chill thoroughly.

From National Honey Board
Website: http://www.honey.com/consumers/recipes/recipe_detail.asp?RecipeID=432

Found on Ann's Desk... By Ann Harman

Why is beekeeping so full of bad news these days? It would be nice to hear something good—a great year for honey, hives full of healthy bees, money for research flowing to the scientists.

Well, the Rothenbuhler Honey Bee Research Lab at Ohio State University is closing and its funding is being used in the other departments of biology. This lab is where **Susan Cobey** did all her genetic work and developed the **New World Carniolan bees**. Sue is now at UC Davis and continuing to work with queens. The lab there was vacant for some years until UC realized that pollination problems were not going to be solved easily and quickly and so funded the reopening of that lab.

The Ohio beekeepers are understandably upset about the lab's closing and are trying to convince the university to rethink, to recognize that honey bees are in trouble. So far the beekeepers have been unsuccessful. And so a good honey bee research lab will sit idle. **Not good news**.

Wow! Is there a bunch of rubbish out there on the Internet having to do with CCD. It seems that non-beekeepers, as well as some beekeepers, are misinterpreting the information about CCD and its yet-undiscovered causes. The result is that scientists have found the cause (they have not!) and it's from a virus (IAPV is usually mentioned), from bad food (unspecified), from lack of food (where?) and a bunch of other guesses. As beekeepers we have to be on the alert and keep on educating the non-beekeepers. However some do not want to be informed. And say so loudly. **Not good news**.

Haagen-Dazs - the ice cream company - has enlarged its original aid to the honey bee. The company has partnered with the organization Pollinator.org and has participated in the Pollinators outreach programs. Of course the ice cream flavor Vanilla Honey Bee has been featured. (If you have not tried it, do so, it's really yummy.) **Haagen-Dazs** is also sponsoring an art installation in New York City. Featured will be sculpture, drawings, bee-inspired fashions, accessories and other items all inspired by the honey bees. But that's not all! Bee-friendly flower seed packets are being given to community groups to increase bee-friendly habitats around the country. The goal is to distribute a million seeds. If you would like to help, e-mail or phone Jon Bellinger at 312-228-6894 or hdloveshb@gmail.com. For more details visit this site: www.helpthehoneybees.com. **That is good news!**

Well, imagine that! There is good news out there.

Honey Bear Meets Great Art

The National Honey Board produces new T-shirts, posters and more for purchase by consumers. They recently produced a series of unique t-shirts and posters featuring the traditional honey bear incorporated into several great works of art. The items feature original works of art commissioned by the National Honey Board for an advertising campaign directed toward retail and industrial bakeries to promote baking with honey. The ads depict the honey bear in unique versions of Michelangelo's Creation, Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, and Van Gogh's Starry Night. The T-shirts, posters, and other items are available for purchase at cost on CafePress.com at www.cafepress.com/honeyboard. The items must be ordered on the CafePress web site and cannot be ordered directly from National Honey Board.

Artwork for "Honey Bear in the Classics"
Source: National Honey Board

Africanized Bees — By Kathy Miller

Are your bees just having a bad day or are they Africanized? Earlier this spring, a beekeeper in northern Virginia described a hive which sounded suspiciously like an African hive. After gathering many opinions, the owner in question ended up killing the entire hive by bagging it in a strong plastic trash bag and leaving it sealed for several days. This was done rather than just requeening, because the drones are the ones who carry the 'grumpy' genes. I don't know anyone who can identify an African bee just by looking at it; they are only 10% smaller than European honeybees. That's a pretty small difference for our human eyes to discern. However, there are a few subtle differences in their behavior which may assist you in deciding whether your bees are just having a bad day or whether they may actually be African. Their defensive behavior is thought to have evolved because of the many biological competitors, including humans, in the bees' native Africa. There, only the most defensive bees can survive.

Africanized workers, while foraging move in quick, furtive patterns, rather than the steadier, systematic movements of European bees. Their course is composed of quick darting movements which resemble those of yellowjackets more than European honey bees. This pattern of movements makes their courses much less predictable and the chances of their being intercepted in flight become less. Many of the returning foragers approach the hive and fly through the entrance at a high rate of speed. Entrances are very critical areas which render foragers quite vulnerable. By crossing this area quickly, they lessen the threat of being intercepted.

Africanized honeybees start foraging earlier in the day than European bees, and will sometimes forage late into the evening. Africanized bees will be found foraging on cloudy, overcast days, in the cold and even with light rain falling.

The African honey bee responds quickly to disturbances by people and animals **50** feet or more from the nest and can sense vibrations from power equipment **100** feet or more from the nest. Approximately half the population pours out of the hive at a rate three times greater than European honey bees. The distances are what distinguish them from our gentle European honey bees. Bees can pursue a victim up to one mile and upon returning to the nest, can stay agitated for several days and can attack a source of movement with little provocation. As with European honeybees, high temperature and humidity can increase agitation.

Orange County Fair — By Kathy Miller

NPBA manned a booth at the Orange County Fair July 24, 25, 26 & 27. Bob Duxbury did a tremendous job setting up tables covered with bee-theme tablecloths sewn by Susan Ishmael. The tables held eye catching display shelves filled with honey from club members Liz& John Ragosta, Joe Miller, Bob Duxbury, Mike Wilson, and Kathy Miller. Also for sale were votive candles, lip balm, scented body scrubs by Liz Ragosta, and honey goat milk soap made by Susan Ishmael.

The new NPBA T-shirts were worn by club members, and were also for sale. Marie Fox had a NPBA banner printed for use which identified our booth to passers by. Visitors to the booth could look at a variety of bee books, take home bee catalogues and copies of ABJ and Bee Culture, and other bee related information. In addition, they could look at Karen Hunt's photo album showing a swarm capture and the most recent package bee pick-up day. Bob Duxbury's teaching hive was a huge hit, with large color photos of all manner of bee life. Another great teaching tool was his screened inner cover filled with serpentine burr comb made when one of his hives ran out of room before he could add another box.

We educated the public, sold bee products, ate bad-for-you-but-great-tasting-fair food and enjoyed the great sport of people watching. Helping with the booth were Bob & Joan Duxbury, Joe & Carol Miller, Deb Parker, Tamara Robinson, and Kathy Miller.