



Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

Volume 30

Number 7

July 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

For New Beekeepers
Information on herbicides
Extracting

JULY **NO meeting**

No meeting in August
Next meeting is
September 17

V. I. P.

President: Mike King
PO Box 213
Amissville, VA 20106
540-937-4792
kahu9@juno.com

Vice President: Deb Parker
540-854-4883
brokenpost@gemlink.com

Secretary/Treasurer Lele Hankins
540-547-4711
hankins77@comcast.net

Website: www.npbee.org
Webmaster: Mike Wilson
webmaster@npbee.org

Newsletter Editor: Ann Harman
540-364-4660
ahworkerb@aol.com

Regional Inspector: Bob Wellemeyer
540-428-0420

A PROJECT FOR YOU

When you have a minute while in the supermarket, read the ingredients on boxes and jars of goods that use "honey" in the label.

You can encourage your customers to read the labels, too, just to show people that frequently little or no honey actually appears in the product. See if honey is listed after sugar.

Have fun!

HIVE WORKS FOR JULY

Maintain good ventilation through the hive during the heat and humidity. Your bees will benefit.

Rain keeps falling and grass and weeds keep growing. Keep them cut in the beeyard.

Cut white Dutch clover when the corollas recurve (curve downwards). The mowing will keep them in fresh bloom, for the bees, of course.

If you are growing herbs let one of the stalks bloom. Your bees will visit.

Harvest honey during the first half of July. Then if you need to use a varroa treatment, you can do it when the honey supers are off for the year.

Put wet honey supers on your hives over the inner cover. The bees will clean them up in a few days.

If supers have **never** had any brood in them, you can store them without wax moth protection. Do protect from mice, ants, and other pests.

Let your honey settle before bottling!

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It was perfect weather for the NPBA picnic, and lots of good food! A big "thank you" to Bob Hoagland, our "grill-master" this year, who did a fabulous and tasty job. Hat's off to Deb Parker, who did a great job coordinating items for the Chinese auction, which included a very nice jacket and veil (donated by Mann Lake) and a hand-made stained glass bee window (made and donated by Karen Hunt), as well as a number of other nice items. The winning raffle ticket for the beautiful handmade bee quilt was selected at the picnic, and was awarded to Margie Sage. A big "thank you" to Susan Ishmael for making the quilt and coordinating the raffle. It was great to see all those who made it, and thanks to "Doc" Snyder for regularly hosting our picnic at the Verdun pavilion. If you were lucky enough to win an item at the Chinese Auction, please take a moment to send a thank you note to the company who contributed—this helps ensure they are willing to continue their support of NPBA!

On another note, those of you who get electricity from Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) may have recently received a form letter stating that the utility would be applying herbicide to small trees and shrubs within their right-of-way. REC and other utilities spray herbicides as a way to reduce their tree pruning and brush mowing costs. **A Penn State study has shown that herbicides and fungicides do accumulate in beeswax.**

According to Keith Forry, REC Corporate Arborist, they use an outside contractor (Weed Control, Inc., based in Cloverdale, VA) for these herbicide spraying services. They primarily use a generic version of "Round-Up" and a secondary herbicide, "Arsenal." As many of you know, it is critically important with any herbicide (or pesticide) that it be used in strict accordance with labeling instructions. Individuals working for sub-contractors may or may not always adhere to labeling instructions, either by accident or not.

If you are a REC member and do not want herbicide applied to plants and trees on your property, you can request that a standing "no-spray" order be placed on file for your proper-

President's Desk cont.

by calling 1-800-552-3904, and providing your address and phone number. REC denotes your address as "no spray" on the map provided the contractor, and is supposed to then come out and "flag" your property with a small signs saying "NHA" (no herbicide application) to inform the contractors prior to spraying in your area. I have requested our property not be sprayed, and will closely follow-up with REC to be sure there is no miscommunication, so my request is accurately conveyed to the herbicide contractor.

For those who have Allegheny Power or another electric utility, I would guess there is a similar procedure you can follow to request a "no spray" order for your property if you are also concerned.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I quite agree with Mike's comments on "no spray." For years we have heard that—"of course herbicides don't affect bees." Today we are not so sure. True, herbicides are designed to annihilate plants of various kinds. And bees are not plants. But all sorts of things are being found in beeswax.

Beeswax tends to attach certain compounds chemically that makes those chemicals very difficult to remove.

True, we don't have an answer yet to the question "Do herbicides affect bees? adult bees? larval bees? queens? drones?"

Those beekeepers that use wax foundation may or may not know whether the wax still contains various substances that processing does not remove.

Yes, scientists are at work on the wax problem. You can keep track of information by reading beekeeping journals and attending meetings. An informed beekeeper is a better beekeeper. Don't hide your head in the sand.

Better safe than sorry would make sense these days.

YOUR HONEY HARVEST

Information for newbees and a refresher for old-bees (is that the opposite of newbees??).

Your bees made the honey and they want to keep it. You know your bees have enough food and you want the honey that is extra. So how are you going to get it away from the bees.

Whatever you do, **do not use smoke to do that.** Smoke causes the bees to puncture the cappings and gorge on honey. They can cling tightly to the comb or start running around. But it will not make them go away. Besides the honey picks up the smoke odor! Nobody wants “smoked honey.”

You can use Fischer’s Bee Quick® (from Dadant) on a fume board. You can use Bee Go® but it smells terrible and the smell is persistent. If you leave the fume board with Bee Go on too long the honey will smell of Bee Go. Not nice!

You can use the various bee escapes. The Porter bee escape fits in the hole in the inner cover. Several other styles of escapes are available. The drawbacks are that it takes two trips plus lifting all the honey supers off, installing the escape, lifting them all back on. Then you have to come back to remove the supers. If the night is hot and humid the bees will not go back down into the main part of the hive.

You can buy a professional bee blower. Or you can use a leaf blower. They work great. The bees must be blown at their own hive entrance. You will have many bees flying about with a blower but usually they are just a bit confused and not bothered.

You will want to save up lots of newspapers for the floor. It is easiest to put down one layer. Then when that layer gets sticky, put another layer on top. And so forth throughout your uncapping and extracting.

Have water and towels handy for your sticky fingers. Turn your cell phone off or throw it away while uncapping and extracting.

Extract only capped honey. If 10% of a frame is uncapped it is probably dry enough.

harvest cont.

If you are using an electric uncapping knife, work quickly and keep the knife blade clean. Scorched honey tastes worse than burned toast. Lean the frame slightly so that the cappings fall away from the comb into the uncapping bucket or tank. Use a cappings scratcher to scratch up missed places.

When using an extractor, whether hand cranked or with a motor, start slow and gradually increase speed.

If the extractor is a tangential one, spin out part of the first side, reverse the combs, spin out the second side completely, then reverse the combs and spin the first side out completely. If it’s a radial extractor spin the combs completely.

Since the honey coming from the extractor is full of bits of wax and the odd dead bee or two, you want to use a coarse strainer.

The best and cheapest straining material is nylon curtain material. It comes in different “mesh” sizes. A coarse weave will take out the large bits without clogging. Use the fine weave for straining into a settling bucket or tank.

Oh yes—you realize that if you extract during the daylight hours that your “extracting room” must be bee-tight—windows and doors have to be screened. Although a fan might help you feel more comfortable, it stirs up dust. Dust in honey is a nucleus for crystals to form.

The easiest uncapping and extracting is done with the combs still warm from the hives. If you let the supers sit around for a day or so you run the risk of small hive beetles making their mess and, if not them, the honey cools and is hard to uncapp and even more difficult to extract.

Protect the extracted honey from humidity! It will pick up moisture from the air. When the honey has been strained into a settling bucket or tank, cover it well. Let it sit for 3 to 5 days so that the air bubbles have a chance to rise.

Skim the foam off before bottling. When you get to the foamy dregs, save that for your own use. Customers do not want to see foam.

COOKING WITH HONEY

Iced coffee is really popular now. Here is your homemade version with honey.

HONEY COFFEE COOLER serves 4

Concentrate

2 tablespoons instant coffee granules dissolved in 1/4 cup boiling water OR

1/4 cup extra-strong brewed coffee (do not add the 1/4 cup waater)

1/4 cup honey

1 3-inch cinnamon stick

3/4 cup cold water

Mixer

Ice cubes

1 quart milk (low fat is fine)

If using instant granules, dissolve coffee in boiling water in medum bowl. Add honey and mix well. If using brewed coffee add honey to hot coffee and mix well. Add cinnamon stick; stir in cold water and refrigerate until ready to use.

For cooler, fill 12-ounce glass with ice cubes.

Add 1/4 cup coffee concentrate and fill glass with milk. Garnish with cinnamon stick

SWEETENED WITH HONEY

National Honey Board

PEPPERMINT FIZZ (2 to 3 large glasses)

1/4 cup chopped fresh peppermint leaves

1 teaspoon honey

2/3 cup boiling water

juice of 1 orange

juice of 1 lemon

1 cup soda water or other sparkling water

6 ice cubes

large sprig mint for garnish

Put chopped mint in heat-proof container. Pour in boiling water and stir in honey. Cover, cool.

Add juices. Chill 2 to 3 hours; strain; add soda water. Pour into glasses with ice cubes.

JOY WITH HONEY Doris Mech

WHAT'S BLOOMING?

garden flowers	sourwood trees
white Dutch clover	vegetable gardens
Queen Anne's Lace (not popular with bees)	
chicory	herbs
daisy-like flowers	vitex (in gardens)
some wildflowers (look around)	

IMPORTANT STUFF

Virginia State Beekeepers Association VSBA operates on a fiscal year of July 1 through June 30 of the following year. So your membership needs to be renewed in July.

If a member of a local association (NPBA is one) dues are \$10. (If not a member of a local, dues are \$12.)

If you are currently a member of VSBA and wish to renew, or if you would like to become a member, you can download and print out a membership form from the website:

www.virginiabeekeepers.org or mail name, address, phone and e-mail to:

Karen Hunt, Treasurer VSBA PO Box 213 Amissville, VA 20106. PLEASE PRINT! and indicate NPBA is your local association.

Questions? contact Karen at 540-937-4792 or at kahu9@juno.com

Meeting dates for NPBA:

September 17

October 15

November 19

No meetings in July, August, Decemeber

- - - - -

VSBA autumn meeting Saturday, November 7 at Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, just off I-81.

Eastern Apicultural Society Short Course August 3, 4, 5; conference August 5, 6, 7 at Ellicottville NY (near Buffalo).

- - - - -

For information abut Virginia State Beekeepers Association go to the website:

www.virginiabeekeepers.org

C & H BEE BOOKS

If you are interested in bee books contact C & H Bee Books for a list of books available. Call Ann to request a book list.

We cannot accept credit cards but checks and cash are just fine!