

## **GOOD NEWS about Honey Bees** by Dewey M. Caron

I presented a GOOD NEWS talk in March. The BEST GOOD NEWS was the Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS) meeting this summer, July 31-Aug 4 at UD Clayton Conference Center in Newark DE. I hope we see you at this event.

Monday and Tuesday Short Course will include a beginners/novice and intermediate level short course plus several topic tracks for intermediate/advanced beekeepers. The Conference begins Wednesday with Keynote addresses by Jay Evans, USDA Beltsville and Jennifer Berry of UGA followed by 5 different workshop sessions. Thursday Keynoters are Tom Seeley, Cornell and Mike Palmer, VT beekeeper extraordinaire and our Friday morning Keynote talks are the DE Veterans Planting Hope project and Marla Spivak, U Minnesota. See the website [Http://www.easternapiculture.org/2017](http://www.easternapiculture.org/2017) for Short Course and Program speakers. There is information on speakers, Beekeeping in DE and at UD, and lots more. Registration form is now posted (you can register online) and the Spring EAS Journal is also on the site.

GOOD NEWS I mentioned included resources you might consult. For the early spring note (According to USA-NPN, spring is arriving 2 to 4 weeks early in much of South & Mid-Atlantic) see website:

<http://www.usanpn.org/files/npn-viz.tool>

I mentioned the study of bumble bee intelligence from NPR Science Friday. Information at: <https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/the-secret-smart-life-of-bees/> plus see press release <https://www.morningagclips.com/ball-rolling-bees-reveal-complex-learning>. MORE\_GOOD NEWS: The Rusty Patched bumble bee (I used for the illustration in the NPR Science Friday GOOD NEWS) was officially listed as an endangered species on March 21, 2017, the first mainland bee federally protected (it joins 7 yellow-faced bees in Hawaii that were placed on the endangered species listing last year).

If you would like a copy of the aid Dead Colony Forensics to help diagnose overwintered bee losses email me [dmcaron@udel.edu](mailto:dmcaron@udel.edu) and request **Bee Colony Forensics**. If you wish to purchase a textbook HONEY BEE BOLOGY & BEEKEEPING I can send one via mail for the meeting price of \$50 (no mailing charge added) – lower than Amazon price.

For GOOD NEWS on mites, I indicated we have some chemicals (synthetic miticide= Apivar) and 3 acids (MAGS=Formic, Oxalic and Hops beta acids =Hopguard) plus 2 essential oil products (Apiguard and ApiLifeVar) that work. The acids and oils are an organic/natural approach but they do not work as consistently well as the synthetic miticide. Only two acids (formic and Hopguard) treatments are permitted when supers are on colonies. I recommend an IPM approach that might use non-chemical methods and, if numbers become elevated, the use of chemicals to knock the numbers back. This would be a consistent with a “Working toward Treatment Free” mite control.

I indicated all bees in an apiary need treatment if mite numbers exceed 2-3% when adult bee mite loads are sampled using powdered sugar or alcohol wash sampling. The reason is virus – the mites harm bees, weakening their immune response but also transmit viruses and replicate some virus reproduction. As sick bees, adult workers leave home but have difficulty getting back to their own home. These sick bees

from colonies with elevated mite numbers (often the strongest colonies) , i.e. “mite bombs” can carry the viruses to healthy colonies resulting in spread of the disease epidemic.

The other GOOD NEWS I mentioned is another tool the Honey Bee Health Coalition ***Tools for Varroa Management*** and our accompanying videos as being the most useful educational tool you should have to help develop a varroa management plan. The downloads are absolutely free at <http://www.honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroa/>

In addition to the GOOD NEWS about EAS in DE this summer and *The Tools for Varroa Management* aid from Honey Bee Health Coalition, I also presented GOOD NEWS about bees and pesticides, honey & bee forage and about the increase in interest and educational opportunities for information on beekeeping (abbreviated at Kent Co meeting).

PESTICIDES: It was difficult to find GOOD NEWS about pesticides and bees. I started by saying pesticides are useful for beekeepers to combat mites and for growers to produce high quality, inexpensive crops and food stuffs but we still need to do better to protect bees when we use pesticides. I discussed the Wilsonville Bumble Bee kill of June 2013. For details see my Bee Culture article <http://www.beeeculture.com/pesticide-causes-massive-bumble-bee-massacre/>.

The GOOD NEWS from this kill incident was the public outcry and energizing of environmentalists, banning of the 2 neonicotinoids involved in Oregon and fining of the applicator plus an OR Legislative Task Force that has resulted in passage of 3 new bee health initiatives and hiring of a new Extension Bee Health specialist at OSU. A great resource for information on neonicotinoid insecticides is the Xerces Society pamphlet “***How Neonicotinoids Can Kill Bees: The science behind the role these insecticides play in harming bees.***” The is a free pdf download.

The references to lawsuits are as follows: Beyond Pesticides and the Organic Consumers Association (OCA) have filed a lawsuit against SUE BEE ([www.suebee.com](http://www.suebee.com)) for ‘deceptive and misleading’ use of the word natural on their label because it contains glyphosate (Monsanto Roundup® herbicide). Samples (69 total) of both U.S. and imported (including organic) honey were collected from Philadelphia grocery stores. <https://www.organicconsumers.org/>

Two court cases, both in 9<sup>th</sup> circuit court, are directed at EPA review of neonicotinoids. One by beekeepers seeks to force EPA to review their approval of neonicotinoid effects on bees and pollinating insects and the second has specifically limited the approval of sulfoxaflor, a neonicotinoid-type insecticide. . [http://pollinatorstewardship.org/?page\\_id=3706](http://pollinatorstewardship.org/?page_id=3706)

The GOOD NEWS on the White House Pollinator Health Task Force can be found at [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Blog/PPAP\\_2016.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Blog/PPAP_2016.pdf) and the 10 pointers to help save the bees are at: [HTTP://BUZZABOUTBEES.NET/SAVE-THE-BEES.HTML](http://BUZZABOUTBEES.NET/SAVE-THE-BEES.HTML). Most recommendations revolve around pesticide use, planting flowers and providing habitat. An example of working with elected officials is Beyond Toxics efforts to seek legislation (Oregon Pollinator Protection Act 2017 SB 929.) See [www.beyondtoxics.org/work/save-oregons-bees/](http://www.beyondtoxics.org/work/save-oregons-bees/)

HONEY: I began the GOOD NEWS about honey with the bad news that most of the honey in use in US is imported and some of it is adulterated and/or ultra filtered. The GOOD NEWS is that Local honey is unequaled, sells for a decent price, is sought after and is unique. I offered examples of BEE LOCAL REF Henry Storch Old Blue Honey Philomath OR <http://oldbluenaturalresources.com> (whose Big Leaf maple and blackberry honey is a 2017 GOOD FOODS ([www.goodfoodawards.org/](http://www.goodfoodawards.org/)) award winner and Buddy and Meg Sequim Honey Farm, WA [HTTP://SEQUIMBEEFARM.COM/](http://sequimbEEfarm.com/) , also 2017 Good Foods award winners (2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row) with their blackberry honey which is a Certified Naturally grown honey product. The reference to the General Mills (Honey Nut Cheerios) campaign to plant more pollinator plant can be found at: [www.cheerios.com/bringbackthebees](http://www.cheerios.com/bringbackthebees)

I mentioned too that Manuka honey can be heated and sterilized and not lose its UMF = unique Manuka Factor) so mainstream medical doctors prescribe it for cuts, burns, skin lesions and body sores. Manuka is one of many honeys that promote faster healing of human (and animal skin) with less scarring. See: <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/manuka-honey-medicinal-uses#1>

For GOOD NEWS on forage and efforts to provide bees with better and safer forage, I mentioned The New York Phenology Project, a networked community science initiative focused on climate and urbanization impacts on plants and pollinators. Two community examples I included were for the Hominy Creek Restoration and efforts of Asheville, NC, a Bee City, and the City of Boulder CO with expanding efforts to Protect Pollinators (with ban on neonics) and provide more food alternatives.

Two programs that seek to both do and educate are the **BEE CITY USA** ([www.beecityusa.org/](http://www.beecityusa.org/)) designation ( Anne Arundel Co and cities of Annapolis & Highland Park are the closest Bee City in the region, although Washington DC is about to become a BEE CITY), and **Million Pollinator Gardens** ([http://millionpollinatorgardens.org/.](http://millionpollinatorgardens.org/))

The website of Beekeeper Eric Patno of Lynwood WA, with his NW Honey Bee habitat restoration 501c3 appeal, although well-intentioned, unfortunately depicts a pollinator other than a honey bee (he has a flower fly). It is important to get it right. [HTTP://WWW.NWHONEYBEE.ORG/MISSION.HTML](http://www.nwhoneybee.org/mission.html) The neat Wild bee abundance map is at [www.uvm.edu/giee/?Page=news&storyID=24083&category=gundhome](http://www.uvm.edu/giee/?Page=news&storyID=24083&category=gundhome).

I closed with the BEST NEWS of all; there is more good information, more collaborations, more funding, more mentors and classes to learn beekeeping and more interest in the general public. Inquiring minds want to know how to start Beekeeping. And yes more FUN like when I visit the bee colony of my daughter in Portland with her companion planting.