



PSBA Newsletter

March 2003

Volume 4, Issue 3

EVENTS at the Arboretum Visitors Center

2200 Arboretum Drive
East, Seattle

March 25

MEETING 6:30 -9:00 pm
Beginners Instruction:
6:30 – 7:15 pm

Main Presentation:
Mike Ingalls
HONEY MARKETING &
APPLICATIONS OF
FOOD TECHNOLOGY
7:30 – 9 pm

March Trustee Meeting
Saturday, Mar. 22
10 am to 3 pm
*At Tim Celeski's office,
4545 – 44th Avenue SW
in West Seattle*

April 22

MEETING 6:30 -9:00 pm
Beginners Instruction
6:30 – 7:15 pm
Main Presentation:
Frank Fitzpatrick
SWARM PREVENTION
7:30 – 9 pm

May 17

Field Day
HANDS-ON TRAINING
10 am to 3 pm

Hive Calendar

Year-to-year variation in temperature and rainfall, hills that block or funnel prevailing winds, northern or southern exposures, nearby lakes or rivers, and other geographic features near your apiary will speed or delay the blossoming time by as much as three and a half weeks. Use the hive calendar as a guide.

March

Crocus, heather, skunk cabbage, pussy willow (pollen), raspberry, and apricot bloom in March.

Keep the entrances clear of dead bees. Clean out dead hives. Heft your hives and feed a syrup of two parts sugar to one part water if they are light. Include Fumidial-B to suppress Nosema. If you have not already done so, order your queens or packages. Mouse guards may be removed about mid-month.

April

Dandelion, clover, maple, scots broom (pollen), raspberry, heather, and apple bloom in April.

Foragers should be flying freely and bringing in pollen regularly. Make sure you have a queen and a good laying pattern. Install packages on foundation in mid-April and feed until 20 deep or 30 western frames are fully drawn. Install Crisco-sugar patties between the brood boxes. If you include Terramycin in the patties then they must be removed before supering. If medicating in the Spring be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions. Apistan must be removed before supering. Coumaphous must be removed 14 days before supering. Add supers when the fruiting (not flowering) cherries bloom or when local maple nectar flow begins. Swarming sometimes begins in April.

Based on Roy Thurber's Bee Chats, Tips and Gadgets

Apiary Report

February 24 was a gorgeous day. Dawn Corl, Jerry Mixon and I weighed each colony and took a quick look inside. One had died and the remaining 5 had lots of bees but were extremely light. I mixed up 5 gallons of sugar syrup and got it on them by Wednesday afternoon.

As one would expect, the bees all have moved up and the bottom box on each colony is empty. Rather than simply rotating the boxes I'd like to get in there and cull out some of the bad comb first. Van has some good drawn comb that belongs to the club and some honey stores we can put on them. We are getting together at the beginning of next week to do that.

After feeding the bees on Wednesday I had a chance to meet Brett Mercier, the

Arboretum grounds manager. Brett is very approachable and helpful. We briefly discussed the "after 2 PM" rule. We need to be mindful of the weekly plant sales between March and October. They occur on Tuesdays from 10AM to Noon and on Wednesdays from 10AM to 2PM. Regardless of the time of day we should check with the building manager on whether there are activities going on that might be impaired by beekeeping activities.

Anyone who would like to volunteer to work in the club apiary should contact the apiary manager at (apiary@pugetsoundbees.org). It's a great opportunity for one-on-one learning and socializing with your fellow members.

Bruce Eckholm, Apiary Manager

SPRING CLEANING

Pollination

Preparation

To Do Lists

Warmer Days

Club Notes

Spring Cleaning

As I write this, it's an especially cold and windy early March day. With the chill in the air, it hardly seems to be the time to be starting beekeeping for the year. But it is. I've been working on two projects to get ready for the season.

The first project is a new one. After seeing Margriet Dogterom's great presentation last month on Mason Bees, I've gotten inspired to create new bee blocks for my dwindling Mason Bee population. Just as she discussed, I found that over a three year period my populations have gone from very strong to almost zero. The same is true for the friends that I gave blocks to as gifts. So, with the help of her book and a hard-to-find router bit I found at Boeing Surplus, I plan to build a lot of new bee blocks in the form she showed in her presentation and her book for the new season.

The second project, of course, has to do with diligently preparing for this season's honey flows. Since last year was not a particularly good year for my apiary, (I lost three out of my four hives) I have a lot of left over equipment that will be used in expanding back to four. But even though I don't have to build any new equipment, a lot of it needs to be cleaned up and made ready for the year and the soon to arrive packages I've ordered.

And, then there is my new apiary shed. Since my hives are located on a fairly steep hillside, to make it easier to move equipment back and forth I built a new shed last fall. In it I store supers, other supplies, and gear to shorten those long treks up and those steep stairs. Though mostly complete, I have a little more work to do to make it work just right.

I'll bet I'm not alone. I'm sure we all have our own lists of things to do. With these early spring days we're all reminded that it's time to get to work. Just look outside. You'll see the bees are starting to come out on warmer days. April and beekeeping season is just around the corner.

Tim Celeski, President PSBA

March Presentation:

**Mike Ingalls on
“Honey Marketing &
Applications of
Food Technology”**

- President of Pure Foods, Inc.
- Vice President of Sky River Brewing
- Past President of the Western States Honey Packers and Dealers Association
- A Director of the National Honey Board for 8 years

“Honey Marketing and Applications of Food Technology”

Our March speaker will be Mike Ingalls, President of Pure Foods, Inc., Vice President of Sky River Brewing, past president of the Western States Honey Packers and Dealers Association, and eight years a Director on the National Honey Board.

On the 25th of March Mike Ingalls will speak to the Puget Sound Beekeepers Association on honey marketing and the application of food technology, a topic on which he is very experienced and knowledgeable. Sky River Brewing makes excellent meads that are available in local stores in several variations: dry, semi-sweet, and sweet. Pure Foods produces ‘value added’ honey based foods. The ‘value added’ of these foods is that they include honey as a significant ingredient in a way that creates a public perception of enhanced value of the food. Mike has many years experience as a beekeeper in addition to his expertise as a producer of honey-based foods.

Newsletter Editor

Double Queen

Have you tried double queen colonies?

What is it? A double queen colony consists of (from bottom to top) a bottom board, a brood nest, a queen excluder, honey supers, another queen excluder, another brood nest, and a lid. You could try putting the upper brood nest directly above the bottom one and all the supers on top, but I don’t think that will work as well because the queens can reach through the excluder to fight with each other.

Why do it? The greater the number of workers in a colony the greater the percentage of those workers that will be foraging. The double queen colony is a scheme intended to increase both the number and the percentage of foragers. You should harvest more honey with a double queen colony than with two regular colonies. In the fall you can choose the better queen and combine the two colonies or keep them separate and repeat next year.

Why doesn’t everyone do it? The disadvantages include more work, more excluders, more lifting, and a more complicated supering situation. You will need a wide, stable step stool to work that giant stack of a colony. You might need guy wires to keep your ‘leaning tower of honey’ from toppling.

It’s a good idea to put extra entrances between the excluders so that the foragers don’t need to squeeze through to unload. An easy way to do that is to cut a one-inch notch on one side of a wood-bound queen excluder. Make sure the drones and queen in the brood nests can fly out to mate (in case they supercede).

Watch out for crowding in the brood nests. With a laying queen in both you may need two deeps on top and two deeps on the bottom to maintain adequate egg-laying space. Avoid lifting at or above your own shoulder height if at all possible. Bring a sturdy wide set of stairs or bench to the apiary. Watch things very closely when the nectar flow starts. A single colony can fill a honey super in as little as two days. With two ‘engines’, your stack of supers can fill up very quickly indeed.

In a fit of excessive thrift I tried to create a double queen colony on the cheap one

Puget Sound Beekeeping Association

We're on the Web!

www.pugetsoundbees.org

PSBA OFFICERS

President

Tim Celeski
(206) 932-4466
tim@98101.com

Vice President

Nancy Beckett
(206) 937-5583
nbeckett@butter.toast.net

Secretary

Dawn Corl
(206) 525-2433
dawncorl@blarg.net

Treasurer

Paul Knutzen
(425) 254-8032
pknutzen@msn.com

Newsletter Editor

John de Groot
(425) 788-2259
john_degroot@juno.com

Apiary Manager

Bruce Eckholm
(206) 788-0255
apiary@pugetsoundbees.org

TRUSTEES

Laura Bendit
Bob Clark
John deGroot
Scott Eby
Frank Fitzpatrick
John Keenan
Mary McIsaac
Anne Patton
Vic Scarpelli
Wes Ulman
Lyle Willis

spring by leaving the queen in one deep on the bottom and putting the other deep (with eggs) above two supers and excluders. Contrary to my expectation, they did not raise themselves a queen in the upper brood nest. They must have been getting too much of the bottom queen's pheromones. Apparently, both brood nests must have a laying queen before you stack the one above the other. That means that you buy a second queen, or use a queen-right swarm, or place a regular colony in the second brood nest.

To get the most value out of the double queen arrangement it should be in place long enough to increase the population of workers before the main nectar flow begins. If the main nectar flow starts on June 1, then the double queen colony should be set up by the middle of April.

Try it, you might like it. You can always declare it a learning experience and write a newsletter article about it.

Newsletter Editor

Swarm List

Frank Fitzpatrick will update the club Swarm List shortly, and then send it out to fire departments, police departments, and others emergency responders. Persons listed on the Swarm List will receive calls from the general public to remove bee swarms. The club provides this community service to help prevent zoning against beekeeping in urban areas. If you pick up a swarm outside, you must do so free of charge. If you remove a swarm from inside the wall of a building you may charge a fee. Swarm List members do not have to go to every call, but should refer the public to another member if they cannot respond. This is an exciting and interesting way to increase your number of colonies. If interested, send your name, the area in which you are willing to pick up swarms, and your contact information to Frank at (206) 244-1291.

Marketplace

For Sale

A two frame stainless steel hand cranked extractor - \$150; 100 deeps with 9 or 10 frames with drawn comb (some drone comb) - all or part \$10 each. Contact Frank Fitzpatrick (206) 244-1291 diebiene@juno.com

For Sale

Deep supers with drawn frames - \$12 each; Western (6 5/8) honey supers with drawn frames - \$10 each; Commercial (7 5/8) honey supers with drawn frames \$8 each; Miscellaneous supers without frames - \$5 each; Some tops, bottoms, and inner covers \$3 to \$5 each; Lots of other miscellaneous bee equipment except no extracting equipment. Contact Lyle Willis (425) 771-7781

Wanted to Buy

Motorized extractor. Contact Cary Therriault (425) 558-1922

Order Your Packages

The *Beez Neez Apiary Supply* will have packages available April 16-19th. Cost is \$51 for 3lb. \$59 for 4lb. If you want marked queens, add \$1. Order by April 1. Phone the Beez Neez at (360) 568-2191 for more information.

Tim Celeski is again coordinating the delivery of packages from *Heikams Apiaries*

in California. Thanks to the help of beekeeper Earl Kanz of Bellingham, three-pound packages with queens will be available for delivery about the second week of April. Orders must be in to Tim by the March 25th PSBA meeting. Cost is \$38 for Italian and Carnies (Add \$1 if you want marked queens). Also, if ordering, please bring your empties back to the March meeting for return to Heikams. For more details, contact Tim at tim@98101.com or at the February or March meeting.

Short ads are run for free for members of PSBA! . Commercial ad rates: \$15 for _ page, \$30 for _ page, or \$60 for a full page. Deadline for entry is first of the month.

Short Notes

Cal Shorts

Cal Shorts, a long time beekeeper and past member of PSBKA, died Wednesday, March 5th, at the Covenant Shores Health Center on Mercer Island.

Noise

During the February general meeting, some members were unable to understand part of the Beginner's Instruction due to conversations in the back of the meeting room. Please move quietly to the lobby if you wish to talk during the meeting.

Virtual Beekeeping

For information on Formic Acid mite treatments: www.mitegone.com

Know some great links? Send them to John deGroot john_degroot@juno.com