



The PSBA Newsletter

October 2004

2004, Issue 9

EVENTS at the Arboretum Visitors Center

2200 Arboretum Drive
East, Seattle

Tuesday, Oct. 26

MEETING 6:30 -9:00 pm

Beginners Instruction

6:30 – 7:15 pm

Presentation: Mead

Making by John

Keenan

7:30 – 9 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 16

MEETING 6:30 -9:00 pm

Election of Officers,

Potluck Dinner,

Tall Tales, and Awards

*(The third Tuesday instead of
the fourth - Bees don't like to
compete with turkeys.)*

December

**We do not meet in
December.**

*Reindeer and honeybees
don't play well together.*

We're on the Web!

www.pugetsoundbees.org

www.psbaees.org

PSBA OFFICERS

President

Tim Celeski

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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.

October

A few minor nectar flows at the lower elevations.

Prepare for winter. Hives should be at the winter apiary location. Install mouse guards and tip hives slightly forward to ensure dry conditions. Formic Acid, Menthol, Coumaphous, and Apistan must be removed before winter. Feed or combine any hives that are too light to survive until early next summer. Bottle and sell honey and beeswax. Evaluate this year's hive management results and plan for next year.

November

Brrr. Not much blooming.

Do not disturb hives. Keep entrances free from ice. Read technical books and journals. Make plans for the coming year: medication, requeening schedule, equipment purchase, and migrations. Buy, build and repair woodenware and equipment. Buy the bottles and packaging for the next year. Package and sell last year's honey and wax. Render old combs into clean wax.

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

Work-party Schedule

The work on active colonies in the club apiary is largely complete for the year. But the equipment needs some TLC. Apiary Manager Bruce Becker would be glad to have some members volunteer to clean and organize the equipment shed and perform some simple repairs on some of the equipment.

Thanks to all who participate in work parties all year.

Club Notes

Getting Ready for Your First Year in Beekeeping

A lot of new people have joined the club this year expecting to start their beekeeping experience next year. With that in mind I thought I'd go over a list of what to do, when to do it and the resources PSBA has to help you get started right.

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Schedule At the last meeting I held a little impromptu contest and asked the beginners at meeting "When do you start?" Nobody had the answer. In our area, the time to get your starting package is mid-April. Using that as a take-off point and working your way backwards is a good idea, because you have quite a bit to do to get ready for your first year.

Order your equipment now The first thing to do is to order your equipment and your supplies and now is the best time to do it. And, if you're ordering via mail order, the first of the year all the major suppliers come out with new catalogs and usually prices are slightly higher, so ordering now might save you a few \$. Major mail order suppliers are Dadant and Sons, Mann Lake, Ltd, Western Beekeeping Supply, Brush Mountain Bee Farm, Glorybee, Walter T. Kelley and Betterbee. All have great catalogs they'd be glad to send you. You can find contact information on the web.

You'll find all the catalogs have pretty similar prices, but since you'll be ordering heavy items like boxes and frames (woodenware) keep in mind that shipping costs will be pretty considerable and will vary between different suppliers and where their located. One trick is to buy your woodenware from a regionally located supplier and picking it up yourself.

Building and repairing equipment over the winter is a natural task for all beekeepers. Allow yourself plenty of time to put it together and paint your hives (Just the outside and you don't need to paint them white, btw). This is especially true the first year. Though, the equipment is simple enough, learning to assemble your frames, wire them, mounting and melting the wax foundation can be a little awkward at first. PSBA will have a meeting February about how to put equipment together, show you the simple jigs many of us to use to make the job easier and help you out.

In addition to the hive boxes you'll need tops, bottoms and inner covers and maybe excluders, frames to fit and foundation, either wax or plastic. For yourself, you'll need a beesuit, (Buy good one if you can-you'll be glad you did.) beekeeping gloves, one or two hive tools and a smoker.

How much woodenware do you need? Like many things in beekeeping the answer is that it varies. But, if you can afford it, buy enough equipment for two hives as learning on two hives is better than one. That way you can compare the two. As you may have heard there are two ways to go here. Each has it's advocates: 1) Use deeps for brood area, and shallows or mid-sized westerns for honey storage. If that's your choice you need two deeps and 2-4 westerns or shallows per hive to get you started. 2) Use westerns for everything. In this case 6-7 westerns per hive will work well.

Prepare your apiary For many lucky people with a back yard, you might have a perfect location in a corner of your or a friends property. Honey goes a long way to opening up opportunities if you don't have the right space. When locating your hives find a spot that is away from neighbors and high traffic areas (maybe separated with a fence) in as sunny location as possible with emphasis on morning sun (facing the front of the hives East and/or South is ideal) so that the bees get to work early in the day. Once you've found a spot, make sure it's level and consider placing some concrete bricks or blocks of wood down to put the hives on to keep them off the ground.

Order your bees in early spring Starting from packages is a big part of learning beekeeping. Early spring is the time to order. A couple of local beekeeping suppliers usually have packages in April, but you need to order ahead of time. As an option, the club has for several years does a large group purchase, with a local

beekeeper traveling to California to pick them up and deliver them to us mid-April.

Get educated That's what we're here for. This is the time of the year to either join or renew your PSBA membership. If you pay by November 18th, the cost is only \$15, so take care of business at the next meeting or the Potluck on November 16th. And, while you're at it, don't forget to take advantage of the reduced cost of subscribing to either the ABJ or Bee Culture. Both are excellent and an invaluable resource to beekeepers of all levels.

Also, the club keeps a list of members who are mentors in different parts of Puget Sound to help you out if you have a question or a problem. You will. And, we also have an Adopt-a-Hive program starting in the spring where you work with the club's apiary in the Arboretum along side an experienced beekeeper to help you get started right.

The club has a pretty extensive library for our members to use consisting of lots of videos and books. Contact our VP Nancy Beckett at one of the meeting to find out what's there.

Set your calendar PSBA meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month. Van Sherod's timely beginners classes at a part of each meeting and you won't want to miss any of them. So, make sure you mark your calendar and attend the meetings. And, make sure you set aside Saturday, May 14th next year as a very important day. This is our annual Field Day where we have a special speaker come and speak and lead you on a very thorough hive inspection of our club apiary. It'll be the best 4 hours you can spend learning about beekeeping.

Happy Beekeeping, and don't forget to mark your calendar ahead for the PSBA Annual Potluck on November 16th.

Tim Celeski, President PSBA

October Meeting

The Beginners Instruction

The beginners instruction will concentrate on the procedures you should be implementing now or in the immediate future and on the concerns appropriate for this part of the year.

Main Presentation:

The main presentation will be The Making of Mead. John Keenan will be our speaker.

Newsletter Editor

Outreach Events Sell Honey

Seattle Tilth Festival

The club made \$1400.00 selling honey at a booth at the Seattle Tilth Festival on Saturday, September 18. Thanks to Van Sherod, Rob Stevens, Mary McIsaacs, John Keenan, Tim Celeski, and several others for a very successful sale and educational event.

Bug Day at the Burke Museum

The club made about \$200.00 selling honey at a beekeeping booth at the Burke Museum on the grounds of the University of Washington. 987 people attended this

annual event on Sunday, September 19. Thanks to Bruce Becker, Becca Bennett, and several others for an excellent outreach to the public which also made a handy profit.

Fall City Farms Harvest Festival

The club made \$189.00 selling honey at a beekeeping booth at Fall City Farms, 3636 Nealy Road, Fall City. The festival on Saturday October 2 attracted several hundred attendees. Thanks to Bruce Becker, Becky Havekost, Liane Shyry, and others for making this a success.

Newsletter Editor

Bee Q & A

Question

What's are the keys to success for a new hobby beekeeper?

Answer

Be observant of your hives. Find a mentor. Make use of all the beekeeping books in the public library. Attend club meetings.

Foraging

How to Rent a Club Extractor

Did you know that PSBA members can rent one of the club-owned honey extractors? The club currently has 4 working extractors from which to choose. All of the extractors are stored in the shed at the clubs apiary in the Arboretum. During the fall "extracting season" all periods of rental are for a maximum of 1 week.

The Extractors:

There are two hand-crank extractors available for rent for \$10 for a one week period. One will extract two frames at a time and the other will extract 4 frames at a time. Both of these extractors are "tangential" type extractors and are great for a smaller amount of frames to extract. Each of these extractors is quite light making it manageable for one person to transport and will fit in well in most automobile trunks.

There are two motorized extractors available for \$25 for a one-week period. One will extract 12 frames at a time and we just bought a new one that can do 12 frames at a time. Both are "radial" type extractors. Each of these units is obviously larger than the tangential units described above and make a large extracting job go faster than a hand-cranked unit. The old 12-frame unit is light enough for a strong person to move on their own. Mostly by leveraging. The new one is a little easier While these extractors are quite large, one member has been able to fit both in the back of a Toyota Corolla Wagon. Of course, your milage may vary.....

Along with these extractors are a couple of hot knives for cutting the cappings off of your combs. These can be used along with an extractor rental if a request is made at the time of a reservation.

The process:

Rental's should be limited to a maximum of **one week** during this busy time of the year. Please promptly return the extractor so that other club members can use the equipment. It's important to remember to return the equipment clean and in working order so that it doesn't attract unwanted visitors to the shed, and to allow the next user a more pleasant experience.

To arrange renting one of the extractors, call or e-mail John Keenan (contact info for members available on the Member's Roster). Let him know which of the extractors you would like to reserve, when you will be picking up and dropping off the extractor and your contact information for him to get back to you. John will let you know if the extractor you want is available and give you instructions on how to get into the club's shed at the apiary. Rental fees can be paid to John or directly to the Club Treasurer, Paul Knutzen.

Happy Extracting!!

Thanks to John Keenan for this news note

Short ads are run for free for members of PSBA! . Commercial ad rates: \$15 for ¼ page, \$30 for ½ page, or \$60 for a full page.

Round Dances

The decisions of the September 28 trustee meeting:

The Purchase of a New Electric Extractor:

Discussion regarding the Association's purchase of a new electric extractor from Dadant. The price of the new 12-frame extractor is \$925.00 plus shipping. A deal was made with Dadant to discount the price of the extractor \$200.00 in exchange for 4 monthly advertisements in the PSBA Newsletter. This reduces the net cost to \$725.00. The estimated shipping cost from Fresno, California is an additional \$80.00. Motion to purchase the Dadant extractor was made and passed with no dissenting votes.

The Purchase of Additional Honey for the Association:

Discussion regarding the need of the Association to purchase additional quantities of local (not specialty) honey to support the Association's honey sales to the Arboretum, Macrina Bakery, local festivals and events. Estimated amount would be 10-15 buckets per year at an approximate wholesale cost of \$1.40 to \$1.50 per pound. Motion to approve the purchase of additional honey for the Association was made and passed with no dissenting votes.

Beekeeping Instruction

In February John deGroot will teach a class on hobby beekeeping for the Northshore (Woodinville) School District Community School Program. The class will begin include 10 hours of classroom discussion and a hands-on at a Woodinville or Redmond apiary in April. Contact Denise Pleasant at (425) 489-6204 to register.

Newsletter Editor

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