



The PSBA Buzz

Monthly Meetings are held
every 4th Tuesday
(except July, Nov, Dec)

Location:

Graham Visitor Center of
Washington Arboretum.
2200 Arboretum Drive E.,
Seattle, WA 98112

Harvesting Honey?
Rent a PSBA extractor

Hive Calendar

Nectar Sources in August: Knotweed, dandelion and clover. In urban yards bees will enjoy perennials such as Echinacea, centaurea, sunflowers, thyme and monarda. Fireweed is prevalent at high elevations and at higher elevations Pearly Everlasting.

Check for swarm cells each 7 to 10 days and re-queen if needed. Remove capped honey frames to be extracted, working quickly to prevent a robbing situation. Don't starve your bees! Leave about 80 lbs of honey on hive for bees to overwinter here in Western Washington.

After honey supers are removed, inspect weak hives and find out why they're in that condition. Use medications per manufacturer's recommendation. Warm temperatures improve the effect of all mite medications so treating for varroa in early August will contribute to raising healthy winter bees. A nectar dearth may occur in August and the colony will benefit from feeding a 2:1 sugar syrup. Collect and freeze pollen for use next spring.

August 27th Meeting:

- ❖ *Beginner Lesson: 6:30-7:00pm*
- ❖ *Announcements: 7:00-7:15 Get the latest info on what's happening with PSBA*
- ❖ *General Meeting 7:30-9:00pm Honey Bee Suite blogger and director of the Native Bee Conservancy Rusty Burlew will speak to PSBA about native bees*



Bee Lunch

By Jeff Steenbergen



Echinacea A Mid-Summer Treat

Echinacea is a type of coneflower native to eastern and central North American forests and grasslands. It has a distinctive spiked center with drooping petals and gets its common name from Greek word "ekhinos" for sea urchin. This perennial doesn't need much water and prefers airy dry soil and can take partial shade making it a good candidate for our northwest gardens. They are often covered in bees when in bloom and produce ample nectar. Where Echinacea is grown commercially a flavorful medium colored honey can be produced.

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President's Message *Krista Conner*

We've had an early season of blackberry this year and hopefully you are busy harvesting a surplus of honey by now. PSBA volunteers have been busy too - at summer festivals and apiary work parties, selling honey and sharing information about honey bees. The season is not over though, there's a lot more fun to be had:

Apiary Work Parties: PSBA needs *both* new beekeepers and experienced beekeepers to maximize learning and to complete all hive management tasks in our apiary. Check out the [schedule](#) of work parties and sign up for some fun. These sessions are free and open to members and non-members - what a great way to learn about beekeeping and get to know other PSBA members!

Summer Festivals and fairs: PSBA receives many requests to participate in community events, yet we are not able to fulfill them all, nor can we adequately staff 2013 events with the current number of volunteers - **help!** September 7th - Seattle Tilth's Harvest Fest is our biggest fundraising event - sign up [here](#). Running PSBA's booth for festivals is a great activity for both new and experienced beekeepers to share information about honey bees, and is just plain fun!

Speaking Engagements: PSBA gets many requests from schools and community organizations to provide speakers about honey bees but we often cannot fulfill these due to lack of volunteers. If you like talking about honey bees, please sign up to be on our speaker list by emailing president@pugetsoundbees.org

Have a great summer and please consider ways to contribute to PSBA and our community of beekeepers. Volunteering for PSBA at a community event, helping in the apiary, teaching a class, or even submitting an article for the newsletter really makes an impact!



*PSBA President:
Krista Conner*



PSBA Swarm List is a way to help protect honeybees - please share!

Upcoming Events

Michael Bush- it's not too late to sign up! Join Puget Sound Beekeepers Association for a special Saturday Workshop with Michael Bush, author of *The Practical Beekeeper* and creator of the popular beekeeping website [Bees at Bush Farms](#). For more information and to sign up: <http://bit.ly/PSBABush> There are a limited number of volunteer positions available for this event too. Sign up to [Help make this and other PSBA events possible!](#)

The more we know about our bees, the better! *By Daniel Najera*

Ever wonder how your backyard bees are progressing through the year? One way is to compare them with other beekeepers! This is fun and allows you to make connections with other beekeepers, just keep in mind that their bees have access to different resources than your bees do. Another way is to track the levels of activity of your own bees over time. Some simple ways to get more in tune with your bees (and more knowledgeable) are the forager counts and sugar water feeder activity.

Forager counts

Choose a specific amount of time and count all the bees that enter your colony. Make note of the time of day. As you get better at your observations, you can make note of the number of bees that come back with pollen and the color of the pollen! Here is an example.

6/30/2013. 10 minute observation of Hive 6. 300 foragers went in, 50 had pollen. 35 were grey, 15 were yellow.

Sugar Water feeders outside of the colony

Choose your favorite feeder style (I use upside down baby food jars on a grooved plate) and mix up a 1/4 sugar to 3/4 water (by volume) solution. Place the feeder in the entrance and wait to see when the bees start feeding (could take a day). (continued on p.3)

The more we know about our bees *(continued from page 2)*

Move the feeder with the bees 3 inches away from the colony (on a small stand). If they keep feeding, keep moving the feeder away, increasing the distance every 10 minutes or so. Start by moving small increments (3-4 inches) and getting larger (1 foot, 2 feet, 5 feet, 10 feet) until you reach your desired location. If you keep "losing" the bees, move less distance or move it every 20 minutes instead.

I like to keep mine just outside a window that I can check from inside. This provides interesting information about your surroundings. With a 1/4 sugar to 3/4 water solution, if there is plenty of forage for your bees, they will almost entirely ignore your feeder (1-5 bees on your feeder at any time). If the bees are not actively working flowers, they will send out a good force to your feeder, a full ring or 10-30 bees at any one time. Sometimes there can be so many bees, they will be crawling over each other to get the food.

Pay attention to how your bees react to sunny days, cloudy days, rainy days, etc. Feel free to adjust the concentration as you see fit, but the feeder is more informative if you keep the concentration constant. Of course you could use this as your primary way to feed your bees :) Have fun with it!

Concepts of Treatment-Free Beekeeping *by Jeff Steenbergen*

Whether you just started keeping bees or are an old pro you are likely no stranger to the long list of chemicals a beekeeper might use inside the hive to address issues. The list changes over time as pests adapt relatively quickly to whatever treatments are used and so books and classes devote a good portion of time to discussing when and how to apply them. However what is often not discussed in much detail is the concept of treatment free beekeeping which is beekeeping that does not use any treatments in the hive. The generally accepted definition of a treatment is defined as: "A substance introduced by the beekeeper into the hive with the intent of killing, repelling, or inhibiting a pest or disease afflicting the bees."

Going treatment free means you are going down a difficult road where you let the genetically weak bees die and take steps to propagate the most resistant genetics.

By selecting the most resistant bees you help to accelerate the natural selection process so they can develop natural defenses to pests and

disease, breaking the treatment cycle. Resistant bees are those that survive despite having been exposed to a pest as opposed to bees that survive because they are in a protected location or fortunate to have been spared exposure.

Taking the treatment free approach is not an easy path and for the most part if you simply stop treating bees that have been regularly treated you will likely have low survival odds. However there is a way around this problem and that is by getting bees from a breeder that is already successfully raising treatment free bees, or rearing queens from your own hives which have successfully overwintered without treatments. Having treatment free genetics is only part of what is necessary to be successful and you will also want to take steps to maximize bee health and reduce stresses in the hive. Many ideas exist as to how to reduce stresses and improve health: from allowing the bees to build natural comb to only feeding their own honey. There are also management steps to allow brood breaks to occur that would naturally happen as part of the swarming cycle. Using natural comb and turning over combs more quickly helps to prevent contaminants from building up in the wax so that larvae can be raised in uncontaminated wax cells. There is also much to be learned about the natural microbial environment of the hive that exists when treatments are not used and how those microbes can also help to keep diseases in check.

Treatment free beekeeping is not lazy beekeeping and can often be more challenging because you need to be able to make decisions several steps ahead of the hive's needs to prevent problems from occurring to ultimately be successful. If you have questions about treatment free beekeeping, consider attending PSBA's workshop with Michael Bush on September 14th. More details and registration: www.pugetsoundbees.org

Journeyman Beekeepers Wanted

Are you a Certified Beekeeping Apprentice through Washington State Beekeepers Association? Turn up the dial on your beekeeping knowledge by becoming a Certified Journeyman Beekeeper, which is the next step beyond Apprentice in the Master Beekeeper Program. More info about the Master Beekeeper Program [here](#). Request materials via info@pugetsoundbees.org. A study group may be possible if enough folks are interested.

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We're on the Web!

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A Case for Doing Summer Splits

by Brad Jones

Now is one of the best times to split your hives. After the blackberry flow, a strong colony will have ample honey supplies and bee population to make a new queen. There is also very good drone coverage for mating, which is not always the case in early Spring or late Summer/early Fall. There is also a lot of time to build up a new colony to strength to over-winter. You can buy a queen to make a split or just let the girls make one on their own.

I would advocate for a "walk-away" split (one where the old queen is removed and the main colony makes a new queen) for 3 reasons. Some are obvious, but they are: 1) Increasing of your colony count, 2) the brood break also will break the mite's reproductive cycle, keeping the "mite-load" within a tolerable level and 3) you will learn a bunch whether the split is successful or not. If you don't end up with a new queen, you can just combine the colonies back together and prepare them for the winter.

The best case scenario is you'll end up with twice as many colonies. The worst case is you have the same number or queens. In this beekeepers opinion, it is a low-risk proposition and has the greatest up-side potential of any beekeeping practice when it comes to having strong colonies to over-winter. If you've never done a split and are a little intimidated by the prospect, connect with a beekeeper in your neighborhood who can help you through the process. It is one of the most important practices of a self-sustaining beekeeper and it is very thrilling when realize that "you" just made a new queen! It is worth the effort.

Marketplace

*** please [see our website](#) for new marketplace fees and guidelines ***

- **Urban Bee Company** is looking for experienced Seattle-area beekeepers to partner in 2013-14 on: **Honey** (good rates for your quality honey!); **Speaking engagements**; **Backyard beekeeping** (chemical-free hives and pollinator habitats in Seward Park, Central District, West Seattle, Ballard, Shoreline, and other neighborhoods); **Community Beehives** (including projects at Beacon Food Forest, Alleycat Acres, GroundUp/Yesler Terrace, Sea-Tac airport, and more). **Inquire** to Bob Redmond, bob@urbanbee.com.
- **Need to Extract Honey?** – Join Seattle Bee Works on **August 31st** for our annual honey harvest in West Seattle. Learn the ropes of extracting and hangout with some cool beekeepers too. All the sticky fun without all the work! Bring your supers or even a few frames. Request an extraction appointment today! krista@seattlebeeworks.com for more info.

Puget Sound Beekeepers
Association

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