

# BeeKind

June 2003

Volume 2 Number 1

## The Quarterly Newsletter of the Clatsop County Beekeepers Association

By Thom Trusewicz

The Clatsop County Beekeepers Association turns one-year old this month. Looking back over the year I see a lot of accomplishments. We became an OSBA Branch organization. We shared space with the Master Gardeners at Sunday Markets through last summer, and our members educated the public about honey bees at the County Fair. We also gave a talk to a service group in Clatskanie, had a beekeeping class at the Master Gardener's Spring Seminar and spoke on Diggin in the Dirt on KMUN a couple of times. Our Bee School at Clatsop Community College was successful in February, and we are planning one for next year. We presented a program at the Children's Museum and had the hive set up at the KMUN Plant Sale.

We had wonderful guest speakers such as Dr. Kim Patten speaking about bumble bees, Don Leach spoke on mason bees and Michael Bunch spoke about pathogenic fungi to control mites in our hives. We had an outing to the Honey Bee Workshop in Colton where 14 of our members came to learn and bought 27 hives and 2 nucs.

There certainly are many more hives in Clatsop County than there were last year at this time.

I get a good feeling when I go to one of our meetings and see there are 15 people there who are interested in learning how to keep their bees healthy.

It also feels good when I see beekeepers with a lot of experience like

Dick Trent, Ron Stroczyk and Mark Roberts at our meetings.

I always look forward to Eldon's observations and all of his optimism about capturing swarms. Maybe he'll get that one out of the barn this year.

We now have 24 members in our group. Each of us come from varied backgrounds. Oddly, only one member is a full-time agriculturist.

I think we take some of the wisdom of the hive with us every where we go. The jobs that we have to support ourselves come into better focus when we relate ourselves to the hive. We begin our careers as one thing and often retire as something else entirely.

Honey bees are called social insects just as we humans are social creatures. We work collectively for the betterment of our society. We do this in many ways; paying taxes, abiding the law, donating to charities, taking good care of our property and even belonging to our local beekeeping association.

Our goal at the CCBA is to educate the public and to support beekeepers and beekeeping. In the past year our association has met this goal. We plan to continue fulfilling this goal for many years to come.

As we, a diverse cross section of the local population, learn and come to understandings through our association with one another, we in turn take this information and share it with our communities. We become better beekeepers and the public becomes more accepting of what we do.

Happy Birthday CCBA!

## **Granny Patti's Has It!**

"If you sell it we will come!" That's what we told local feed shops, but so far Granny Patti, who is also a beekeeper, has been the only shop locally that sells beekeeping supplies. Some of our members told me that she is going to stock some items, so I went to Knappa to see for myself.

Patti bought out all the equipment from a beekeeper who was closing shop. She told me that she has a lot of things that haven't made it to her shop yet, but for now you can buy medium boxes, some assembled and used and some new and not assembled. She has some deeps as well.

She has foundation and frames. She has bottom boards, queen excluders, a 4-frame extractor and a whole bunch of other stuff. She also has a source to get you anything you might need. Patti told me that her store really belongs to the community and she will try to get whatever the community needs.

Patti and I also talked about our concerns of how to get young people involved in beekeeping. This is a topic we all need to visit.

In her acquisition of all the beekeeping equipment, Patti also purchased a large motorized extractor that she hopes to set up in her shop. Beekeepers may soon have a place to have their honey extracted. We did not discuss the fee for this service, but after turning a crank for a day or so you may decide to let a professional do it for you.

You can find Granny Patti's shop off of Abbott Road in Knappa. When heading East on Rt. 30, turn right onto Abbott Road and take the first right down the gravel road. Her shop is the building down at the end. Ask to see the beekeeping section in the back room.

## **Pollination Co-op?**

I got a call from a beekeeper in the Valley whom I met at the OSBA Fall Conference. It seems that this keeper was doing some pollination work here in Astoria and Knappa, but the trip to the coast for the small volume was prohibitive, so they referred the farmer to me. The order was small, only eight hives were needed and Dick Trent and I supplied the needed hives.

As a hobbyist I never considered becoming a migratory beekeeper. Bundling and moving two story colonies is somewhat unpleasant work, but there is a fee, and a chance to move your bees and get a variety of honey that you wouldn't normally get.

It's too late to try to get up to full speed this year, but this is something to consider for next year. If you would like to make a cooperative effort to do some pollination next year let me know before next spring. We will rent two story hives that have a good healthy population. The fee and the contractual write-up will be determined this coming winter. It will be like getting paid to send your bees to camp.

## **Bee Day in Astoria!**

We have confirmed a date to have the Honey Bee Workshop here in Astoria. So if you missed Bee Day in Colton or Central Point, please mark your calendars for August 22, 7-9pm and August 23, 9:00am-4:00pm. There will be classroom and open hive activities.

There will be presentations by George Hansen, Harry Vanderpool, and more of your other favorite Oregon beekeepers and educators. Lunch will be provided on Saturday.

Registration material is available at [www.orsba.org](http://www.orsba.org) or 503-325-7966 or e-mail: [honeybeeworkshop@attbi.com](mailto:honeybeeworkshop@attbi.com).

## A Lesson Learned

At the Honey Bee Workshop Dr. Michael Burgett mentioned in his own sly way that honey bees have been around since the dawn of time on our planet, and man has been working with them for only the last 4,000 years. He said, "How did the bees ever get along without us?"

The wisdom of the hive is evident, especially when we as beekeepers make mistakes, like starting a spring buildup in January.

OK, I'll admit it. I made another mistake with my bees this winter. Yes I blame my self, and I'm glad that all who went through our bee school this year were too late to make this same mistake because of what I espoused to be true.

A good beekeeper is always looking for ideas that make sense, and I found an article last winter that made sense to me. It simply stated that if you want an early build-up you should start feeding your bees a light syrup, 2 parts water to 1 part sugar in January. It also said that if you feed your bees syrup you also should be feeding a pollen substitute as well. Bees need the protein in pollen to produce young.

Great, I thought. My bees all made it through the winter with healthy populations. In fact my queens had brood all winter long and they never kicked the drones out. It was a mild winter and they had plenty to eat.

So to further increase my population I fed them light syrup and each hive got pollen substitutes. They usually took two weeks to get through all the pollen paddies. I could measure their progress by seeing how much of the wax paper they had taken to the hive entrance. In the end each hive had eaten four paddies.

By April it was evident that these hives were going to need to be split. I ordered the queens in mid March, but the rainy weather was not conducive to queen rearing. As the weeks passed my hives looked as though they were going to go into a China Syndrome. That is when a hive gets so heavy that your hive stand snaps under the weight and your heavy hives sink in the mud to the center of the earth.

Finally the queens arrived at Ruhls on a Friday while I was away at a Grant Writing Summit. I found the voice mail message on the following Monday morning when I got to work that my queens had arrived. I took the rest of the morning off and rush to pick them up. Others in our group were in on that order, and they had been eagerly waiting as well.

So I was ready ready, finally. I made the splits, hoping for the best, but four days later one of the problem hives swarmed. It was that damn queen I could never find. Oh, she's a crafty one alright.

My plan was to find her in the nuc box where I was housing the swarm, mark her and replace the queen in my observation hive with her. Then I put her swarm mates into one of the splits I made from that hive the week before. I used the newspaper method. Things are smoothing out now.

I think it's time I start keeping better records. I'm even starting to get confused. Maybe I should number my hives because next week it all changes again. Hives 1-5 will be pollinating holly, 6-8 will be staying home, 9 will be joined with 6. If there is a 10 it will become 9... How did the bees ever get along before we came along to manage them?

## **Election Time**

We have all been plodding along from meeting to meeting, things seem to be going well, but while writing the cover article for this edition I realized that it is time we have an election for Association officers to take us through the next year.

Since we are a branch of the OSBA anyone wishing to hold office in the CCBA will need to be members of the OSBA. This rule is present in our Constitution and By-laws. There are three or four elected positions; President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer as one position.

If you are interested in holding any of these offices, please step up at our June meeting and let us know what position you would like to be elected into.

## **The Colton Trip**

I was very pleased to see so many of our members at Bee Day in Colton. There were 14 from our Clatsop group. I'm sure the Portland group was pleased.

We also took away 27 hives and 2 nucs. George Hansen was amazed to see Sarah and Peppe loading hives into a motor home for the trip back to Nehalem and Manzanita. I asked Sarah for a report and she told me they made it home without incident. These are brave women. I might have attempted that with nucs but not with single hives. I am impressed.

I was also pleased to see that everyone had a good experience there, even with the rain. I was "mother hen" anxious that everyone would get something good out of it since I've been talking up Bee Day for the last year.

Have you ever told someone they had to see some really great movie, and

the next time you see them you find out they hated it?

I really loved my first Bee Day experience, and it looks like every one who attended enjoyed their experiences as well.

So with this success under my belt I'm going to change the subject. If you enjoyed Bee Day...you must attend the Fall Conference. It will be at the Hood River Inn in November.

If you attend the Fall Conference you will be treated to presentations by bee scientists from all parts of the country. This is a big conference for the entire Pacific Northwest.

Heads up, you may not want to wait until October to reserve a room.

## **Liability?**

We had a short discussion at our May meeting about liability and insurance coverage for having honey bees on your property.

We've all heard stories that as soon as your agent finds out you are keeping bees, they drop you. I took a chance this morning and called my underwriter, Allstate. They told me there is no problem with honey bees. They are not restricted in my policy and are covered by the liability portion of my policy.

The only problem would be if I was a commercial beekeeper. Then I would need a business policy.

You may want to contact your insurance agent if you have any concerns over your coverage.

## **Advice from Lori**

Lori Mason spoke with us about the importance of having your physician prescribe an epi-pen for emergencies. If someone is stung at your bee yard there may be very little time to react if they go into an allergic shock.

## Emergency Supplies

Every year a number of us get caught with our pants down in the bee yard, figuratively, of course. Just when you think you have everything covered like that extra box with the ten frames of foundation that you thought you had. Those extra hive covers... When you look for them you remember that they are in use and you don't have them to capture the swarm that came out of your hive.

I am finding that the boxes we got from Colton were so packed with bees that they are swarming for people who didn't get a second brood box on right away.

This is a busy time of the year for equipment purchases. Ruhl Bee Supply runs out of stuff as do all other major catalog bee suppliers. It is best to have the supplies you need on hand or the phone number of a beekeeper who has reserve supplies.

Better yet, you should consider what you should have in reserve for an emergency. In beekeeping you should always count on an emergency. With beekeeping it's not "if" but "when" there is a problem. Few beekeepers get through a year without an event that needs some sort of equipment to remedy the situation.

So what if you don't have a lot of room to store unused boxes and frames of foundation. You don't really need to have full hives assembled to be ready for a problem. All you need is a four or five frame nuc box.

Nuc boxes are simply half the size of a normal hive. They can be purchased for anywhere from \$10-\$20, or you may be able to build one for much less.

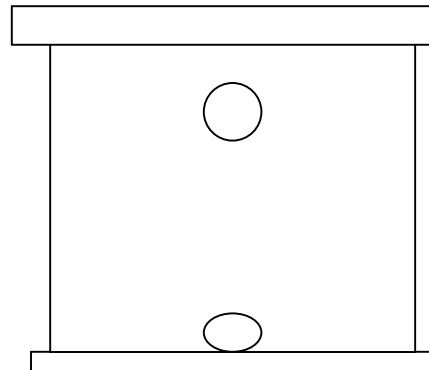
Though you will see plans for nuc boxes that have fancy corner joints,

these joints really aren't necessary since they will not have to be able to support the weight of a full hive filled with honey and brood.

You can put one together with  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch plywood and two-inch screws. Follow the dimensions on the plans on the next page.

Here is an important thing to consider when building nuc boxes. You may want to build two types. One being a box much like the hives you now have that sit on a bottom board. This type of nuc box is perfect for making a split and introducing a new queen.

More importantly, you should have at least one nuc box with an attached bottom and a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch hole drilled in the center right at the landing entrance. It should look like this from the front:



This type of box comes in handy if you find a swarm. It is light enough to hold up with one arm while you bend a branch of bees into the box. The vent hole at the top should be screened, and the bottom hole should have a screen that can be swung into place to close the entrance.

I've used this type of nuc on several swarms. Once the queen is inside all the swarm bees march like soldiers into the box. Close the screen and fasten the top and you can take them away.

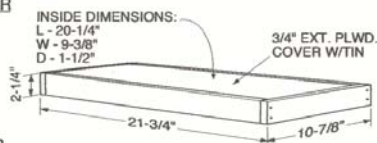
See plans on the next page.

# 5-FRAME LANGSTROTH NUCLEUS HIVE

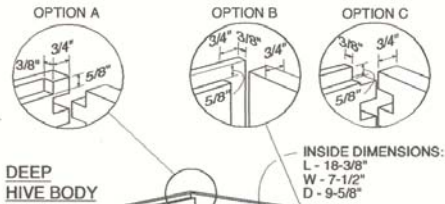
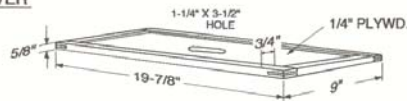
## CONSTRUCTION DETAILS FOR 3/4" THICK LUMBER

Refer to '10-Frame Langstroth Beehive' and 'How to Make a Box Joint' plans for details on construction.

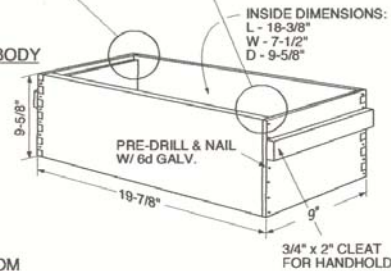
### OUTER COVER



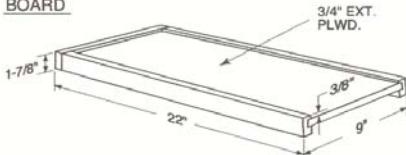
### INNER COVER



### DEEP HIVE BODY

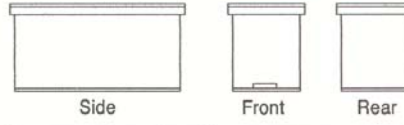


### BOTTOM BOARD



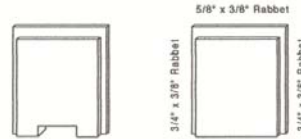
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### The Yankee Beekeeper's Five Frame Nuc Box

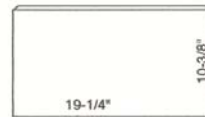


### THE HIVE BODY

The front and rear panels are 9" x 10-3/8". Both panels have a 3/4" x 3/8" rabbet down each side and a 5/8" x 3/8" rabbet across the top edge. The front panel has a 3/4" x 3" cut out centered on the bottom edge.



The two side panels are 19-1/4" by 10-3/8".



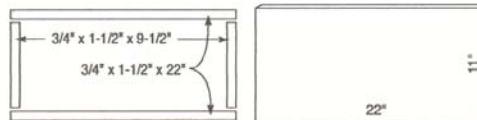
### HIVE BOTTOM AND INNER COVER

Both the hive bottom and inner cover are 20" x 9". Both are made out of 3/8" or 1/2" plywood. The bottom is nailed directly onto the hive body.



### TOP COVER

The top cover is made from 5 pieces. The stiles and rails are detailed below. The cover is made from either 3/8" or 1/2" plywood.



## **A Taste of Honey**

Yes, it's June. The bees are working and hopefully your bees have been busy enough to draw out some comb in your supers to reward you for all your efforts to keep them alive and healthy. That's not actually what is going on, but it may help you justify robbing the honey later.

If you are a first year beekeeper it is more than likely you started with foundation for your second brood box and foundation for your honey supers.

You know that you can not add another box of foundation until at least seven frames are fully drawn. Sometimes bees in poor locations have all they can do just to draw out second story brood box foundation. They don't get to the supers.

You were looking forward to some honey. There is a small amount of hope.

It is important to remember to never harvest honey from a frame that has been in the box during a medication cycle. One thing I do is I mark frames that have been medicated with an M with a marker. Frames that were introduced as foundation after a medication cycle I mark with an N (for new) and change them to an M after I medicate.

So what I'm getting at here is that if you have two hives, the bottom box has frames that have been through a med cycle that you don't touch. The top box has ten frames that have been drawn out and have never seen medicine. You can take a frame of honey from each top box and reduce the box to a nine-frame hive giving the bees more room to draw longer comb. You get to keep and use the honey from a deep frame, which may hold nearly as much as two frames from

a super frame. You may get three or four pounds per deep frame.

Now that you've sweetened your disappointment, you may want to see if there is a better place for your hive for next year.

## **Prepare for Fall**

I know it's only June, but what are you going to do in August when you order your mite strips and find they've been back ordered?

Order them now. They won't go bad. Just follow the instructions for safe storage and they will last a good long time. I doubt you can order in quantities less than ten. You will need one strip for every four frames of brood. In most hives one or two strips will do.

So you have only one hive, why do you need ten strips? You don't. That's why we have an association. Hook up with someone and share a package. It's much better if you can get fresh medicine and use it all up and not have to store it where it can become a potential hazard.

Some beekeepers test to see if they do need to medicate with mite strips. You can use the sugar roll method or a sticky board under a screened bottom board to test your mite load. I do this to check for a spring time mite load, but I generally medicate in the fall regardless.

Please follow directions carefully so you do not over or under-medicate.

Regardless of your mite load you should medicate for Nosema with Fumidil-B and for foul brood with Terramycin in sugar not paddies.

If you order Terramycin please ask the seller to send directions for the proper mixture. This product is sold for all sorts of animals and bees have a recommended dose.

**Clatsop County Beekeepers  
Association  
OSU Extension Service  
2001 Marine Drive, Ste 210  
Astoria Or 97103**

## **Keep Up With Events**

Tillamook and Clatsop County Bee Workshop with Dr. Lynn Royce. This workshop will take place on July 19 in Tillamook County. The presenter will be Dr. Lynn Royce. Topics will be screened bottom boards, drop boards, sugar shake, brood comb dissection and microscope observations. This event will take place from 10:00am-Noon, and then there will be lunch. The cost is \$5 for the program and \$5 for lunch. The location will be 15825 Miami Folley Rd, just south of Geribaldi.

If you plan to attend this event please e-mail [ccbee@intergate.com](mailto:ccbee@intergate.com) so we can get a head count. Or you may call 503-325-7966.

There will be a full-blown **Bee Day in Astoria** on August 22 and 23. Please pre-register. Please check the website for the most up-to-date information and registration forms.  
**[www.orsba.org](http://www.orsba.org)**

**The CCBA meeting time and place is changing for July.** There is going to be a party for our local beekeepers at my house on July 12 at 5pm, (90041 Logan Rd, Astoria), and maybe at another beekeepers home as well. Bring your suits (bee suits, I don't have a pool). I will have beverages, burgers and hot dogs, but feel free to any pot-luck items you want to share. I will send post cards with directions in July.