
THE BEE LINE



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 30, Number 1

Jan-Feb 2005

A CLEVER WAY TO THWART THE BEARS

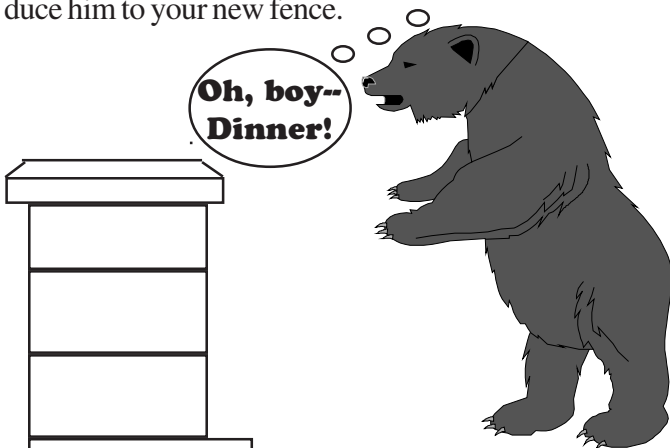
From Lane County comes this helpful piece about dealing with hive-robbing bears. Our thanks to Ken Ograin for allowing us to reprint his story, which appeared in the January 2005 issue of the Lane County Beekeeper Association newsletter.

Since the last report, there have been two more bear encounters, in Creswell and Cottage Grove. The recommended electric fence setup for bears is a little different than what you may have used for farm animals. High-voltage, pulsating energizer Mult-steel wire fence with at least five strands, is the answer.

Chicken-wire mat, two or three feet wide, can be placed around the perimeter of the fence to ensure that the bear is grounded when it touches the fence. Connect the chicken wire to the grounding rod and pin it to the ground to prevent wind from blowing it into the fence.

Although bears seldom break through a properly constructed and maintained fence, some failures have occurred when hives were placed close to the fence. Therefore, locate beehives at least three feet from the fence.

The final touch is to place some strips of bacon on a live wire. This will be a special treat for the bear and introduce him to your new fence.



ROVING CAMERA CAPTURES MYSTERY GROUP AT DINNER

Who ARE these people?



Hint: they were all present at the 2004 Fall Conference at Agate Beach

Give up? See bottom of page!

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- *President's Message
- *Photos from Fall Conference
- *Tippling Bee Experiments
- *Information on BEELINE Submissions
- *Monthly Beekeeping Tips . . . & more!

Anita Azarenko, Chuck Sowers, Bob Morgan, Debbie Morgan, Mike Burgett & Kenny's head

Oregon State Beekeepers Association

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association and is published ten times a year. Subscriptions are included with OSBA membership.

To join the OSBA, complete the membership application in this issue and send with payment to: Phyllis Shoemake, 1702 Toucan Street NW, Salem, OR 97304.

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President's Message

by Kenny Williams

I would like to share with you some of the latest news in our efforts to restore the position of honeybee entomologist at Oregon State University.

Up until now we have had conversations with a number of staff people at OSU, but we had not yet spoken with Dr. Thayne Dutson, dean of the College of Agriculture. We were able to secure an appointment with Dean Dutson with the help of Mike Weber, who heads Central Oregon Seed, Inc., of Madras, OR. COSI is a business which contracts with area growers to produce carrot and onion seed, which in turn requires the pollination services of several thousand beehives.

Our meeting with the Dean took place on Tuesday, January 4, at OSU and included four representatives from grower groups, five from OSU, and four beekeepers. The beekeepers were Vince Vazza, commercial beekeeper; Fred VanNatta, chair of our OSU committee; myself, as an officer of OSBA, and Pat Heitkam, past ABF president participating by conference call.

In essence, the message given to the Dean was that hundreds of millions of dollars worth of Oregon crops urgently require the pollination services provided by Oregon beekeepers; that the community of researchers nationally is shrinking; and that right now beekeeping (and thus pollination) is experiencing a crisis, as many outfits in the West and Midwest have suffered high losses this fall and consequently almond pollination prices have risen to the eighty-dollar range and higher.

While all of this input was valuable for the Dean to learn, to make a long story short, the funding simply is not available at this moment. If it were, the Dean assured us this would be a high-priority position to re-fill.

It is now, more than ever, up to us and up to grower groups and interested parties to explore raising funding if we are to have a honeybee entomologist.

In the coming issues of the Beeline there will be more information about these efforts and how you can help. These efforts will include exploring the endowment of a permanent chair at OSU. There will also be another effort made at the legislature. In May at Salem, there will be an OSBA Executive Board meeting which will include further discussion of an OSBA self-assessment and other member contributions towards research, which were initially discussed at our Fall Conference. A committee comprised of the Board plus any members who attend this May meeting will make these decisions.

I would ask these interested members to call me so that I can notify them of the time and place of the meeting. Also, I would ask all local club presidents to announce this intention to meet at their February, March, and April meetings.

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WHEN BEES BOOZE, SCIENTISTS TAKE NOTE

BY BILL HENDRICK COX NEWS SERVICE

Posted on Tuesday, January 4, 2005

ATLANTA — Do mild-mannered honeybees just get a happy buzz when they drink booze — or do they get baaaaad when blitzed?

That's one of the mysteries scientists are trying to solve in hopes of learning why some people who are normally cool and calm get aggressive and mean when they're loaded. And believe it or not, bee brains — on a molecular level — are very much like those of humans, so studying the brains of honeybees can shed light on how ours work, says Dr. Julie Mustard, an entomologist at Ohio State University.

When honeybees get drunk, they get wobbly, just like people. They stick out their tongues. They spend less time flying and, if drunk enough, flip over on their backs and just wiggle their legs. "This loss of motor control with alcohol consumption is also observed in humans," she says. "Perhaps down at the local bar."

Like us, bees get hangovers, but they suffer longer — 48 hours or so, and not even a hair of the dog will help them.

What's more, too much booze can kill honeybees, just like it can people.

Though research on the drinking habits of honeybees may sound whimsical, it's really deadly serious, Mustard says.

She and fellow researchers Geraldine Wright and Ian Maze have found that honeybees, like people, get dopey on booze and forget things and that alcohol impairs their learning. Honeybees are social animals — normally, they get along together and work collaboratively — but alcohol affects their behavior.

They get lazy, spending less time crawling and buzzing around and more time grooming. Normally, worker bees are industrious, adept at foraging and at navigating their way to and from promising food sources. But alcohol dulls their senses. And those given the most booze just keel over on their backs and sleep it off. Or never wake up. "We know from a lot of work on other things like fruit flies that things that are true in some animals are true in humans as well," Mustard says. "The genes underlying the behavior are very similar. What's going on in the cells is the same in bees and mice and humans."

And it's cheaper to do experiments on honeybees than to use mice or rats. What's more, students who help in the research prefer bees to the other critters and are more eager to volunteer.

They gave honeybees various levels of alcohol, then monitored the effects. Some bees were given the equivalent of a glass of wine, others a few beers and some really strong liquor — 200 proof grain alcohol. And some bees were given plain old sugar water.

The researchers, not surprisingly, found direct correlations between how much booze the bees consumed and how much time they spent walking, flying, standing still, grooming or being so sloshed they just keeled over and croaked, so bombed they couldn't use their legs to flip back over.

"It's really important work," Mustard says. "It's often hard to include undergraduates in topline research, but this attracts them and shows them the big picture."

Do some bees, like people, have an aversion to alcohol? "There's a lot of anecdotal evidence that some do," she says. "If you leave a glass of wine out on the porch, some bees will come and drink from it. Others aren't as interested. But what we're really hoping to learn is why some people become addicted, and others don't."

(continued, next page)

WHEN BEES BOOZE

(Continued from page 4)

“ And we know alcohol kills brain cells in honeybees, just as it does in humans. We’ve seen a higher mortality and a negative effect on memory and learning. And bees given higher concentrations of alcohol die more often than those given less. “

Booze also does seem to make bees more aggressive, she says, but it doesn’t affect their libido or mating behavior because, well, worker bees — the subjects of the study — don’t mate. They’re all females.

Maze, another researcher, gets the bees blasted by squirting drops of alcohol on their antennae, which they slurp up with their tongues.

“ The big picture is to establish the honeybee as a model for human behavior,” he says. “They may help us identify the underlying mechanisms of alcohol addiction. If we knew more, we could look at possible ways to treat it. ”

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Was someone in your family a beekeeper “way back when?” Why not write up a story about that person, and we’ll print it here in THE BEELINE! You might be surprised at how much interest there is in how ol’ Uncle Charlie kept his bees.

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YOU’RE INVITED . . .

To submit your bee-related articles, ads, reports, jokes, cartoons and other items of interest to be included in upcoming issues of THE BEELINE.

We particularly would like to have monthly update reports from each Regional Rep and Regional Association, whenever possible. That way, everyone across the state can keep up with what other groups are seeing, doing, and planning. Information about meetings, field days, fund-raisers and any other tidbits which would be of interest to Oregon beekeepers is welcome.

Please send your items to the Editor by the 10th of each month for publication in the following month’s newsletter. November and December are combined into one issue, as are January and February. All other months have one issue each.

Legibly handwritten pieces are welcome, as are e-mail submissions.

Send to: Mary Moss, Editor
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osba@verizon.net or
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(503) 357-4782

BEE PREPARED. A foraging honeybee is best equipped for dance communication if it developed in a warm nursery during its critical pupal stage. F. Bock/Würzburg Bee Group

FALL CONFERENCE PHOTO GALLERY



Mike Burgett



Tony Noyes (cooking crab)



Fronz & Audrey Yordy



Dr. Steve Shepherd



Tory Johnson (Auction)



Dr. Dewey Caron

NORTHWEST BEEKEEPING TIPS - January/February

By Harry Vanderpool, WVBA

- Ventilation in our hives is very important during the cold months as it is at other times in the year. Take a walk through the apiary on a cold clear day and peek under some hive covers. Is the underside wet or moldy? If so, place a short twig about 1/8th inch under one end of the outer cover as you close it. .
- Spring usually brings some of the windiest weather of the year. Make sure your hive lids are secured in one fashion or another.
- Keep a close eye on hive weight especially during warm winters. Bees eat more when they're active and flying. Provide emergency feed for any featherweight colonies.
- February usually has a couple of warm days that will give you the opportunity to inspect your colonies. This will give you a chance to move frames of feed closer to the brood nest and equalize between healthy colonies.
- Things are going to be getting busy soon. Now is the time to get the hive equipment assembled that you will need to get through the year. Invite a non-beekeeper friend or neighbor over to help. Everyone likes driving nails! Maybe you will end up with a new helper.
- Order queens and packages now as you never know about availability later

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- Your regional association is making plans to run their annual bee school. Why don't you step forward and offer to do a short segment on one of the nights? Choose your favorite subject and make sure the students hear it right this time!
- Dust colonies with 2 tablespoons of Terramycin and powdered sugar mix, every 5 to 7 days to insure a continuous treatment that will last 21 days. To make the mix, thoroughly combine and mix 2 pounds of powdered sugar with one 6.4 oz packet of Terramycin. Store any unused mix in a sealed container in a safe place between treatments.
- If you find colonies that have died-out over the winter, make your best effort to find out why. Haul the hives into the shop and take a long close look. You have spent good money for the lesson before you, don't ignore it.
- As soon as the weather will allow, start your varroa treatment. Read and follow the directions on the package! Mark the date for strip removal on the calendar or somewhere so that you cannot forget.
- If a fast build-up is desired, you can start feeding pollen patties and light syrup in February.



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(continued next column, right)

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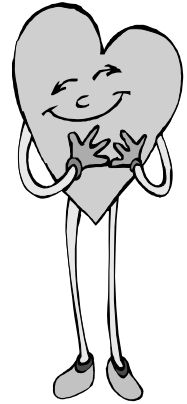
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Willamette Valley

Please see next page

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Happy Valentine's Day



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Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers Association is open to anyone who has an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. OSBA membership is \$20 per person and includes a vote in OSBA elections, discounts on other publications and ten issues of *The Bee Line*. Membership outside the US is \$29.

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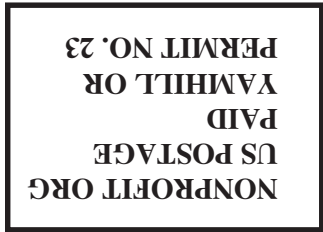
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