

Homewood Co-operative Apiary set to open in Pittsburgh



Moving hives to new Homewood Cooperative Apiary.

Burgh's Bees have turned a vacant lot across from the East End Brewery into an apiary and demonstration pollinator garden that will serve as a hands-on classroom for beekeepers in training.

The group installed the basic infrastructure and first round of planting in early April and they are looking for monetary donations to help fill-out the pollinator garden. If you'd like to donate please make checks out to Burgh's Bees, and mail to 1025 Murray Hill Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15217.

The ribbon cutting ceremony with Pittsburgh's mayor is set for May 4. Volunteers are welcomed to workdays in the garden and apiary. Check out the Burg's Bees website at www.burghbees.com.



New Homewood Co-operative Apiary

BVABA April 26th meeting speaker is Past-President, Jim Fitzroy. Jim will be addressing "Swarm Calls". What to look for, what equipment you'll need, and more!

2010 W. PA Beekeeping Seminar A Success

The Western Pennsylvania Beekeeping Seminar, hosted by Penn State Extension, Beaver, the BVABA club and with support from a number of local Western / North-western bee clubs fared well in its new location. The weekend of February 19-20, 2010 saw close to 300

participants shop, meet and greet and learn some essentials of beekeeping at the Marriott Hotel in Cranberry Township.

The location of the seminar near routes 79, 19 and the Turnpike allowed seminar attendees easy access and plenty of choices for rooms

and meals if they were making a weekend of it.

Speakers received good reviews and the vendors were selling non-stop. Put next year's seminar on your calendar today: February 18-19, 2011 at the Marriott Hotel - Pittsburgh North, Cranberry, PA.

2009-10 BVABA Club Officers

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From the President's Desk... Working on the Dream! by Rob Steffes

What a busy month! I no sooner cleaned out my deadouts than April opened with 80 degree temperatures. The survivors took full advantage and built up fast. This is especially heartening after a cruel winter that took down 28% of my apiary, the first losses I'd taken in 6 years of beekeeping. Anecdotal reports suggest that this rate and worse has not been uncommon throughout the Northeast.

Yet the high casualties don't seem to have slowed the upsurge in new beekeepers nor driven the old ones out. Lee Miller delivered over 200 packages on April 1. Like Mel Disselkoen, a featured speaker at the WPA seminar, I'm a believer that the demand for bees around here far outstrips supply, especially for Northern raised, overwintered, disease resistant stock.

So when Ken Eastman offered me his queen and nuc rearing equipment, I figured I had to grasp the opportunity.

Ken used to be our local queen breeder until he got wiped out a few years back. His bugs were always the best so I badgered him relentlessly to get back at it. But his heart was no longer in it and now, following the death of his father, Ken is moving back to New Hampshire. Ken has been a skilled and inventive beekeeper, as well as a good friend. While he will be sorely missed, he is glad "the dream will live on" as he puts it.

Ken's is a very big veil to fill and I have a long way to achieve his level of expertise but at least I am not alone in attempting queen rearing. Gil Buzza, Tom Owczarzak, Jim Stein and Joe Zgurzinski, among others, are sharpening their skills at it.

On behalf of the club, I wish you the best of luck in your new endeavors, Ken. We'll keep working towards your dream of healthier and more productive bees.

Cream of Tartar inverts sugar

"CREAM OF TARTAR OR FRESH LEMON JUICE MAKES SUGAR SYRUP LESS PRONE TO CRYSTALLIZATION"

Inverted or **invert sugar syrup** is a mixture of glucose and fructose. It is obtained by splitting sucrose into its two components. Compared with its precursor sucrose, inverted sugar is sweeter and its products tend to stay moist and are less prone to crystallization.

Inverted sugar syrup can be easily made by adding roughly one gram of citric acid or ascorbic acid per kilogram of sugar. Cream of tartar or fresh lemon juice (10 milliliters per kilogram) may also be used.

The mixture is boiled for 20 minutes and

will convert enough sucrose to effectively prevent crystallization, without giving a noticeably sour taste.

All constituent sugars (sucrose, glucose and fructose) support fermentation, so invert sugar solutions may be fermented as readily as sucrose solutions.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverted_sugar_syrup

Courtesy of member Jim Stein.



Hands-on experience in learning how to find brood, eggs, larvae, mites and more...

Outyard Beekeeping Demonstration

Jon Laughner, Beaver County, Penn State Extension Director, announces an outyard beekeeping demonstration meeting set for Saturday, April 24, 2010. The program will be conducted at the Pennsylvania Railroad Supervisors Club off of Tevebaugh Hollow Rd., Freedom, PA 15042.

The time of the meeting will be 1:00—3:00 p.m.

The meeting is designed for beginner beekeepers to experience working in a beehive. Members of the BVABA and Burgh's Bees will conduct the meeting.

Topics include: installing a package of honeybees in a hive; making a nucleus colony

from and established hive and installing a queen; identifying eggs, larvae of all stages, capped brood, capped honey, nectar, pollen, propolis, varroa mites, etc.

For more information or directions call Lee Miller at 724-544-2900

Beekeeping Merit Badges: A Thing of the Past?

Article forwarded by *Berry Birkey*
of www.beesource.com

I want you to consider helping Christopher Stowell, a young Boy Scout and beekeeper, in his efforts to persuade Boy Scouts of America to reinstate the Beekeeping Merit Badge. There is not enough youth involvement in beekeeping. Both the involved scouts and the beekeeping community would benefit greatly if BSA will reinstate the merit badge.

BSA discontinued that merit badge about 15 years ago. I don't think it is a coincidence that, around that time, many beekeepers quit due to difficulties caused by varroa mites. With the development of the internet, we now have a way to pair up scouts with mentors. Beekeepers support for this effort will be critical to its success.

The **BVABA website** has been receiving a number of visitors: January-604; February-774; March-832; April-408. Check out the site for recent seminars, meeting dates and club news!

Spirotetramat Escapes Federal Ban Despite Concerns

An interesting development on Spirotetramat, a new insecticide from Bayer, submitted by member, Lee Miller.
A federal appeals court refused to delay a ban on the sale of a pesticide that some environmental groups claim is killing honeybees.

The decision prevents Bayer CropScience, from selling its pesticide, Spirotetramat, while the company appeals a lower court ruling that halted sales.

"Bayer has demonstrated neither that it will suffer irreparable injury absent a stay, nor that it has a substantial possibility of success on the merits of its appeal," U.S. District Judge Kimba Wood and U.S. Circuit Judge Joseph McLaughlin said in the ruling this week.

Here is what I ask you to do:

1. Please go to this website and sign Christopher Stowell's online Petition: <http://www.experienceproject.com/beepetition>
2. Please spread the word about the online petition by asking your friends and contacts to sign it. You will find that most people, even non-beekeepers, are happy to support a 13 year-old who is on a mission to accomplish something positive. Christopher's goal is to present his petition to the BSA on July 15, 2010. So please keep this in mind and make sure you take action as soon as possible.

Something worthy to consider in supporting youth as developing beekeeper's for the future!

Upcoming Events

Thursday, April 22 -

Earth Day—Beaver County celebration at Ewing Park, Ellwood City from 10 a.m.—2 p.m.

Saturday, April 24, 1 p.m.-

Outyard Beekeeping Demonstration for beginners at PA Railroad Supervisors Club, Freedom, PA

Monday, April 26, 7 p.m.-

BVABA Regular Meeting at the Beaver County Conservation Wetlands, 156 Cowpath Rd., Aliquippa, PA.

Tuesday, April 27, 7 p.m. -

Beekeeper meet-up for Burgh's Bees at Carson City Saloon on the South Side.

May 9—15 National Wildflower Week

Saturday, June 5 -

United Nations World Environment Day, Pittsburgh, PA , 2010 Host City.
June 21-27 National Pollinator Week

Monday, June 28, 7 p.m.-

BVABA regular meeting at the Beaver County Conservation Wetlands, 156 Cowpath Rd., Aliquippa, PA.
[Bill Kopar—"Making Nuc's"](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is considering what to do with existing stock of Spirotetramat, known by the trade names Movento and Ultor, said spokesman Dale Kemery .

Sales of the pesticide remain legal in Europe, Canada and Mexico, according to Bayer CropScience, which is based in North Carolina. Bayer's North American headquarters is in Robinson.

The decision was handed down three years after scientists identified Colony Collapse Disorder, a mysterious breakdown of bee immune systems that each winter roughly halved the number of bee colonies the nation's large, commercial beekeepers own. The cause of the breakdown largely has eluded researchers.

(Spirotetramat continued)

In December, Manhattan U.S. District Court Judge Denise Cote banned the sale of Spirotetramat on grounds the EPA skipped steps required in any pesticide approval process, including not taking public comment. Cote's decision did not explicitly address the impact the pesticide might have on honeybees.

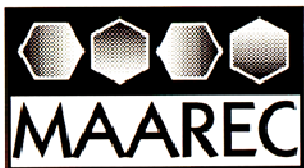
"Bayer has been touting this as a greener pesticide. It is designed to stop insect reproduction, and it seems to do the same thing to bees," said Aaron Colangelo, an attorney for the New York-based Natural Resources Defense Council, which, along with the Portland, Ore.-based wildlife conservation group Xerces Society, sued the EPA. Jack Boyne, an entomologist for Bayer CropScience, said the company is confident the EPA will reapprove Spirotetramat's registration.

"It is unprecedented for a lower court to vacate an approval. We believe the decision was not correct. We have been injured improperly and believe that science is on our side," he said. "As the manufacturer, we are not allowed to sell our inventory of product to our distributors." The EPA approved Spirotetramat in 2008 for use on hundreds of crops, including apples, pears, peaches, oranges, tomatoes, grapes, strawberries, almonds and spinach. Bayer CropScience developed the pesticide after scientists identified Colony Collapse Disorder in late 2006. "This is one of the safest insecticides for bees," Boyne said.

According to the Department of Agriculture, bees pollinate \$15 billion worth of crops in the United States. An estimated 29 percent of all U.S. honeybee colonies died last winter, about 11 percentage points higher than what beekeepers consider normal, but lower than losses during the previous two winters. Colony Collapse Disorder is linked to viruses, mites, poor bee treatment and poor nutrition, said Dennis van Engelsdorp, a honeybee expert and researcher at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Yet the cause of the die-off remains elusive. "Will we ever have one cause for cancer? That's what this is like," van Engelsdorp said.

Dave Hackenberg of Lewisburg in Union County is Pennsylvania's largest commercial beekeeper. Because of his concerns about the effect of pesticides on his bees, for the first time in 42 years, Hackenberg will not take his bees to Florida to pollinate oranges.

"I am not going to put my bees in orange groves. The chemicals they are using are doing something that is breaking down bees' immune systems," he said.



Mid-Atlantic
Apicultural Research &
Extension Consortium

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey,
Pennsylvania, West Virginia
and the USDA cooperating

DIVIDING HONEY BEE COLONIES February 2000

It is sometimes worthwhile for a beekeeper to divide honeybee colonies to increase numbers or to make up winter losses. Dividing the colonies costs little as compared to buying package bees or established colonies. An additional dividend to dividing a colony is that the beekeeper can obtain the net result of swarming, but does so at his or her convenience without the work of swarm capture or risk of missing or being unable to capture the swarm. Only strong colonies should be used for making divides. In areas having a late honey flow, divisions should be made approximately six to eight weeks prior to the main flower bloom. This will allow new colonies sufficient time to build up strong populations to gather the crop.

In areas having an earlier honey flow, colonies may be divided when there are six or more frames of brood present in the hive. Although divisions can be made any time, those made within two months of a nectar flow period may result in the loss of some or most of the surplus honey crop. Dividing bee colonies after June is not recommended (except in the more southern states) since the colonies may not be able to properly build up and store enough honey for winter use. Colony divisions should be made on a day that bees are freely flying. Colonies will be most gentle at this time. This insures that young bees that have remained in the hive will be transferred to the new hive. Additionally, this will insure warmer weather and there will be less danger of chilling brood.

To divide a colony, the procedure is to open the hive using as little smoke as possible. Fewer bees will scatter and take flight, thus allowing more bees to remain on the combs to be transferred. Find the frame containing the queen and set it aside to insure that she doesn't move to another part of the hive. Next remove frames of brood and honey with adhering bees and divide equally or if the colony is very strong (more than 12 frames with brood) divide into thirds. A minimum of three frames of brood should be given to each new hive. Empty frames, or frames containing honey or pollen, are added to fill up empty spaces left in the brood chamber. The frame containing the old queen is then placed in the original colony or in one of the new colonies. Introduce a new queen (or a queen cell) into the other colony or colonies. It is a good idea to feed the new divides sugar syrup to stimulate production of brood. It is also important to provide entrance reducers to the smaller hives to prevent robbing. If colonies are maintained in two-story brood boxes, it is possible to divide by simply separating the two hive bodies. Four days after this separation check the two hives and determine which one is queenless. Add a new queen to the queenless colony using a cage introduction method. This dividing method is not very refined and neither original colony nor divide usually produce any surplus honey.

SWARM CONTROL DIVIDES

When dividing colonies for swarm control, 3 to 5 frames of brood with clinging bees are removed from those colonies that begin rearing queens. These frames are placed in a new hive and given a queen cell or a new queen. Replace the frames in the original colony with drawn comb if possible since foundation frames may crowd the original colony too much and it may still swarm. It is well to reorganize the frames of the hive that was preparing to swarm, providing as much room for brood rearing as possible to assist in swarm control. It is possible to take one or two frames from several colonies to form a new hive. This may help alleviate potential swarm problems if done at an early date. It may also be done without a loss of honey crop in the stronger colonies. There is usually little fighting among young bees when they are placed together in this manner. If fighting does occur, smoking the new colony heavily may help alleviate the problem.

LOCATIONS FOR DIVIDES

When dividing colonies in half, the original colony can be moved slightly to one side so that it covers half of its original stand. The new hive is then placed alongside the colony so that it is partially on the stand occupied by the parent colony. Half the foraging bees will enter one hive and half the other. If the colonies cannot be placed side by side, or if the original colony is split in thirds or more, it is beneficial to move the new hive or hives a minimum of two miles from the original home to prevent the older foraging bees from returning to the original hive. With some divides, the original hive may be removed and the new divide placed at the original location. As the foraging bees leave their hive they return to the original position since that is the one they know as home. New divides increase rapidly in this situation and the original colony usually is not adversely harmed but it may not produce a honey crop with the heavy loss of its foragers. The divide does not necessarily need to receive the foragers from the original colony. The divide can be placed at the location of a different strong colony in the apiary and that strong colony moved to an alternate position. If done when there is a moderate to good nectar flow, little robbing should result. If there is little nectar forage available, it is best not to interchange any colony positions.

QUEENS AND DIVIDES

The most efficient method of dividing involves placing a new queen in each of the resulting colonies. This will insure that the colony gets a good start and has an opportunity to survive the winter. It is possible to divide a colony without a queen. A queen cell in the new hive will be sufficient, provided there is the majority of the season ahead. The least desirable alternative is to let the new colony rear a new queen. The delay before the new colony can start worker bee production is quite lengthy and not desirable for a small colony. If queens are not available, it is best to leave the queen of the original colony in the largest colony if you want surplus honey. She will continue the brood cycle and the colony should be assured of surviving the winter even if they don't store a surplus. Divides that remain too weak can be united in the fall.

MANAGING DIVIDES

New divides should not be extensively manipulated. Any divide that must rear a new queen cell should not be disturbed for three weeks. It usually is advisable to feed sugar syrup to divides for the first couple of weeks. It may be necessary to continue feeding for a longer time. Divides should be examined early in the fall management schedule. Weak colonies can be combined with other weak colonies or added to stronger colonies to insure that they get through winter. If a new queen was added to the divide, this queen may be used to head the united colonies as a method of requeening. Fall feeding may be necessary and early fall examination will insure sufficient time to accomplish this task.

* * * *

Dividing a colony is a means of obtaining free bees. Divides are an excellent means of increasing colony numbers or for making up winter and swarm losses. When done properly, divides may yield surplus honey and certainly should build up and winter well. Dividing is good bee management.

Check website for other updates and frequently asked questions: <http://maarec.cas.psu.edu/>

2010 PA State Beekeeper's Picnic July 23rd & 24th in Erie, PA

The Northwestern Pa. Beekeepers Association will be hosting the 2010 Pa. State Picnic July 23rd & 24th Camaraderie, games, an auction, with sights to see, and learn what's buzzing from around the State. Come and join fellow beekeepers for a wax chew'n good time. Do the Dance, spread the word, then follow the Beekeepers to Asbury Woods Nature Center in beautiful Erie, (www.visiteriepa.com) For more information call chair person: John Haschalk at 814 - 763 - 2986

A Message from the President of the PA State Beekeepers Association

We now have about 1000 beekeeping members of the Pennsylvania State Beekeeping Association. We have met with key legislators and they are supportive of beekeeping in Pennsylvania. We have received funding for 6 full time seasonal bee inspectors for 2010. The letter that we received from PA Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding showed strong appreciation of our industry and he has supported us in many areas. We plan to meet with him later this summer to discuss additional issues. Thanks for your support.

There will be many changes in the displays at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. The Apiary displays and exhibits will be featured in the main exhibit area in a high people traffic area.



Observation hive in an Assisted Living Facility in northern Virginia.

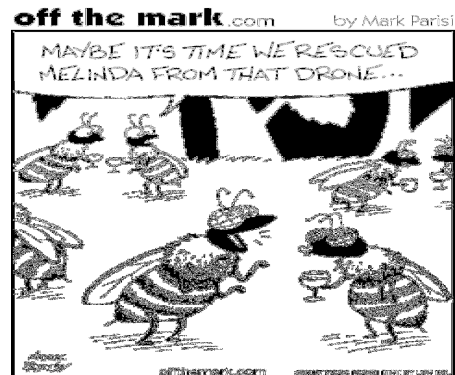
We may not have county exhibits but we are pleased to have a very prominent space in this show. We were rated as one of the most educational areas in the learning center. Most classes and premiums will remain the same so plan to send an exhibit the 2011 PA Farm Show.

Beekeepers have a valuable and important message to share with consumers and that is why we need your continued support at both Hookstown and Big Knob Fairs.

Lee Miller

CLASSIFIED

Need Some equipment or eggs? Beekeeping equipment is in-stock and available in Pittsburgh. Periodic bulk orders are also coordinated to save on shipping costs. Direct drop shipments to your location can be arranged anytime. Joe's chicken are also laying fresh eggs. Contact Burgh Bees instructor and BVABA member Joe Zygurzynski of Country Barn Farm for more information at 412-225-0930 or joe@countrybarnfarm.com



RECENT NEWS MAKERS THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST...

- **The Buzz: Targeting Cancer with Bee Venom**—Wall Street Journal article from September 29, 2009 recommended by Jim Fitzroy. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203803904574433382922095534.html>.
- **Pittsburgh Officials May Rein-in Urban Agriculture** — Pittsburgh Tribune Review from March 2, 2010 <http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/print/669399.html>
- **Proposed Zoning Ordinance Could Create Change for Urban Agriculture** —Pop City Media from February 17, 2010. <http://www.popcitymedia.com/devnews/urbanag021710.aspx>

Gardening for Pollinators

- Eliminate pesticides whenever possible. If you must use a pesticide, use the least toxic material possible. Before purchasing, read labels carefully, as many pesticides
- Use a wide variety of plants that bloom from early spring into late fall. Help pollinators find and use them by planting in clusters or drifts of the same plant. Use plants native to your region, as natives are four times more attractive to pollinators. Include a variety of flower shapes to attract different kinds of pollinators.
- Avoid modern hybrid flowers, especially those with "doubled" flowers. Often plant breeders have unwittingly left the pollen, nectar and fragrance out of these blossoms while creating the "perfect" blooms for us.
- Include larval host plants in your landscape. If you want colorful butterflies, grow plants for their caterpillars.
They WILL eat them, so place them where leaf damage can be tolerated. Realize that some host plants are less than ornamental.
- Provide water. Pollinators will gather at shallow pools or very shallow bird baths. Water seeping to create mud puddles will benefit mason bees. Mud puddles also provide important minerals for pollinators, including butterflies. Try adding a quarter inch of sand to a saucer. Add water until the sand is slightly covered. A few flat stones that rise above the water will give access to pollinators.
- Leave garden cleanup until spring. (Except for diseased plant material that should be removed and destroyed.)
Many beneficial insects overwinter in the dried stalks of plants. Break up stalks into pieces in early spring and leave them to decompose. Native ornamental grasses make good protection from winter winds for birds and small mammals. The seed will be welcome food for birds when normal food sources are gone.
- Leave bare ground for ground nesting bees; go easy on the roto-tilling. Very few bees can nest in manicured lawns. Leave a 3' by 3' spot of bare ground in a sunny location.
- Remove invasive species. Invasive species displace important pollinator plants. Don't plant invasives. Remove existing invasives before they escape to natural areas.
- You do not need a lot of space. A few containers, pollinator plants tucked into your existing plants or a small designated "pollinator friendly" garden will get you started. Most pollinator plants need at least 6 hours of sunlight a day.

Some websites and references

[Haagen-Dazs Help the Honey Bees](http://www.helpthehoneybees.com/)

<http://www.helpthehoneybees.com/>

[Xerces Society](http://www.xerces.org)

www.xerces.org

[U.S. Forest Service Pollinator website](http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/index.shtml)

<http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/index.shtml>

[Discover Life](http://www.discoverlife.org/)

<http://www.discoverlife.org/>

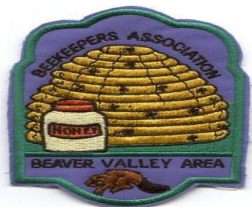
[Natural Resources Conservation Services](ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/WHMI/WEB/pdf/TechnicalLeaflets/NativePollinators.pdf)

<ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/WHMI/WEB/pdf/TechnicalLeaflets/NativePollinators.pdf>

Resource found at: <http://maarec.cas.psu.edu/BeeGardens/PollinatorGardening.pdf>.

Beaver Valley Area Beekeepers Association

Dan Worst, Treasurer
124 Grant Street
Coraopolis, PA 15108



We're on the web at: beavervalleybees.com

Honey-Rhubarb Rolls & Mayo Dressing

Sauce:

3 c. cut rhubarb
1/4 c. water
Honey to taste
3 drops red food coloring

Roll:

2 c. flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
4 tbsp. shortening
2 tbsp. honey
2/3 c. milk
1 tbsp. melted shortening

Cook rhubarb in water until soft (5 min.). When almost cool stir in honey to sweeten and add coloring. Sift flour, baking soda and salt.

Cut in shortening. Blend honey and milk and add enough to make soft dough. Turn on floured board and knead gently a few minutes. Roll out into rectangular sheet about 8 inches long by 1/2 inch thick. Rush with melted shortening.

Roll up loosely as for jelly roll. Cut into 1 inch slices; place slices cut side down on greased

muffin pans and bake at 400 degrees for 15-20 min. or until golden brown. Serve with rhubarb sauce poured over each roll. Makes 10-12 rolls

Honey Mayonnaise Dressing

1 egg yolk 1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp honey 1 c. oil
1/2 tsp. dry mustard
Pinch pepper & cayenne
2 tbsp. cider vinegar

Mix all ingredients together except vinegar and oil. Add oil slowly and beat with rotary beater. Add vinegar and continue beating until thick and well blended. Store in covered jar in refrigerator.

The Honey Cookbook by Maria Lo Pinto, NY, Hippocrene Books, 1993.

