

# The Middlesex Bee

Middlesex County Beekeepers Association  
www.middlesexbeekeepers.org  
Tom Fiore, President

Volume 21, No. 10

**November 2010**

## Introductions.

Any new members?

- Pete, Alice, S. from Lowell, we have a few hives, but lost our queen. It was a problem with the hive top feeder.
- Marty, has 26 hives, from Essex County.
- Caroline & Jim L. from Concord, with one hive. We had a serious robbing/attack experience this summer, and the hive is limping along. If it doesn't make it through the winter, we'll start again.
- Christina, no bees, wanted to come along and find out what it's all about.

## Bee Talk.

Tom P. what's going on with your bees? Took the ventilators off the hive (things atop the hives to help for the ventilation). I have a weak hive with no stores, unsure if it's going to make it through the winter.

Tom Fiore said that he received two phone calls from Bee Keepers (BK) this week, there isn't a gram of honey in their hives. With my own hives at the end of July, because of the drought, if the colonies didn't have enough reserves and weren't strong enough, the hives were absolutely empty. I think there's a lot of empty hives out there, so you should be feeding and doing Fall Prep. Another member commented that their bees are going through the sugar syrup like crazy. They're taking as much as I can give them, and I'm feeding them 1:1. It's not too late to feed. This next week (in October) is going to be warm. If the bees are taking it, and the weather is ok, go ahead and provide syrup and save yourself in the February.

Has anyone seen more yellow jackets this fall? Lots of members have. Tom F. commented that as he's taking the cap off of the syrup jars for the feeder, that the yellow jackets are right there.

Tom Seeley's talk at Harvard University; A member had attended the talk about Seeley's new book called *Honeybee Democracy*, which goes into great detail about how the bees communicate and make decisions—whole colony decisions—when the bees swarm. It often involves 10 or more sites to choose from, how the bees communicate to decide where to settle.

Some of the newer people, do you have questions about Fall feedings? When does it become too late to feed them? If you want to feed them, feed them. Gus uses a top hive feeder. Atop the inner cover, he places a couple of blocks and inverts a gallon jug over the opening. The bees cluster around the center frames, and Gus feels that they don't want to climb a runway to get to the syrup, especially when it's cold. They don't want to break the cluster. Hence the top hole is the best place... For a Do-It-Yourself hive top feeder, use gallon paint can and take a brad nail to make some holes. Use two sticks and place the container on the inner cover. The feeder has to be level. You can also use Mason Jars with small nails in the lid. Two or three jars can be placed across the top of the hive.

A member asked about Mold in the sugar syrup. Honey-Be-Healthy (HBH) can help with that... HBH is an organic supplement, and one way it helps bees is to inhibit mold. When using HBH, like with

any other medication, USE AS DIRECTED! John C. uses a 1:1 water to sugar syrup with HBH in a spray bottle after he smokes his hives. He sprays the top bars, giving the bees something to do while he works the hive. Mike has used HBH when combining weak colonies. While most use the newspaper method, he sprayed the colonies before combining them without the paper.

Doctor David D. Yeong(sp?) is a world expert on Africanized bees (so-called killer bees). He's researched and explained how to work on Africanized bees. Their life cycle is different. It's a tropical bee, not designed to last 6-months over-wintering. In the '70's they brought Brazilian Africanized Honey Bees (AHB) to Poland for four successive years in an attempt to over-winter. None of the colonies lasted. The lifespan of AHB in our colder climate is 90 days. European Honey Bees live for approximately 160 days. It's strictly a tropical bee. There's one country in South America that doesn't have AHB, and that's Chile – because of its climate.

Does anyone know the furthest North that AHB has been found? Portland Maine – the swarm stowed away upon a shipping freighter that came from Brazil. In the 1920's, there was an attempt to introduce AHB into Massachusetts, and nothing came of it. They didn't last. Most of the testing conducted upon AHB is being conducted on Grand Isle, which is an isolated island with no chance of bees getting off.

Are there local queen producers? There's a

## Upcoming Meetings and Events:

**November 26, 2010 MCBA meeting 7:00-9:00 PM**

At the Unitarian Universalist Church, at 27 School Street in Carlisle, MA.  
The guest speaker: Mr. Tom Stefanini, Middlesex County Bee Inspector.

*December 11, 2010 MCBA meeting & annual dinner 7:00-9:00 PM*

*January 28, 2011, MCBA meeting 7:00-9:00 PM*

school of thought that BK should use locally raised queens from stock that has been raised, and survived for years here in New England. Genetically predisposing bees to survive—and thrive here. For instance, one could buy a package, and re-queen the package with a local queen. If you have a package with aggressive tendencies, re-queen the hive with a local queen and wait a few weeks for them to mellow out.

Are there any last questions or comments? What is the best way for a hobbyist to maintain a good local stock? It's just a matter of time and energy to raise Nucleus Colonies (Nucs). Take a hive and split it into 2 Nucs, with brood in lower hive and honey above. What happens is that the 2 new hives will adjust the number of bees in relation to the cavity size.

Gus suggested that in the Fall you should move the hive away from its original location – more than 10 feet; all the field bees will return to the original location. They are the bees that are going to die over the winter—and you've just taken care of them without depleting the hive's stores. What the hive needs to keep warm in the winter is the brood. The bees remaining in the hive (the nurse bees) are already there and are your over-winter bees.

Gus, had 28 colonies in Carlisle, in October they do the harvesting of the berries, and he stored his empty extracted supers in an out building. Under each window, there was an 8" mound of dead bees. The next spring he discovered that all of his colonies lived, because he got rid of the workers. You know that you're a BK when you're having fun.

Ernie, feature presentation, a documentary on DVD entitled Nicotine Bees. The premise of the documentary is that the current bee problem of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) can be traced to pesticides, specifically Neonicotinoids (Nicotine based). After watching the DVD, a member mentioned the recently published article in which the researchers claimed to have found the causes of CCD, which is a combination of two pathogens, Nosema, and new kind of previously

unknown fungus. Another member stated that the author was immediately attacked because there was no indication that pesticides are involved, and the fact that he receives major funding from the chemical companies. Apparently world-wide, researchers are splitting into two camps, CCD via pesticides, or CCD via pathogens.

### ***Business Meeting.***

We don't have a treasurer this evening, so there's no treasurer's report.

There was a motion to approve the minutes as printed, subject to editing. The motion was approved with none opposed.

Ernie moved to pay the Church \$600 for our indoor season which consists of 6-7 meetings. It's the same amount that we've been paying for several years – the rate hasn't increased... A Motion was made to approve the expenditure. Any discussion? None. The motion carried.

Tom Fiore (MCBA President) received a message from Dan Conlon from Mass. Bee, requesting funding for bee research, and/or awards for research grants (for research relating to honey bees). Past winners include Marla Speevack, Galen Dively, Mike Embry. The grants are for \$5000. Dan Conlon has asked that each county contribute \$100, so that we have a total of \$1000 contributed by Mass. Clubs. Gus made motion to amend the amount to \$250, which was seconded. Discussion?

- *Do we have the money?* While we do have several bills coming up, as of Aug. 28th, \$4791.92 in the account. So we could certainly afford \$250.
- *How can we find the results of past research?* TF has results of award the history. Some of it is ongoing research: Marva Spivek has done work on genetic hygienic bees, Sue Colby at Ohio State at the time, manages the new world carniolain bee raising program, go online to the Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS) website: <http://www.easternapiculture.org/programs/hbrf.shtml>
- Gus – it's always been worthwhile, Diane S. work on tracheal mite, which was conducted with help from the grant: she came out with a video

showing how the tracheal mite goes from the hair on one bee to another bee. Grants received in 94 and 97. Tucson lab received a grant to research protein feed for nourishment for the bees, and the result is what we now know as The Tucson diet.

- The next EAS meeting will be in Warwick RI this year (2011), so it's a local conference.
- Any other questions or comments? None.

All in favor? The motion carried unanimously.

### ***Old business.***

Gus brought up Ag in the classroom. The club's usual donation occurs around this time of year. A suggestion was made to bring that up at the November meeting, and Gus agreed.

Motion to close BM, seconded, and approved unanimously.

## ***Help Wanted!***

### **Refreshment Coordinator**

The club is looking for one or more people to handle refreshments at our monthly meetings.

Generally this would involve arriving early enough to start the coffee and cleaning up after wards.

If you can help, please contact:

Tom Fiore at [tnfiore@comcast.net](mailto:tnfiore@comcast.net)  
or  
call 617-974-4528 and leave a message

***The Middlesex Bee***

Middlesex County Beekeepers Association

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Your comments and submissions are always welcome. All material is due by the 10th of each month. Plain text is preferred; Open Document, or Microsoft Word formats are acceptable.

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