

Sussex County Beekeepers Association

February/March 2009

President's Message

Hello,

While shoveling the snow and ice from the doors and autos in the driveway a few days ago, I was reminded of the proximity of spring by the tentative 'old Sam Peabody Peabody Peabody' song of a white throated sparrow at the bird feeder. In the midst of winter, the momentum of spring is building.

Soon the sap will begin flowing and the buds will swell on the trees. You can be sure that the bees are beginning to prepare for the nectar flows by remaining tightly nestled in the combs of the hive until later this month. Spring surprises us with its suddenness every year, it seems.



Take some advice from the little white

throated sparrow, and anticipate its emergence.

It isn't important to try to time it perfectly, but try to be ready to take advantage of those days where winter loses its grip for a while.

As February wears on, winter will begin to show its fatigue. Catch it napping if you can, and get out to your hives on those days. Active hives will have dead bees scattered about the front of the hive. On a mild day, bees will be taking cleansing flights and leaving green and yellow calling cards on everything. Dead hives will be silent and at peace. Give a 'heft' check for honey stores and if in doubt, feed with fondant candy.

Check your supers for damage and rot. Repair or replace them **before** you need to use them. Paint whenever you get a chance. New stuff is expensive.

And be sure to join us at the next meeting to brag about your successes, or seek solace from others

who may have fared less well than you. Beekeeping is not a pure science. Like fishing. They don't call it 'catching' for good reason. We say we keep bees, but really we just offer them a place to keep themselves.

Bill Foley

Dues are Overdue!

If you haven't already paid your dues please do it now!

Dues are \$20 and entitle you to attend state and local meetings and receive the state and local newsletters.



Not sure if you paid your dues—check the front of this newsletter for a timely message.

Please make checks payable to SCBA and mail to our treasurer, Linda Osborne at 23 Fox Hill Road, Lafayette, NJ 07848.

SCBA Newsletter
Feb./March 2009

SCBA Calendar

Clip and Refrigerate

- **Saturday, Feb. 21st**
1 pm at the Fairgrounds. Late Winter/Early Spring Management. Check the website for building
- **Saturday, March. 7th**
9 am to 4 pm—First Session of Beginner Beekeepers Course, Fair Administration Building
- **Saturday, March 14th**
9 am to 3pm—Second Session of Beginner Beekeepers Course
- **Saturday, March 21st**
Snow Date for Beginner Beekeeping 9am-noon—Putting Hive boxes together.
- **Saturday, April 18th**
Meeting at 1 pm at Fair Administration Building. Preparing honey and wax entries for competition
- **Saturday, May 16th**
Progressive Hive Inspections
- **Saturday, June 20th**
Extracting honey
- **July 18 or 25**
Fair set-up tentative dates
July 31 –August 9— Sussex County Farm & Horse Show

Beginning Beekeepers

Please feel free to join the short course—beginning beekeepers love to talk to experienced beekeepers.

The Beginning Beekeeper course will be offered on Saturday, March 7th from 9 am to 4 pm and 14th 9 am to 3 pm at the Administration Building on the Sussex County Fairgrounds. The snow date is Saturday, March 21st. The cost to new beekeepers is \$20

If you plan to attend or know somebody who would like to attend call Linda at 973-875-5770 before **March 4th**.

Continuing Education

The beginner beekeeping course offered by SCBA is a great basic course but as experienced beekeepers will tell you there is always more to learn.

Essex County is offering a three day course on Feb. 21, 28 and a field day in April. The cost is \$70

The Rutgers Beginner Beekeeping course is April 23, 24 and 25. Check the New Jersey Beekeeper Association web site at njbeekeepers.org for more information about both these courses and to register.

Our own Bill Foley will be leading The Honeybee and Its Role in Modern America on March 6 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at Sussex County Community College the

cost is \$35 and you can register at <Sussex.edu/cce>

If you can't get away there are courses on line some of them are free. Check out <gobeekeeping.com> for free basic courses and a test of your knowledge. If you like videos check out <beemaster.com> for videos, chat and web cams on peoples hives.

For the most up to date and scientific news about Colony Collapse disorder visit <maarec.psu.edu> These are the people on the working group doing the research into CCD. There is lots more info on this site as well as videos. SCBA has a great library of books and videos as well.

I Want Candy... I Want Candy...

Many people have been asking for fondant recipes to use for bee candy during the cold months here are two. The first recipe Bob Burkhard prepared at a meeting last year.

The recipe Bob used for Bee Candy:

1) Heat one pint of water to boiling in a large pot on the stove (or outside using a turkey cooker)



2) Stir in as much sugar as can be dissolved. This will be about 5 pounds. More sugar is better.

3) Boil uncovered until the mixture reaches 234 degrees F. Be patient, it takes awhile. The boil should be gentle not rolling.

4) Pour into jelly roll pans lined with wax paper. It should not be more than 1/8 of an inch thick—it has to fit between the top of the frames and the inner cover.

The candy will harden as it cools—it may

take overnight. Bob said sometimes the consistency is like taffy and sometimes like a peanut brittle—either way cut into strips—wax paper and all and lay on the frames. The bees will eat it eagerly and discard the wax paper.

Another Fondant Candy Recipe

This is the one Linda uses

2 cups sugar
1 1/2 cups water
1/8 tsp. Cream of tartar

Combine and heat until sugar dissolves. Heat syrup until it reaches 238 degrees. Make sure not to burn the syrup. Pour onto cookie sheet with a layer of waxed paper about an 1/8 inch thick. Let harden. We put a piece of foil on top of the hardened candy for easier handling. Place the wax paper side down on the cluster of bees. The bees will eat through the wax paper.

Editor's note: I made Bob's recipe—the trick was to let it boil gently for about 10 minutes at 234-238 degrees.

Turn if off, let it cool slightly, then put in the pans—it hardened almost immediately. Remember, even though you are bringing them a treat, the bees will not be happy to see you in this chilly weather. So suit up and have your smoker going so you can clear the top bars for the candy.

Newsletter by E-mail

It would save trees, time and money if the newsletter was delivered by e-mail.

If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically please e-mail me at sdbrodhecker@gmail.com.

Back issues of the newsletter are archived on the web site <brodheckerfarms.com/SCBA>

Beekeeper's Calendar



Beekeeper notification forms from the NJ Depart of Environmental Protection must be filed by **March 1st**. Obtain the forms at www.pcpnj.org to register your apiaries so that you are notified of any pesticide application in the area.

February

The Bees: The queen, still cozy in the cluster, will start laying a few more eggs each day. It is still “females only” in the hive. Workers will take cleansing flights on mild days. The bees will consume about 25 pounds of honey this month.

The Beekeeper: There is not too much to do this month. Attend those bee club meetings. Read. Get your equipment ready for Spring.

March

The Bees: This is the month colonies can die of starvation. However, if you fed them plenty of sugar syrup in the fall this shouldn't happen. With the days growing longer the queen steadily increases her rate of egg laying. The drones begin to appear. The bees will continue to consume honey stores.

The Beekeeper: Early in the month on a nice, mild day when the bees are flying you can take a quick peek inside your hive. It's best not to remove the frames. Just have a look-see under the cover. If you do not see any sealed honey in the top frames you may need to begin emergency feeding. But remember once you start, you should not stop until they are bringing in their own food supplies.

Information above from the Backyard Beekeepers web site www.backyardbeekeepers.com.

January Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held at the Sussex County Fairgrounds. Bill Foley, president, called the meeting to order. It was decided that in the future the Pledge of Allegiance will be included in the opening of the meetings.

Current officers are: President, Bill Foley; First Vice **Open**; Second Vice President, Chris Tomlinson; Third Vice President, Lynn Cuomo; Treasurer, Linda Osborne; Secretary, **Open**; Newsletter Editor, Deb Brodhecker.

Old Business: Lynn Cuomo was elected third vice president. A secretary for the group is still needed .

SCBA received a letter from the NJ Agricultural Society for renewal of membership. Lynn Cuomo moved that SCBA continue membership at the previously established level. Frank McElroy seconded and the motion carried. The NJ Ag Society's mission is to promote the impact and importance of agriculture to the non-farming public. The society does this

in many ways including providing fresh produce to needy families, educating children in school gardens and training tomorrow's agricultural leaders. For more information about the NJ Ag Society visit their web site at www.njagsociety.org

Tom Webb provided information about “feather” banners for use near the bee cage on the fairgrounds. Chris Tomlinson volunteered to look into the cost and design.

New Business: Chris Tomlinson and Frank McElroy will facilitate the Beginner Beekeeper Short course. The course is scheduled for March 7th and 14th with a snow date of March 21st.

Dates and topics for this years meeting were discussed. The membership agreed to have monthly meetings on the third weekend of each month. The tentative dates and topics are as follows:

Feb.21—Late Winter/Early Spring management

March 21—Constructing a Hive*

April 18—Preparing Honey and Wax entries for competition

May 16—Progressive Hive Inspections

June 20—Extracting

July 18 or 25—Fair Set-up

July 31-Aug 9—Sussex County Fair

Sep 20—Joint Meeting with SENY Beekeepers

Oct. 17—Winter prep and fondant making

Nov. 21—Holiday Party

*Two hives will be constructed and raffled off. One hive for members of the Beginning Beekeeper course and one hive to existing members of SCBA



February/March 2009



Sussex County Beekeepers Association
75 George Hill Road
Branchville, NJ 07826

Please pay dues for 2009 to continue this newsletter



Who Ya Gonna Call?

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