

SOARING CAPITAL BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

MISSION STATEMENT: "To educate, promote and teach beekeeping and have fun."

THURSDAY, JANURAY 19, 2017 MEETING HELD AT

7:00PM AT MARANANTHA BIBLE CHURCH

There were 21 members that signed in for the meeting.

Lenny brought some printed out materials and handed them out for anyone to take. One handout was on how to make propolis extract. The other was on estimating bees and brood on a frame from the excellent David A. Cushman website.

Burt, our website/communications guru, talked about the club's presence on Facebook, as well as the club's websites. We have both "scba.org" and "scba.com". They are looking to be consolidated on the ".org" website. The meeting minutes should be available on the website shortly for this meeting. Burt asked for ideas on what members would like to see on the website. Some ideas that were mentioned included a swarm list for the upcoming season, with a sheet likely to go around at the next meeting to get names/information from people who would like to be listed on it. Possibly have name and contact info, as well as geographic area people are willing to retrieve swarms in. A list of upcoming events/calendar of bee club activities. Also mentioned was a possible section for links to bee club member's personal websites that have bee related items.

Lenny mentioned that Nuc pick-up day this year from Joel at Nature's Way is expected to be May 6th in Spencer/Van Etten near the intersection of Routes 34 and 224 – more details to follow I am sure. The expected special club price this year is \$125.00 each for a 4 frame nuc. Last year the price was \$115.00 each. With an increase in package and nuc prices from last year \$135.00 reported for packages and \$200.00 for over-wintered nucs, as well as another potential high winter loss year, there may be significant demand. You can get with Lenny to get him money/place your orders if you want to get in on the club order. Joel has offered nucs in the past with Italian, Carniolan or Hybrid queens. Lenny recently tried the Italians and likes them, although he said they tend to rob more during the fall/periods of dearth, and raise brood longer into the fall, although swarm less.

Lenny asked about members experience over time with small hive beetles. It seems that some members have seen more in the last few years. There is some uncertainty over how big of an issue they are in this area currently, and how big of a problem that they might become, since they pupate (turn from larva into adults) in soil underneath colonies and prefer sandy soil. As most of us know, much of the soil in this area is more rocks and clay than sand. Erika shared her experiences with them in North Carolina, where they seem to be more of a problem. She mentioned that they seem to be especially tough on already weakened/stressed colonies. The adults are good fliers with an excellent sense of smell and will also reproduce in rotting fruit. Some of the increase may be related to the movement of bees/nucs from southern U.S. (more

favorable to small hive beetles) to New York. Erika also mentioned that there are several trapping options available for Small Hive Beetles.

Lenny talked about possible upcoming workshops he is working with Joel on: Basic Beekeeping; Advanced Beekeeping; Approx. 6hr. course with lab in bee yard; Diseases and Parasites.

Lenny mentioned that Chemung County seems to have among the greatest % winter bee losses reported in NYS on the Bee Wellness website (approx. 60% winter of 2015-2016). Members shared some of their loss information so far this relatively mild winter. Even though winter kill often shows up in late winter/early spring, several members already are reporting some losses. Rob brought in a dead-out colony. They had plenty of stores, but relatively small cluster/number of dead bees on the bottom board with dead capped/almost ready to emerge brood. Death may have been related to varroa effect. Lenny passed around hand-out on new Kakugo virus vectored by varroa (related to Deformed Wing Virus). He also mentioned Jim Burritt out of Wisconsin who recently discovered a high level of a new bacteria in bee blood (hemolymph). There are in the dozens of bacteria and viruses that are transmitted by varroa. Lenny knocked out dead bees and a good number of varroa from a frame from a colony treated last fall to kill varroa. Did the treatment (utilizing a formic acid formulation) not work? This treatment should have killed not only the phoretic (adult varroa on adult bees), but also varroa reproducing under capped bee brood. Lenny thinks that some August treatments may have been done above the brood nest, but with honey supers on and upper entrances open. This may have allowed the treatment to not reach the varroa on a majority of the bees or in the brood. Before and after treatment sampling for varroa would help confirm the effectiveness of any treatment, and Lenny compared the more effective alcohol wash vs. the sugar shake. Lenny also mentioned periodically checking hives during the fall/winter, especially with this mild weather we have been having to help determine more specifically when colony death occurred. One can also close up any dead-outs to prevent robbing until one can inspect them.

Lenny passed out another handout on the USDA Beltsville Bee Laboratory's free testing service. He demonstrated how to cut out a piece of comb to send in as a sample, and encouraged members to submit samples and share results with others from hives that died from unknown/possible disease causes. Lenny also mentioned "Classic Colony Collapse Disorder" = bees abscond but leave a handful of bees with the queen.

This past fall, it seems like some queens laid later into the fall than normal – especially in some places with adequate fall moisture, and the warmer temperatures, where some pollen and nectar was available until later than usual as well.

MAIN PROGRAM:

Mead making demonstration by Ed and Rob, with input from experienced mead maker Mark. Made up a 5 gallon batch (actually 6 gallons, so that there would be enough to fill a 5 gallon glass carboy (jug) once some of the sediment was later separated). Mixed honey with warm water to dissolve the honey. Various recipes involve mixing in other things besides honey – possibly fruit juices, or herbs. Ed's batch involved adding tea. One can make in batches as small as one gallon fairly easily. Add nutrients if using mainly honey – for yeast growth. Getting

the desired beginning sugar level is critical. The level can be measured with an instrument called a hydrometer. Re-activate yeast, and add them to proper temperature mixture. Wait several days/several weeks for fermentation (yeast eating sugar and producing carbon dioxide and alcohol) to happen. Clarify the mead. Rack the mead – one can use a hose as a siphon to transfer the clear portion to a clean container, leaving behind the sediment – mainly dead yeast. The yeast will eat the sugar. They will either die from running out of food = no more sugar and the mead will be “dry”, unless one then adds a sweetener at the end in which case flavor of mead will be mostly of that sweetener OR die because they produce so much alcohol (yeast waste product) that they can no longer survive in which case they leave whatever sugar/sweetness that they could not eat = “sweet” mead with main flavor from original sweetener/honey/other flavors. Cleanliness and oxygen management (mainly keeping it away from mead) are important. Lots of good resources/books available. Been done for thousands of years, so if you are at all interested, give it a try. Better living through microbiology!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Next Monthly Meeting: Thursday February 16, 2016, 7:00PM. MARANANTHA BIBLE CHURCH. Looking to do a Dead-Out workshop/inspections, to help members identify likely causes of winter kill. Was it starvation, queenlessness, varroa, other disease, mice related, dysentery, nosema, other?

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Meybaum,

Secretary