Issue 10 – April 2011

Kelley Bee News

Modern Beekeeping

In This Issue

May all your bees be strong and large, like this one. Happy April Fool's Day, and Happy April!

The Buzz

Things around the Walter T. Kelley Company are certainly buzzing, hope that holds true for your hive(s) as well.

One challenge we face with this newsletter is addressing the needs of our diverse customer base. Those of you in the south are well into managing your hives, those of you in the north are still looking forward to continuous warm days when you can open them and see what's going on. We'll generally try and stay in sync with beekeeping issues for warmer areas, meaning our northern customers may need to hold on to the information for a month or so until it becomes applicable to their climate.

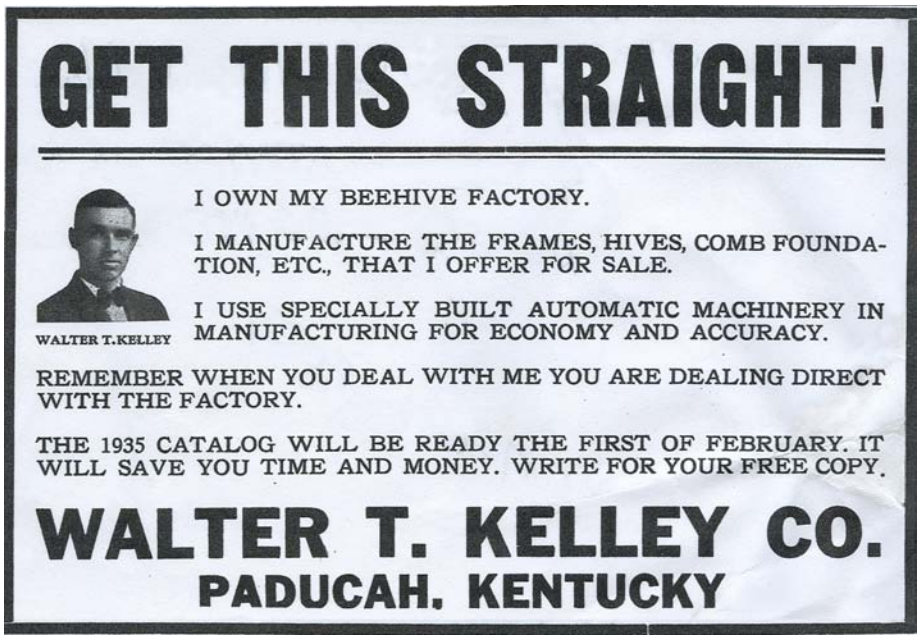
We've enjoyed seeing so many of you when you pick up your bees on Saturdays. Next month northern customer Charlotte, who writes the humorous monthly "Dronings," is picking up hers. We suspect she'll find something to laugh about as she drives them home for 10 hours. As she's highly locally allergic to bee stings, she's thinking of wearing her protective suit during the drive because bee packages always seem to pick up a few hitchhikers. Anyone have any tried-and-true methods for taking the sting out of the sting? If so, we'd love to share them! Next month we'll also feature what goes on here during Bee Pick-up Days. You may want to plan your 2012 spring vacation around how much fun we have!

If you want to travel from your chair (and without wearing a protective suit), check out this issue's Bees Overseas article, a wonderful piece about beekeeping in Italy. And if you don't have time for leisurely reading because of all your bee work, you'll want to look at some of the products we offer. Among them are products to save time and bees!

We're happily as busy as bees this time of year, and look forward to helping you with all your beekeeping needs.

Thanks for your loyalty.

Jane Burgess
CEO / Partner
The Walter T. Kelley Company



In case you forgot this lesson from 1935.

Dealing with Dead-Outs

By Camilla Bee, Editor

I recently met a beekeeper who has about 500+ hives. I asked if he hauls them about the USA for pollination.

"No," he guffawed. "Used to do that, but found I could kill them just as quickly keeping them at home."

His tongue-in-cheek comment was humorous, but unfortunately, also carried a bit of truth. Bees die. It's a reality whether you keep bees to enhance your life, or you're a commercial beekeeper who keeps them to make a living.

So, what do you do with a dead-out? I've asked around, and, as usual, received about twice as many different answers as beekeepers surveyed.

First, predominant advice was to close up or remove the dead hive from the bee yard as soon as practical. Unprotected, any honey is an invitation for robbing by assorted wild critters and other hives. Also, the hive may become a rodent clubhouse. And, moisture will likely build up inside the hive, encouraging mold that must then be cleaned up or require disposal of the wax / honey.

Second, don't become too discouraged. Dr. Roger Hoopingarner, of Michigan State University, noted that "having dead colonies over winter is more common now that we have Varroa," and continued that "most colonies that die now die from too many Varroa or from lack of food."

Third, try to determine the cause, because that will define what you can do with what the deceased colony left behind. Beekeeper John Gardner tries to identify the problem, but notes that "every once in a while it becomes a mystery."

Diagnosing the Cause

Figuring out why the hive died can be difficult at first, and then easier, unfortunately, as years go by and you suffer the inevitable losses. Here are some clues:

- No bees in the hive? That's likely Colony Collapse Disorder.
- White, spider-webs, and potentially larvae or moths? That's probably wax moths. An infestation is more common in warmer weather; if you find them in a dead hive they may have moved in when the hive was dead or weak and unable to defend against them. The web has many excellent pictures to help diagnose this pest.

Photo 1: The top bars of frames. The frames were salvaged after a salt and vinegar treatment (see callout on page 5).

The honey was extracted after the stained cappings were carefully shaved off; honey was NOT fed back to the bees. The spotted wax was used for candles.

- Yellow-brown streaks like those in Photo 1? That's likely Nosema. Other clues include behavior of k-wing, hopping and jumping about the front of the hive as they wander around the front of the hive. Jamie Ellis, of the University of Florida, has a insightful video posted at http://bit.ly/dOiAw8. The web is full of more information.
- Concave cells with a dark covering, and a bad smell? That's likely American Foul Brood (AFB). The video at http://bit.ly/hS30tL can help you diagnose that issue.
- Bees clustered, perhaps just inches from honey, with perhaps bees head first deep inside cells? That's likely starvation if you're in a northern or unseasonably cold area, where the bees can't break cluster to move because it is too cold. Beekeeper Sean Burgess, upon reviewing this photo, noted "The funny thing about clustering bees is that they will not move and take advantage of the resources if the cluster is too small. You may have had a queen shutting down too early in the fall (sometimes Russians will do this, or older failing queens) and heading into winter with too few bees … you can see they used the resources and … where they shrunk as the food ran out."
- Can't tell? Be wary. Gardner shares, "When I do not know what the reason was for the dead out I will pressure wash the equipment and then spray straight Clorox (chlorine) on the equipment and let it dry. Most of the time I will scorch the equipment with a torch before reusing. Some time needs to pass before the bees are excited about setting up housekeeping in the scorched equipment. If I have any indication that AFB was present all the equipment is cast in a pre-dug hole and I incinerate the contents."

Clean Up

If the cause of death was what Hoopingarner noted most—**Varroa or starvation**—reusing the stores and drawn wax is generally no problem. Brush off the dead bees, rap the frame the flat way to dislodge some stuck in the cells, and protect the wax from wax moths until they are being reused. These drawn frames are ideal for starting nuc colonies from strong colonies that survived, or for welcoming a new package. Don't worry about leaving a few bees behind in the frames, the new bees will clean them out.

This frame, after dead bees are removed, will be used in a hive receiving a new package.

Some beekeepers surveyed thought the chlorine treatment described previously was a bit severe, along with using lye soap. They instead recommend a good cleaning with salt and vinegar water, and then freezing the frames.

Hive/Frame Cleaning Solution

- 2 gallons water
- 1 cup salt
- 1/4 cup vinegar

No need to rinse, bees like a bit of salt.

AFB requires burning it all. With **Nosema**, if there are only a few brown spots you can probably scrub and shave them off, wash everything with the salt and vinegar solution, then freeze the frames. Any honey and wax harvested must be for humans, not bees. If the spots are extensive it's probably best to burn everything and start fresh.

Mold, unless it is black mold, may be wiped off the frames and capped honey. Give any hard surfaces a good scrubbing, with maybe a little extra salt in the mixture. Air them out good and then freeze, saving as much comb as much as possible. The comb, honey and frames may be used in the hive again.

If it is **black mold**, remove and trash the foundation (or melt for other uses). Clean the frames thoroughly, air out, freeze, and reuse.

Wax moths may extensively damage the hive and comb, and it may be simpler to burn and start again. If the infestion is minor, remove and larvae, clean out all webs, and freeze everything to kill all stages of the wax moth—either in a freezer for several hours, or by overwintering in an unheated shed.

Final Step

Get back on the horse, er, into the hive! You've already made the investment in equipment and gaining knowledge, and the world needs us all to bee, well, bee-friendly. Read, talk to other beekeepers, let us know your questions, and try, try again.

Sure, you may suffer loss again (see Dronings at the end of this newsletter), but there's a bright side to that as well. Drawn comb is gold. Your new colony will undoubtedly do better if it has the advantage of having some comb so it may more quickly have room for the queen to lay, and forage.

Good luck!

K

There are always plenty of newbees trying to figure out how to successfully manage their bees. Please share any helpful hints you have so we may share them with others. Email them to kelleybeeseditor@gmail.com. Thanks!

Bee-Havior

Care and Installation of Package Bees

By Stacy Hill, Kelley Employee and Beekeeper

If you are an established beekeeper and can use drawn combs on which to install your package you should do so. If you can just give them two or three drawn combs it is a big advantage. This allows the bees to get to work without having to draw combs from the foundation first.

Four Important Points

1. Feed package bees heavily until the colony is well established. Sugar and water mixed in a ratio of 1 part water to 1 part sugar, or high fructose corn syrup works well. This is for spring feeding. Consider using a feeding stimulant like Honey B Healthy that is added to your sugar water and treating with Fumigilin B for prevention of nosema.
2. Keep entrances reduced to a small size. This prevents robbing and conserves heat.
3. Do not add supers or a second hive body until the bees draw out 7 of the 10 frames.
4. Do hive inspections to check the condition of the new hive, on a weekly basis, until the hive is well established.

Care of the Package on Arrival

If weather conditions are poor when the package arrives, you can hold the package for several days in a dark room or basement where the temperature is close to 50° F. You should feed the bees in the package by using a clean spray bottle to mist with a mixture of sugar and water (50/50) on the screen of the cage and allow the bees to gorge themselves. You should repeat this process morning and night. If you do not do this, the sugar syrup in the can shipped with the package can go dry and your bees will starve. Bees die of heat quickly—do not leave them in the sun or in a place that is hot.

Installation of Packages

Install the package late in the afternoon. This helps prevent drifting. It is well to mist a little syrup on the screen of the cage 15 minutes before you are ready to move them to the hive for installation. This quiets them down and they will be better natured. There are several ways of installing a package of bees. We recommend the following methods.

A couple newbees install their bees via the shake method.

Method 1

Remove one frame from your hive. Store the frame in a dry cool place. This frame will be put back into your hive several days later. Tap the cage lightly a few times on the ground to jar all the bees to the bottom of the cage. Do not let queen the cage slip down into the cage. With a firm grip on the can, remove it, pull the queen cage out of the package and immediately return the square lid to the hole of the cage. This prevents the bees from getting out.

While Newbee Pete struggles to remove the cork, the worker bees investigate their new home & caretakers.

Now that the queen cage is removed, inspect your queen to make sure she is alive and in good condition. Carefully remove the cork from the candy end of the queen cage. The bees will release the queen from the cage by eating the candy (it usually takes a few days for them to do this). You may choose to take a small nail and make a hole through the candy. This will help release the queen sooner.

Bees don't typically get this excited during an install, but these ladies were! It was probably due to a combo of warm humid weather & a long ride from Kentucky.

Place the queen cage, screen side facing up, between frames 5 & 6 in the hive body. Again, tap the package lightly a few times on the ground to jar all the bees to the bottom of the cage. Remove the square lid and begin to gently shake the bees from the package over the tops of the frames and the queen cage. Once you have shaken the bees from the package, place the inner cover over the hive upside down. You can now close up your hive with the top cover. Once you have shaken the bees from the package and closed up the hive, place the package on the ground in front of the hive so that the few remaining bees can fly out and into the hive. You will need to feed your bees on a regular basis. We suggest using a Boardman entrance feeder with package bees to prevent drowning. You can open the can of syrup that came with the package and use the remaining syrup to feed with.

In about three days, you will want to go into the hive to make sure the queen has been released and is alive. If she is still inside the cage, you can choose to leave her there a day or two longer or release her yourself. To do this, hold the queen cage down inside the hive body and carefully pull back the screen to release her. Remove the queen cage and place the frame you removed before installation back inside the hive body box and return the inner and outer cover.

Method 2

With this method, you do not have to shake the bees from the package. Follow the same procedures as Method 1, except remove five frames from your hive. Place the queen cage, screen side facing up, between frames 2 & 3 in the hive body. Again, tap the cage lightly a few times on the ground to jar all the bees to the bottom of the cage. Remove the square lid and place the package down inside the hive body in the space of the frames you have removed. In about three days, make sure the queen has been released and is alive. Remove the queen cage and package and place the five frames you removed before installation back inside the hive body box and return the inner and outer cover.

Stacy shipping your package bees!

Bee-Yond & Bee-Hind the Hives

Stop, Look, Listen and Smell

By Kim Flottum

Kim, Editor of Bee Culture Magazine for 25 years (www.BeeCulture.com), is also author of The Backyard Beekeeper, The Honey Handbook, and this summer, Better Beekeeping. He lives in Medina, Ohio.

We are constantly told by those who have more experience than we do that before you even leave the house to do bee work, have a plan. Know what it is you'll be looking for, what you want to find and what you want to accomplish. All good ideas. Plowing into a colony with no plan, no idea of what you should be seeing, and no clue as to what you should do when you find…what ever it is you find is definitely not a good idea. If you don't know what you're looking for, how do you know when you find it?

So, have a plan before you even put on your beesuit or light your smoker.

- Checking to see if the queen was released from a recent requeening or package installation
- Looking for signs of disease…this time of year chalkbrood, European foulbrood are common, but Varroa and other problems can be found
- Checking to see how the queen's brood pattern is…solid, spotty, non-existent
- Checking to see if there's ample room for the queen to lay in to reduce swarming tendencies
- Putting in, or taking out drone comb for Varroa removal
- Restocking the food supply, both syrup and pollen
- And a host of other activities you need to be tracking….

But, here's something to think about, too.

The bees can, and will tell you a lot about what's going on inside the hive by stopping, looking, listening and smelling what's going on before you bowl them over with smoke and tear apart the home they live in.

Here's how.

You need to plan on this, too, but it's a much easier plan.

Stop before you get to your bee yard and prepare. Have your smoker lit, but leave it behind, for now. Approach your hives from the rear if at all possible, and with the sun in your face. Come up to the first hive from the rear, squat down along one side close enough so you can see the landing board, but not in front of it. Watch.

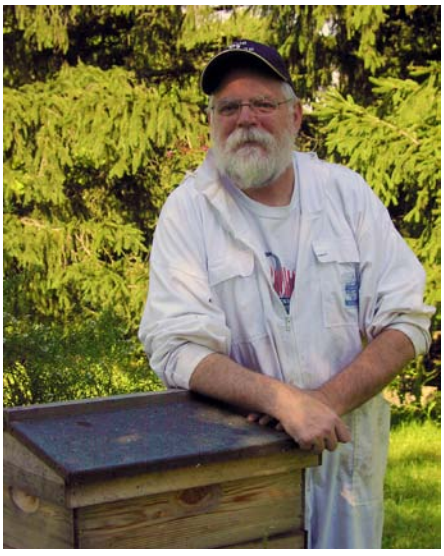
What's going on? Lots of activity? Compared to what…see, you need to do this quite a few times so you have a good idea of what a lot is, what some is, and what's hardly any. If possible, take notes. Time of day and date, sunny or cloudy, windy or not. Record all this background info for the first few times.

What's going on on the landing board…lots of bees out, but not many in? Lots of bees in, but not many out? Lots of bees just standing around, checking every bee coming in? Actual fighting going on? Foraging behavior is a good clue to the situation inside…if there's lots coming in then everybody is going to be busy inside taking and storing and going to get more. Lots of foragers will be outside, not bothering you when you are looking around. But if there's no action…why? Bad weather on the horizon? No honey flow going on? Sick bees inside? Make a note and find out why.

What about fighting? Is there robbing going on? Drifting bees? Something fishy is happening and you need to find out what, but you wouldn't know if you hadn't looked.

Listening? Queenless colonies have a sound unlike anything else you will hear in a beehive. You'll notice it right away when you take the cover off, but if you rap on the side when you're standing there, you can hear it at the front door. Bees are fanning the air in the colony like mad, trying to circulate queen pheromone that is no longer there. It is the cry of the lost souls in that hive that you hear. It is unmistakable.

And smell. Here's how you do this. Don't use your smoker. Very, very, very carefully, lift off the cover. Wait a minute. Maybe two. Let them settle down after all that banging and thumping. Using your hive tool, carefully lift off the inner cover…carefully. Let them settle again. Then, make sure your veil isn't touching your face, lower your head very slowly so the veil, but not your face, is touching the top bars. Take a deep breath. What do you smell? Curing honey, sometimes sweet, sometimes smooth. Unfermented pollen. Fermented pollen….both smell kind of like fresh cut hay out in the field. Nasanov pheromone like lemonade. Alarm pheromone like bananas. Foot print pheromone from workers that adds to the mix but doesn't have a personality of its own. Queen pheromone like ozone sometimes. New beeswax being made, wood and paint and warm, moist air. It's the honey you want to smell….where's it from, how long has it been here? If you know it's locust, learn the smell. Or dandelion or willow or maple or fruit trees. Berries are as fruity as it gets, and redbud smells like cotton candy.



Kim Flottum

The smells will tell you loads about what's going on long before you pull a frame or crack a box.

Next time, stop, look, listen and smell. Leave the smoker over there for a bit. Be careful, and you'll learn a lot.

K

BeeCause

The Alan Blair Project

Several issues ago, we shared news about Kelley's sponsorship of the Alan Blair Project, offered by Southeast Alabama Beekeepers (SEAB). The project supplies an interested person, ages 10 to 15, with all the necessary equipment, along with workshops, meetings and most importantly—mentorship. It is named after the late Alan Blair, whose enthusiasm for beekeeping was unrivaled. As part of ongoing charitable efforts, Walter T. Kelley Company provided a Kentucky Special along with a veil, gloves, hive tool, smoker and package of bees—allowing a youth to have everything they need.

At SEAB's December meeting, the club was introduced to Matthew and Johnathan Doyle, who share the 2011 "Youth in Beekeeping" Award. Whitaker noted they are proving to be a great selection for the project.

The future of beekeeping depends on people like the Doyles and on beekeepers like those of the SEAB, sharing their knowledge. SEAB Vice President, Gerry Whitaker, explained how they advertised this mentorship program in area newspapers, inviting youth, via an essay, to be awarded this opportunity. The first year there were no respondents; the second year, there were 11, much to the delight of SEAB members.

If you'd like to learn more about developing a youth in beekeeping project, Gerry Whitaker invites you to contact him to learn of their experiences, via email at whitsfarm@centurytel.net.

At the Auburn University beekeepers Workshop in February, WTK's Earl King presented equipment to Johnathan and Matthew Doyle, the 2011 Youths in Beekeeping. Also pictured is Gerry Whitaker, mentor.

Remember, the future of beekeeping depends on all of us, in a variety of ways. If you know of ways to involve future generations, we'd love to hear about and share them here. Please contact me at kelleybeeseditor@gmail.com.

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Will Bee Missed

STUEDLE, MATTHEW GEORGE, "DOC," 79, passed away February 24, 2011.

Beekeeping was more than a hobby, it was his passion. Honey production, Kentucky State Fair exhibitions, the Kentuckiana Beekeeping Association including serving as their president, were outstanding highlights of his life. He received the Beekeeper of the Year award in 2000, and a Lifetime Achievement award in 2010.

Bees Overseas

Terre Madre

By Lady Spirit Moon Cerelli

Editor's Note: Lady Spirit Moon Cerelli lives in the Appalachian Mountains of Northwest North Carolina. She is a North Carolina Certified Beekeeper, studying for Journeyman, also studying Apitherapy.

Slow Food USA is an extension of Slow Food International (SFI), Italy. According to their website[1], it is "an idea, a way of living, and a way of eating. It is a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members around the world that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment."

I saw it was also a way of bringing together a community of people working in all aspects of growing, selling, advertising, processing, and serving food. SFI is responsible for connecting the beekeeping community worldwide. It was my honor to be one of the 500 delegates chosen by Slow Food USA to attend the October, 2010, Terre Madre Conference in Turin, Italy.

What I saw at the conference would rival the UN in the array of native costumes as rich in color and design as the languages. Smiling faces of people from different cultures were willing to introduce themselves to strangers. And though several brought interpreters, most of us we were able to communicate through sign language. Folks became laughing children as their hands gestured their thoughts.

Registration and the opening/closing ceremonies were held in an arena large enough to hold some of the Olympic Games. At the same time, chefs and retailers held a conference in a larger building next door. Chefs, butchers, cheese makers, bakers, vintners/wineries, and breweries from around the world had set up their temporary stores or bars in the building. A lot of these participants created many of their products from organically grown foods.

Never had I seen so much varied food and literally felt so many people packed in one building. Five thousand delegates from 167 countries, their interpreters, volunteers, staff members and participants from the two conferences, along with Turin residents, packed themselves into these building complexes. Delegates dined on free lunches prepared by chefs using locally grown food. Aborigines from Africa, China, and India, and more took up the

1 www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/slow_food

middle of the Terre Madre complex with their blankets spread on the floor displaying their fabrics, crafts, jewelry, spices, cheeses, and other strange items I'd never before heard of nor seen.

Many took the opportunity to taste honey gathered from around the world at the International Honey Bar. Chestnut honey from Turkey tasted like a wet dog smells (I kid you not—and nasty); followed by perfumed water-clear honey from an isle off of France. Japanese beekeepers put adult Bald Faced Hornets in a jar before filling it with honey and letting it sit for about 3 months. "The honey draws out the chemicals from the hornet's abdomen," the young woman replied.

The International Honey Bar.

Her male partner chimed in, "It helps to rejuvenate your muscles and renew your energy." I thought about my fatigue and sore leg muscles and held out the back of my hand. With hesitation, I tasted the honey and reflected on the "aroma"—something taught at the International Honey Bar. My expression must have reflected my perplexity at tasting Listerine. "That's the chemical from the wasp," he said. They showed me pictures of wasp nests broken (torn?) in half with large white adult larvae exposed, "We use these, too."

Explaining Bald Face Hornet beekeeping.

Beekeepers were interviewed by SFI personnel. My interviewer, Paol, couldn't get over the idea of my not having Varroa problems and hadn't heard of Natural Beekeeping. He shared how he would cut out drones 4-5 times a season and would still have too many Varroa. During a tiny break, a Nigerian, Idris Babauer, came over and introduced himself and shared he too teaches Natural Beekeeping using top bar hives and African Bees. With a beautiful broad smile, Idris said, "You have to understand the bee." (Editor's Note: Idris insights will be shared in a future issue.)

Before I left the Terre Madre building, I visited the wasp honey person again and stuck out the back of my hand. Imagination or no, I felt better both times.


The three professors at the University of Entomology: Marco Porporato, Apiturlurist; Aolo Manino, Zoologist; Paola Ferrassi, Entomologist and Apidologist of the Forest Region; and Pietro Viazzo, my guide.

Beehives of the University of Entom, which is similar to the three bee yards.

In the afternoon I met with Pietro Viazzo, a 30-year veteran beekeeper and breeder. We were warmly greeted as Pietro introduced me to professors at the University of Entomology (UE). They shared that the university used to keep bees naturally. But when the Varroa got out of control 10 years ago, "We started using Oxalic Acid and Formic Acid. We didn't have the time to spend it took to cut out the drone cells."

Traveling to neighboring towns surrounding Turin, I visited three income-sustaining bee yards. All beehives were built exactly the same with the entrances under the 3" porch roofs varying slightly. Two yards contained 100 hives and Pietro had his own 30 hives divided in two separate locations. All hives were 10-framed with the outside dimensions of the brood box measuring (converted from centimeters) 17.05" wide by 19.69" long by 12.21" high. I understood they don't have any more than the one brood box at any given time and saw there were perhaps only one or two honey supers (which measure 6.61" high) per hive. The aluminum roofs of the top telescoping cover slanted slightly toward the back and extended over the edge about 4". The aluminum trays under the SBB stayed on year-round. The tray pulled out and the contents told the beekeeper what was going on in the hive.

No one I had met treated for Nosema or Trachea Mite. Some of the beekeepers use Formic Acid and Oxalic Acid for Varroa, or the "soft" chemical Thymol.

Michela, another beekeeper, said she takes the queen and all adult bees out of one hive at the beginning of August and leaves behind some nurse bees and brood in various larvae stages. The bees hatch and are forced to create a new queen in the original hive. Even though she still uses chemicals, she says this is her

way of controlling the Varroa. Her 100 hives have supported her family of four for several years.

What You Can Do To Protect Honeybees

View at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0Di8gIc8y8

The government, in part, regulates the beekeeping industry in Italy. Each beekeeper must keep their own records regarding extracted honey, bottling and labeling, cleaning up the laboratory, and how often they clean it. All records are checked by the inspector. Their labeling includes a seal placed on every jar extending from the lid top down to the side of the jar with numbers indicating the type of honey in the jar. I thought it interesting that with such regulations, Pietro didn't use a fine mesh cloth for the final straining of his honey. Beekeeper Marco sent me a poster titled, "The Filth of Honey," displaying magnified human hair, bee parts, etc. found in honey.

Pietro shared the two-page document I had written regarding my method of Natural Beekeeping and small-cell bees. Beekeeper Frank gave a brief history of the bees they keep in Italy; at one time they had four original types of bees. Frank wrote that he didn't think there was an original strain of bees anymore. The Italian people have done studies regarding the size of bees by letting the bees create their own foundation (wax leaf) and placing small-cell foundation in the hive. He said that forcing the bee in smaller cells, the bees hatched out with deformed bodies. I've not experienced this in my bee yard and have seen that bees sometimes have a mind of their own by building cells slightly larger over the small-cell foundation I placed in the hive.

The one thing I heard loud and clear at the conference when talking with other beekeepers from Italy and around the world is that all beekeepers are hungry for knowledge. The questions on everyone's mind are: "Why are the bees dying?" and, "Why are the bees leaving the hives?"

As the Ambassador at Large for the Western North Carolina Center for Honey Bee Research, it was my task to connect with the professors at UE and other beekeepers in Italy and around the world. Some of the intentions of the non-profit WNC Center are to collect, share, provide, and assist in honeybee research information. While in the Paris airport waiting to board my plane, I was approached by Donata Renfrow, a professional filmmaker and communications expert. SFI asked Donata to contact a few delegates and fol-

The panel at the Flower Children Workshop.

What do you want to see in future issues?

Please let me know via kelleybeeseditor@gmail.com. Thanks!

low them for the next two years and film how the delegates incorporate into their lives what they brought back from Terre Madre. Donata intends to do a "Bee Story" for YouTube and wherever else she feels will help the bees.

As a Certified Beekeeper, meeting and communicating with people who help broaden my knowledge of the bee world make me a stronger advocate for the Flower Children. All of my senses awakened by the experience at the International Honey Bar helped me during the 3-hour Flower Children Workshop that taught how Italians look at honey the same way they look at wine. One warms the wine glass by rolling it between the hands then deeply inhaling its essence. Check the honey's crystallization. And, finally, "taste the aroma."

My Italian contacts went out of their way to honor me and my two roommates with a three-hour dinner consisting of traditional Italian dishes from a cookbook written by an Italian chef who also sat at our tables. They and Terre Madre gave me memories I'll keep for the rest of my life and new friends who are still with me, offering me their homes for my second trip. My bee yard has been opened to the world while meeting people from other cultures has broadened my heart's compassion.

The most important statement made by the head speaker at the end of the Flower Children workshop still pulsates in my brain. "We around the world must unite for the sake of the honeybee; for if the honeybee dies, so do we."

About Lady Spirit Moon Cerelli

My honeyhouse is also my classroom, with a wet room, and an adjoining workshop. I presently have ten hives on three apiaries with the intentions of doubling that next year. The main apiary is for experiencing. I teach natural beekeeping, and BEe Healing is an educational organization. I've been beekeeping for over 2 years, though it seems a lifetime. I plan to go back to Italy next year to teach Natural Beekeeping mid-Fall.

I have an apprentice who is also a partner in our cosmetics business. Presently, we have a lotion made from everything from the hive, three healing oils, and five herbs. It's becoming really popular so I had to get a partner so I can continue with the bees. We are going to be expanding the line.

I am a Certified Herbalist, going for my masters, and plan to put herbs back into the ground in garden beds. I will also be experimenting with different herbs for the bees. It's a small operation, but I wonder at my sanity for having starting it in '09; especially at 66.

K

From left: Giancarlo, Chiara (interpreter), and Lady.

FAQs

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the newsletter. This is my second year beekeeping. We have two hives that originally took up residence in owl boxes we had made and put in trees. We transferred those hives into brood boxes. Both are going strong and we harvested 30 pounds of honey last year.

Q1: What is the best way to remove old brood comb from the hive? We had tied the comb from the owl boxes into frames. I understand that old comb can harbor disease and pests.

Q2: Secondly, is it necessary to wash the honey containers that I order before filling? Last year I washed all of them in the dishwasher before filling but I don't know if that is necessary. Thank you for your good equipment and information and time! (S LaRose, FL)

Sean Burgess, Kelley beekeeper and instructor, fielded Sarah's questions. He said:

A1: "With wild bees, and the fact that the comb isn't that old I wouldn't worry. However if you are using two deeps, you could let them build into the second box and you can begin to cull frames from down below. Start by doing one or two and continue as they draw the new comb until all is replaced. This may take a few weeks.

There is no need to replace old comb if you think it is free of disease and pests. We have commercial beekeepers who proudly share that their comb is decades old! And, already drawn comb makes bees more efficient in producing honey—it's ideal for new packages or splits."

A2: Certainly doesn't hurt to wash or do a rinse in very hot water and invert over paper towels until dry.

Q: I am curious if anyone has submitted a recipe for honey candy. I can remember my grandma making honey candy—pouring the hot honey (with butter perhaps??) in cold water to see if the candy would form a ball, dropping it on wax paper and then wrapping the hardened dropped candy in the wax paper. The candy was like a taffy in consistency/soft. I have asked my mom (her mother) if she remembered the recipe—no records. Have you heard of such a candy or recipe?? It was always a treat I looked forward to. (D Detering, IN)

A. That does sound mouth-watering! No one has submitted one yet—readers? Please send any honey candy recipes to kelleybeeseditor@gmail.com. (Samples always also welcomed!)

Q: One of my hives has far fewer bees—maybe two-thirds less—than it did in the fall. But I'm not sure if I should order a package of bees or just replace the existing queen with a new one. Is there rule of thumb to determine how many bees it takes to sustain a new queen? (T Springer)

A. Kim Flottum, Editor of Bee Culture Magazine, fielded this challenging question:

Your question points out the difficulty of offering a good answer without having additional information. For instance:

- First off, where are you? Far north, mid section or in the south?
- How many frames of bees do you have? Consider a frame of bees to be a frame three-quarters covered with bees on two sides.

Anyone can sign up to receive this free newsletter. Just go to www.kelleybees.com and select Newsletter Signup, (bottom right corner) and fill in appropriately.

- But what size frames, deeps or mediums? If deeps, that's one thing, but if mediums, that's another.
- Is there any brood at all?
- Were there lots of dead bees on the bottom, or none at all?
- Is the queen still alive?
- Is there any food in the hive? Both honey and pollen?

Carniolans and Russians will have far fewer bees in the spring than in the fall and need less food. They will expand as soon as a honey flow starts.

Italians should have several frames of bees by now, no matter where you are.

If Italians, why don't they have bees? Short of food? Disease, especially Varroa mites? Not enough bees to care for brood? Poor queen?

Two or three frames of bees, with enough food, should do well if they are Carniolans or Russians. Build-up should begin soon. Monitor brood. If you don't have 2 or 3 frames of brood in a couple of weeks or so, consider replacing the queen and adding bees and brood from the other hive to help out. Be certain, very certain that the cause is not disease or a host of Varroa mites. Test for mites.

If Italians, and you don't have Varroa or disease, my first option is to simply add what bees you have in the small hive and get another package, removing the faulty queen first, of course.

Q: Checked my hives, and they all have a ton of honey in them (well, at least the extra honey super, which had bees in it.) We've got 60 degrees here in northern Indiana, but that's unseasonably warm. With all that honey, any reason to feed them? (T Babcock, Indiana)

A. It never hurts right after winter to put some feed (sugar water and Honey B Healthy) even if there is a source for pollen and nectar.

We also received a handful of questions about downloading the newsletter, including one from Sharlene, who wrote: "I cannot download it. Why can't you just send it so it's readable for all?"

Sharlene, and others who may experience difficulties—with the variety of computer operating systems, internet speeds, and versions of download / read technology, we're trying to use what will work for everyone, although there can be glitches along the many paths the e-newsletter travels (paths out of our control). We're finding readers who have the latest version of the free adobe reader usually have no problems. You can get that at: http://get.adobe.com/reader/.

If your download speed is too slow to obtain that file, another reader told us you can send for a disk to load that software.

Another reader wanted to know why we just didn't mail the newsletter to everyone. There are a couple of reasons—and they all come down to helping the bees. Primary is cost. The newsletter is free. If we had to mail it, we'd have to pass that cost along. We'd rather distribute for free and get more knowledge and insight into the hands of people taking care of our winged friends instead of charging for it.

K

Featured Products

What type of frame? Wired or wireless foundation? Which gloves do we recommend?

It's the time of year when we're getting lots and lots of questions. And, to most of the questions, there is no right or wrong answer, but just some recommendations based on what you want to do in your apiary.

But, while which hive tool or smoker to use is a matter of opinion, one shared opinion all we beekeepers here at Kelley's have is to use Honey B Healthy.

Honey B Healthy, Cat #77-HBH

This all natural product is useful in the spring to stimulate brood rearing, pollen collection and to initiate early spring development. Anything you can do to get your queen going is only going to improve overall hive health, and subsequently, honey production.

And, we're not the only ones who feel this way. For example, check out: www.wvu.edu/~agexten/Varroa/honeyBhlth.htm, or, Ross Conrad's article, Essential oils and the Beekeeping Industry's Survival, in the March 2010 article of Bee Culture, see http://honeybhealthy.com/conrad.pdf.

Plastic Super, Cat # PLSUP

Another product we like is the plastic super. The advantages in labor-savings are many: no assembly and no painting, and the food-grade plastic is disease resistant. It is interchangeable with all 10-frame Langstroth equipment, and accepts all plastic and wooden frames, including in-hive feeders.

We also carry several Contech products. More information may be found at www.contech-inc.com/products.

SwarmCatch, Cat # 89-L

SwarmCatch is a standard pheromone-based tool that has been used effectively by beekeepers for many years, ideal for baiting an empty hive (or other receptacle) to induce a swarm to settle and be captured. It is a mixture of three pheromone components produced in the Nasonov gland in the abdomen of worker bees. The volatile mixture is released from a small tube that can be secured with a tack or simply embedded in the wax comb. In nature, Nasonov pheromone is released by bees returning to the hive to tell other bees that this is the right place, to stimulate feeding at an acceptable food source, and to stimulate swarming bees to join the absconding queen in flight to a new hive.

PseudoQueen, Cat #243

PseudoQueens are typically used to keep a colony in a queenright state in the absence of a viable queen (e.g. during shipping of queenless packages), to inhibit swarming for short periods, and to supplement or temporarily replace a failing queen while a replacement is sought. The concept was pioneered in Dr. Mark Winston's laboratory at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. It's been in use for over 20 years, with consistently excellent results.

Mite Away Quick Strips, Cat #421Q

Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS™) are now available, Cat #421Q. MAQS™ is a formic acid gel strip product. Two strips are placed on the top bars in the brood area of the hive. The treatment period is 7 days and may be used during the honey flow at temperatures up to 93° F. No extra equipment is required. MAQS™ achieves up to 95% mite kill and penetrates the capping to destroy the male mite and immature female mites as well as the phoretic female mites on the adult bees.

Superboost, Cat #248

SuperBoost is a phernome dispensed through an in-hive holder that stimulates foraging, aids in the revitalization of overwintered colonies and increases honey production. The statistics are amazing:

- Up to 7x more pollen per returning forager
- 276% increase in brood comb in overwintered colonies
- 195% larger adult population and more than double the number of splits from overwintered colonies
- 100% or greater increase in honey production by package and established colonies

We didn't print any recipes this issue for a couple of reasons. First, this newsletter is crammed with more timely information as the season is here (happy happy joy joy!!)

We would still like to share your favorite honey recipes in future issues; email them to kelleybeeseditor@gmail.com. Thanks!

The Love of Honeybees

I started beekeeping for the pollination and honey, but now I find that it is also great for emotional health. When I have a bad day go and sit by my hives and just watch the steady flow as they come and go and hear the hum it is so peaceful and relaxing.

~ L Elamon, KY, Kelly customer and beekeeper for three seasons

Many years ago, when I was a teenager, I had very bad allergies that would act up at the first sight of spring flowers. This reaction would leave me sniffling to the point that I would use up all the Kleenexes my mom had in the entire house. This was troublesome for a young boy who loved the outdoors. I would go fishing and sniff, hunting and sniff, to school and sniff and to church and sniff. Something had to be done because my nose was going to be sniffed off. One day while talking to some friends and sniffing around, it was determined that local honey would cure the sniffing symptoms of allergies. All I had to do was to sniff out some local honey.

I was at the local post office, mailing a letter and sniffing, when I found honey. It was right there being sold on the counter at our local post office, right under my sniffing nose. You could mail a letter, buy stamps and purchase a jar of honey. After consuming the honey for several years, the allergies just went away.

As life went on, I got married and had children. My youngest son, of two, in his preteen age, was having severe allergy attacks in the spring, just like I did. He would go fishing and sniff, hunting and sniff, to school and sniff and to church and sniff. Then the remembrance of honey came to mind, or should I say nose. Since we had moved from where I grew up and the post office in our new town did not have honey for sale, we had to sniff out local honey for my son. I soon came into contact with a friend of mine, Mr. Boyette. I asked if he knew where I could get some local honey and he replied, "I have local honey." I never knew he was a beekeeper. After several trips to his home to get honey, he offered me a bee hive. I took the little white, buzzing box home and placed it near my garden. This was a way for me to manufacture honey as local to me as possible and pollinate my garden.

To become immune to plant pollen, a person must use honey that contains the pollen from the specific plant they are allergic to. We have learned that you have to extract honey that is pro-

We LOVE your bee pictures! Please help us help newbees by sharing pictures of good (and bad!) brood patterns, drone layers, and anything else that can help others diagnose problems.

Photos should be 300ppi or better. Send them to kelleybeeseditor@gmail.com. Thanks!

duced from the plants that you are allergic to, so it may be consumed to make this work. This means that if you are allergic to Goldenrod, then you have to have honey made from honey bees foraging on Goldenrod.

In addition to the honey for allergies, the honeybees have become rather an obsession. This obsession has caused me to learn the habits of the honey bee and respect them for what they are. Not a day goes by that I am not doing something with or about bees. I have experimented with many types of situations and have documented the outcomes of the honey bee. I am currently an advanced beekeeper with the State of Florida and will be a master beekeeper in the spring. So to answer the question, "Why are you a beekeeper?" it would best be answered, "because beekeeping found me."

~ A. Stefanik, FLA

I had mentioned to my wife many times that I would like to keep bees. When I turned 50 I said this is it. So I started attending meetings and field days and one year later I have four good hives.

~ Ed

K

Beek Hint

One of the phone-answering beekeepers at Kelley's shared that they're getting plenty of calls asking "what is the sugar syrup recipe for spring?"

So, here's my beekeeper hint: Clip this and keep it somewhere for easy reference! (I've got it taped inside the sugar cupboard door.)

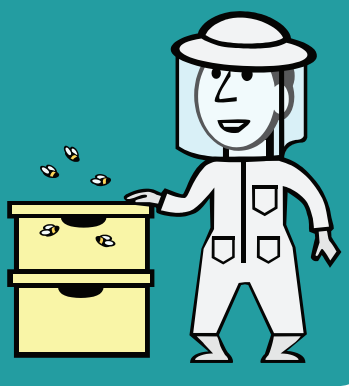
Spring Feeding

One to one (1:1) sugar to water, by volume.

Fill a clean, empty gallon milk carton with 5 pounds of sugar, then fill with very hot water. Shake like crazy; will likely need to top off a couple of times with more water.

Remember, use only white sugar, not brown, powdered, or confectioner's. Half fill your container with sugar and add water to completely fill the container.

After it has cooled, and if Honey B Healthy is desired: 1 tsp / quart, (or 4 per gallon) for feeding. Can use 2-4 tsp / quart as a spray for calming.



Dronings from a Queen Bee

Dead Bees

By Charlotte Hubbard

I've lost a lot of things—like my passport once, dozens of pairs of sunglasses, a pair of winter boots (really? Did I come home in the snow barefoot then?) a wallet or two (or six), and my car keys … too many times to mention.

I've also lost a lot of bees. And while 8 of 11 hives were alive in February, I found out this week that 2 more have moved on to the big clover field in the sky.

I've lost a lot of bees over the winters I've kept bees … too many bees to mention. (Plus, I suspect the Walter T. Kelley Company has me on a watch list and may some day refuse to sell me any more.) I also suspect researchers are going to add another item to their list of major causes of death. Along with "CCD" and "Varroa infestation" will be "beekeeper who just can't get it right."

I'm trying to get it right, doggone it!

My late husband Tom started beekeeping in 2006 with two hives, locating them in what my uncle, a state apiary inspector, called "the absolute worst possible location in the entire yard."

A state apiary inspector may have known that was the absolute worst possible location; the bees did not. After Tom installed his package bees, he ensured the queens were free, filled up the feeders, and never opened the hives again … not even to refill those feeders.

For two years, year round, those (very dry) feeders sat atop the hives—hives that never had brood patterns checked, never had ventilation holes in the upper deep, never had a honey super, never had fall feedings. And for two springs, those neglected bees happily buzzed into the warm sunshine to let us know they'd made it and all was right with the world (other than Tom having [yet unsuspected] Stage IV colorectal cancer.)

When the cancer was finally diagnosed (and after I almost lost Tom as well), I took over his bees. He'd ordered three more packages, meaning I needed a crash course on bee installation (and treating bee stings). As spring stretched into summer, my fascination grew. I read everything I could, talked to all sorts of experts, spent evenings surfing bee information. As a result, those five hives never went into winter so well tended. They had fall feedings, vent holes, a tar paper wrap. Under my careful, dili-

gent preparations, all five of the hives … died.

I killed plenty more bees the following year as well, but thought my bad luck was over this year. In February, when 8 of 11 hives had winged darlings flying about speckling the snow brown on that sunny day, I too was soaring. But having discovered no activity in two more hives on a recent sunny Michigan March day, I'm despondent. My dog is following me closely, afraid I'm going to off myself. (In her mind this would cause an even greater tragedy—she'd have to go without an hourly belly rub.)

This year's 50%-ish loss (please oh please oh please let the remaining live!!!) is hitting me waaaay too hard (especially since I should be used to it by now!). I understand the loss of some bees happens, although I'm absolutely and continually bee-fuddled why. Last fall I tried even more ideas—larger vent holes, popsicle stick vents, bottom boards, partial bottom boards—and mixed them amongst the hives that'd been moved to various locations. I figured I'd see which hives survived where, and then use those techniques / locations next fall.

I didn't figure one of each hive type would die and one would survive. The thunder I heard last night must've been God's statistician angels rolling on the clouds with laughter over my (very failed) scientific approach to figure out what works best.

There should be a support group for we hobbyists that have lost (er, killed) the very essence of our hobby. But the thought of gathering in a cluster with anyone these days, well, stings a bit. If I'm involved, inevitably we'd buzz in consolation, and then just probably die of starvation, a few inches from honey.

I wish I knew why my bees (again!) died. Couldn't the last few have scratched something in the wax, like "even more ventilation" or "it just wasn't meant to bee!" Would belly rubs have helped?

K