



# SEMBA NEWS

Vol. 12 No. 7

Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association

October 2002

## Upcoming Events

### October 20

SEMBA Annual Potluck and Meeting

### November 13

Schoolcraft Bee Club Meeting



## Schoolcraft Bee Club Meeting

The Schoolcraft Bee Club will meet on Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, in the Schoolcraft College Forum Building, Biology Lab, F270. The meeting was changed to Wednesday in order to use the biology laboratory. The title of the program is *Microscopic Examination of Honey Bees and Honey*. Using dissection microscopes, attendees will be able to dissect honey bees to look for tracheal mites and view anatomical features of the honey bee. We will also use light microscopes to identify pollen grains in honey samples to determine the nectar sources. If you wish to measure the moisture content of your honey, a refractometer will be available. Bring a small container of honey and a few honey bees to participate in the activities. As always, refreshments are welcome. *Roger Sutherland*



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## SEMBA Treasure's Report

Checkbook	10/01/01	\$2475.28
Balance		
Income		\$5710.29
		\$8205.57
Expenses		\$4099.75
		\$4085.82
Due from MBA		\$19.63
Actual Balance	9/30/02	\$4066.19
<b>Income</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Dues	\$1232.00	\$1368.00
Bee Class	\$2025.00	\$2362.00
Bee School	\$930.00	\$984.17
Donations (eq)	\$45.00	\$50.00
Donations (cash)	\$90.00	0
State Fair	\$472.00	\$465.00
Income on CD	\$785.89	\$481.12
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Consultant fee	\$300.00	0
Bee Class	\$555.00	\$694.00
Bee School	\$866.00	\$460.37
Postage	\$732.00	\$661.25
Newsletter	0	\$355.96
Photos-copy	\$11.00	\$2.55
Speaker fee	\$168.00	\$75.00
E.L Johnson	\$90.00	\$92.00
Miscellaneous	\$346.00	\$231.62
State Fair	\$553.00	\$527.00
Foundation gift	0	\$1000.00

SEMBA opened a 2-year, \$10,000 CD 1/23/02. Terms: rising rate-2.50% 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months, 3.00% 2<sup>nd</sup> 6 months, 3.5% 3<sup>rd</sup> 6 months, 4.00% 4<sup>th</sup> 6 months. Matures 1/23/04. *Roger Sutherland, SEMBA Treasurer.*



## Membership Information

SEMBA membership costs are \$6.00 for an individual, \$8.00 for a family;

\$60.00 for an individual life membership, and \$80.00 for a family membership. If your label has an **N**, your membership is due in November. Note: we will be voting on a dues increase at the October 20<sup>th</sup> SEMBA meeting.



### **Submissions to SEMBA News**

Send your submissions electronically to smrutter@umich.edu, by mail to Rutter/Bowman 1314 Olivia Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, or phone 734-741-0482 (feel free to leave message). The newsletter is only as good as its contributors; please share your knowledge, observations, and discoveries with other SEMBA members.



### **SEMBA Meeting October 20th**

The Annual SEMBA Business meeting will be held on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 p.m. Preceding the meeting will be a SEMBA potluck that will begin at 1:30 p.m., bring a dish to pass and table service. The meeting will be at the Witches Hat Depot in McHattie Park, next to the First United Methodist Church, 640 S. Lafayette Street, South Lyon, 48178. The program will include *Winterizing Your Bees*, presented by Keith Lazar and *Preparing for Next Year's Queen Rearing*, presented by Earl Hoffman. Roger Sutherland



### **Fall Treatment Advice: Dr. Zachary Huang, Michigan State University**

Now is high time to treat your hives! I am sure you have lots of questions: do your hives really require treatment? What pesticide should you use? The old saying "know your enemy" is also true here for the varroa mites. Instead of treating all your hives, you should only treat hives that have a certain mite levels, otherwise you are wasting your money on hives that do

not have "enough" mites (below economic threshold). There are several ways to gauge the mite population in your hive. One can uncap some drone brood to see if varroa mites are present, but this method does not tell you how many mites are there in the hive (unless you are very experienced). There is the old "ether roll" where you take 200-300 workers from brood nest, put into a mason jar, spray some starting fluid and count the mites on the wall. There is the new "sugar roll" test where you do not kill the workers by mixing confectioner's sugar with bees in a jar which dislodges the mites. There is a third method by using a sticky screen bottom, and leaving it in each hive for 1-2 days and then counting all the mites. The threshold for treatment in Georgia is around 3000 mites per hive. This means if you have 100 mites per day natural fall on a sticky board in a hive (in Georgia), you should treat that one (in other words, 24 hour mite fall x 30 = total mites in a hive). Here in Michigan, I would lower it to about 50 mites per day because of our longer winter. At our apiary here, we surveyed all of our hives using sticky traps, and two highest ones had 475 and 800 mites in 48 hours. These two colonies had workers with malformed wings and many workers were dying in the process of emerging. If we do not treat now, the two hives definitely will not make through the winter. Interestingly, we "harvested" only about 2500 mites from the 2<sup>nd</sup> colony on adult bees, not counting mites on the brood, by using both Apistan and Coumaphos in the two colonies. Even assuming that the brood has another 2500 mites, this would only account for 5000 mites, not the 12,000 mites we estimated using the "formula". The other hive also supplied only about 600 mites, not 6,000. It is possible that our mites are resistant to both Apistan and Coumaphos in both colonies. Alternatively, the total mite population is way lower than 30x the mite fall per 24 hour period.

Our experience indicates that if you started with new package bees, the mite count will be low enough that you do not need to treat (unless your package colonies had a lot of mite "immigration" from other "mity" colonies).

So what should you use to treat your hives after you know that you have mites? Resistance has been reported to Apistan and to Coumaphos. The best method is to do a resistance test and then use Apistan if your mites are not resistant to Apistan, otherwise use Coumaphos. If you do not have time to do it this year before treating, the rule of thumb is to use Apistan if you have not used it for the last 3 years, and use Coumaphos if you have used Apistan over the past years. Notice that Apistan and Coumaphos are currently the only two legally registered pesticides against the varroa mite. Neither of them should be used when honey supers are on, and neither of them should be left in the hive the whole winter. Many beekeepers complain there is not enough time left, after the honey harvest, to leave strips in and pull them out after 42 days. One way to do this is to extract your honey early, put strips in, and leave an empty honey super for bees to collect their own winter feed from goldenrod and asters (i.e. this super is not for human consumption). The latest time that you can put strips in is perhaps about September 30, meaning that you need to pull the strips out around November 12, hopefully before snow comes in. But to be on the safe side, I would put strips around Sept. 20, if not earlier.

Internet References:

1. Ether roll method:  
<http://ag.udel.edu/departments/ento/staff/dmcaron/Apiology/mitesurvey.htm>
2. Sugar roll method:  
<http://entomology.unl.edu/beekpg/tidings/btid2000/btdjan00.htm#Article2>
3. Resistance test:  
<http://www.cyberbee.net/resistance.html> (has links to the above two url).
4. Biology and control of varroa:  
<http://entweb.clemson.edu/cuentres/eiis/apic/ap5.pdf>.

*Dr. Zachary Huang, Michigan State University Honey Bee Biologist*



### **Honey Bee Removal**

As beekeepers, many of us receive one or two calls a year from people wanting bees removed from their

houses, sheds, or barns. Over the years, I have removed six or eight colonies of bees. The reasons people give for wanting bees removed are varied and interesting. Some people prefer that the bees remain where they are and just want the opening reoriented. This summer my son and I, changed a hive entrance that was four feet about a veterinary clinic's parking lot so that the flight path is now about 18 feet high, away from the clinic's clients exiting their cars. Many people express concern about saving the bees because of the mites, which is why they call in a beekeeper. This reason is often given after they have received the quote of \$400 to \$500 from an exterminator to destroy the hive.



### **Bees and Ordinances**

From the *Romeo Observer*, the Bruce Township Planning Commission has determined that they will not create an ordinance to regulate beehives in the township, which is located 25 miles north of Detroit. If residents are bothered by honeybees they can pursue civil action. The bee ordinance entered the agenda after a resident called the township clerk about concern over beehives located on their neighbor's property. *Thanks to Lynwood Wellhausen for this submission.*



### **Current Research on *Apis mellifera***

1. Schulz, DJ, Sullivan, JP, Robinson, GE 2002. Juvenile hormone and octopamine in the regulation of division of labor in honey bee colonies. *HORMONES AND BEHAVIOR* 42(2) 222-231.
2. Dornhaus, A. 2002. Significance of honeybee recruitment strategies depending on foraging distance (Hymenoptera : Apidae : *Apis mellifera*). *ENTOMOLOGIA GENERALIS* 26(2) 93-100.