

# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 20, Number 4 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
May/June 2010

## SEMBA MAY MEETING-FIELD TRIP

When: Sunday afternoon, May 16, 2010

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Where: The Detroit Urban Apiary and Beekeeping Museum at the Catherine Ferguson Academy, 2750 Selden, Detroit, MI (Enter museum/apiary from Lawton St.)

Program: SEMBA member Rich Wieske will lead a tour of the "Honey Bee Museum" featuring top-bar hives, skeps, bee trees. He will also explain the urban beekeeping program in Detroit. Other urban apiaries may be visited.

Beverages provided.  
Refreshments are welcome.

## WITH THE BEES IN MAY

The blooming of fruit trees, locust trees, clovers and many other nectar producing flowers will increase the hive activity dramatically. With the buildup, you should consider reversing supers to give the colony room for expansion. Look for swarm cells at the bottom of hive frames. If the hive is strong, consider making a split with 2 to 3 frames of brood and 1 to 2 frames of honey. If you want them to produce a new queen, make certain the brood frame contains eggs and very young larvae. You may also purchase queen cells locally or obtain mated queens locally or from the South. Open up drone cells to determine if Varroa mites are present.

If you installed a package, check to see if the queen is laying. Some new queens may have been poorly mated and their supply of sperm may be exhausted. Often the colony will make a new queen (supercedure) but that will set your new colony back about three weeks to a month before the new queen begins to lay eggs. Adding to this delay, remember that it takes 21 days for the worker eggs to develop into adult bees and these new bees will not become foragers for another 3 – 4 weeks.

Place a swarm trap on your property to attract swarms that may emerge from your bees or feral bees in your area. Have swarm removal equipment ready in case you get a swarm call. Early honeys are often light and mild so you may want to extract some honey in late May.

Most importantly, keep ahead of your honey bees and anticipate their next move.

## NEW LIFE-MEMBER PROFILE

--DEBORAH ZAHN SIMMONS

Deborah, who lives between Ann Arbor and Dexter, began her beekeeping experience over 15 years ago when she assisted a friend who needed help with her bees on her farm. From this introduction, she started her own colony. Her love of teaching and children inspired her to offer her services/bees to schools and churches where she could expand their thoughts on bees and their environment. For several years she participated in Project RED, (Rural Education Day) for Michigan. Her bees have been on film and are in the process of becoming a part of a series on animal habitats.

Deborah's interests have changed over the years; she is now beginning to expand her knowledge about bees with all the wonderful scientific information available. She has begun catching swarms and sharing her bees with friends who wish to begin their own journey. She swore she would never have more than 5 hives. She says: "It's too sticky in the Fall with full-time work." (For 30 years she has been a dental hygienist in private practice and teaching at the UM.) However, one should never say never; last year, with her new beekeeping partner, she acquired 12 swarms throughout the summer. One failed in the Fall and she was left with 11 going into Winter. As of today, all 11 are alive and the hives are very full of bees. Making splits and queen rearing are in her future when she has the time.

Deborah gets lots of help from family in all aspects of beekeeping and she has been very willing to assist other beekeepers in SEMBA's mentoring program. Her surplus honey is given to patients and friends.

### NEWS FROM MICHAEL HANSEN, THE MICHIGAN STATE APARIST

All beekeepers should be aware of the Bee Health eXtension website and newsletter. This is a relatively new website that Michael Wilson is managing at the University of Tennessee. One of the great tools at this site is that a person can post a question, and that question will then be addressed by the leading apiary research professionals in the country. It's a very good opportunity, and the content of their newsletters comes right from those questions that have been answered. Look into it. Read the latest from Bee Health at the following link.

[http://www.extension.org/pages/Bee\\_Health\\_Update\\_2.2\\_February\\_March\\_2010](http://www.extension.org/pages/Bee_Health_Update_2.2_February_March_2010)

Check out this site.  
 Help Save Our Bees  
 Web: [www.saveourbees.ca](http://www.saveourbees.ca)

### MICHIGAN BEES WORTH A BILLION \$ IN IMPORTANCE TO MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE

~Zachary Huang, MSU

The Western honey bee *Apis mellifera* plays a crucial role for US agriculture because it provides pollination for a large number of plants. The dependence on honey bee pollination was estimated to be \$14.6 billion per year in the U.S. (Morse and Calderone, 2000). Last time (6 years ago) I did some adding up and I estimated the value of honey bees to Michigan crops was about \$460 million per year. I thought I needed to redo it again. So, I used the most recent production data published October 9, 2009 (Kleweno, 2009) to do the calculations. What did I find out? Michigan's fruit and vegetable industry produces over two billion dollars per year and nearly 50% of that value is due entirely to honey bee pollination. (See table.) This is more than 100 times the value of honey alone, which was \$7.4 million in 2008.

How do you read the table? Column 1 lists the crops by their names. Column 2 shows the honey bee dependent factor; therefore, if a crop produces nothing without honey bees, it is 100% dependent on honey bees, and it would be

entered as 1 in the table. Other crops only increase their yield slightly. For soybean, it is only a 10% increase after honey bee pollination, so it is 0.1 in the table. Column 3 lists the total production in thousands of dollars. Column 4 shows the adjusted value for the total value of production factored with the honey bee dependence factor (column 2). It is the value of production due to the pollination by honey bees. This undoubtedly is an underestimate since many crops are too small to be included in the official statistics.

### Take home message: honey bees are worth almost 1 billion dollars per year in Michigan!

About 50% of Michigan's fruit and vegetable industry depends on honey bees (2008 data).

Some crops do not need honey bees for production (e.g. cabbage, carrots, celery, and onions), but the production of their seeds are dependent on honey bees.

Note: \*BD: (Honey bee dependence factor): the percentage of seed/fruit production that is due to honey bee pollination (based on Gordon and

Crop	*BD	Value (\$1,000)	Adjusted Value (\$1,000)%
Apple	0.9	380,815	342,734
Asparagus	0.9	18,516	16,664
Blueberry	1	130,555	130,555
Cabbage*	0.3	443,520	133,056
Carrots	1	17,668	17,668
Celery	1	14,705	14,705
Cherries(Sweet + Tart)	0.9	78,189	70,370
Cucumbers(Fresh + Pickled)	0.9	55,719	50,147
Dry bean	0.1	129,060	12,906
Onions	1	14,117	14,117
Peach	0.6	26,794	16,076
Peppers	0.8^	41,602	33,282
Pumpkin	0.9	15,283	13,755
Soybean	0.1	714,784	71,478
Squash	0.9	12,144	10,930
Strawberry	0.4	5,846	2,338
Tomatoes (Fresh + Processed)	0.8^	34,668	27,734
Total		2,133,985	978,516

Davis, 2003).

## BEEKEEPING NOTES FROM BILL SIRR

Over the years, four swarms have moved into the corn crib where I store bee equipment at the property. The fact that there is a mix of empty frames doesn't seem to matter—to the girls it looks like a nice place to set up housekeeping.

Early this year, I found two dead hives in the apiary. When I went out to bring them back for clean up, the top super of one hive had dead bees--starved? The second super was full of honey with no bees alive. The bottom super was empty with a good 2 pounds of bees on the bottom board with their heads removed -- by mice or a shrew? At any rate, it all came home for clean up.

In the second super of the second dead hive, there was a small cluster of bees with a very black queen. I transferred them into a nuke. The next day they were flying in and out and all looked well. Two or three days later, there was no activity. All were gone except for two workers. Why? They had food, a place for the queen to lay, and a nice home, I thought. CCD? Good question.

Safety note: If you are working out yards check for ticks. I found a few already this year.

~Bill Sirr

## WEST VIRGINIA PASSES BEEKEEPERS IMMUNITY LAW

West Virginia has become the first state in the nation to pass a law giving beekeepers immunity from liability for ordinary negligence. The law requires that beekeepers register their hives. It also mandates the WV Department of Agriculture to promulgate Best Management Practices for beekeepers. All beekeepers who abide by these two provisions will have absolute civil immunity from ordinary negligence. The Department is working on a set of emergency rules they hope will be in effect soon. Governor Joe Manchin signed the bill into law the first of April making this the first state to protect its beekeeping industry. ~Aptrack News, 3/2010

## NEWS FROM THE SEMBA CLASS AT TOLLGATE

Thirty-four eager beginning beekeepers have been putting their hives together and placing them in the new apiary at Tollgate Education Center in Novi where they will learn about managing bees from six equally enthusiastic instructors: Mike Siarkowski (leader) Winn Harless, Kathleen Carter, Richard Mendel, Clay

Otoni and Gilbert Terry. At the end of the eleven-session class, they will remove their colonies from Tollgate to a home location.

Class member Suzanne Vivian is producing an excellent photo show of each session. If you would like to be put on a list to view the photo show, e-mail [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com)

## PLANNING FOR THE 73<sup>RD</sup> SEMBA BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE

Because of the large number of participants attending the 72<sup>nd</sup> SEMBA Beekeeping Conference, some changes are being made for the 73<sup>rd</sup> conference. Next year, major presentations will be held in the VisTaTech auditorium and concurrent sessions will be conducted in classrooms that can accommodate larger numbers.

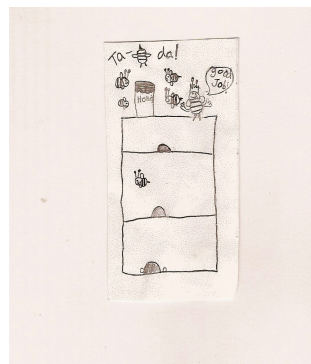
While the conference is still fresh in your mind, send us your ideas for new workshops or changes you would suggest for any aspect of the conference.

## SWEET HONEY ON THE ROOF

Here's the best news we have heard in awhile: keeping honey bees is now legal in New York City. The old rule was based on a misunderstanding that lumped honey bees into a long list of wild animals that may not be kept in the city — outside a zoo — including the hippopotamus and elephant.

~ Submitted by Ann Kerwin

## A POSSIBLE THIRD-GENERATION BEEKEEPER IN THE SUTHERLAND FAMILY



~Drawing by Whitney Sutherland age 10

**NOTE: MBA PICNIC, SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2010, AT THE SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER IN DRYDEN, MICHIGAN.**

### Protecting Honeybees with Frog Eggs, December 8, 2009

Ground-breaking discoveries by Michigan State University researchers could help protect honey bees from deadly parasites that have devastated commercial colonies.

The MSU researchers for the first time were able to produce in the laboratory proteins that help channel sodium ions through cell membranes of parasites known as Varroa mites. The research, using cellular frog eggs, also found that these proteins react to chemicals differently than the sodium channel proteins in honey bees, a finding that could be a key to controlling the mites.

"The insecticide used to control Varroa mites, fluvalinate, targets the mite sodium channel," says Ke Dong, MSU professor of entomology. "But the mites are becoming resistant to fluvalinate. Successfully producing the mite sodium channel in the lab now allows scientists to develop new chemicals that target the mite sodium channel but don't affect the honey bee's."

Fluvalinate paralyzes the mite and eventually kills it. But in addition to the problem of growing mite resistance, the pesticide can harm bees and contaminate honey if not used extremely carefully. The MSU scientists also found two amino acids in the mite sodium channel that make the mite resistant to tetrodotoxin, or TTX, a deadly poison found in pufferfish not currently used as an insecticide.

"Chemicals such as fluvalinate and TTX target sodium channels in insects and mites, so this basic research opens the door for more applied research on chemicals to control mites and other pest insects," Dong says.

Other members of the MSU team are Yuzhe Du, senior research associate; Yoshiko Nomura, visiting scholar; Zhiqi Liu, former research associate; and Zachary Huang, associate professor, all in the Department of Entomology.

#### SEMBA Bargain Corner

##### For Sale:

~Screened bottom boards made from rot-proof composite decking, includes solid slide-in board for winter. Hive top feeders with handles and two rafts. Items may be viewed at [www.staffordwoodworking.com/bees](http://www.staffordwoodworking.com/bees). Contact Tom Stafford, 734-277-1555 or [tom@staffordwoodworking.com](mailto:tom@staffordwoodworking.com).

~Custom made bee jackets made to your size. Contact Don Schram, 248-310-8205, [don.schram@gmail.com](mailto:don.schram@gmail.com).

~20 deep 9 1/8" plastic frames (Dadant EZ frames), new, never used, \$30. Call Kurt Sonen, 734-222-9245.

~ Honey in 5 gallon buckets. Call Dave Kriesch, 810-395-2037.

~ Beekeeping Equipment, Garden Hives available. Call Keith Lazar, 248-361-1710.

##### Services

~ Honey bee removal service. Call Don Schram, 248-310-8205.

~Licensed Honey House for rent, \$15 per hour. You can use a licensed honey house to bottle and sell your honey legally to stores and farmers' markets. Contact Bob Jastrzebski, 734-748-2185 or [bob@cimsurf.com](mailto:bob@cimsurf.com).

##### Notice:

~SEMBA beekeeper desires location in the Pontiac area to keep 1-2 colonies. Call Mike Bee, 248-497-7923.

~Beekeeper is looking for a location in the Saline, Manchester, Lodi Twp. or Pittsfield Twp. area to keep 1-2 colonies. Call John, 734-944-2421.

Note: Ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. Contact Roger Sutherland [rsuther@hotmail.com](mailto:rsuther@hotmail.com).

Southeastern Michigan  
Beekeepers' Association  
*Organized April 1, 1934*

SEMBA Membership  
5488 Warren Road  
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Affiliate Chapters  
Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

