



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 20 Number 8 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
November 2010

SEMBA ANNUAL MEETING

When: Sunday, November 14, 2010 at 2:00 pm

Where: Lower Waterman Center, Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road Rd., Livonia, MI.

(See campus map on page 4)

Meeting Agenda:

~Election of officers

Candidates for office: 1st Vice President, Winn Harless; Treasurer, Mary Sutherland.

Nominations will be accepted from the floor.

~Vote on SEMBA Constitution and By-laws

~Beekeeping class graduation

Program

"Varroa mite Reproductive Biology"
Zachary Huang, PhD MSU

Refreshments welcome – Bring cookies of your choice. Coffee and tea provided.

SMALL HIVE BEETLE *Aethina tumida*

During the past 6 months, the number of beekeepers reporting Small Hive Beetles in Southeastern Michigan has increased significantly. If you think you have Small Hive Beetles bring some for microscope identification.

Below is some information about the Small Hive Beetle by

[Keith S. Delaplane](#), Professor of Entomology, The University of Georgia



about ¼ inch long

Order Coleoptera: Family Nitidulidae

Description: Adults and larvae of the small hive beetle are found in active bee hives and stored bee equipment where they feed on honey and pollen. Adults are broad, flattened beetles about 5.7 mm (¼ inch) long, 3.2 mm wide and dark brown to nearly black in color. Adults are red just after pupation and soon thereafter become blackish. They move rapidly across comb and are difficult to pick up. The larvae are elongate, whitish grubs with rows of small spines along the back. Larvae look superficially like wax moth larvae, but the legs of beetle larvae are larger, more pronounced, and restricted to near the head. Beetle larvae do not spin webs or cocoons in the bee hive but rather pupate in the soil outside the hive. Pupae are whitish brown. The small hive beetle is native to southern Africa where it requires 38-81 days to develop from egg to adult, and five generations per year are possible. The first record of this beetle in the western hemisphere was determined from a commercial apiary in Florida in May 1998.

Damage: Florida beekeepers report the beetles have caused considerable damage and colony loss. Beetle larvae tunnel through combs, killing bee brood and ruining combs. Larvae can heavily damage delicate, newly drawn-out comb; however, old sturdy brood comb seems to withstand heavy larval infestation without disintegrating. Bees in Florida have been found to abandon combs and entire colonies once they are infested. Beetles defecate in honey and cause it to ferment, producing a frothy mess in supers and honey houses. Honey thus contaminated is no longer salable, and moreover, it is unpalatable to bees and cannot even be used as bee feed. Florida observers report that the fermented honey smells like rotting oranges. In heavily-infested operations in Florida, larvae by the thousands have been observed crawling out of colony entrances or across honey house floors in an effort to reach soil to dig in and complete their development.

Control: If *A. tumida* is suspected or detected, the following precautions are suggested:

~Be clean around the honey house. Do not leave filled supers standing long before extraction. Do not leave cappings exposed for long periods. Beetles can build up rapidly in

stored honey, especially away from protective bees.

~Do not stack or store infested supers onto strong colonies.

~Be aware that supering colonies, making splits, exchanging combs, or use of Porter bee escapes can spread the beetles or provide room for beetles to become established away from the cluster of protective bees.

~Monitor colonies for hygienic behavior; i.e., the ability to actively rid themselves of both larval and adult *A. tumida*. Propagate those queen lines found to be beetle-resistant.

~Experiment with trapping or cultural control measures. It may be possible to trap beetle larvae as they attempt to reach soil and pupate. Moving colonies may be advisable to keep a beetle population from building up in any particular apiary. The ability of beetles to complete development may vary according to different soil conditions and beekeepers may find some locations naturally less prone to beetle infestation. Fire ants may be a beneficial insect in this context if they are found to prey on pupating beetles.

~Bees will normally not clean up equipment or supers full of beetle-fermented honey. However, bees may finish the job if the beekeeper first washes out as much honey as possible with a high-pressure water hose.

~Treat soil in front of affected hives with GardStar™ soil insecticide or similar approved product.

~Treat colonies with CheckMite+ bee hive pest control strip according to label instructions.

FALL MANAGEMENT TIPS

By Eric Mussen, PhD UC Davis, ApiNews Vol.45, 2010

Fall management actually begins in late summer. The goal is to raise as many healthy bees as possible to be your wintering population. Three crucial considerations for population buildup are: 1) adequate pollen supplies, 2) large numbers of week old to two week old nurse bees, and 3) lots of empty space in the brood combs to accommodate egg laying.

If the bees are short on food, consider feeding BOTH sugar syrup and supplemental protein. If the brood nest area is pretty much filled up with honey, remove combs and replace them with combs that are practically empty. Brood rearing naturally wraps up, or tapers way off, by the end of October, so the colony needs space dearly during the next month.

As for bee health, honey bees infected with diseases, fungal and/or bacterial, or that have been fed upon by *Varroa* mites while pupating,

will not be able to survive the four to six months expected of healthy winter bees. You should have an idea of your colonies' mite populations through periodic monitoring with sticky traps. *Nosema* spore counts are not technically difficult to determine (see the instructions at Randy Oliver's website: www.scientificbeekeeping.com). Interpreting the counts and deciding how to treat, if deemed necessary, can be a bit dicey. Finally, the bees should have produced enough honey for winter survival and for you to take some. Try to leave 60-80 pounds for the bees. Fully filled deep combs contain about 5-7 pounds of honey and medium-depth combs between three and four pounds each. If the bees read the text-books, they will have put the honey above and to the sides of the brood nest, leaving many empty cells in the bottom box for late summer (then early spring) brood rearing. You may have to help the bees redistribute their stores to acquire that arrangement. Having accomplished the things previously mentioned, you and your bees should be able to take a break for awhile.

THE AVERAGE BEEKEEPER IS EDUCATED AND EXPERIENCED

By Shelley Stuart, ApiNews Vol. 45, 2010

In January 2010, researchers Larry Krenzel and Wendy Schweigert surveyed beekeepers. They are interested in what draws people to become beekeepers, and what kinds of people become beekeepers. Over 1,300 people completed the survey, and the researchers released a preliminary profile of the "average" beekeeper.

In a nutshell, they found that "the average beekeeper is a 52-year-old male who has been keeping bees for 9 years and maintains 4 hives."

More specifically, the beekeepers fell into three categories:

~Commercial beekeepers (5% of those who responded) - making a living from bees through a combination of honey sales, pollination services and selling bees, managing from 200 - 16,000 hives.

~Sideliners (13%) - supplementing their income through their bee activities, with 10 - 700 hives.

~Hobbyists (82%) - don't rely on their bees for income, usually managing 2 or 3 hives.

As you might expect, the more dedicated the beekeeper is to the business, the longer they've been working bees. Commercial beekeepers average over 24 years of experience compared to the hobbyist's 7 years.

No matter how many hives the beekeepers

have, more than 90% of the beekeepers had at least some college experience, and nearly half of them have done post-graduate work. Krengel and Schweigert included a personality test in the survey which revealed that beekeepers tend to be less extroverted, more open to new ideas, and more emotionally stable than the general public.

Krengel and Schweigert will release a more in-depth analysis in the near future which may reveal more about why the average beekeeper tends to be older and more educated. Income may play a large part; those with a college education tend to earn more money.

Beekeeping isn't a low-cost endeavor. Getting started with only three hives can run a new beekeeper up to \$1,000 for equipment and bees. Beekeepers also need a place to locate the hives, which requires some land, preferably owned.

Once the detailed analysis comes out, we will also be able to look at the numbers in depth. The "average" beekeeper is a middle-aged male with a college degree, but the male-to-female ratio might reveal a closer race in the gender and age games.

And if you happen to be a 20-something woman interested in keeping bees, don't let the numbers daunt you. Find a local bee club, educate yourself and next spring get some bees!

Suggested resources:

[How to Start Beekeeping](#) (BeeSource.com).
[The Backyard Beekeeper](#) by Kim Flottum
(beginning guide to beekeeping).

MBA MEMBERSHIP THROUGH SEMBA

Membership in SEMBA qualifies you to join MBA at the discounted rate of \$25-single or \$30-family. Membership in MBA is now paid directly to the MBA treasurer. To join or renew MBA, make your check payable to MBA, indicate the name of your local club on the check, and send it to the MBA treasurer,
Judy Schmaltz
3119 Oakhill Place
Clarkston, MI 48348-1046



Ohio State University Honey Bee Lab Hit by Tornado

A September 16th tornado in Wooster, Ohio devastated the OARDC campus. The Honey Bee lab "bee barn" where they store non-office and non-laboratory equipment was leveled. Losses to the Honey Bee Lab alone are estimated at \$250,000. Thankfully the bee yard hives and the historic Rothenbuhler cabin on the site were spared.

Donations can be made via OSU's "Online Giving" website.

SEMBA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

SEMBA CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW CHANGES

Each SEMBA member will be receiving an electronic copy of the proposed SEMBA Constitution and the By-laws for review. If you do not have e-mail access and wish to receive a printed copy, please call Roger Sutherland 734-668-8568. Voting on the proposed changes will be held during SEMBA's Annual Meeting held at Schoolcraft College on November 14, 2010.

NEW PROCEDURE FOR HONEY BEE MAGAZINE ORDERS

To order beekeeping magazines at bee club discounted prices, call the publishers directly and indicate to them the name of your local club. For *Bee Culture* call: 1-800-289-7668. For *American Bee Journal* call: 1-888-922-1293 or 1-217-847-3324.

If your address label denotes N10, your SEMBA

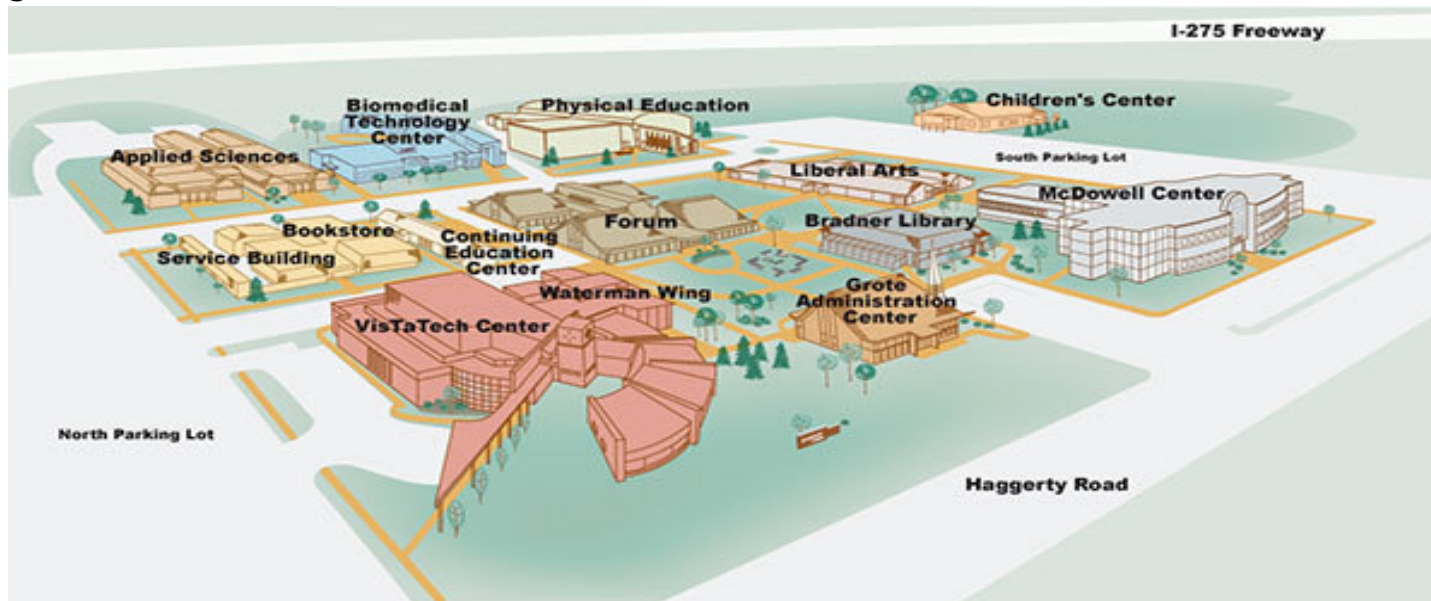
dues are now payable. Enclosed is a renewal slip for your convenience

ARE PESTICIDES KILLING HONEY BEES?

California's Department of Pesticide Regulation cited reports of eucalyptus nectar and pollen with imidacloprid levels up to 550 parts per billion, nearly 3 times the 185 parts per billion needed to kill honeybees, and deadly levels of systemic poisons showing up in leaf guttation drops (water droplets that plants sometimes exude). According to a 2009 report in the *Journal of Economic Entomology*, when bees consume guttation drops collected from plants grown from neonicotinoid-coated seeds, they encounter death within a few minutes.

~Contributed by Bill Sirr

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Schoolcraft College Campus map. For SEMBA meetings, park in the North Parking lot, enter the VisTaTech Center, then proceed to the Waterman Wing lower level.

SEMBA Bargain Corner

For Sale:

~Honey Sticks: 10 cents each. Contact the Sutherlands, 734-668-8568 or rsuther@hotmail.com

Wanted:

~I am looking for two 5 gallon pails of fresh, local raw honey. Call Rick, (248) 672-2200.

Notice:

~ Honey for sale or honey wanted: Send your name to the Sutherlands, 5488 Warren, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, or rsuther@hotmail.com
Names will be printed in the next newsletter and posted on the sembabees.org web pages.

~Looking for an enthusiastic, active partner so that I can semi-retire from beekeeping. Put your bees on my organic farm in Columbiaville. Use of my equipment, including extractor. I will assist you. We will split the honey. Call Robin, 810-793-2511 or email mallor@gmail.com See our farm here: www.threeroodsfarm.com

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

SEMBA Membership
5488 Warren Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9425

Affiliate Chapters

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

