



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 22 Number 6 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
October 2012

SEMBA BOARD MEETING

Sunday, October 21, 2012, 1:00 p.m.
Schoolcraft College
Lower Waterman Center
All SEMBA members are invited.

SEMBA ANNUAL MEETING

When: Sunday, November 25, 2012
Where: MSU Tollgate Education Center;
8115 Meadowbrook Road, Novi, MI 48377,
Southwest corner of 12 Mile and Meadowbrook.
See: <http://tollgate.msu.edu/>

Potluck: 1:30 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee and tea will be provided by SEMBA.

Program: 2:30 p.m.

**Winter Beekeeping Projects and
Making Your Own Equipment
Fritz Sanders and Winn Harless**

Note: If you have made an item of beekeeping equipment, please bring it to share with other beekeepers. You do not have to attend the potluck in order to participate in the program.

Annual Meeting Agenda:

- ~Committee reports
 - ~Recognition of SEMBA Beekeeping Course Participants
 - ~Election of officers
 - Slate of nominees:
 - 1st Vice President – Winn Harless
 - Treasurer – Mary Sutherland
 - SEMBA Directors: Fritz Sanders
Don Schram
 - SEMBA representative to MBA –
Rich Wieske
- (Nominations will be accepted from the floor.)

OTHER AREA BEEKEEPING MEETINGS

Meetings in Monroe are held the 3rd Monday of (most) months, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, at the MSU Extension Building, 963 South Raisinville Road, Monroe, MI. For information contact Bill Bray at braybill@hotmail.com.

The Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers (A2B2) usually meet 2ND Tuesday of each month at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. To be notified by e-mail for the date and agenda, contact Richard Mendel, brescue@att.net

DON'T QUIT SMOKING

That's right, don't quit smoking--you read it right. Of course I'm referring to smoking your bees. It has been my pleasure to help with the SEMBA Beekeeping Class for over eight years now. In doing so, I have noticed that many "nu-bees" are reluctant to use their smokers while working their hives.

Some get their package of bees in the spring and find them to be so gentle that no smoke is needed to work them. In fact, we instruct them not to use smoke when they check on them for the first or second time, and it seems they just get out of the habit of using their smokers. One student even told me that the bees don't like smoke in their eyes, so they use a spray bottle with sugar water and Honey Bee Healthy to control them. This works fine in the early season, but soon those gentle little hives grow into large colonies that can become quite defensive. Also, if the hive consists of a lot of boxes, smoke can really "clear the deck" when you go to put the hive back together. Many times I've had to rush over to puff smoke on the top bars of a box to get the bees safely down so the student could put on the next hive body. I think a little smoke in my eyes would be better than getting smashed by the second story of my house, don't you? At this time of year the bees can become very defensive, so when you go into your hives use smoke. It will be safer for you and the bees.

~Mike Siarkowski

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

SEMBA is interested in finding new venues for our club meetings. If you know of churches, sportsman clubs, American Legion, Moose, restaurants or other places, please contact Clay Ottoni.

.....ceottoni@gmail.com

SEMBA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If your address label denotes N12, your dues become due in November. Enclosed is a renewal application for your convenience.

SEMBA ADVANCED BEEKEEPING COURSE TO BE OFFERED IN 2013

If you have four years of beekeeping experience or have completed the SEMBA Beginning Beekeeping Course, you are eligible to take the Advanced Course. More details on cost, schedule, and syllabus will be included in a future newsletter and on the sembabees.org website.

GENOTYPIC VARIABILITY AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MITE INFESTATION LEVELS, MITE DAMAGE, GROOMING INTENSITY AND REMOVAL OF VARROA DESTRUCTOR MITES IN SELECTED STRAINS OF WORKER HONEY BEES

Abstract

The objective of this study was to demonstrate genotypic variability and analyze the relationships between the infestation levels of the parasitic mite *Varroa destructor* in honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies, the rate of damage of fallen mites, and the intensity with which bees of different genotypes groom themselves to remove mites from their bodies. Sets of paired genotypes that are presumably susceptible and resistant to the *Varroa* mite were compared at the colony level for number of mites falling on sticky papers and for proportion of damaged mites. They were also compared at the individual level for intensity of grooming and mite removal success. Bees from the "resistant" colonies had lower mite population rates (up to 15 fold) and higher percentages of damaged mites (up to 9 fold) than bees from the "susceptible" genotypes. At the individual level, bees from the "resistant" genotypes performed significantly more instances of intense grooming (up to 4 fold), and a significantly higher number of mites were dislodged from the bees' bodies by intense grooming than by light grooming (up to 7 fold) in all genotypes. The odds of mite removal were high and significant for all "resistant" genotypes when compared with the "susceptible" genotypes. The results of this study strongly suggest that grooming behavior and the intensity with which bees perform it, is an important component in the resistance of some honey bee genotypes to the growth of *varroa* mite populations. The implications of

these results are discussed.

~*Journal of Invertebrate Pathology*, Vol. 110, Issue 3, Pages 277-414 (July 2012). (Paper prepared by Ernesto Guzman-Novoa, Berna Emsena, Peter Unger, Laura G. Espinosa-Montaño and Tatiana Petukhovae)



MITE DROP, August 20, 2012

~ Submitted by Dennis Holly

WORKER BEES REBOOT BRAIN GENES TO SUIT THE TASK

Worker honey bees shuttling between foraging and nursing tasks have been found to switch huge groups of genes on and off in their brains for each job. This shows for the first time that different behaviours can have specific gene patterns.

The discovery could have implications for how our own behaviour influences which genes are switched on in our brains and bodies. The changes were recorded for the first time when a group of worker honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), all starting life as "nurses", switched to being "foragers" but were then tricked by the researchers into becoming nurses again.

Most worker honey bees begin life as nurse bees, which feed the queen and her larvae. After 2 to 3 weeks, most nurses switch to being foragers. [Andrew Feinberg](#) of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland and his colleagues emptied a hive of all existing nurses. This tricked foragers into changing roles: as they returned from a bout of foraging, some reverted to being nurses to save the queen and the larvae.

To see what effect the role-play had on their brains, Feinberg and his colleagues scanned the insects' brain cell DNA for evidence of a process called [epigenetic modification](#).

This is a way of switching on sets of genes that involves adding or removing chemical "methyl" tags to their DNA. Methylation enables large groups of genes to be simultaneously and reversibly switched on or off without altering the underlying genome sequence.

Feinberg and his colleagues noticed a specific pattern for each task – nursing or foraging. What's more, when foragers reverted to being nurses, they deactivated the "forager" gene pattern and rebooted the set needed for nursing.

The genetic changes were dramatic: as many as 150 genes were affected. Feinberg says it's difficult to say whether the change in behaviour caused the genetic switch or vice versa. "It's the first evidence, to our knowledge, of an epigenetic change linked to reversible behaviour in any organism," says Feinberg. "It opens doors to new ways of thinking about human problems like addiction, and about learning and memory."

~Journal reference: *Nature Neuroscience*, DOI: 10.1038/nn.3218 -- Submitted by Tom Lisk

SWARM STORIES FROM OUR MEMBERS

After receiving a swarm from Mike Siarkowski, (one of my instructors), to expand my apiary, I talked about it where I work. In less than a week there was a swarm outside our building. By then word had gotten around that I was keeping bees. The maintenance dept. asked if I could remove it so they didn't have to spray them and kill them. So based on what I learned in my first year bee class (thank goodness) I ran home and improvised a nuc and super, and away I went. It was a great success and the bees are doing everything they are suppose to. I did not see the queen and am assuming she is there based on what they are doing, but I will keep looking. I am feeding them sugar water as suggested by my instructors until I see they no longer need it. Not sure when that will be because of our drought. It was a great experience.

~ Nola Klink

Interesting story as both occurred on the same day. -- On April 25th I took the day off to catch up on some yard projects. Late morning I was back by our hives and I heard and noticed my strongest surviving Langstroth hive crazy with activity. I called to Jenni, my wife, to come out and see what was going on. I stepped away for about five minutes and sure enough when I returned the colony had swarmed and moved off. At that point we were about to track them by following the sound and a few stragglers. It was really something. They lighted on a branch in a neighbors' field about 100 yards away and only

about 8 feet up in the air. We suited up, found a large cardboard box, trimmed some surrounding branches and shook that branch and swarm right into the box! Next we hightailed it to an empty Langstroth from an over-winter die out and dumped the contents of that box right in. It is now one of our strongest colonies. But the day wasn't over yet. After so much excitement, what a rush to be amongst so many bees, then to have them in a box in your hands, we decided to have a quiet lunch at a local spot. Upon our return, as we pulled into our driveway, we saw another swarm! It almost passed through the open windows of our car as we pulled up our driveway. I was concerned it was our recently transplanted swarm, so I jumped out of the car to check while Jen did her best to follow it by car. She had no luck but I found the earlier swarm was still in house and the latest had split from my winter-surviving Warre hive.

Late that afternoon while working in our vegetable garden, we were witness to a third swarm (or was it the second moving some five hours later?). We watched as it settled way up in a Choke Cherry tree about 25 feet above ground. This time we had lots of company to watch the phenomena. Unfortunately, it was too high up to safely capture so we just enjoyed the show. Later, about an hour before dark, it moved again, to about the same height in a neighboring tree. At this point I figured it would probably spend the night in this spot as it was a nice tight cluster with good protection. All this time I was sorry I couldn't trap this new beginning since we had a vacant Top Bar Hive from a recent die off. Well, you guessed it: before dark that swarm put itself into that open Top Bar I had built. That was really amazing to watch! That made me very happy as it demonstrated the bees appreciation for my workmanship and because it saved me purchasing another package.

Wow, some day! Certainly one we'll never forget.

~ Ned & Jenni Glysson.

PRODUCTS OF THE HIVE will be the theme topic for the January 27, 2013 SEMBA meeting. Details will be provided in a future newsletter.

ED AND ADA WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Ed Nowak, former SEMBA President and beekeeping course leader, and his wife Ada have moved to Louisiana. Their address is 2899 Rhett Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70611. E-mail address is enowak@mi.rr.com

CINDY LISK HOSPITALIZED

Cindy Lisk, wife of SEMBA webmaster Tom Lisk, underwent extensive surgery for cancer of the tongue on September 27 at UM Hospital in Ann Arbor. Please keep the Lisks in your thoughts and prayers.

SURVEY REPORTS FEWER WINTER HONEY BEE LOSSES IN US.

Total losses of managed honey bees from all causes were 21.9 percent nationwide during the 2011-2012 winter, according to an annual survey conducted by the USDA, Bee Informed Partnership and the Apiary Inspectors of America. This represents a substantial drop in mortality compared to the previous five years, when winter losses of around 30 percent have been reported. Previous surveys found total colony losses of 30 percent in the winter of 2010/2011, 34 percent in 2009/2010, 29 percent in 2008/2009, 36 percent in 2007/2008 and 32 percent in 2006/2007. According to USDA, the unusually warm winter during 2011-2012 could be a contributing factor related to the decline in colony losses, although a direct scientific investigation of the weather connection has not been conducted.

~Source: Michigan Farm News, June 30, 2012

SEMBA Bargain Corner

For Sale:

~Comb honey. Call Winn Harless 734-453-2914

~ Local bee keeping equipment and supplies. Contact Keith Lazar at Keithmlazar@hotmail.com or call 248-361-1710.

Wanted:

~Bees put on a property in Lake Orion. Contact Connie at thewhits@comcast.net

~Pollen. Contact Bill at wrichett@ford.com

~Beeswax. Contact Rebecca at Rebecca.calahan@comcast.net

~Want to purchase two established hives. Contact Peter Santeiu at [734-718-6737](tel:734-718-6737)

~Beekeeper to keep bees on a 17 acre location in Garden City, MI. Contact Peter Santeiu at [734-718-6737](tel:734-718-6737)

Services:

~ Two-frame motorized extractor for rent at \$25 a day. The baskets which hold the frames are ten inches wide. Two shallow frames will fit in each basket. I will be extracting my honey on (10/12/12-10/14/12). Anyone wanting to extract honey at my place can call me at [313-999-3180](tel:313-999-3180) or e-mail me at m7mav@yahoo.com

Note: Ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, contact Roger Sutherland, rsuther@hotmail.com.

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

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

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

