



Next Meeting

Wednesday, June 15 Time: 7 PM
 Gateway Centre Suites 1313 E. Maple St.
 The Rainier Room, Ste. 301 Bellingham, WA
 "Bee-giners" session: 6–7 PM Rainier Room

AND ANOTHER FIELD DAY



COMING UP THIS WEEKEND



Brushy Mountain Bee Farm is hosting a field day just south of Portland, Oregon, featuring speakers **Dennis vanEnglesdorp** and **Dewey Caron**.

Seminar and workshop topics include:

- * Hive inspection techniques
- * Making nucleus colonies
- * Seasonal management activities
- * Mite sampling and mite management
- * Marking your queen
- * Drivers of colony losses

All the details can be found at:

www.brushymountainbeefarm.com/

SEQUIM LAVENDER FESTIVAL

The 20th annual Lavender Festival will be filling the Sequim area this year on **July 15, 16, and 17**. More than ten lavender farms are open for tours and festivities; most are free.

A huge street fair stretches across blocks of downtown Sequim, and for music lovers, there's "Lavenderstock."

But mostly, there are hives in every beautiful purple field, and the plants are *vibrating* with bees.

<http://www.lavenderfestival.com/>



Hives set up next to North Olympic Peninsula Beekeepers Association tent at last year's festival.



Our friends at the Langley Bee Club have generously invited us folks from Whatcom, and other clubs, to attend their field day. It starts at 1:00 and will be at least 2–3 hours. Bring a veil or suit if you want to get up close and personal with the hives.

Wagner Hills Farm is just 28 miles from Bellingham, up the Guide to the Aldergrove border crossing.

Langley is known for putting on a great field day!

CRANKY BEES



Probably not cranky, these pollen bearers look quite happy.

*From Keeping Backyard Bees
By Melissa Caughey*

This nice article is just a sample of the resources available from a great website. You can get more information and sign up for their newsletter: www.keepingbackyardbees.com/author/mcaughey/

Cranky Bees. They are one of the worst nightmares of a beekeeper. Cranky bees are not enjoyable to keep. They have aggressive tendencies and are overprotective of the hive. Often when you have cranky bees, you will be unable to get near the hive or you will get stung. Sometimes these bees chase you for just being within eyesight of the hive. In my case, I could not tend to my garden without honeybees hitting my head and face. After investigating why this nice hive turned mean, it was clear that I needed to re-queen this hive. But where do you begin when this happens in your own backyard apiary? Here are some things to consider.

Bad Weather. One thing new beekeepers quickly learn is that honeybees prefer calm days with abundant sunshine. They do not care for cloudy, windy, or rainy weather. These types of conditions as well as other weather extremes greatly affect the bees' temperament. Thus, it is never recommended to go into a hive on less than optimal days.

Hive manipulation/inspection. Any of us would be upset if someone came into our homes and began poking and prodding around. It is only natural that the bees become aware and protective of their home. Sometimes, bees can be cranky for a few days following a more thorough inspection or hive manipulation. So, when going into the hive consider the time of day. Optimal time to enter the hive is later morning until early afternoon during times of good weather. Using a smoker during the inspections can also cut down on hive crankiness afterwards.

Starvation. Hungry and thirsty bees are not happy nor should they be. Pay attention to the nectar and pollen availability in your area and remember to feed the bees during droughts and nectar dearths to prevent crankiness and other bee issues.

Predators. Bee predators that lurk around the hive can cause bees to increase defensiveness of the hive. Sometimes it takes a bit of detective work to see if this is a cause of bee irritability. Skunks for example love to bring their families to the hives at night during the summer when the bees cool their hives by bearding. Skunks are only sensitive to bee stings on their abdomens. Therefore they sit outside the hive and pick off bees one by one until they have had their fill.

Mean Queen. All the other bees in the hive emulate the personality and temperament of the queen. If the queen is nice, the hive should be gentle. If she is nasty the hive will turn nasty. In this situation, beekeepers are encouraged to re-queen the hive.

Queenless. If the queen goes missing through death or other mishap, the hive soon senses that she is gone. As they work to requeen the hive, they can become more protective and defensive until the new queen emerges, mates, and sets the overall tone of the hive.

Africanization. Africanized bees do reside in certain areas of the country. (See her online article for more on this, and also see the following story.)

Our board member Evan Jones fills us in with an update about a story last month regarding a so-called Africanized swarm in Concord, California. A backyard beekeeper, supposedly with 15 years of experience moved three hives during the day so his father could landscape the yard. One hive went bonkers, swarming and stinging several people in the neighborhood and killing two dogs who were chained in a neighbor's yard. The angry swarm was declared to be Africanized bees, based on the over-the-top reaction of the offending insects. Wrong. Evan quotes from an article in the San Francisco Chronicle:

"Scientists at the California Department of Food and Agriculture tested the mitochondrial DNA of seven of the crazed bees . . . and found only European genes." (There are, however, Africanized bees elsewhere in the Golden State.)

It would seem the beekeeper was at fault, having moved his hives during the day and ignoring some basic beekeeping rules about buttoning them up the night before a move.

