



BEEBITS

NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 19 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

BELLEWOOD ACRES RUN FOR THE BEES



It's time again for Bellewood Acres bee benefit—a trail run through apple orchards with proceeds going to bee research at Washington State University. MBBA will be adding to the festivities at the event with a beekeeping information table. Registration for the run is at bellewoodfarms.com, where you can also find out about their u-pick orchard, farm market, country cafe, bakery, and distillery, all of which are worth checking out.



Mount Baker Beekeepers' table at the Run for the Bees

WHATCOM LITERACY COUNCIL TRIVIA BEE



NEW LOCATION!

The annual TRIVIA BEE & Silent Auction will take place on Friday, April 21st from 6 pm to 9 pm at **Bellingham Technical College's Settlemyer Hall**. Ken Jennings of Jeopardy! fame and Scotty VanDryver of KAFE radio will co-host the event, which benefits vital literacy programs in Whatcom County. Pizza, cookies, and coffee will be available, as well as a cash bar with beer and wine. The silent auction will feature an eclectic array of cool items under \$200. (Including an MBBA-donated honey basket!)

Down at the Outback

The Outback Bees Project is an all-volunteer teaching apiary located on The Outback Farm on the WWU campus in Bellingham. Wednesdays and Saturdays at 1pm April through October, the apiary is open to anyone interested: students, faculty, staff and community members. **NO BEE EXPERIENCE needed!** At our weekly meetings, we discuss current issues of the bee season and offer hands-on experience working directly with the bees. Good fun and a good way to find out if beekeeping is for you **BEFORE** you get bees. Bee suits and gloves available for those without. Whether you just want a quick glance at beekeeping or are looking for in-depth advice on how to keep your bees alive and productive, The Outback Bees Project is a good place to "bee." Get on Outback Bees mailing list at outbackapiary@gmail.com or call: 483-9754.

--Michael Jaross, Director, Outback Apiary



RHUBARB??

Recently a post on the Mount Baker Bee Forum brought a new treatment for varroa to light.

“I have just received the latest issue of Beekeepers Quarterly (British) and found a very interesting article called:

Varroa Control: Is Rhubarb the Hope for Polish Beekeepers? by Ann and Maciej Winlarski (of Opale, Poland)

In short, what the beekeeper does is place a *crushed rhubarb leaf including the sliced off stalk (each tenderized with a hammer in this case) on the top bars of the super containing the brood nest*. In this beekeeper's case this meant between the honey super and the broodnest. The beekeeper replaced spent leaves and repeated this procedure five times over the midsummer.

Over three or four days, the worker bees remove the more tender leaf material from the hive, leaving only the leaf and stalk skeleton. In the process they expose the hive to levels of oxalic acid. This was observed to drive mite fall levels, increasing fall by a factor of 2x to 7x.

Research is continuing this summer, but the writer felt this was an easy, non toxic, warm weather friendly way to at least suppress Varroa growth throughout the season when their reproduction rate is at maximum.” (Courtesy of Janet Wilson.)

That post prompted Forum member Chuck Howell to do more digging, and he came up with the following from the *Walden Effect* blog (waldeneffect.org) posted by Mark and Anna, homesteaders in southwest Virginia:

“After the rain barrel workshop on Saturday, I dropped by the St. Paul's Farmer's Market on my way home. I was thrilled to stumble across a local beekeeper who keeps 28 hives without any chemical use at all, resulting in only 10% losses per year. For

non-beekeepers, those are very good stats --- even if you use chemicals, 30% to 50% losses are normal in our area.

I asked the beekeeper what he did about varroa mites, and he shared his home remedy --- rhubarb leaves. *He told me to make a tea out of rhubarb leaves, then to dip in a sheet of plain paper. After letting the paper dry, you put it in your hive the way you would use mite strips in the fall.*

The internet suggests that the purpose of the rhubarb tea is to extract oxalic acid, which is a proven treatment for mites. Rhubarb leaves contain 0.2 to 1.3% oxalic acid, and spraying oxalic acid into bee hives does seem to kill varroa mites with only some damage to the bees.* The less-intrusive strips seem much better than spraying if they work, though. I may have to try that this fall if our mite counts are high”

All local beekeepers who try the rhubarb treatment this year need to report their findings!

*Link to Randy Oliver's Scientific Beekeeping



EPIPEN RECALL

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is alerting consumers to Meridian Medical Technologies' voluntary recall of 13 lots of Mylan's EpiPen and EpiPen Jr (epinephrine injection) Auto-Injector products used for emergency treatment of severe allergic reactions. This recall is due to the potential that these devices may contain a defective part that may result in the devices' failure to activate. The recalled product was manufactured by Meridian Medical Technologies and distributed by Mylan Specialty.

Look for expiration dates from April to October 2017. Further info at: www.mylan.com/epipenrecall

FROM THE WASHINGTON STATE BEEKEEPERS

Get Your Noxious Weeds Converted to Bee Forage



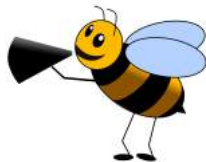
Earlier this year, House Bill 2478 was signed into law by the Governor. This bill directs the state Noxious Weed Control Board to conduct a pilot project to convert existing patches of blooming noxious weeds—that bees like—to plants which would still be good forage for bees.

These patches of land will be located in many areas of the state and will be overseen by county noxious weed control boards. Funding for plant starts and seeds, as well as technical help in eradicating the existing weeds, will be given to those chosen to participate in the pilot project. At the end of the project, the state noxious weed board will produce a guidelines and best practices report to inform landowners how to control noxious weeds and replace them with bee forage friendly plants. You can participate in the project by giving your contact information and describing your property. You need not own the land to participate. Visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCHWT68> and fill out the questionnaire.

The Washington State Beekeepers Association vigorously supported House Bill 2478, and we hope many beekeepers take advantage of the offer of help in creating more forage for bees and other pollinators.

Call for follow-up information!
Anyone who takes advantage of this great project—please share the results with us!

--[Bee Bits Editor](#)



BEWARE OF WELL-INTENTIONED SEED PACKETS

Beth Skwarecki of lifehacker.com explains why the good intentions of cereal giant General Mills to promote protection of their spokesbee BuzzBee might be missing the mark.

“Bee populations are in decline, and Cheerios wants to help. So far, so good. But they are sending free packets of wildflower seeds to people all over the country—and some of the flowers included are invasive species that, in some areas, you should probably *not* plant.”



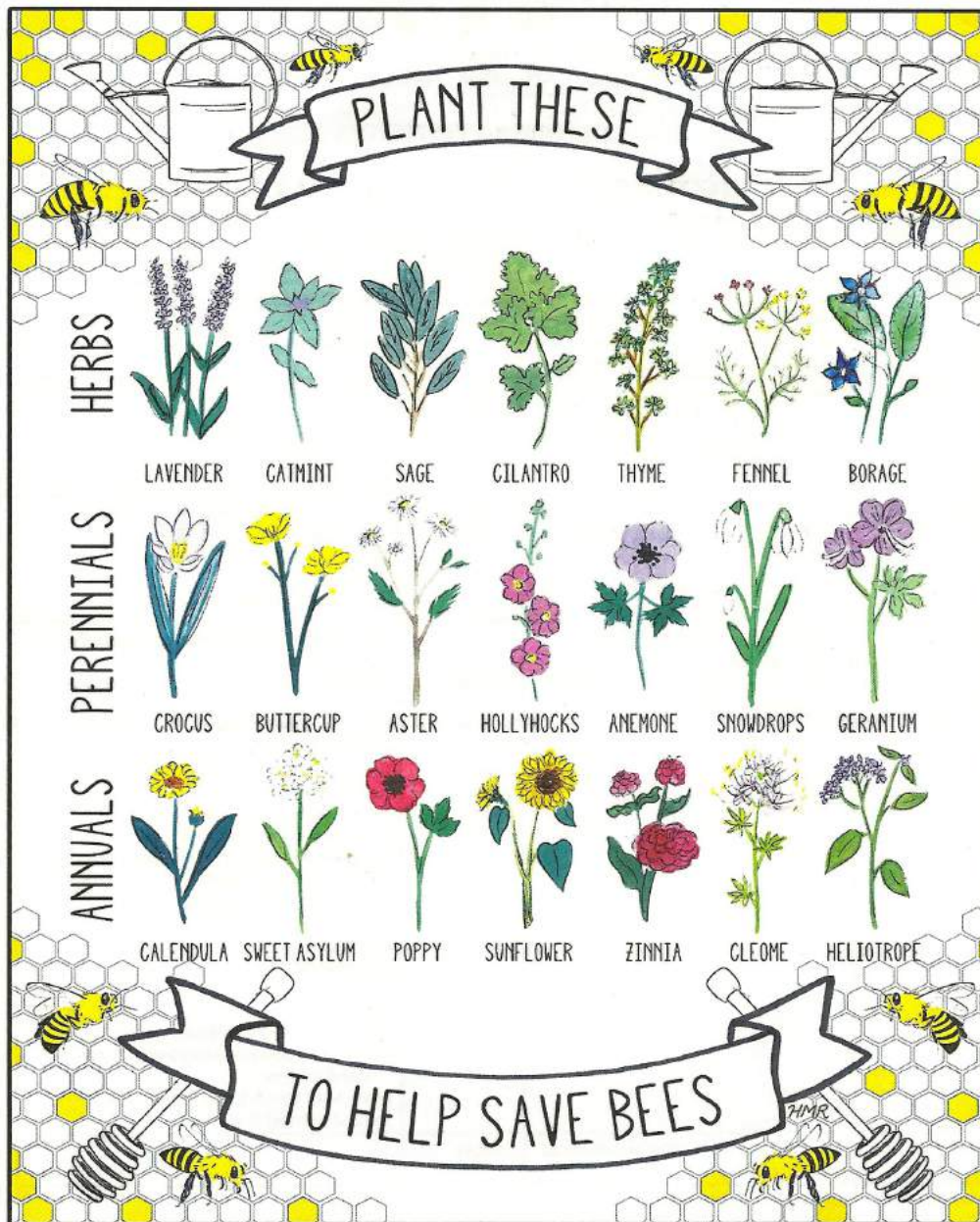
In her article [Don't Plant Those "Bee-Friendly" Wildflowers Cheerios Is Giving Away](#) by she offers a great place to check the list of seeds for safety. “If you want to check the status of a random plant you’ve brought home from a garden store, check out the [USDA's PLANTS database](#). If your state is green, that means the plant is native there. Click on the “legal status” tab to see if the plant is on any federal or state noxious weed lists.”

[While this is good-intentioned advice, this editor was unable to locate the map on the USDA site. Lots of other good info, though.]



Protection arrives for the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee

After years of work and a last-minute delay, the rusty patched bumble bee has become the first bee in the continental United States to receive federal protection under the Endangered Species Act. [Learn more](#) about the bee and this historic listing.



CHECK BEFORE YOU BUY: Did you know that some plants, including those labeled "pollinator friendly," have been pre-treated with pesticides that kill bees? Check with your local nursery before buying plants or seeds to ensure that your bee-friendly flowers aren't treated with neonicotinoids.