



BEE BITS

NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting

Wednesday, June 21 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



SIGN-UP TIME FOR THE FAIR

NEW BOARD ANNOUNCED FOR MBBA

Mount Baker Beekeepers' President Gary Clueit has resigned from the position, as he will be moving to Europe, splitting his time between exotic, varroa-free! Isle of Man and Lisbon, Portugal. The board met to reorganize in light of Gary's departure, and Daryl Hill has been appointed as the new President. Daryl is counting his beekeeping years by the successful winters (3), which is really the make-or-break standard in our climate. Rebekah Lee, whose thoughts on her Flow hive appear in this issue of Bee Bits, has taken on the job of Vice-president. Continuing on the board will be Ellen Gehling (Secty), Jo Miller (Treasurer), and Steve Pabody.



Intrepid Fair Organizer, Kelly Thompson

Kelly did an excellent job of organizing the MBBA booth at the Northwest Washington Fair last year, and luckily she's volunteered to do it again. The Fair is August 14–19 this year, and if we really want it to be a worthwhile project, we need to support Kelly's efforts. Contact her at kelly@justenough.biz.



Daryl Hill is taking over as MBBA President



New MBBA Vice-President Rebekah Lee

All the board members will be at the June 21st meeting, and Daryl will be presiding. They'll be taking questions about the future of the club and addressing some ongoing issues such as the establishment of an MBBA apiary.

*Parting words from outgoing President Gary Clueit:
 "I wish everyone the best of luck for the future, and may your bees be healthy and a pox on your varroa!"
 And the same to you, Gary!*



Or, if you're already on her list she will have sent an easy sign-up app so you can choose the slot that works for you. Don't be afraid! Even the newest new-bee can be a good bee ambassador. The Fair is our chance to get the public engaged in supporting the beekeeping

community and to educate future beekeepers, like the one seen in this photo from last year's booth.





Small hive beetles seen on a frame

SMALL HIVE BEETLE WARNING FROM B.C.

From the Provincial Apiculture department in British Columbia:

I would greatly appreciate if you could email all your club members and urge them to look for any signs of Small Hive Beetle (SHB), as follows:

Use little or no smoke. Carefully lift the lid and then, quickly lift the inner cover and immediately examine the top bars and the underside of the inner cover for adult beetles. Tilt the hive forward (or backward) and have a quick scan of any beetles walking on the bottom board or screen.

If you find any beetle, take a close-up picture with smart phone or camera and mail it to us for ID. Keep the beetle in a small canister or bottle, in case it needs further identification.

*Thanks for your participation and support.
Paul van Westendorp Provincial Apiculturist
paul.vanwestendorp@gov.bc.ca*

...it is the larval stage [of the SHB] that causes the greatest amount of damage. The beetle larvae tunnel through combs feeding on pollen, brood and honey. SHB typically attacks weakened or small colonies, however once the beetles gain access, even strong colonies can be severely affected because beetle are not easily ejected from the hive. --*Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists (CAPA) Honey Bee Diseases & Pests, Third Edition*

...AND EFB WARNING FROM THE SOUTH

Our neighbors down in the Skagit Valley have experienced a recent wave of European Foulbrood (EFB). While it is mostly among the commercial beekeepers, it's important for all beekeepers to be on the lookout for this bacterial disease.



European Foulbrood larvae turning into scale, also note the two cells with contaminated brood food.

For more information on EFB, check the Bee Informed link:

beeinformed.org/2013/04/05/european-foulbrood-efb-identification/

Or hopefully, you have a copy of the aforementioned CAPA book *Honey Bee Diseases & Pests*.

Stay informed regarding local beekeeping issues at the Mt. Baker Beekeepers' Forum:
mtbakerbees@groups.io

Seen here, a very cooperative swarm is making their new home in a bait hive set out by a fortunate beekeeper in California. Placed just the day before, the box was baited with a tiny strip of queen pheromone.



Photo courtesy of Olafur Olafsson



Whatcom County beekeeper Rebekah Lee's Flow hive with its beautiful tung oil finish is certainly lovely to look at.

To see the Flow hive in action (and links to more videos):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUQX5kfCT9U>

Back in April 2015, *Bee Bits* featured a look at the Flow hive from Australia, which had aroused great curiosity in the beekeeping community. Now we are fortunate to have a brave and conscientious local beekeeper who has acquired a Flow hive and is sharing her thoughts and experience with us.

A LOCAL VIEW OF THE FLOW HIVE

--Rebekah Lee

I will share with you my views and experience with the Flow, of which, I own one complete Aussie setup (the Western Red Cedar is so beautiful in Tung oil). I purchased it last year and started with a package. From previous beekeeping experience (pre-Varroa destructor), I knew that there was little likely hope of a surplus honey crop the first summer. Any surplus was planned to keep with the bees for over-wintering. And that was just about the way it worked out. I have yet to use the Flow super, and it doesn't look like this will be the year either. My colonies are still in establishment/increase mode and most likely any stored honey will again go to them. The reason I decided to try Flow was my experience in trying to deal with honey rendering from my two hobby hives in North Dakota - just a mess. If it looks like a season will offer a surplus honey opportunity, I like the idea of just turning the Flow lever and watching it ooze into the jar(s). End of mess. An aside: they show the honey flowing into the jars behind the hive, but there's nary an interested bee in

I re-entered beekeeping simply because I am in love with these fantastically marvelous creatures.

sight. Hmmmm. All that honey and no bees. Must be well fed.

Caveat: I'm not in this for the honey; if I get some that will be an added bonus. I re-entered beekeeping simply because I am in love with these fantastically marvelous creatures. I desire in some small way to learn and make some sort of contribution to their ability to cope with varroa destructor and raise healthy local bees. I am strongly opposed to the continual introduction of package bees/nucs that aren't from local survivor stock. Why keep dragging all that viral trash from the commercial almond pollinators and their concomitant negatives. (Oops, a little off-topic rant there :-)

My concern with the Flow is the advertising of easy honey with little or no emphasis on the real management issues required to successfully maintain a healthy colony of bees from one year to the next. There are a few experienced beekeepers on the Flow Forum who obviously know how to do this, but they seem the minority. The questions the newbies ask reveal a stunning lack of knowledge or expertise of actual beekeeping basics. Most seem to have acquired the concept of getting a package of bees into a box, wait a few weeks, put on the Flow super and open the taps. I finally quit the forum because it was too frustrating to listen in.

For newbeeks, it is especially useful to join the local bee club, forum, the Apprentice class and the Out Back. I believe it is essential to pair up with an experienced mentor. For those mentoring inputs to be truly efficacious, the newbeek needs to have read AND studied basic bee biology and colony dynamics. A quick read through of *Beekeeping for Dummies* isn't sufficient. Successful beekeeping results from a solid knowledge base that is plugged into the mentoring process, which enables the translation of knowledge to practice. Beekeeping isn't easy or cheap. It takes a lot of time, energy, thoughtfulness and money. The

Flow advertising, in my opinion, short-circuits the realities of beekeeping. That said, I

think it is a very interesting option for honey harvesting and most certainly has its place in apiculture. Perhaps one day, I'll be able to discover just what that place might be.

My apologies if I've sounded a bit blunt, but beekeeping entails so much more than what Flow implies. Perhaps one upside is there will probably be a lot of used Flow equipment on Craig's List and eBay in the coming years. Patience may reward you with good used equipment to replace the knock-off.





National Pollinator Week is a time to celebrate pollinators and spread the word about what you can do to protect them

Ten years ago the U.S. Senate's unanimous approval and designation of a week in June as "National Pollinator Week" marked a necessary step toward addressing the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations. Pollinator Week has now grown into an international celebration of the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats and beetles. pollinator.org/pollinatorweek/



Bee Culture magazine is celebrating Pollinator Week with a series of webinars. Go to beeculture.com/ for all the info. If you already subscribe to their newsfeed, "Catch the Buzz," you've received the invites. If not, it's worth subscribing!

PLASTIC-EATING BUGS? IT'S A GREAT STORY, BUT THERE'S A STING IN THE TAIL

--Philip Ball, the Guardian

Caterpillars that can munch up plastic bags have just been identified, fuelling excited speculation that this could one day eliminate global pollution from plastic waste. The chance discovery, initially made by a scientist and amateur beekeeper whose plastic bag had been eaten through by the moth caterpillars, was reported this week by researchers at Cambridge University and the Spanish National Research Council.

These creatures, the larvae of the *greater wax moth* (*Galleria mellonella*), can devour polyethylene, which along with the closely related polypropylene is the main type of plastic found in waste.

Wax moths, which are found throughout the world, are so-called because they eat wax. Specifically, they love to eat the wax from which bees make their honeycombs - and so [they can devastate bee colonies](#).

(This link goes to a good *Bee Works* article about wax moths.) The two common species of wax moth, of which *Galleria mellonella* is one, are thought to cause more than £4m worth of damage annually in the United States alone.

With [bee populations already under severe stress](#) from pesticides, habitat loss and predators, we might want to think twice about breeding one of their common airborne enemies in huge numbers - even if the intention was to somehow keep them in plastics-processing centres. The idea that if bees disappear then humankind will follow four years later, popularly misattributed to Albert Einstein, might be a touch hyperbolic. But without their pollinating assistance, crop cultivation would be in deep trouble.

For the full story:

theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/25/plastic-eating-bugs-wax-moth-caterpillars-bee#comments

BEE INK

Hundreds of people queued in Manchester to get bee tattoos as part of a fundraising campaign to help those affected by the deadly terror attack in that city in May.

Manchester tattoo artists launched the Manchester tattoo fundraiser, where bee tattoos would be done for £50, with proceeds going to the families of victims of the attack.

The bee is a symbol of Manchester's industrial past and people got bee tattoos in the wake of the attack to show their solidarity with the city and the victims.

