



Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 17 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

MUST-SEE EVENT IN EVERETT

Tickets are still available for the Randy Oliver event in Everett this September, but don't wait too long! The Northwest District Beekeepers Association is hosting this very famous and respected beekeeper/biologist. Director of the go-to website scientificbeekeeping.com. Randy is a commercial beekeeper in California, a careful researcher, and the author of a monthly column in American Bee Journal.

Randy Oliver began beekeeping in 1966 and currently manages more than 1,000 hives in California



The topics to be covered will be "Reading the combs to understand colony conditions over the season" and also Randy's recent research on varroa mite management, including the most current information on his experiments using oxalic acid applied dissolved in glycerin.

For those not familiar with Randy's website, here is a description in his own words:

This is not a "How You Should Keep Bees" site; rather, I'm a proponent of "Whatever Works for You" beekeeping.

I've visited beekeepers in many countries, and

realize that there are as many ways to keep bees as there are beekeepers. The bees don't care whether you are a commercial or hobby beekeeper, nor whether your personal preference is Langstroth, Warre, top-bar, small cell, foundationless, "natural" or conventional beekeeping--the same biology applies to all. My goal is to provide any and all beekeepers with a resource of readable and straightforward information on how to practice good bee husbandry, and to exercise environmental and community responsibility.

Where: Everett PUD Auditorium, 2320 California Street, Everett, Washington

When: Saturday, September 9th, 2017.
Doors open at 12:30 PM and the talk runs from 1:00 to 5:00 PM

Price: \$25 (tickets are available through www.brownpapertickets.com by searching for Randy Oliver)

OF LOCAL INTEREST

WhatcomTalk is a community oriented website that explores topics for a wide range of interests. Focusing on positive stories, they offer business profiles, events, sports, and much more.

A recent profile by staff writer Dondi Tondro-Smith featured familiar Whatcom beekeeper Michael Jaross waxing poetic on the zen of beekeeping.



Well worth a look, the article, aptly titled "For the Love of Bees," can be found at:

whatcomtalk.com/2017/05/07/michael-jaross-bees/





The powdered sugar mite test just takes some practice.

IMPORTANT (AND EASY) VARROA MITE CHECK

It's time to start checking for mites. In his recent webinar, Dr. Paul vanWestendorp recommended sampling once a month during the high-mite season (summer). Like much in beekeeping, it seems complicated at first, but all it takes is a little practice. Here is a handy reference from Bee Informed Partnership (beeinformed.org/):



Collecting the Sample

Collect a sample of approximately 300 adult bees from one to three brood-nest combs (avoiding the queen). Three hundred bees are equivalent to about ½ cup of lightly packed bees.

Mark a wide-mouthed, open neck glass or plastic collection jar with a line at ½ cup.

Select a brood frame. Look for the queen. If she is present, move her to another frame.

Collect 300 adult bees directly into the collection jar from a brood frame by moving collection jar downward over adult bees so they fall backwards. Or shake bees directly from two or three brood frames into a larger collecting container (honey bucket, cardboard container, or lipped tray) and scoop up ½ cup of bees and quickly pour them into the quart jar.

Experiment with your collection technique to consistently obtain a 300-bee sample. The powdered sugar shake method is non-lethal, so the bees may be returned to the hive after testing.

Powdered Sugar Shake

1. Add approximately two tablespoons of powdered sugar to the jar. (For best results,

sift the powdered sugar through a flour sifter to ensure a fine texture; some recommend using a powdered sugar that does not contain cornstarch.)

2. Vigorously shake the jar for at least one minute to cover the bees in sugar and dislodge the mites from the bees. To improve the consistency of mite counts, shake the jar for a consistent length of time for every sample.
3. Set the jar down and wait three to five minutes. (Rushing the process increases the risk of undercounting the mites.)
4. Invert the jar and shake it like a salt shaker, capturing the falling mites onto a clean plate or pan below. Shake the inverted jar until mites stop falling out.
5. Spray the powdered sugar deposit in the plate or pan with a water mist to dissolve the sugar.
6. Count the mites on the plate or pan.
7. Add an additional tablespoon of sugar to the jar, shake and roll the bees again for 30+ seconds, and repeat steps 4, 5, and 6 to improve the accuracy of the count.
8. Count the number of mites in the plate or pan.
9. Calculate the mite number per 100 adult bees. (See Counting the Mites, below)
10. Sampled bees can be released back into the top of their colony or at colony entrance. Do not perform this test in high humidity or during strong nectar flow, because dampness will cause the sugar and mites to adhere to the bees.

Counting the Mites

The goal of mite assessment is to determine the number of Varroa mites per 100 adult bees, expressed as the percentage of infestation. Counting steps:

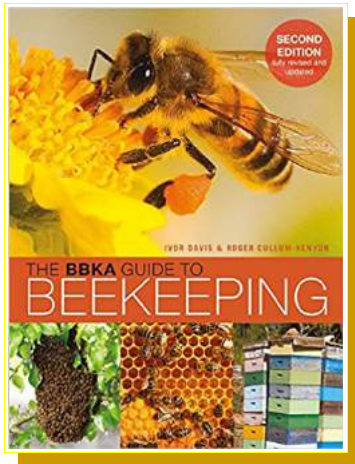
Count the number of mites collected in the plate or pan. Divide that number by the number of bees in the sample. Multiply by 100 to yield a percentage. *Example: A beekeeper samples 300 adult bees and counts 12 mites in the pan. $12 \text{ mites} \div 300 \text{ bees} = .04$ $\times 100 = 4\%$ (4 mites per 100 adult bees)* To increase the accuracy of the assessment, count the actual number of bees in each sample. As you gain experience with sampling, your sample sizes will become more consistent.

Of course, there are plenty of videos to help, here is one from Stony Creek farm:

[youtube.com/watch?v=ZvWfGMvy_zs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvWfGMvy_zs)

BEE BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

Here are some selections that need to be on your summer reading list:



A beautiful edition from the British Beekeepers Association

This guide, aimed at beginning beekeepers and the only one to be endorsed by the BBKA, provides an authoritative text along with clear photographs and illustrations.

It introduces the reader to beekeeping, including such areas as the workings of the colony, the structure of a hive, how to acquire bees and keep them healthy, and what happens each month in a beekeeping year. Each chapter is accompanied by anecdotes, answers to frequently asked questions, and fascinating facts about bees and honey.

The new edition includes new step-by-step sequences to illustrate procedures such as containing a swarm, identifying the queen, using a smoker, and cleaning a hive as well as more information on different kinds of hives, disease management, and many other key areas. bbka.org.uk/learn/general_information

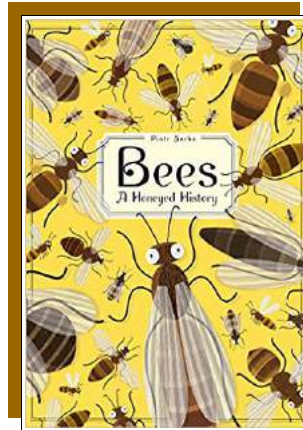


For the budding beekeeper:

The beautiful *Bee and Me* by Alison Jay is now available in paperback! A bee flies in the window and a little girl is frightened. She traps the bee and then wonders what to do.

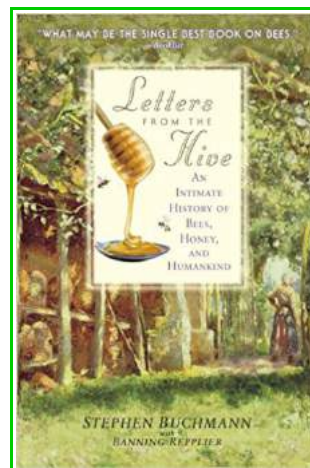
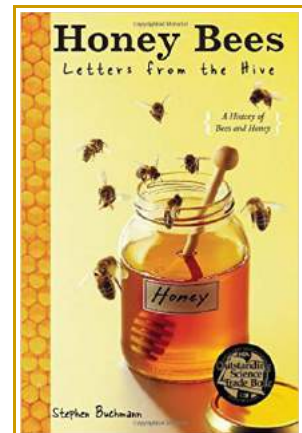
This beautiful wordless picture book traces the growing friendship between girl and bee and

introduces small children to the ecology of the natural world. Highlighting the plight of the disappearing bumble bee, it shows how some simple actions can help restore beauty and balance in our environment.



One part science, one part cultural history, and countless parts fascination, *Bees* celebrates the important role that these intriguing insects have played in our ecosystem throughout the ages. From Athena to Alexander the Great and from Egypt to Ethiopia, *Bees* explores different methods of beekeeping and uncovers the debt that humans owe this vital species. With beautifully accessible illustrations depicting everything from bee anatomy to the essentials of honey making, readers will be captivated by the endless wonders of this seemingly small speck of the animal kingdom.

This nicely done volume for K--12 students reflects the author's beekeeping expertise in a very engaging way. Stephen Buchmann is a beekeeper and an associate professor of entomology at the University of Arizona in Tucson. He served on a National Academy of Sciences committee on



the status of pollinators in North America and is a member of the Pollinator Partnership. He coauthored two nonfiction adult titles, *The Forgotten Pollinators* and *Letters from the Hive: An Intimate History of Bees, Honey and Humankind*, and a picture book, *The Bee Tree*