

Sussex County Beekeepers Association

April/May 2009

President's Message

Hello,

The red-winged blackbirds are back from their winter vacation and are marking the beginning of spring, according to my calendar. The juncos haven't left yet, so the possibility of snow is still present.



Now is the time for spring checks. On nicer days it would be prudent to look at the entrances of your hives to observe for-

aging activity, especially the gathering of pollen. If you've got six or more bees returning with full pollen baskets each minute, the hive is working as it should; less than that, and it's time to peek under the inner cover.

Give a 'heft' check for honey stores and if in doubt, feed with sugar syrup at as high a concentration of sugar as you can fit in a unit volume of water.

Look for a nice, sunny day to open the hives you suspect of having trouble. Keep a log. It's better than your memory. Look for any signs of

disease as you inspect the comb for brood and stores. The presence of wax moth larvae this time of year is a sign of a faltering hive. Look for a good brood pattern and a healthy queen.

Combine weak healthy hives if warranted. Global patties or pollen substitutes can be applied to give the hives a boost.

Get a jump on spring if you can, it will make your spring management that much easier, and your honey harvest that much, ahem, sweeter.

Bill Foley

Welcome New Beekeepers!

The response to the short course in March was overwhelming! Almost 60 people took part in the course taught by members of SCBA.

Frank McElroy and Chris Tomlinson coordinated everything. Bob Burkard taught bee biology and pest management

Mike Osborne explained the mysteries of bee equipment and Tom Webb shared his wisdom regarding spring management and other topics. The final session involved building two complete hives. Laszlo Bekefi won the new complete hive. A great way to start beekeeping!

We look forward to meeting all the new beekeepers at our meetings and encourage you to extend your education with our library, local and state meetings and more in-depth courses.

Welcome to the wonderful world of beekeeping!

SCBA Newsletter
April/May 2009

SCBA Calendar

Clip and Refrigerate

• **Saturday, April 18th**
Meeting at 1 pm at Fair Administration Building. Preparing honey and wax entries for fair competition.

• **Saturday, May 16th**
Progressive Hive Inspections

• **Saturday, June 20th**
Extracting honey

• **July 18 or 25**
Fair set-up tentative dates

July 31 –August 9— Sussex County Farm & Horse Show

• **Saturday, August 22**
National Honey Bee Awareness Day

• **Sunday, Sep 20th**
Joint Meeting with SENY Beekeepers at Brodhecker's

• **Saturday, Oct. 17**
Winter prep and fondant making

• **Saturday, Nov. 21**
Holiday Party

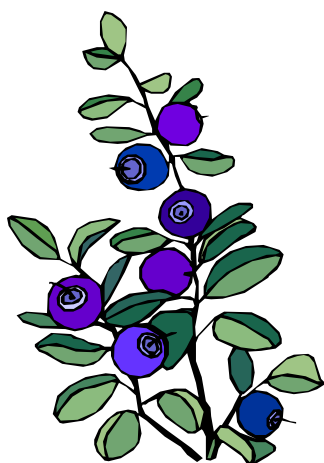
Blueberry Grower Funding CCD Research

The nation's largest grower of wild blueberries -- a crop that relies on honeybees for pollination -- has thrown its support behind Penn State research aimed at finding solutions to the health crisis facing the nation's honeybee colonies.

Ed Flanagan, president of Wyman's of Maine, visited the entomology department in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences Thursday (March 26) to present a check for \$50,000 to Robert Steele, dean of the college. The funds will support research on Colony Collapse Disorder, or CCD, a mysterious ailment that has led to the disappearance of up to one-third of U.S. commercial honeybee hives since late 2006.

Researchers say the loss of honeybees has put at risk about one-third of the typical American diet. About \$15 billion worth of fruits, vegetables and other crops -- from California almonds to Pennsylvania apples -- rely on honeybees for pollination.

Every berry that Wyman's of Maine grows owes its existence to the essential pollination that comes from the



honeybee's dance from flower to flower, noted Flanagan.

"There is no more direct or urgent sustainable food issue than CCD facing the wild blueberry crop," he said. "There is no effective alternative to honeybees. It's simple: no bees, no blueberries!"

Wyman's of Maine has taken a leadership role nationally among growers in the effort to help beekeepers solve CCD and eliminate the threat to our nation's crops.

The company testified before Congress in June 2008 in support of increased USDA funding. The company has also issued a call to action for consumers, noting a portion of their wild blueberry purchases will be used to fund that commitment.

Penn State has been at the forefront in the effort to identify the cause or

causes of CCD. Researchers are investigating viruses and other diseases, bee immune responses, pesticides, bee nutrition and other environmental factors.

Maryann Frazier, Penn State extension bee specialist, said the gift from Wyman's will provide critical support. "This funding will allow us to extend projects, collect and analyze more data and make the most of what we're doing," she said. "In particular, it will help us continue looking at how the complex interaction between pesticides and diseases is contributing to pollinator decline and possibly to CCD."

To learn more about Penn State honeybee and pollinator research, visit the entomology department online at <http://www.ento.psu.edu/HoneyBeeResearch.html>

National Honey Bee Awareness Day

A grass roots effort is underway to make August 22 National Honeybee Awareness Day.

The idea is that bee clubs across the country hold an event to educate, connect with the public and promote the bee industry.

This effort started in Pennsylvania and it is hoped that counties across PA and the country will all hold an event such as

tasting, or open house at an apiary to allow the public to get involved with bees.

This will be a topic of discussion at the April 18th meeting so please bring your ideas and suggestions to support National Honey Bee Awareness Day in Sussex County. If you can't make it to the meeting call or e-mail Bill with your ideas!



April/May 2009



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