



The PSBA BUZZ

October 2006

Volume 7, Issue 9

EVENTS at the Arboretum Center
Graham Visitor Center
2200 Arboretum Drive E.,
Seattle, WA 98112
(Meetings are the 4th Tuesday
of each month except July and
December.)

Oct. 24

MEETING 6:30–9 pm
Beginners Instruction
6:30–7:15 pm
Main Presentation:
(revised)
Making Mead
Richard Sirota will
speak on the fine art of
making the nectar of
the gods
7:30–9 pm

Nov. 14

MEETING 6:30–9 pm
Election of Officers,
Potluck Dinner, Tall
Tales, and Awards
(NOTE: This is the second
Tuesday of the month
instead of the fourth—bees
don't like to compete with
turkeys.)

Hive Calendar

Harvest, Medicate, and Bottle

Install mouse guards, tip hives slightly forward to ensure dry conditions. Formic Acid, Coumaphous, and Apistan must be removed before winter. Feed or combine any hives that are too light to survive until early next summer. Bottle and sell honey and beeswax. Evaluate this year's hive management results and plan for next year.

Year-to-year variation in temperature and rainfall, hills that block or funnel prevailing winds, northern or southern exposures, nearby lakes or rivers, and other geographic features near your apiary will speed or delay the blossoming time by as much as three and a half weeks. Use the hive calendar as a guide.

—Based on Roy Thurber's *Bee Chats, Tips and Gadgets*

Club Notes

Hello Folks,

As winter approaches and we are preparing for the coming year, this would be a good time to renew your membership with Puget Sound Beekeepers Association. Along with the renewal members receive a reduced price on the bee magazines.

We are also preparing for new members to fill officer and trustee positions. Being an officer or trustee is a low stress job that is a great way to meet other beekeepers and a chance to support the club. Members don't need to be knowledgeable with beekeeping as there have been many new beekeepers that have served. Filling a position is mostly about making decisions about meeting topics and assisting with the various tasks that our club is responsible. If you are interested in serving for the club we can accommodate you and please ask an officer or trustee.

Finally we are still working on the new shed and apiary improvements. We are canceling a work party for the end of October. The Shed committee is considering a planning meeting for Thursday, November the 16th and a work party for Saturday, November 18 at nine in the morning.

—Tim Comstock, PSBA president

December

We do not meet
in December.

*Reindeer and honeybees
don't play well together.*

Jan. 23, '07

MEETING 6:30-9 pm
Beginners Instruction
6:30-7:15 pm
Main Presentation:

PSBA OFFICERS

President

Tim Comstock
(206) 285-2942

president@psbees.org

Vice President

Nancy Beckett
206-937-5583

vp@psbees.org

Secretary

Cary Therriault
(425) 885-0159

secretary@psbees.org

Treasurer

Ambra Wadley
(253) 638-9112

treasurer@psbees.org

Newsletter Editor

Rob Stevens
(206) 526-5201

editor@psbees.org

Apiary Manager

Bruce Becker
(206) 527-0226

bsbecker@u.washington.edu

PSBA TRUSTEES

John Keenan
John de Groot
Mary McIsaac

Male Drop

by Jason Nelson, Voice of the Hive

It's Fall and fall means feed around here, feeding the colony all the sugar it will take. Like a processed sugar buffet I've refilled their plate as often as they empty it. This artificial feed has not dulled the bees sense of season. The earth still tilts and turns and so it is time for the hive to take the final steps to prepare for winter. It will slaughter the drones.

Strictly speaking the bees will not kill the drones. They let the cold kill them or drag them kicking and buzzing from the hive and drop them a distance away. A distance away from the hive the wasps wait. The remaining wasps are monstrous versions of their summer sisters. They are the future queens of wasp colonies to come. They will sleep through the winter and arise in the spring to hunt again. Before their winter slumber they gather like jackals to harvest from the hive.

If the hive were weak they would not hesitate at the entrance but this hive is strong, very strong. The landing board is ever crowded with workers and the reduced entrance means that there are no easy meals, just a wall of eyes watching and waiting to defend the hive. There is no reason to risk a full on attack. A hungry wasp princess need only wait patiently beyond the landing board for an unlucky drone to land near her. Large, round and stingless, the Drones represent the wasp's ideal meal - one that can't fight back.

Not all the drones are dropped off for the wasps. Some are simply denied entrance into the hive. Eventually they either chill to death or search out other hives. Perhaps another hive will take them in, perhaps not. The queen has decided the timing of this rite of winter. When she ceases laying drone eggs the colony takes its cue. Casting them aside is the last tightening of the belt before the cold winter forces them to gather and wait.

At the top of the feeder I spotted one drone left. Hugging the wall of the feeder he slurped syrup contentedly. How his sisters have missed him I do not know but when the cluster convenes tonight he will be dealt with. I feel sorry for him in a way, and considered taking him in to my daughters to play with. On second thought the wasps are probably gentler.

In the summer the drones fulfilled their purpose as an insurance policy against the loss of the queen. In the winter a queen could never mate, so the colony will stake its life on the current queen and guard her through the months ahead. The drones are no longer needed and therefore no longer tolerated. To paraphrase a famous man hater, "A colony needs its drones like a fish needs a bicycle." In the winter that is true, and so we say farewell to the boys of summer. We'll see them again in the spring, when the celestial grind brings around their time and purpose once more.

Apiary Report

Many thanks to all those who have given their time and efforts with the Apiary Project. The fences are all up; now we just need to finish the sign.

Thanks to Bruce Becker, Nancy Beckett and Jamie Northern for staffing the PSBA booth at Bug Day, Sunday September 17 at the Burke Museum. We sold \$453 of honey and introduced about 500 people to beekeeping.

Bruce Becker
Dawn Corl
Rob Stevens
Bob Clark
Richard Sirota
Mike Doren
Tim Todd
Linda Zielinski

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We're on the Web!
www.pugetsoundbees.org
www.psbees.org
www.beegeek.com

October Meeting

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2006

Beginners Instruction: 6:30-7:15 pm

Van Sherod's beginner lesson precedes the main presentation.

Main Presentation: 7:30-9 pm

Making Mead

Mead has been called nectar of the gods for centuries. Richard Sirota will talk about the fine details of brewing this delectable drink.

Bees In the News

Honey Remedy Could Save Lives

We've been hearing more and more about the benefits of honey in treating drug resistant staph infections. Now the mainstream media has caught onto it.

<http://www.wired.com/news/technology/medtech/0,71925-0.html?tw=rss.technology>

Pollinator Populations Declining

The National Academy of Science has issued a 396 page report on the decline pollinator populations. "Honeybees are crucial to agriculture, pollinating more than 90 commercially grown crops; for example, it takes about 1.4 million colonies of honeybees to pollinate 550,000 acres of almond trees in California. Studies show that U.S. honeybee populations have dropped since the 1980s, when a non-native parasitic mite was introduced, although the full extent of the decline is unclear because of problems with the way the federal government collects statistics on the beekeeping industry." I'm sure we will be hearing more about this in the near future. Read the announcement.

<http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=11761>

National Public Radio

Listen to NPR's story on bee decline. "Since bees help to pollinate many plants, that could cause problems for anybody in the following categories, see if this includes you, gardeners, farmers, anyone that likes to eat."

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6326020>

Foraging

8 cases of 16-oz glass jars with white lids, \$5.50, Call Maria Jewell (425) 746-7373

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