



The Honey Pot



December 2004

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

Contents

November Meeting Minutes
December Dinner Meeting !
News and In The News
Hiveworks
Honey Recipe
Member Spotlight

Upcoming Events:



MCBA Dinner Meeting
Wed., December 8, 2004
7:30 PM at Madison's in
Olney, MD

Regular Monthly Meetings

7:30 PM Brookside Nature
Center, 1400 Glenallan
Road, Wheaton, MD

January 12, 2005

February 9, 2005

March 9, 2005

April 13, 2005

Maryland State Beekeepers Association Meeting

February 19, 2005

Howard County Fairgrounds

2005 MCBA Beekeeping Short Course

Brookside Nature Center
Lectures – Tuesdays in March
(March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29) at

Field Session:

Saturday April 2 & 9

President's Notes

by David Bernard

As you may have noticed, the format for the Honey Pot is undergoing some changes as we shift editors. I want to express my sincere thanks to John Seets, our outgoing editor, who has done a yeoman's job publishing the newsletter each month with very little contributions from others. Without John's tireless work, The Honey Pot might have died out over the past several years, much like a neglected hive. Being editor is a wearying task and John has been exceptionally resilient and prompt with the publication of The Honey Pot. John has certainly livened up the newsletter with graphics, taking it from mere pages of type to a more attractive format. As we move in new directions, I say, "John, thank you for your dedicated service to MCBA!"



I have a number of ideas for meetings, workshops, and field sessions for the coming year. We'll have speakers covering the "normal" seasonal activities such as stimulative feedings, swarm prevention, honey collection, processing, and so on. I've heard from a number of you that you'd like to hear about comb honey or have demonstrations of the sugar roll and honey extraction techniques. If you have any other suggestions for meeting topics, please contact me by phone, email or letter at:

301-414-2317

amazing.bee@verizon.net

26626 Howard Chapel Drive, Damascus, MD 20872

We had a great time we had at our November meeting! See Betsy Klinger's recap inside.

December's "meeting" should be a real treat. At the encouragement of several members, we've arranged a dinner meeting on December 8th at 7:30 PM at Madison's restaurant in Olney, MD, about 7 miles straight up Georgia Ave. from Brookside Nature Center. See inside for further details.

Lastly, we are planning to make some changes to the way the newsletter is distributed. Again, more details inside.

Have a fantastic holiday season with your families and let's hope for a great honey crop in the New Year!

Notes from November 10 Monthly Meeting- Easter Eggs and Cosmetics! by Betsy Klinger

Our recent meetings have been entertaining and informative with short presentations, announcements, and sharing before the refreshments, followed by a longer presentation by a member or guest demonstrating some process or craft useful to a beekeeper.

Several members had something interesting to share during the first part of the meeting this month:

David Bernard announced the upcoming Maryland State Beekeeping Association meeting in Annapolis (to be held Saturday the 13th, three days after this one). He also mentioned plans for the new Website.

Chuck Graefre generously offered members some free used equipment: shallows and Ross rounds that he no longer wants.

Miles Zdinak brought an impressive array of Ukrainian Easter eggs, beautifully and intricately decorated by his cousin. Miles described the slow dyeing process in which a kistka is used to apply a fine stream of melted beeswax to parts of the design not to receive a given color. The egg is then lowered into the dye,



removed, and dried. The whole process is repeated for each color in the design, usually ending with black or with the darkest color to be used on that egg. Then the egg is held next to a candle flame and wiped with a soft cloth to remove the wax masking.

During the rest of the meeting, members enjoyed a hands-on lesson in producing cosmetics from beeswax. Guest Dave Simmons, an environmental engineer from Harford County, brought beeswax from his own hives, various other ingredients, recipes, hot plates, and containers and directed the action. We broke into 5 groups, each team mixing, cooking, and packaging a different lip balm or skin cream.



All of us went home with a variety of skin creams and lip balm sticks, recipes, and a good feel for how to set up for such a project on our own.

Dave Simmons pointed out that with about one pound of processed wax a beekeeper can make more than 300 lip balm sticks or 50 small jars of skin cream. Dave finds his products are popular with his customers and bring him a very nice profit.

Questions for those who attended:

(Answers appear before this month's recipe)

1. What is the purpose of Borax as an ingredient in a skin cream? What happens if Borax is omitted?
2. A pound of processed wax can be made from the cappings of about how many pounds of honey?
3. What is the main commercial use of beeswax?
4. Beeswax mixed with mineral oil (or baby oil) produces what common household product?

(Dave finds it has impressive customer appeal when described as "skin and cuticle softener.")

December Dinner Meeting by Evelyn Hogg

RSVP 301-414-2317 or amazing.bee@verizon.net

We've reserved the small banquet room at Madison's beginning at 7:30 this coming Wednesday, December 8th. Guests may choose from one of four entrees: sirloin steak, fillet of salmon, chicken parmesan, or fettuccine alfredo. The cost per person will be just under \$20 and will include a tossed salad, coffee or tea, and a chocolate sundae for dessert (as well as taxes and tip). Family members welcome!

Madison's is located at the corner of Georgia Ave. and Rte. 108 (Olney-Laytonsville Rd.), in Olney. From the intersection of Randolph and Georgia (in Wheaton), go north on Georgia for about 7 miles. Turn right (east) onto Rte. 108 and then make a u-turn at the first left opening, to travel west briefly. Make an immediate right into the parking lot behind Madison's.

At the desk, just say you're with the beekeepers.

NEWS

New Website

by David
Bernard



My sincere appreciation to Woody Medina, a beekeeper who took our short course this past year, who has taken the initiative to register a new Website and is donating his time and effort towards developing it into a useful communication tool for all of us. The site is currently under construction at www.montgomerycountybeekeepers.com.

Among other things, each month's newsletter will be posted on the Website. If you have any ideas about the Website, or want to check on its progress, please contact Woody at wmedina@pragmatiq.com.

New Honey Pot Distribution Plans

By David Bernard

A number of you have requested NOT to have The Honey Pot mailed to you, but would rather receive a pdf file by email or download it from a Website. If you are in this category, please contact me at amazing.bee@verizon.net and I'll switch you from "snail mail" distribution to email. If receiving the pdf file by email is not a good option, I can send an email each month letting you know when the current newsletter has been posted to our Website and reminding you to download it. Either way, we can save money, time, and effort by reducing the number of newsletter copies that we need to mail (currently running at about 180!).

For those of you who do not have email or internet access, rest assured that we will continue to mail the paper version to you.

New Beekeepers Needed

(The following is adapted from a segment by RACHAEL JACKSON entitled "Buzz in Maryland: Beekeepers Needed", which was broadcast on WTOP by Capital News Service on Monday, Nov. 8, 2004)



Farmers in Maryland rely on just 4 large-scale beekeepers to pollinate their crops of cucumbers, watermelons, strawberries, pumpkins, cantaloupes, and apples. While beekeepers are making sure their hives have plenty of food for the coming winter, Maryland State Apiary Inspector Jerry Fischer worries who will see hives through winters to come: the average age of these large-scale beekeepers is somewhere in the mid 60s.

"It's a young man's game, yet older people are in it," says Warren Seaver, a Dover, DE, beekeeper who keeps some bees in MD. Oliver Collins, who keeps about 1,500 hives on MD's Eastern Shore, agrees: "If you waited until you were 60 years old to start this it might kill you."

When these aging beekeepers decide to stop renting their bees out for pollination, farmers may have to resort to hiring migratory beekeepers who move their bees between Maine and Florida over the course of the year. Aside from greater expense, the importation of bees from other states creates greater opportunity for the spread of honeybee diseases and pests.

Although there are currently about 1,000 hobbyist beekeepers in Maryland, they do not manage sufficient numbers of hives to provide adequate pollination services, nor do most of them have the ability to move any number of hives in and out of orchards and fields on demand.

Although it's hard to attract young people to a business that is physically demanding and offers few frills, local beekeeping associations and promoters of county and state fairs continue to try. Each spring, many local beekeeping associations offer beginning beekeeping classes, and each summer and fall, honey shows, in which products of the hive are featured, pop up at fairs and festivals across the state.

Hiveworks by Evelyn Hogg



By now, your hive(s) should be settled in for winter. Hives should be tilted slightly forward and should have some small opening near the top for ventilation. All medications should be off and all extra boxes should have been removed, leaving only the brood chambers (which are steadily being emptied of pupa as the queen shuts down for a short rest) and sufficient stores for a couple of cold months.

What's sufficient? More than you ever think. A rule of thumb is that each hive should go in to winter with at least 60 lbs. of stores (about 15-20 medium-depth frames or at least 8 full deep frames) within easy reach.

WITHIN EASY REACH: As you know, the bees have formed a fairly tight cluster and will tend to move as a unit through much of the upcoming cold weather. The stores that are left to them must be very close to this cluster (either directly above or beside: below rarely works) or the bees will starve. You will have to check on the location of bees versus stores over the next couple of months and should be prepared to move frames of stores. As Spring nears, you should consider feeding again, as necessary.

Answers to Nov. 10th meeting questions:

1. Borax prevents the skin cream ingredients from separating in the jar.
2. A pound of processed wax can be made from the cappings of about 100 pounds of honey.
3. Beeswax is most often used in cosmetics and beauty aids - properties such as its sheen, its ability to carry color and perfumes, its property of blending easily and its hypoallergenic properties make it ideal for such uses.
4. Beeswax and mineral oil produce petroleum jelly.

December's Honey Recipe

Hot Spiced Wine

Contributed by MaryEllen Kirkpatrick

A wonderfully warm way to welcome the holidays, this recipe is adapted from Le Vin Chaud served at L'Auberge Chez François in Great Falls, Virginia.



- 1 orange
- 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup water
- 4 cloves
- 3 allspice
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 gallon of bodied red wine
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 fl.oz cognac
- pinch of nutmeg

Remove a few strips of rind from each of the fruits using a vegetable peeler. Slice the fruit and set aside. Combine the rind, water, sugar, cloves, and cinnamon in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and allow the syrup to simmer very slowly for 10 minutes. Add the syrup to the wine and allow it to steep over very low heat for 10 minutes. The wine must not be allowed to boil. Remove the wine from the heat and add the honey, cognac, and nutmeg. Allow to steep for another 5 minutes and then strain. Serve the wine poured over the sliced fruit.

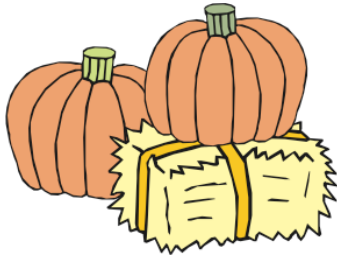
When making this for a party, strain the wine back into its bottles and then set the bottles in a pot of water kept at low heat.

To make just a glass at a time, prepare the syrup and keep it in the refrigerator. Add syrup to the wine to taste, finishing the glass off with a spoonful of honey and a splash of cognac.



Spotlight on our Members by David Bernard:

Not just this month, but for years, working in the background and quite frankly the reason that MCBA is allowed to hold our meetings at Brookside Nature Center, is the volunteer managing the observation hive. Several years ago, Len Grieg volunteered to care for the observation hive *and* the colonies out in the Brookside Nature Center apiary. But neither job gets much attention until the observation hive dies, or the field hives swarm or are too weak to split when the short course instructors intrude into the apiary. Then, of course, all of the attention is criticism and second-guessing. During his most recent inspection Len noted that one of the three field colonies had only a small cluster and needed to be combined with one of the other two. The stores on these other colonies were insufficient, so Len's been feeding them medicated (fumidil) sugar syrup. The observation hive continues to take sugar syrup and has filled a medium frame, although ants were attracted to the inside feeder jar and were a nuisance. As you can imagine, this year-round responsibility is challenging and underappreciated. **Len, thank you for your years of service!**



“The Gourd Guy: David Heisler, pumpkin grower in Comus, MD”

David Heisler, a Montgomery County beekeeper and pumpkin grower, was featured as an expert on pumpkins and gourds in The Washington Post's Sunday Source section. David is a very knowledgeable grower, beekeeper, and environmentalist, which I discovered during the lengthy hours we spent at the county fair this year. However, the article goes far beyond what I learned from him at the fair, detailing just exactly how knowledgeable he is about pumpkins!

(The following is adapted from an article that appeared in “The Expert Column” of “The Sunday Source” section of the The Washington Post on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2004)

David started growing pumpkins over 40 years ago at the age of 5 when he found pumpkinseed and sunflower seeds in his father's toolbox. He planted them, watched them grow and knew that someday he wanted to have his own pumpkin farm. He currently grows over 30 different varieties ranging from half a pound to over 100 pounds in a variety of colors including white, green, red and blue, although the orange are culturally the most popular.

David says:

- The best pumpkin for pie is the hearty Blue Hubbard pumpkin, which weighs about 20-30 pounds.
- The best pumpkin for chuckin' (firing out of a cannon!) is the Sweet Meat variety because they're dense and almost perfectly round like a cannon ball. The Sweet Meet seeds are also great for roasting with a nice nutty flavor.
- The Cinderella Pumpkin is properly called the Rouge Vif D'Estampes, which has a deep orange color.

David has some trouble with pests, such as deer eating his crop, so he uses an electric fence and then plants deer-attractive alternative crops such as sweet clover and buckwheat in neighboring fields to lure the deer away from the pumpkins.

Hmm, sounds like good bee forage too!

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

C/O David Bernard

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Damascus, MD 20872



Next meeting December 8, 2004 Dinner Meeting at Madison's Restaurant, Olney, MD