



# The Honey Pot



January 2005

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

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## Upcoming Events:

### **Regular Monthly Meetings**

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

### **January 12, 2005**

#### **Producing Comb Honey By Bill Troup**

February 9, 2005 (Bring a honey)  
March 9, 2005  
April 13, 2005  
May 11, 2005

### **Maryland State Beekeepers Association Meeting**

February 19, 2005  
Howard County Fairgrounds

### **2005 MCBA Beekeeping Short Course**

Brookside Nature Center

Lectures – Tuesday evenings in  
March (March 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>,  
and 29<sup>th</sup>)

Field Sessions - Saturdays midday  
(April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>)

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

If Montgomery County Schools are  
closed for evening activities then  
we will NOT hold our meeting.

## **President's Notes**

**by David Bernard**

Wow, what a beautiful New Year's Day we experienced with temperatures rising to almost 70°F and the bees hurriedly flying all over the place, looking for nectar and pollen, or taking much needed cleansing flights. I hope that you took advantage of the nice weather to crack open your hives and give a quick look-see at the conditions of their strength and food stores. I know that I did and was mildly surprised to find some hives just absolutely busting with bees and stores. To be fair though, I do have some late season splits I made for the county fair that are in need of food. I made 5 gallons of sugar water (2 parts sugar to 1 part water), grabbed some old oyster buckets, and ta-dah my job was done. Sounds easy, I know, but the reality is that I hate making feed. This past Fall, I looked into buying a drum of high fructose corn syrup but can't find a local source. Domino Sugar in Baltimore used to sell it, but no longer. Mann Lake will sell it and you can buy if from the big corporations in the midwest but what will the shipping cost? Maybe this year I can get all of the cost details and make a bulk purchase if there is enough interest from the club members.

In December, we held our first club dinner with 21 beekeepers attending. Everyone seemed to enjoy the evening and personally I had a great time.

A number of newer beekeepers have asked about comb honey so this month I have asked Bill Troup to talk about "Producing Comb Honey: Management and Equipment". Making comb honey requires strong hives, good honey flows, and excellent preparation on the part of the beekeeper. So, with several months to prepare, January seems like a good time.

January is also an excellent time to make plans for your beekeeping year. Nucs, packages and queens should be ordered in January to be certain that your bees arrive in April. If you wait until later to order, you might be disappointed when the bee supplier can't fill your order until after our main honey flow begins. Now is also a great time to purchase, build or repair the extra equipment you need this year. Don't wait until the honey flow hits to try to order that extra super! Spring is just around the corner!

## News by David Bernard

### **January Monthly Meeting 7:30 PM Brookside Nature Center**

7:30 - 7:50 Seasonal Management: Winter Inpections and Colony Conditions by David Bernard

8:00 – 9:30 Producing Comb Honey: Management and Equipment by Bill Troup, Master Beekeeper

After quickly reviewing topical management concerns regarding mid-winter hive inspections, we will hear about the management techniques important in comb honey production. There are many types of comb honey that can be produced including square section, round section, cut comb, and chunk honey. Each requires special equipment, however the hive management for these types of honey production is nearly the same. For years, Bill Troup produced large quantities of cut comb honey for a resort that supplied fresh comb honey for it's guest on every table. Along the way, Bill has become an expert on comb honey production and will share this information with you at our next monthly meeting. If you've never done it, come learn from one of the best in our state.

### **New Website**

Again, my sincere thanks to Woody Medina and Bill Miller, who have our new website up and running at:

[www.montgomerycountybeekeepers.com](http://www.montgomerycountybeekeepers.com).

Among other things, each month's newsletter will be posted on the Website. If you have any ideas about the Website, please contact Woody at [wmedina@pragmatiq.com](mailto:wmedina@pragmatiq.com).

### **State Fair**



Last month I received a check for \$439.50 earned by MCBA's staffing of the honey sales booth at the Maryland State Fair. Now we are searching for a used stainless steel extractor, to be purchased with our proceeds, to lend to members needing to extract honey. "Thank you" to all whom traveled all the way to Timonium and volunteered their time selling honey. Great Job!

### **Bulk Purchases??**

Packages, queens, equipment? Now is the time to order items for the spring and we may be able to take advantage of our purchasing power by buying in quantity and then distributing the items at our monthly meetings. If anyone is interested in helping organize such a program, contact me at the meeting or by email at [amazing.bee@verizon.net](mailto:amazing.bee@verizon.net).



### **MCBA Email List**

[beekeeper@yahoogroups.com](mailto:beekeeper@yahoogroups.com)

Marc Hoffman ([satu@glue.umd.edu](mailto:satu@glue.umd.edu)) has created an email list specifically for Montgomery County beekeepers to share experiences and information. Novices have a forum for asking questions and advanced beekeepers can ask questions, discuss, and give advice and information. If you'd like to join the list send an email to [beekeeper-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:beekeeper-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) Questions and answers are posted to the list as well as current events and meeting information. The more list members we get, the more useful the list becomes! Subscribe today!

### **Honey Pot by Email**

As mentioned last month, if you'd rather receive the Honey Pot as a pdf file by email or would like to just download it from a Website, please contact me at [amazing.bee@verizon.net](mailto:amazing.bee@verizon.net) and I'll switch you from "snail mail" distribution to email. We'll send an email each month letting you know when the current newsletter has been posted to our Website. This is one way that we can save money, time, and effort by reducing the number of newsletter copies that we need to mail (currently running at about 180!).



## Hiveworks

by Evelyn Hogg

### Check Stores and FEED!!!!

During these cold months, it's important to take advantage of every mild day to make sure that your bees still have plenty of stores that they can

reach. Even if the day is not as warm as those we had over New Year's, as long as there is some sun and there's little or no wind, if the temperature nears the upper 40s, go ahead and lift up a hive lid. You shouldn't need to disturb the cluster to check that there is some food within easy reach of it. Any empty frames that are above or beside the cluster should be replaced with full(er) ones.

If bees are staring back at you when you open lift the lid and the day is not particularly warm, you may be in trouble. Plan to provide additional food!

### Ventilation

Although it may sound wrong, it's critical to 'leave a window open': there should always be ventilation in a hive, even in winter. A small gap between the inner and outer cover (the width of a bottle cap, for example) can provide enough air to help remove excess moisture from the hive's interior.

### Hive Tilt

During the winter, occasionally check that the hives are still tilted forward to allow moisture that might accumulate on the bottom board to drain out the front of the hive. Excess moisture is a stress on the bees during winter.

### Remove medications

Check that all medications are removed from your hives. Never leave your miticide strips in the hives for more than the recommended period of 6 weeks. Leaving the strips in longer than recommended will increase the chances of developing miticide-resistant mites!

## Questions & Answers

(Editor's Note: Q and A grabbed from our email list at [beekeeper@yahoogroups.com](mailto:beekeeper@yahoogroups.com))

**Q:** My bees are bringing in what looks like pollen. Can this be true in the winter months?

**A:** Recently, several observant beekeepers noticed that their bees are bringing in pollen of various colors. While there aren't many, there are several plants still with blooms or that will force a handful of flowers in any short stretch of reasonable weather. Among these are: autumn olive (*Eleagnus* sp.), bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera* sp.), and rosemary hedge.

MaryEllen Kirkpatrick  
Barry Thompson

Be aware that bees sometimes collect sawdust, and other fine particles when pollen is not available and their hoarding instinct is triggered.

**Q:** I still see drones in some of my hives. Aren't they all supposed to get kicked out when cold weather starts?

**A:** While an inordinate number of drones may be a sign of trouble, the spotting of a handful of drones, even in the coldest months, is not cause for concern. Drones are refused entry to a hive if they're seen as an unsustainable drain on the hive's resources. If the hive is in reasonably good condition entering the winter months, the drones may not appear to be a threat to its survival.

Regarding the inordinate number of drones: either the hive entered the winter with a laying worker or a virgin queen, or there were insufficient numbers of workers to repel unwanted drones. The hive cannot survive with more drones than workers, since it will soon run out of food.

## Bee candy recipe

*Editor's note: At an earlier meeting, Bill Troup promised to provide a recipe for making bee candy/fondant that can be used to feed bees instead of 2:1 sugar water. Here is the recipe found at:*

[http://www.imkerei.com/goodies/bee\\_candy.htm](http://www.imkerei.com/goodies/bee_candy.htm) written by Bill Morong Email: [morharn@KYND.NET](mailto:morharn@KYND.NET)

We decided to attempt to make a fudge or fondant-like candy. We did not wish to use corn syrup as we have some question about all corn syrup processes being good for bees. We did not wish to include cream of tartar for similar reasons, using instead a small amount of vinegar (volatilized in process) to break down the sugar. We found small batches of the 1:5 water to sugar ratio too quick for the response of our thermometer, and backed off to 1:4, which doesn't change the end result, but slows the process. Our first pour, on a greased metal sheet, yielded a suitably friable cake but one too brittle for easy handling. Pouring onto wax paper resting on a towel gave a nice cake, but too thin. Cooling to 200°F prior to pouring increased cake thickness. In conclusion, to obtain satisfactory cakes we:

1. Use 1 part water to 4 parts granulated sugar.
2. Add 1/4 tsp. per vinegar per pound of sugar.
3. Bring to boil, stirring constantly until boiling commences.
4. Boil without stirring for 3 minutes, covered.
5. Insert thermometer, and boil uncovered until 234°F is reached.
6. Remove from heat, and allow to cool to 200F.
7. Whip with whisk until whiteness occurs.
8. Pour (QUICKLY!) onto waxed paper having a towel beneath.
9. Allow to cool undisturbed.
10. Remove waxed paper, and store each cake in a plastic bag.

The white cakes thus made can be handled as plates, but are fudgy. The waxed paper is readily removed before storage. If the towel is fluffy the wax paper depresses limiting the width of the cake. (*Editor's note— makes a pool not a sheet of candy*)

We did try to make the candy without stirring which yielded a transparent gel that was extremely sticky. We did try to recycle our earlier failures, but they were crumbly until we added vinegar again, after which they behaved as new sugar.

*Editor's Note: The "candy board" is then placed in the hive directly over the cluster on the frame top bars. Extra space, such as a shallow super or a simple rim such as an Imirie Shim, might be needed to elevate the hive covers with the candy in place. The bees will use water produced by the cluster that condenses inside the hive and mix it with the candy to make a sugar syrup. The benefit of fondant candy over sugar syrup is the elimination of any extra moisture in the hive. In northern climates where wintering bees is a fine art, such as Maine, some beekeepers avoid sugar syrup during the winter and use candy boards exclusively.*

### **The Marketplace: One For All and All For One Hivebox Giveaway**

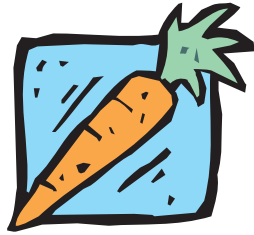
works like this. Susie and Hugo Robinson have enough deep and shallow hive body equipment (including bottom boards, inner covers, and outer covers) to make up 4 hives. The equipment is in reasonably good, though not great condition. Susie and Hugo will GIVE the equipment to the person who contacts them first, but that person MUST be willing to take everything. (The short version is that this equipment is being stored at a friend's place; the friend needs the space back!) This weird offer expires January 31, 2005. If interested, please leave a message at 301-942-4175.

## January's Honey Recipe

### **Brown Butter and Honey Glazed Carrots** Contributed by MaryEllen Kirkpatrick

Even if carrots are not your favorite vegetable, give these a try. This is a great dish to prepare ahead of time as well. The carrots are first cooked in white wine and then either chilled and held, or glazed and served immediately. The acidity of the wine compliments the sweetness of the honey nicely.

6-8 medium carrots  
1 medium yellow onion  
1 cup white wine  
1 T butter  
thyme  
salt  
pepper



Peel the carrots and slice them into coins about 1 inch thick. Mince the onion or cut into very small dice.

In a pot or a pan large enough to accommodate the carrots, heat the butter to melt and cook the onions to soften a bit, but not to color. Add the carrots and the wine, season with thyme (dry or fresh), salt, and pepper. Cover partially and cook until the carrots are tender but not mushy. Taste to correct seasoning with additional salt and pepper. Drain the cooking liquid off and place the carrots in a casserole or serving dish. The carrots can be chilled and held for later at this point if necessary. Just warm the carrots up gently before glazing them.

For the glaze:  
2 T butter  
1 T of honey

In a small sauté pan, melt the butter and allow it to bubble and brown slightly. Turn off the heat and immediately stir in the honey. Pour this over the warm carrots, stir to combine and serve immediately, or hold partially covered in a warm oven.

## Book Review by Betsy Klinger

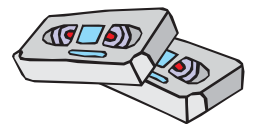


Clan Apis by  
Jay Hosler,  
Ph.D.

My son surprised me with a delightful Christmas present that I think other beekeepers are bound to enjoy both for themselves and for sharing with others. Clan Apis is a humorous, educational, and rather sweet graphic novel about a spunky honeybee named Nyuki (the Swahili word for honeybee). Graphic novels usually appeal to a certain set of readers but THIS one is different from any others. It's probably aimed at pre-teens and teens, but would be sure to enrapture the read-me-a-story set as well as adults.

Dr. Hosler teaches neurophysiology and neuroethology at Juanitia College. I find it surprising that a biologist could produce these award-winning works combining comics and science. The artwork is as slick and professionally drawn as any comics I've seen. There are lots of great close-ups of Nyuki and her friends - all very realistic depictions of honeybees from every angle and in every activity.

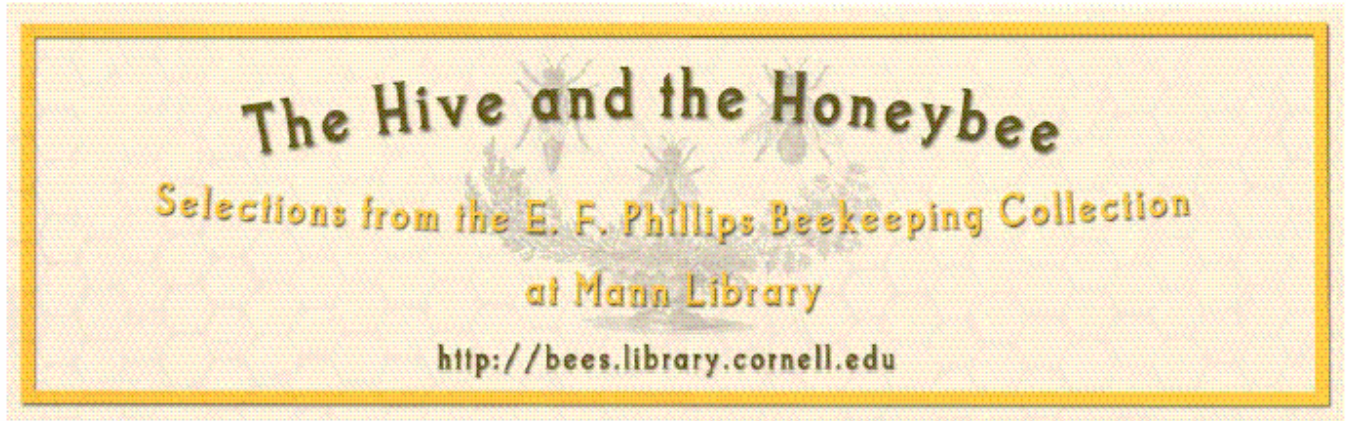
The story is beautiful too - I had tears in my eyes, at one point - for a honeybee! Geez! The story manages to be involving and even philosophical while including endless details about bees and the mechanisms of the hive. There is also additional information about honeybees at the end of the story and a 6-page illustrated addendum (with just as much humor as the main story) telling about the anaphylactic reaction to a sting the author experienced after writing Clan Apis and after years of research with honeybees.



### **Educational Video Tapes** by Susie Robinson

Several years ago, MCBA had a collection of instructional beekeeping video tapes. It's been a while since anyone asked or talked about them, but now they're back! Susie and Hugo Robinson will have the tapes at the January meeting where we can discuss how best to use them for the current members.

## Virtual Beekeeper's Library at Cornell!!!



Support from beekeepers across the U.S. is helping th Albert R. Mann Library at Cornell University to digitize historic beekeeping books. The Phillips Beekeeping Colletion at Mann is one of the largest and most complete apiculture libraries in the world. The Hive and the Honeybee is a free, full text digital archive of selected books from the Phillips collection chosen by a team of scholars for their historical importance and usefulness ot beekeepers today. This archive will grow as funding allows, and it is hoped that eventually it will contain every major pre-1925 beekeeping work in the English language. The collection is availabel at <http://www.bees.library.cornell.edu>.

Is this something that MCBA would be willing to support?

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