



The Honey Pot



December 2005

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

Contents Page

Hiveworks, For Sale column	2
Mentors Needed, Honey Recipe	3
Web site, e-mail, dues	4

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Please note: No meeting at Brookside Nature Center until January 2006.

December 14, 2005 7:00 PM
2nd Annual MCBA Dinner at Madison's Steak and Seafood in Olney
3333 Olney Sandy Spring Rd (at the intersection of Rt 108 and Georgia Ave.)

Upcoming MCBA Meetings
Second Wednesday of the Month
7:30 PM Brookside Nature Center
1400 Glenallan Road, Wheaton, MD
January 11, 2006
February 8, 2006
March 8, 2006

Short Course Location and Dates
Brookside Nature Center
1400 Glenallen Road, Wheaton, MD.
Tuesday, February 28, 2006, 7:00 PM
Tuesday, March 7, 2006, 7:00 PM
Tuesday, March 14, 2006, 7:00 PM
Tuesday, March 21, 2006, 7:00 PM
Tuesday, March 28, 2006, 7:00 PM
Saturday, April 1, 2006, 1:00 PM
Saturday, April 8, 2006, 1:00 PM

Submissions for Honey Pot due by the 25th of each month. Send to:
Amazing.bee@verizon.net
or by regular mail to
MCBA
26626 Howard Chapel Drive
Damascus, MD 20872

President's Notes

by David Bernard

Last month Master Beekeeper Nancy Troup, from Williamsport, MD, conducted a workshop on making rolled beeswax candles. It was a nice change of pace and I hope that everyone who wanted to got the chance to make his or her own set of candles.

The menu options for our annual dinner at Madison's Steak and Seafood restaurant in Olney, MD will be: grilled New York strip steak with baked potato, OR broiled Rainbow trout stuffed with Imperial crabmeat served with rice pilaf, OR ravioli stuffed with mozzarella, ricotta, and sweet basil served with a parmesan cream sauce, OR a half chicken roasted with fresh herbs and served with garlic mashed potatoes. A tossed salad accompanies each meal. All dinners end with coffee or tea and your choice of a chocolate sundae, apple pie, or sherbert. The cost will be \$17.99 per person, before tax and gratuity.

Madison's is the same place about 20 of us met last year when we had a very nice meal and spent time socializing with other beekeepers. I'm sure we'll have a good time again. So far, we've guaranteed 20 dinners, but have room for up to 35 people. If you haven't already let me know you're coming, please e-mail or call me ASAP. The more, the merrier!! [E-mail: amazing.bee@verizon.net; phone: (301) 414 -2317]

As I mentioned last month, the dates have been set for our spring short course. It will start on Tuesday February 28th and run for the next 4 Tuesdays, ending on March 28, 2006. As in previous years, we'll end the class with field sessions on the two Saturdays following the last classroom session. If you know of anyone interested in keeping bees, please encourage them to attend the short course this year. The textbook we'll use will be *The Beekeeper's Handbook, 3rd Edition* by Dianna Sammataro and Alphonse Avitabile. There will also be classroom materials that students will be expected to obtain at the first session. The fee for taking the course is \$40. To register, or for more information, contact me directly [E-mail: amazing.bee@verizon.net phone: (301) 414 -2317]. Please do not contact Brookside Nature Center regarding the short course.

I hope to see you at the dinner on Wednesday and at our meetings in the New Year!!

Hiveworks by Bill Miller

The Perfect Hive

This time of year the colony in a perfect hive will spend most of its time in a cluster. Imagine a ball of bees about the size of a basketball and you'll have the size about right. The bees will be spending most of their time keeping the cluster warm. Brood rearing will be almost nonexistent in December, but will start in earnest in January and February.

The perfect Maryland hive will have about 40-50 pounds of food stores in December; this will decrease as the winter goes on. Remember that natural food supplies will not be available for the bees to gather in quantity until the end of March.

Fortunately for Maryland beekeepers, days that the bees can fly are common during the winter.

Winter Inspection

For your winter inspections, pick a time when the bees are flying (at least 50 °F, sunshine, and light winds). Work quickly, and try not to break up the cluster. Start with outside (bee-free) frames, and work toward the center until you hit the cluster. Don't leave frames with bees on them outside the hive for any length of time. Your main objective is to see if the bees are running out of food stores. If the bees are pouring out of the hole in the inner cover, feed now. If you find three or fewer frames of food stores, feed now. If you find more than three but fewer than eight deep frames of food stores, mark the colony for future feeding. If you have any questions as to whether or not a colony needs feeding, feed it.

Up until the middle of February, feed 2/1 sugar syrup; switch over to 1/1 at the end of February.

Weak Colonies

The criterion I use here is if the cluster is smaller than a soccer ball, I combine the weak colony with another weak colony. The resulting larger colony will have a better chance of surviving



the winter, and the large colony can be split in the spring.

Dead Colonies

If you have a dead colony, look inside it for signs of American Foulbrood. If you find none, you can use the colony's food stores in other hives, and put the drawn comb into storage for later use. Of course, if you find signs of American Foulbrood (fortunately rare), all the equipment associated with the dead colony must be taken out of service and bagged to keep bees out. Marylanders can get foulbrood-infected equipment fumigated by the MD Dept. of Agriculture; if you are a Marylander with foulbrood-infected equipment, make sure you contact the Dept. of Agriculture and arrange fumigation.

Starting Colonies

Now is the time to reserve packages and/or nucs for the desired early April delivery time.

Equipment Maintenance

Do that on cold, rainy days when you can't work your bees.

For Sale : Motorized Dadant 6-12 Frame Radial Extractor - excellent condition.

No more hand reversing of frames!

3 years old. Paid \$900, asking \$700

Advertised reel capacity 6 9-1/8" deep frames or 12 6-1/4" or shallow frames, but 9 9-1/8" frames will also fit. Perfect for the backyard beekeeper. Radial extractors are the quickest, easiest, and most efficient way to extract honey from the comb.

Speed adjustable. 120 v. operation. Stainless steel tank 24" dia. 27-1/2" tall, with coned bottom and 1-1/2" cast honey gate. Stand not included. For picture, see:

http://www.dadant.com/catalog/popup_image.php?PID=364&osCsid=f06f1e1fbaf33dbc25106074f7e2eb71. If interested, contact John Seets at john.seets@ngc.com.

Mentors Needed for Short Course Students

by MaryEllen Kirkpatrick

The dates for our annual Beginning Beekeeping Short Course have been set! One of the most intimidating things for many first time beekeepers is the thought that after the class is over and the bees have arrived they are basically on their own. There is an art that goes along with all the science that really can only be learned by doing. "Doing" is so much less intimidating when you don't feel like you must sink or swim on your own. Even for a seasoned beekeeper, sometimes it can be difficult to tell if what you are seeing is "normal" or not. Please consider being a mentor to one of the new students this year.

Don't let the title "Mentor" put you off. A true mentor relationship is something that with trust and experience evolves naturally over time. I would like to encourage beekeepers with less experience to act as guides, or "bee buddies" for lack of a better term. To act in this capacity, you need only to be supportive and available to share your experience. Mentors could be available for moral support when beginners are installing their first packages, or could take a look at their woodenware and equipment just in case they have questions on how something works or how it is to be assembled. Even if you have only kept bees for a year, you could be an enormous help to someone who is just starting out. Think of this as being a little like a shift in Old MacDonald's barn: the first time you did it, you were probably nervous about being able to answer questions, but once you were there, you realized that you knew more than you thought you did. You will also know when you don't know the answers, but you will have the experiences that makes finding the answers a little bit easier. Please consider mentoring. Contact MaryEllen Kirkpatrick at (703) 404.9549 or electronically at maryellenkirkpatrick@cox.net to sign up as a mentor.

Honey Recipe for December

by MaryEllen Kirkpatrick

Italian Twist on a Grilled Cheese Sandwich:
Panino con fichi secchi, formaggio e miele
(Panino with dried figs, cheese and honey)

It was my good fortune to spend the first two weeks of November in Italy this year, up in Lombardy, the Veneto and Alto Adige regions. It goes without saying that the food was fabulous.

I had a sandwich one afternoon in a coffee bar on Lake Iseo that I would like to share. It was made with a holiday bread common in Lombardy that is like Panettone but with walnuts, figs and dates instead of candied orange rind and citron. The filling was a semi-soft mild white cheese from the region and dried figs, drizzled with honey and toasted as for an American grilled cheese sandwich. It was wonderful on a chilly fall afternoon, and it would be just as nice at breakfast or brunch.

I re-created the sandwich at home with a rustic raisin-nut bread that I found at my local Shopper's Food Warehouse, and some nice brie. Because the bread I chose did not have walnuts in it, I added them to the filling. Slice the bread in 1/2-inch slices and butter the sides that will come into contact with the pan.

Slice the brie and remove the rind if you would rather, and lay the cheese on the bread. Remove the stem end from the dried figs and slice them in half, opening them out to expose the seeds. Lay the fig halves on the cheese and drizzle with honey. Scatter a few chopped walnuts on the honey, top with another slice of bread buttered on the outside and toast as you would any other grilled cheese sandwich. All that is lacking is the lovely lake!



Website

Remember to visit our website, at: www.montgomerycountybeekeepers.com.
If you have any ideas about the Website, please contact Woody Medina at wmedina@pragmatiq.com.

MCBA EMAIL LIST

Are you on the MCBA email list? You are only if you get occasional messages with [Bee] in the subject line. If not, email Beemoderator@gmail.com to be put on it. The email list includes announcements of events and opportunities, discussions of the local beekeeping situation, and questions and answers about beekeeping from our local beekeepers.

Dues

Annual dues of \$15 payable to “MCBA” are collected in January of each calendar year. Current members should plan to pay their dues in **January 2006**.

Dues entitle members to monthly editions of the *Honey Pot* newsletter, monthly educational meetings, and inclusion in special events, such as field trips, live bee sessions, honey sales opportunities and more. Send payment to MCBA, 26626 Howard Chapel Drive, Damascus, MD 20872.

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association
www.montgomerycountybeekeepers.com
C/O David Bernard
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Damascus, MD 20872

**Next Meeting: December 14th
Annual MCBA Dinner
Madison's In Olney, MD
7:00 PM**

