



# The Honey Pot



January 2006

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

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## Upcoming Meetings and Events

**January 11, 2006 7:30 PM**

Brookside Nature Center  
1400 Glenallan Road, Wheaton, MD

## Upcoming MCBA Meetings

**Second Wednesday of the Month**

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

February 8, 2006

March 8, 2006

April 12, 2006

## MSBA Meeting

Saturday February 18, 2006 at the  
Howard County Fairgrounds

## 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 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. Send to:

[Amazing.bee@verizon.net](mailto:Amazing.bee@verizon.net)

or by regular mail to

MCBA

26626 Howard Chapel Drive  
Damascus, MD 20872

## **President's Notes**

by David Bernard

Happy New Year! Last month, instead of our regular meeting, about 30 of us gathered for dinner at Madison's Steak and Seafood restaurant in Olney, MD. Thanks to Jim Fraser for bringing door prizes! The first, a decorative tile, went to Daphne Feuntevilla for being the newest beekeeper (Daphne will receive her first package in the mail this April). The other prize, a beeswax ornament, went to Roland Steiner for having kept bees the longest (over 30 years, I think). Hope you can all join us next year.

I've begun to receive registrations for the short course and am looking forward to another successful set of indoor and outdoor sessions. We are looking for mentors for our new students, so if you are willing to help someone start keeping bees, contact Mary Ellen Kirkpatrick at [maryellenkirkpatrick@cox.net](mailto:maryellenkirkpatrick@cox.net).

On the last page of this newsletter you will find a form for paying your dues and updating your contact information. Thanks to all of you who have already paid your 2006 dues. I greatly appreciate your quick response.

This month's speaker will be our own inspector, Gregg Gochnour, speaking to us about making creamed honey. After his presentation, please take the opportunity to ask Gregg anything you need to about hive inspections, bee diseases, regulations, etc.

Finally, Len Greig, who has been single-handedly trying to maintain the observation hive at the nature center, is looking for some serious help (or a replacement). The nature center staff are quite anxious to have the hive up and running as quickly as possible. Len's told them that the earliest this could happen would be April, but it would be best to have someone in touch with Len long before then. I've done the job myself and know that it's really a handful but can be rewarding in the same way as a stint in Old McDonald's Barn at the fair. Just remember that even the most inexperienced beekeeper knows more about honey bees than the average visitor to the center. Please contact me or Len if you think you might be interested in taking on this job.

Happy Beekeeping.

## News by David Bernard

### **January Monthly Meeting Jan 11, 1005 7:30 PM Brookside Nature Center**

7:30 - 7:50 Seasonal Topics: Winter Inspections, and Colony Conditions by David Bernard

7:50 - 8:00 Refreshment Break

8:00 - 9:00 Creamed Honey Workshop by Gregg Gochnour, MD Bee Inspector

After quickly reviewing topical management concerns regarding mid-winter hive inspections, Gregg Gochnour, the Bee Inspector for Montgomery County, will present a simple method for preparing creamed honey. Gregg is one of the few people who routinely enters creamed honey into the county fair and employs a quick method when making creamed honey. This past year, at the club sales booth we featured creamed honey and sold about 140 jars. People were eager to see a product other than the traditional liquid honey and, when properly introduced, it sold quickly. If you have never made creamed honey or are unsure of what it is or how to make it, don't miss this meeting!

February 8, 2006 Demonstration: Soap Making Using Hive Products by Sarah Richards

February 18, 2006 Maryland State Beekeepers Association, Winter Meeting  
Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD  
Speakers to be announced



### **Website:**

Remember to visit our website, at:

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

If you have any ideas about the Website, please contact Woody Medina at [wmedina@pragmatiq.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## Bee Forage: Ailanthus, Tree-of-Heaven

By MaryEllen Kirkpatrick

A couple of years ago while vacationing at the Outer Banks in North Carolina, I purchased a jar of local cut comb honey at a roadside produce stand. The honey was a reddish amber color and smelled sweet and vaguely floral. The label read “Wildflowers.” I was shocked when I tasted this honey. It left an acrid aftertaste that I couldn’t get out of my mouth. It tasted poisoned and I wondered if the beekeeper had extracted honey from supers that he had treated with some sort of chemical. I have tasted honeys that I didn’t care for, but I had never before tasted something in honey that screamed TOXIC! I threw the jar in the trash and cursed the beekeeper who bottled it.

With the mild weather last week I had the opportunity to go out with Dane Hannum, from Arlington, Virginia, to take a look at his bees. Dane has been keeping bees for more than 15 years and manages 120 colonies in out-yards



of perhaps a dozen hives each. We visited three of these yards in the countryside along Route 66, which he calls “Ailanthus Alley.” Dane pointed out Ailanthus trees with their dead seed heads still attached to the ends of the branches, and the seedlings sprouting up from bare ground nearly everywhere we turned. This tree is ubiquitous- and a little honey made from its nectar is enough to ruin your harvest. I now understand that the honey I bought at that roadside stand in

North Carolina probably came from bees working Ailanthus along with the rest of the “Wildflowers.” I pitched my jar in the trash because I thought that it had been contaminated with something, but Dane assured me that was just the way Ailanthus honey tastes, and that awful flavor does not cook out- imparting a nasty chemical aftertaste to whatever you have cooked with it.

*Ailanthus altissima* or Tree-of-Heaven is also known as Stinking Sumac, although it is not related to our native sumacs. The species share a superficial resemblance in their large compound leaves, but while Staghorn sumac, or *Rhus typhina*, has fuzzy branches and leaf stems and toothed leaflets, Ailanthus has smooth branches with pale gray bark, chestnut- colored stems and

leaflets with only a few teeth near the base. When bruised, the leaves have a strong offensive odor. Ailanthus flowers in the spring with greenish-yellow clusters of flowers near the tips of the branches. Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. The female trees are prolific

seed producers, with papery seed clumps remaining on the branches often through the winter and into the following spring. The tree not only propagates by seed, but also asexually by suckers from roots or root fragments. Cutting alone is counterproductive to eliminating this tree, as cutting stimulates stump sprouting and root suckering. The best way to eradicate it is using an herbicide and being diligent in re-application in order to kill or seriously

damage the root structure. Left to grow, Ailanthus will quickly take over an area, forming a thicket. The tree also produces a toxin that prevents the establishment of other plant species, promoting a monoculture.

Ailanthus is considered an agricultural pest, a noxious and invasive species. Its native range is Central China. It was brought to the east coast of the United States in the 1780's and was available in nurseries by 1840. On the west coast, the plant was brought into California by Chinese immigrants in the mid 1800s, who used the seed heads as packing material, like excelsior or Styrofoam peanuts today. Ailanthus was popular at first because in addition to being enormously prolific, it

grows rapidly and is impossibly hardy. The seeds will sprout and take hold in cracks in pavement. Betty Smith's classic novel, "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" was based on the Ailanthus tree.

Dane remarked that the flowers seem to be very attractive to bees and "Eradicating this species would be a life long project." Given the bees' natural inclination to work one species at a time, you can only hope that something more attractive comes into bloom and diverts the foragers from working the Ailanthus. All you can do with the honey made from this plant is to feed it back to the bees.

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## Hiveworks

by Evelyn Hogg

### Hive Inspections

As mentioned last month, you should be using any mild day you're free to check on your hives. Remember to have a specific purpose in mind, to disturb the cluster as little as possible, and to have as your primary goal an assessment of the amount of food stores the colony has or needs. If the latter, either move honey frames closer to the cluster, or feed 2:1 sugar syrup. We use an inverted 1-gallon pail with a screened opening for my sugar syrup. We place this over the hole in the inner cover, just above the cluster, and then put an empty hive body over it and the outer cover on top of that.



## Weak Colonies

There is no saving a weak colony at this point. If at all possible, combine its numbers with those of a nearby hive and hope for the best. Salvage whatever stores you can and store empty equipment.

### Indoor Work

Winter is the perfect time to spend time preparing for the coming season. Order your packages, nucs, and/or queens, repair or build equipment, and, most importantly, brush up on your bee biology. Do you remember how to prevent swarming? How to re-queen? How to add honey supers? What will you be doing about Varroa mites this year? When



## Honey Recipe for January

### Honey-Mustard Sauce for Grilled Meats

by MaryEllen Kirkpatrick

This is a nice sauce for a simply seasoned grilled rack of lamb. It is best made as needed as it is quite perishable.

1 teaspoon butter  
1 small onion, minced finely  
2 cloves garlic, minced finely or 1 teaspoon prepared garlic paste  
black pepper  
salt (1/8 teaspoon)  
dry thyme (large pinch)  
1/2 half cup white wine  
1 Tablespoon stone ground mustard  
1/4 cup honey

1/4 cup Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon dry mustard powder\*  
1/2 teaspoon cornstarch (You could omit entirely but I like the sauce to have a little more body so it clings nicely to the meat)  
1 Tablespoon white wine, or white vinegar\*  
1 Tablespoon minced fresh parsley\*  
(1-3 teaspoons red currant or raspberry jelly, if desired)

Cook the minced onion and garlic or garlic paste in the butter over very low heat only to soften. Add the black pepper, salt and dried thyme. Add the wine and cook until most of the liquid has evaporated. Away from the heat add the stone ground mustard, honey and Dijon mustard, stirring to combine well.

Combine the cornstarch, dry mustard powder and vinegar, and add to the honey mustard mixture. Cook to thicken. If needed, add water to adjust thickness. Add the fresh parsley and the jelly if desired.

- Dry mustard powders vary greatly in flavor. Coleman's has quite a sharp bite, as do some of the mustard powders available in East Indian markets. If you prefer a mild mustard, omit the powder.
- White vinegar is slightly more acetic than white wine vinegar. White balsamic vinegar is nicely acetic and pleasantly flavorful.
- If you do not have fresh parsley, omit this ingredient. Dried parsley does not add the same flavor.
- Jelly will add a fruity component to the sauce. If you use a raspberry jam or preserve, strain out the seeds.

I make this sauce while the meat is grilling, put a spoonful on the plate and put the chops right on top.

**Dues:** Annual dues of \$15 payable to “MCBA” are collected in January of each calendar year. 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.

**2006 Montgomery County Beekeepers Association  
Dues and Contact Information Update**

Member Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First

Last

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/Town

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ or (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive your newsletter electronically? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 annual dues for 2006, payable to MCBA, should be mailed to:

MCBA

26626 Howard Chapel Drive

Damascus, MD 20872-1243

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

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

C/O David Bernard

26626 Howard Chapel Drive

Damascus, MD 20872

**Next Meeting:  
January 11, 2006  
Beekeeping Demo**

