



# EJ'S NEWS

EJ is East Jefferson Beekeepers Association's Mascot.

Volume 11

Gloria Neal, Editor

May 2022

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## THE PREZ SEZ

Greetings EJBees!

We have our next general meeting coming right up on May 14th...that is, *this* Saturday at the Chimacum Grange, 10 a.m.

We'll have a discussion of "what to do now" in the apiary, some talk about swarms, a presentation on a special swarm-catching tool, and a demonstration of how to clean your smoker. And there's always time for Q&A!

Some of you have just finished the in-person beekeeping course at the end of April, many of you will be receiving bees/queens this week or have already gotten yours delivered, or have successfully overwintered your hives....in any case, we hope to see you *ALL* at the general meeting for ongoing education and convivial interaction with your local beekeeping community.

Warm regards from all of us on the EJBees Board,

*Susi Thomas*

Meeting  
**Chimacum Grange**

9572 Rhody Drive  
In Chimacum

.....

**Saturday, May 14th**

Board Meeting 9:30 a.m.  
Club Meeting- 10:00 a.m.

.....

**"Honey bees are superb beekeepers; they know what they're doing."**

So said bee scientist and author Tom Seeley of Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., at the 4th annual UC Davis Bee Symposium 2018.

## 2022 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Gloria Neal

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello EJ Beekeepers:

Finding the queen in our colonies: how exciting when we finally get a glimpse of her for the first time!

That was the feeling of the participants of EJBees Apiary visits on Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, both at the Quilcene and the Port Townsend visits. The queens were found at both locations, plus a wealth of honey bee information was demonstrated and shared!

The apiary visits were so informative, and I would like to thank Mike Duncan, Mike and Beth Kelley and Rich and Susi Thomas for all the planning, preparations and their presentations that made these visits such a success.

I'm sorry if you were unable to attend. We are hoping to have one more hands-on event this spring, in about a month.

I think I can safely say we are all looking forward to some warmer days this month and watching our colonies grow and prosper!

If you're a beginner who is a member of EJBees, has taken our beginning beekeeping course and would like to have a mentor from the club during your first year, contact Mike Duncan, mentor program coordinator.

*That's the buzz for May.*

*Yours*

*respectfully,*

### BEEZWAX

By John Martin



## Saturday, May 14th, 2022 | Put on your calendar

**9:30 a.m. Board meeting**

**10:00 a.m. General meeting**

***Chimacum Grange: 9572 Rhody Dr. (Hwy 19), Chimacum, WA***

Greetings to members, prospective members, and guests!

The next meeting of 2022 takes place May 14<sup>th</sup> at the Chimacum Grange, 9572 Rhody Drive (Hwy 19), Chimacum, right across the highway from the Tri-Area Community Center and Chimacum Schools.

The board meeting will be at 9:30 a.m., and the general meeting from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Discussion and presentations at the general meeting will begin where we left off last month with helpful tips about receiving your bees, and then go on to “what to do next,” including inspections, watching for signs of an impending swarm, etc.

Plus, there’s always time for your questions! And don’t forget, you can find other helpful tips and articles, photos and videos on the **[ejbees.com](http://ejbees.com)** blog site—take some time to browse!

In the meantime, the Beginning Beekeeping Course finished up with the last two classes (9-10) presented on April 9 at the Grange, and the Hands-On Apiary visit at two different locations: Quilcene and Port Townsend (*you can see a few photos in the blog gallery on the meeting announcement page*).

We hope to see you all on May 14<sup>th</sup> for our regular monthly club meeting.

—*Susi*



## **EJ BEES Has Your Back! And Your Badge!**

**These gorgeous club badges are fresh off the press.**

**Made in the USA and designed to adorn casual or evening wear, say it loud and say it proud: “I’m a beekeeper!”**

**Available for purchase at the very modest price of \$5.00.**



## TIPS & TRICKS from Susi

May 2022: a monthly offering of useful hints for beekeepers

- Use colored thumbtacks for marking frames: one color to distinguish those holding mostly pollen, another color for mostly honey, and a third for those that need attention at your next inspection.
- If any frame shows bulges in the comb after springtime sugar-syrup feeding, use a serrated knife to sculpt the comb FLAT.
- During inspections, use an empty nuc to hold frames with the queen or queen cells while you check the rest of the frames in the hive box.
- Especially this month when you are inspecting hives, hold frames over the open hive box so that any dripping nectar falls back into the hive and not onto the ground where it might incite robbing by other bees or wasps.

If you would like to submit your own tip or trick, please send it to [richandsusi@ejbees.com](mailto:richandsusi@ejbees.com).

East Jefferson Beekeepers' Association

## Favorite Links, ETC.

### HEALTH BENEFITS OF PROPOLIS.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/propolis-an-ancient-healer#safety>

Rich

### TARANOV SWARM SPLIT

This is a Russian technique suitable for beginners and experts alike, with which you can easily split a hive without finding the queen and without losing a swarm! Not only an easy technique that we have used in our own apiary, but some incredible insight on bee behavior and swarming. It's about 55 minutes, but well worth your time— Adam Novitt, Massachusetts Beekeepers Assoc.

One of our Taranov splits before hiving  
Gloria



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETgWMMZr4So>

### A LITTLE LAUGH!

The wanna-be beekeeper decided to order himself some honey bees on-line, so he ordered twelve honey bees. When they arrived, he found they had sent him 13 honey bees.

He contacted the bee company and asked why they sent him 13 bees, when he had only ordered 12.

Their answer, "The 13<sup>th</sup> bee was a free bee!"



## SOS for SSS (*Spring-Summer Supersedure*)

Attempted supersedure in April, May and even June can be a real problem in our region because of prevailing temperatures. Drones need a temperature of about 65°F to establish good drone congregation areas in which the virgin queens can be successfully mated; however, these temperatures usually don't arrive in Port Townsend until mid-July. Other areas, such as Quilcene and Sequim, can be warmer.

If your bees are trying to supersede the overwintered queen and you are finding queen cells (built usually in the middle of frames), you can intervene by requeening with a purchased queen, or else combine the colony with one that is queenright. If you allow the colony to go for too long without a queen (usually defined as about a month), you run the risk of having a laying-worker colony. And *that* is a BIG problem

----- Rich

## VOLUNTEER SWARM RESPONDERS AND SWARM RECIPIENTS NEEDED

**SWARM RESPONDERS:** EJBees members with at least one year of beekeeping experience who have handled swarms successfully in the past are invited to volunteer as a EJBees swarm responder. Must have your own equipment. To apply, provide name, email, phone, and the location or area that you can serve. Send to Tony Weller: [tony4bees@ejbees.com](mailto:tony4bees@ejbees.com).

**SWARM RECIPIENTS:** EJBees members who want to receive a swarm must have the capacity to receive it in its raw state— that is, collected in a suitable box, and to house it appropriately upon receipt. The swarm responder is always first on the recipient list, and may pass swarms on to other recipients. To apply, provide name, email, phone, and your location. Send to Tony Weller: [tony4bees@ejbees.com](mailto:tony4bees@ejbees.com).

Please find detailed information on the blog site in the section, "Report a Swarm" at [ejbees.com/swarm/](http://ejbees.com/swarm/).

*NOTE: This is all volunteer work, and a service to the community. There is no fee for responding, no reimbursement for expenses, and no sales of collected swarms. Swarm responders use their own transportation and equipment*

### Note on a Swarm Queen

According to emeritus professor Dewey M Caron,\* "[a] queen needs to lose one-third to as much as one-half of her body weight if she is going to be successful in departing with a swarm." This process can take from 7-10 days. So if you are starting to see swarm cells, look at your queen to determine whether her abdomen is noticeably thinner. If this is true, you must intervene immediately by splitting the colony or producing an artificial swarm as detailed in the on-line beginning beekeeping course, Class 8.

-----Rich

\*Dewey M. Caron, "Swarm Basics (Part 1)" in *American Bee Journal* Vol. 164 (No. 4), April 2022, p. 387.

## THE GOLDEN RULES OF BEEKEEPING

*In beekeeping there are many ways of doing things, but the honey bees also have their own set of rules. These happen to be some of the rules my bees hold me to with consequences if I don't pay attention. How do I know? I've experienced most of these things first hand.*

- Be sure to wear appropriate shoes or boots. Pinching a bee under the strap or the tongue of your shoe can make the gentlest of bees testy. Also, zipping up your veil or making sure there are no openings in your bee clothes can prevent a bee from getting inside your suit and teaching you a few quick bee dance steps.
- Working your bees on a warm day, usually between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. is the best time to work your colonies. Mainly the nurse bees are home and they are so busy they won't be bothered.
- Wearing any type of leather gloves isn't always as safe as it seems. Some leather can be tanned with some harsh chemicals that can leave an odor that will cause your bees to attack your gloves. Test them carefully first before wearing them to work your bees.
- A beehive is a delicate environment, and it is easily disturbed. Checking it too often (multiple times a week) can cause it stress and lead to a struggling hive. Better to set a chair in your apiary and watch your colony from the outside. It is normally recommended to check in the hive once every two weeks to make sure your colony is healthy, has room, and no queen cells. However, in the spring, check your bees every 10 days, because a queen cell is capped on the 9<sup>th</sup> day. The best way to keep from disturbing the bees is to do just a quick check by "cracking the hive" (see A Quick Inspection in May, page 8).
- Use your smoker right from the start! The smoke will block chemical signals that might organize a defense against you. The bees will also gorge themselves on honey, thinking there is a fire and they may need to evacuate. This has a calming effect on the bees, so they are much easier to work. If you don't use your smoker, they may sting your suit and they will die. Also, your neighbors will appreciate your bees better if the colonies are not riled up.
- Be sure to feed your growing nucleus of bees. They need to build comb for brood and food stores in order to get them through to next spring. Drawing wax consumes a lot of energy and food, and your bees need a lot of nourishment to do it.
- Keep your frames in the brood nest area pushed tightly together. They should be touching and centered in each brood box. This gives the bees the perfect bee space, so they don't want to build burr comb to fill the extra gaps between frames.

Happy Beekeeping! *Gloria*

## IN THE GARDEN WITH CATHERINE

I've been staring at my outside thermometer willing the virtual mercury to rise. The temperature, according to the digital readout, has been stuck at 42.7 since 5:30 a.m. If I could channel my inner Carrie for good, I would bump that virtual mercury up to 60. Alas, my telekinetic skills are up there with my fiddle playing so I will work on my patience towards this cooler than usual spring.

Being patient will help me be a better beekeeper too. While I'm doing my hive checks (IF we can get close to 60 degrees), I will exude zen. I will say to the guard bees in the one cranky hive, *I'm so happy to see all of you*, even my darling guard bees that bounce off my veil. (How happy they are to see me!) And the guard bees that are trying to figure out the velcro and zipper to my veil. (Amazing intelligence!) I will enjoy their silly antics while I wait for a new queen with which to reprogram this hive. I am fairly certain that this hive's queen met up with a drone from one of Pat Stroble's Russian drones from Quilcene. (I checked my map – completely possible.)

One of the first skills of beekeeping impressed upon me was to stay relaxed while working the hives. A nervous beekeeper makes for nervous bees. It's getting easier. I find that deep breathing prior to walking through the apiary gate helps, as does making sure my smoker is going well. Instead of thinking *Try not to get stung*, I think, *If I get stung I'll be fine*. The bee that stung me—not so much. A sting always starts with the notion that I may have been stung and crescendoes slowly into the *Crikey that hurts!* phase. Straight to the smoker to dose down the sting alarm pheromone: (Z)- 11 -eicosenol and isopentyl acetate, along with 40 other compounds.\* While I am convincing the workers summoned by the sting alarm pheromone (Nothing to see here—show's over!) This pheromone is released from the Koschevnikov (Gesundheit!) gland and mixes with the air. What is extraordinary is that a minuscule amount of pheromone, smelling like banana and undetectable to my sense of smell, can quickly summon more guard bees. So when you are stung, get thee to a smoker! Smoke will, in theory, mask the alarm pheromone.

Smokers will do many amazing things, but in order to do amazing things, they must be maintained. Rich Thomas will demonstrate the cleaning of your smoker after our next meeting on May 14 at the Chimacum Grange. Prepare to be dazzled!

- ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture, [AI Root](#) et al. pp 530-531. Interesting note: the first edition was published in 1877 by AI Root alone, and various editions thereafter added several authros. The current 42<sup>nd</sup> edition was published in 2020.



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to reprogram th

<https://www.beeeculture.com/bee-venom-chemistry-ouch/>

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## A Quick Inspection in May

----Rich & Susi

In early May when the overwintered bee colonies are small—each occupying just two hive boxes—there is a simple, rapid way to check the colony, especially if time is short or hives are many.

The quick method is known as “cracking the hive” to determine whether it is congested and whether swarm prevention measures should be taken.

Instead of removing the inner cover and individual frames, just remove the outer cover, leaving the inner cover in place.

Separate the two hive boxes: pull the top box back 2 to 3 inches, and with a quick lifting motion, tip the upper box forward and upward at least 45° (more is better) and be confident that it will not slip off.

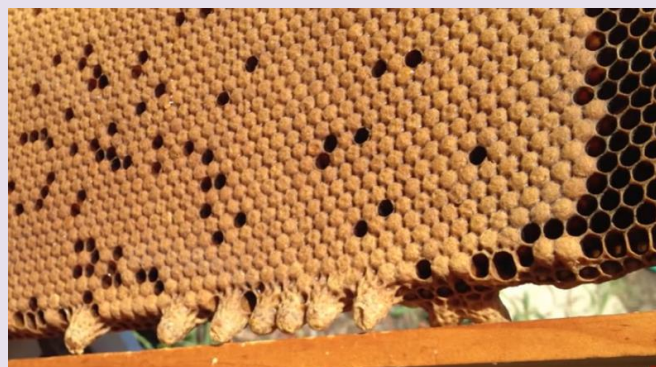


Examine the top bars of the lower hive box and the bottom bars of the frames in the upper box, rapidly scanning for queen cups or enlarged queen cells on bottom bars. If there are very few queen cups and only some of them are enlarged, the colony is not yet too congested.

Be quick! In this early spring season, you need to make your observations and assess what is taking place within 5 seconds.

To finish, lay the top box back onto the bottom box and smoke the 2- to 3-inch gap to get the bees off. Then slide the box forward to close the hive.

NOTE: this technique only works for wooden boxes. It can be used year-round to check for queen cups and elongated queen cells.



*Queen cells at bottom of frame; rounded capped drone cells just above and right; above those are all capped brood cells (photo Bruce White, New South Wales, Australia)*



## BEE BIOLOGY

### Bed Time in Bee Land

--Susi

Have you been wondering whether busy bees ever sleep?

Most hard-working foragers sleep at night from 5 to 8 hours after their hard day's work and occasionally nap briefly on a flower during daylight. They are the oldest bees in the colony except for the queen.

Younger adults working inside the perpetually dark hive take short naps at any time during their 24-hour day, and need less sleep overall than their older nestmates do. Sometimes several cluster with their feet clasping those of their companions, as if "holding hands" as they snooze at the quiet edges of frames.



How would you recognize a sleeper? It's the only time you may see a bee's antennae completely still, lowered, and at rest, while the head and body are also lowered and relaxed, unmoving. And the longer or more deeply the little insect sleeps, the harder it is to waken—can you relate?

Based on Charlotte Anderson, "Do Bees Sleep—Truth or Myth?" and Carolina Honeybees, 2022 and BuzzAboutBees—"Do Bees Sleep?" Feb 2021.

←Figure: Worker bee catches a few "ZZZZZs" (image: C. Anderson).

#### Beekeeping Resources

### TARBOO VALLEY WOODENWARE & HONEYBEES

**Frank Neal-**  
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**5% discount to EJB club members  
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