



EJ'S NEWS

EJ is East Jefferson Beekeepers Association's Mascot.

Volume 11

Gloria Neal, Editor

April 2022

INDEX

Editor's Notes.....Pg.2
EJB Meeting Apr 9.....Pg.3
Apiary Visit.....Pg.3
Honey Tasting.....Pg.4
Mini Book SalePg.4
Swarm Info.....Pg.4
April Bees.....Pg.5
Favorite Links.....Pg.5
Tips and Tricks.....Pg.6
EJB Badges.....Pg.7
Tame Your Comb.....Pg.7
Bee Biology.....Pg.8
Bee Resources.....Pg.12

East Jefferson Beekeepers'
Meeting
Chimacum Grange
9572 Rhody Drive
In Chimacum
.....

Saturday, April 9th

Board Meeting 9:30 a.m.
Club Meeting-10:00 a.m.
Classes 11:00 a.m.
.....

Saturday, April 23rd

Class Apiary Visit

1:00 p.m.

THE PREZ SEZ

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

I'd like to thank Mike Duncan for agreeing to be EJBA's liaison with the Washington State Beekeeper's Association (WSBA). WSBA (wasba.org) serves hobbyist and professional Beekeepers in Washington State. Its mission is to help local beekeeping organizations, assist the agricultural community, promote beekeeping and bee products. EJBA is a member of WSBA and pays dues of \$1.00 per year per member of our association.

Other Puget Sound beekeeping organizations provide a wealth of useful information on their websites. Of course, our web and blog sites are vastly superior thanks to our blog master Mike Kelley. Three of these sites include:

- ✓ Puget Sound Beekeeping Association (pugetsoundbees.org) is Seattle based and provides excellent commentary on beekeeping in urban areas. This site could be of interest for our members located in Port Townsend.
- ✓ North Olympic Peninsula Beekeeping Association (NOPBA) is our immediate neighbor to the west. Rich and Susi Thomas often participate in their events and meetings. We also work jointly with NOPBA (nopba.org) on activities of regional interest and invitations to national experts to present at our respective meetings.
- ✓ West Sound Beekeeping Association (WSBA is, located in Silverdale and covers most of Kitsap County. WSBA (westsoundbees.org) has worked closely with EJBA in the past.

As we move into the active season for beekeeping in Jefferson County, it is especially important for members to attend our monthly meetings. There is always good advice on current topics and challenges. Upcoming topics include helping our surviving colonies to make it to the blackberry bloom, and receiving and installing nucs and packages.

Sincerely,

Dave

Discussion at the general meeting will focus on receiving your queens, nucs and packages, and on spring management. Toward the end of the hour, join a brief workshop in which you can make your own simple and effective hanging wasp trap. Please bring a plastic juice container (see details on page 3: April 9 Meeting).

Bring a sample of your honey from last year. Before the beekeeping class begins, there will be an EJBees Honey Tasting. *Yummy!*

We hope to see you on April 9th!

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Mike Duncan

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello EJ Beekeepers:

Springtime is finally here and with it comes the task of evaluating how our colonies have come thru the winter, and what the best method would be to ensure its success.

Are any of your colonies weak and need to be combined? Do you have a laying queen or should you replace an old queen?? Should you divide your colonies, or add honey supers? Did you lose a colony? Are there some changes you need to make in your apiary? Should be keeping a journal on your colonies?

These are only a few of the many questions that come up in the spring. Many of these questions will be addressed at our club meetings this spring and summer. We have a great group of beekeepers in our club who are happy to answer bee questions. So be sure to attend our monthly meetings.

We have included some great links in this newsletter that you can visit that may answer a lot of your questions.

And check out the club blog at ejbees.com. You will find lots of information on it, including the online classes, which are free to members of East Jefferson Bees.

That's the buzz for April.

Yours respectfully,

Gloria 360-301-1850 eastjeffbees@gmail.com

or gloria@tarboovalleywoodenware.com

BEEZWAX



April 9, 2022 Meeting | Put on your calendar

9:30 a.m. Board meeting
10:00 a.m. General meeting
11:00 a.m. Beginning Beekeeping Course (Classes 9-10)

Greetings to members, prospective members, and guests! The next EJBees meeting takes place Saturday, **April 9th** 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 is at 9:30 a.m., and the general meeting is from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Anyone who has ordered bees for this spring should attend, because the discussion at the general meeting will focus on receiving your queens, nucs, and packages – with lots of tips and information. We'll also discuss spring management and feeding.

Join a brief workshop toward the end of the hour in which you can make your own simple and effective hanging wasp trap. Please bring a plastic juice container to use—half-gallon works well, but any size can be adapted. The best ones have flat sides so that they can also be used on the ground. The container *must* have a lid. This workshop also will be *repeated* right after the beekeeping class, so everyone can be accommodated.

Between the meeting and the class, there will be an EJBees Honey Tasting. *Yummy!*

The beekeeping class will start at ~11:00 a.m.

April Apiary Visit



For Beginning Beekeeping Course Participants: the final activity of your class series is a visit to an apiary on Saturday, April 23rd at 1:00 p.m. for some practical tips and hands-on experience. We'll try to offer two locations: Port Townsend, and possibly Quilcene. Details will be forthcoming.

If you have protective gear (veil and gloves, in particular), please bring it along, and dress appropriately: that is, no sandals or open shoes, no short pants or short sleeves. We'll have some extra gloves available.

Be sure to sign up at the April meeting or by email (richandsusi@ejbees.com) for the hands-on apiary visit, April 23 at 1:00 p.m.



The Taste of Honey

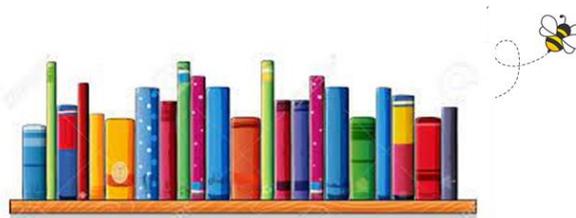
At the April 9th EJBees meeting, we'll have a small HONEY-TASTING between the meeting and final beekeeping classes. Members who still have some honey left from last-year's harvest, please bring a sample jar to share!



Mini Book Sale at April 9th EJBees Meeting

Several beekeeping books will be for sale during the April 9th meeting, generously donated by Jim Gurney and Nancee Braddock.

All receipts go to support the bee club.



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.

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.

Please find detailed information on the blog site in the section, "Report a Swarm" at ejbees.com/swarm/.



APRIL IN THE APIARY

Foragers are foraging, new bees are busy with orientation flights, drones will soon be mature enough to mate, and burgeoning hives may have swarming on the bee brain.

Swarming often occurs just prior to a heavy nectar flow. This is where keeping extra supers in your shed pays off. If your hives are over-crowded, provide extra room ASAP by adding two to three supers on top of your brood boxes. This will often times convince the bees that they have plenty of room to grow.

Once you've provided plenty of room for the bees, take a break and enjoy watching foragers bring in the nectar flow. You will know they're chock full when they take a dip before entering the hive.

Catherine

Favorite Links, ETC.

You've got to see this !!!

A fascinating, detailed view of life inside the hive. Dr. Paul Siefert takes the observation hive to a whole new level!

<https://youtu.be/pl8FcstexmA>

~Greg Butler

HOW TO KEEP SWARMS IN YOUR BOXES

Kamon Reynolds

<https://youtu.be/DoCohH9NfIk>

PLANT NOW!

Borage is a hardy herb with blue flowers. It self-seeds and blooms late spring through summer. It has been called a "bee magnet." The leaves, when harvested young, can be used in cooking. The flowers have a cucumber taste and are great in salads.



YouTube 2/25/21. First swarm of the season. Catching a swarm that is about 20 plus feet in the air.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KpnemGHKkl>

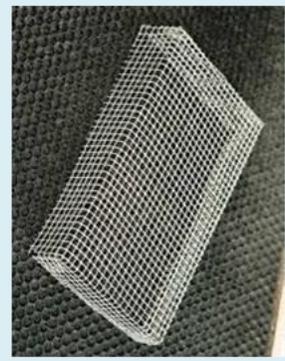
TIPS & TRICKS

--from Susi

April 2022: a monthly offering of useful hints for beekeepers



- *Use black foundation for better contrast when you are searching for eggs.*
- *Employ your cell phone during hive inspection to snap a photo of a frame, then enlarge to check for eggs & larvae—it's easier than a magnifying glass (Rex Robertson).*
- *Put a queen excluder under an in-hive feeder to keep the bees from building burr comb in the channel leading to the food supply (Gloria Neal).*
- *In a queen-mailing cage—or ANY queen cage—you must protect the royal feet; do not rub against the screen. (Why? See "Bee Biology: The Queen's Feet" in this issue, page 8).*



If you would like to submit your own tip or trick for possible future inclusion, please send it to richandsusi@cablespeed.com.

East Jefferson Beekeepers Association



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.

Tame your Wild and Wonky Comb



Sometimes it's your fault for spacing frames too far apart; sometimes the bees just overdo it for reasons of their own: they build cross-comb in the form of towers between frames or connecting outer frames to hive walls. Or they create honey storage areas that are too deep, or comb with wavy, billowing contours.



Cross-comb is not a problem for the bees—just for *YOU*, the beekeeper. Therefore, it is your job to correct such flights of fancy to make sure that the comb on every frame is of regular depth.

To sculpt comb that is out of line, especially during the initial comb-building time when new foundation is present, I use one of my essential beekeeping tools: *a serrated knife*. The blade should be very thin, and the teeth need not be large.

Continued on Page 7

Tame your Comb (Continued from Page 7)



My best ol' serrated knife (top left in the photo) is a permanent part of my beekeeping tool box. It was a thrift-shop acquisition, but you can also find new ones to buy—they're commonly used to cut bread or any produce with a hard outer layer and softer interior (cucumbers, tomatoes, limes) or delicate items that could be crushed by cutting with a straight-bladed knife.

You might find such excessive comb structures throughout the season, so have this knife handy to keep your comb under control. ----- *Rich*

Bee Biology



The Queen's Feet

The Queen Mum. She has no golden slippers, no dainty foot-ornaments to show her royal rank, nor even an occasional pedicure. Nonetheless, the honey bee queen has precious and fragile feet. The tiny claws on the final segment of each foot are vital to her ability to grip the rims of comb cells to position herself properly for laying one precious egg in each prepared chamber.

If a foot is damaged, you may see her limping over the wax comb with one lifted, useless leg. Without six functional feet, she cannot perform the most fundamental and vital task of her daily life: providing eggs to populate the hive.

Continued on Page 8

The Queen's Feet (Continued from Page 7)



Surrounded by her retinue, a queen (blue dot) positions herself to lay a single egg in a cell

Consequently, the beekeeper who is the ultimate caretaker of the queen, notwithstanding her bee-retinue within the hive, must at all costs protect her all-important claws and foot-pads from harm.



Queen on brood comb, gripping cell edge with her claws (small red circle, left); detail of queen's gripping claws (large red circle, right)

In particular, whenever the queen is caged for transport or for isolation, the handler must take care *never* to touch the screen where her feet may be clasping.

Even when she arrives in a small mailing container after a long, dry trip, the beekeeper should not smear water over the mesh to provide her a drink, as is often prescribed.



Queen and attendants in mailing cage



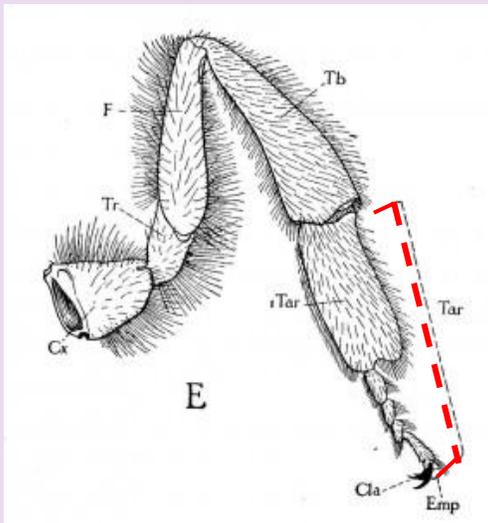
DO NOT rub the screen with your finger! Instead, just carefully shake a drop or two onto the screen surface.... don't risk crushing the royal tootsies. If that should happen, it would deny her the role as mother of all the bees in her colony and subject her instead to early supersedure and untimely demise.

The Mechanism. Like all insects, honey bees have three pairs of legs, with a foot (*tarsus*) at the end of each limb.

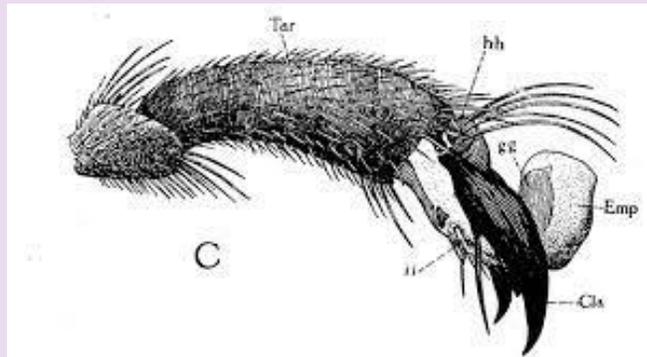
Each bee foot is made up of five tarsal segments, or "toes," set in a linear arrangement below the tibia, like this: >>>>> in contrast to the setting of our own five toes in a side-by-side array, like this: ↑↑↑↑↑.

The Queen's Feet (Continued from Page 8)

Shown to the left is one hind leg of a queen bee, with a dashed bracket marking the five segments of the foot: one large segment at the top followed by four small ones.



Left hind leg of a queen bee with the five tarsal segments marked by red bracket



The fifth segment holds a pair of claws and a foot pad (empodium) that protrudes beyond the claws and contains the pheromone that is released through tiny pores

Walking the Talk. Like all honey bees, the queen leaves her fragrant footprints wherever she walks. The scent of Her Majesty's pheromone trail is thought to *inhibit* the construction of queen cups in the hive, thereby suppressing queen-rearing and accordingly, swarming.

The chemical message left by workers as they step through their daily tasks has a different meaning altogether. It essentially *attracts* nestmates to enter the hive, or to visit certain flowers or water sources, or to gather at locations of group activity in the hive, such as where comb is being drawn.

Experiments during swarming season revealed that in a normally populated queenright hive, the queen's daily routine includes walking over every part of each frame she visits—of course, leaving her scent message like a dotted line on the comb all along the way.



However, conditions of overcrowding in a such a hive prevent the queen from visiting the *bottom comb edges* where swarm cups are typically constructed. Once the inhibitory message is no longer reinforced by queenly footsteps in those areas, workers start building the special cups for producing new queens (Lensky & Slabezki 1981).

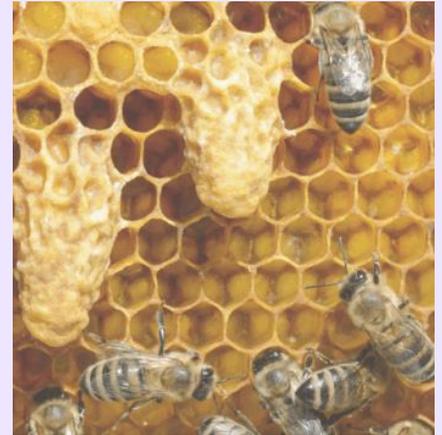
← Queen cups (enlarged spheres) at the bottom of frame

Continued on Page 10

The Queen's Feet (Continued from Page 9)

Most of these cups will never be used for that purpose, but they are created now and then all through the spring and summer "just in case."

If something *does* happen to the queen such that she can no longer fulfill her role, workers will move a fertilized egg into a cup and bathe it in royal jelly. With special diet and care, a new replacement queen will develop in the special cell, which is gradually elongated by workers to accommodate a large larva.



The reigning queen's age makes some difference to the strength of her queen-cup-inhibiting message. A 6-month-old queen's tarsal glands secrete much more pheromone to mark her trail than do those of a 2-year-old monarch. Hence, the suppression of queen cup construction may decrease as the queen gets older.



With a dozen different compounds secreted by the pheromone-producing glands in the queen's feet, there could be additional messages transmitted. For example, both observation and experiments have shown that colonies with freely moving queens have more comb-building activity overall than those with the queen confined or limited in their ability to roam the hive (Gilley 2001).

← Comb-building

In contrast to the queen's 12- and the worker's 11-compound pheromone from the feet, the drone's footprint contains just one single component, and the message it conveys to others has not yet been discovered.

But when the queen's feet speak, the whole colony listens!



References

- Gilley, D. C. (2001). The behavior of honey bees (*Apis mellifera ligustica*) during queen duels. *Ethology*, 107, 601–622.
- Lensky, Y. and Y. Slabezki 1981. The inhibiting effect of the queen bee (*Apis mellifera* L.) foot-print pheromone on the construction of swarming queen cups. *J. Insect Physiol.* 27: 313-323.

-----Susie

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