

OF MITES AND MEN

The RIBA Newsletter February/March 2017

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

1-2 Letter from the queen yard

3 Board & committee members /volunteers needed

4-5 Recipes from the hive

6 Feb meeting recaps

7 March meeting recaps

8-10 What's Happening?

LETTER FROM THE QUEEN YARD

RIBA's queen yard in Johnston is entering its third year and second full season of grafting. As of this writing, 5 of our 6 full colonies have made it through the winter. Our nucs did not fare as well, but we look forward to restocking them with splits from the full hives as part of our swarm management program. We already have ideas on which hive(s) we'd like to graft from based on their performance last year and how they overwintered, but we'll begin a more critical evaluation as the weather continues to improve. I will have further updates on our progress at upcoming meetings as well as on the RIBA Facebook page and website.

This season is going to be exciting due to RIBA's importation of hundreds of genetically superior queens as part of the ongoing RIDEM queen grant. Rather than viewing this as a source of competition for us, we see this as a tremendous asset in improving the overall genetics of honey bees in our area. Remember, our queens are open mated; when our virgins leave the hive they are mating with an average of 12-15 drones from a surrounding radius of 2 miles or more. The better the colonies in that 2 mile radius are, the better our chances of fixing desirable genetics in our mated queens. So as RI beekeepers introduce their "grant queens," those genetics will be passed on to the future drones of that colony, and eventually intermingle with all the drones available for mating in the area. Queens being brought in as part of the grant include Marla Spivak's Minnesota Hygienics and Sue Cobey's New World Carniolians, two highly touted lines. These queens are available at NO COST to any beekeeper who has registered their hives with RIDEM and keeps their bees in the state of RI. I urge all members to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity. As a small state, we are uniquely positioned to make rapid changes in the overall genetics of bees in our area, but it will only work if we all work together. The more we reduce our dependence on package bees imported from out of state the easier it will be to maintain the genetic superiority of our local population. Requeening your hives with these "grant queens" or other locally produced overwintered stock is a great first step.



We have another interesting project planned for the queen yard this year. We've ordered an Arnia hive scale and are applying to become a part of the Bee Informed Partnership's "Sentinel Apiary Program." Data from the scale will be transmitted to their website, which can be viewed by anyone in the world. This will plot changes in weight (honey flows, swarms, dearths) in real time. It's hoped that this information can be used as a sort of early warning system by other local beekeepers to aid their management decisions. We will also be submitting monthly samples of bees to their lab for nosema and varroa testing, which will also be charted online. Currently there are NO other sites in New England taking part of this program so I'm very proud that RIBA is taking the vanguard in this effort. For more information on this program please follow the links below:

Sentinel Apiary Program: <https://beeinformed.org/programs/sentinel-hive-scale-program/>

Online map: https://bipscaleportal.herokuapp.com/demo_hives

Scott Langlais

Queen Rearing Committee Chair



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VICE PRESIDENT
MALINDA COLETTA
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QUEEN REARING COMMITTEE
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STATE OF RI BEE INSPECTOR
JIM LAWSON
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DEB ECCLESTON

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!!!!

PRESENTERS NEEDED!

If you would enjoy speaking to and educating the public about bees, then the presentation committee needs **YOU!** please contact John Rodzen, chairperson of the Presentation Committee at

rodzen.john@gmail.com

GOT SPACE FOR EVERYONE ?

During the summer months, RIBA holds all general membership meetings outside at the homes/properties of generous RIBA members. If you have space and perhaps a beehive to take a peek at (not a requirement) and would like to host a meeting, please contact:

Liyng Peng, Chairperson of Programs committee

liyingpeng@hotmail.com

Malinda Coletta, RIBA Vice President

malindacoletta@yahoo.com

DID YOU SIGN UP TO HELP WITH THE QUEEN GRANT ?

A great opportunity for first timers to pair with an experienced one. Dr. Jane needs about 20 teams. RIBA is hoping to put 200-300 queens into RI during spring, summer and fall re-queening. If you are a beginner and would like to learn more about bees as well as become more comfortable working hives, this is an excellent opportunity. Or, if you have more experience and happen to have some time to spare, then **RIBA needs YOU!**

Please contact Dr. Jane Dennison if you are interested at

jamdmd@aol.com

Sign up to help distribute queens here:

<https://doodle.com/poll/s4bxw2m7ie9dkv4d>

RECIPES FROM THE HIVE

Honey Polenta Cake

1 cup butter, softened, plus extra for greasing

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

3 tablespoons honey, plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup more for glaze

2 teaspoons lemon juice

3 large eggs

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups fine polenta

2 cups almond flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon kosher salt

3 sprigs fresh rosemary (for glaze)

To serve:

Fresh rosemary

Greek yogurt or crème fraiche

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Use butter and sugar to grease an 8-inch round spring-form cake pan.

In a large bowl, beat the butter with sugar until light and fluffy. Add the honey, lemon juice and beat again until pale. Mix the eggs in one at a time.

Mix the polenta with the almond flour, baking powder and salt, then add a large tablespoon of this mixture to the butter and sugar mixture and beat well.

Continue to whisk in the dry ingredients blending until you have a thick batter. Spoon this into the prepared pan and smooth the top.

Bake for 30 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees and bake for 20 minutes longer, or until the cake is golden and risen and a metal skewer inserted in the center comes out clean.

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of honey with the rosemary in a small saucepan over low heat until the honey begins to thin.

Place the warm cake, still in its pan on a wire rack and, using a skewer, make holes in the top. Strain the warm honey and rosemary syrup over the cake so that it soaks into the cake. Let the cake and honey cool to room temperature. Garnish with rosemary sprigs and serve with Greek yogurt or crème fraiche.



RECIPES FROM THE HIVE



Black Salve (aka. Drawing Salve)

6 Tbs infused olive oil (calendula, plantain, violet, goldenseal)

2Tbs castor oil

2tsp beeswax

3tsp activated charcoal

3tsp clay (kaolin or bentonite)

essential oils (30 drops lavender, 15 drops tea tree)

combine oils (not essential) and beeswax in heatproof container (recycled metal can is perfect)

set the container in a saucepan with a few inches of water

Heat over medium low until beeswax has melted

remove from heat and add essential oils, charcoal and clay (you may add more clay if you like a thicker consistency)

Pour immediately in glass containers or tins. Store in a cool dark place. Apply to affected area as needed. Good for splinters, pimples/boils. FOR BEESTINGS-if possible add salve right after being stung and apply a bandaid as the salve will stain anything it touches. Re-apply with fresh blob of salve and bandaid when sting site begins to itch or burn again.

MEETING RE-CAP FEBRUARY 2017

2/19/17 General Meeting: Zachary Lamas

Large turnout for the newbies pre-meeting Q & A between 1-1:45. State bee inspector Jim Lawson gave out his cell phone number (540-521-9879) and admonished us not to be afraid to requeen when there is a problem. He followed up on his remarks from the last meeting concerning bait hives, bringing copies of "Bait Hives for Honey Bees" (Info Bulletin No. 187, Cornell Cooperative Extension Publication) by Seeley and Morse. Though it can be fun and productive to catch swarms, he also reminded us that it is better to spend time maintaining the colonies you already have, rather than driving all over the state trying to catch every swarm out there.

Our president, Keith Salisbury, made a plea to all members **NOT** to sell honey from dead-outs back to RIBA. He recommends feeding it back to other colonies in the spring or saving it for personal use.

Guest speaker Zachary Lamas (Sun Hill Apiary, Salisbury, NH) operates about 250 hives in NH, NY, and NC, and has worked with Mike Palmer in VT. He produces queens, nucs, and woodenware. His talk was primarily a personal account on his history and experiences up to now. He emphasized that organization is key, and reiterated Jim Lawson's advice to requeen when there is a problem; "If it's junk, it's going to produce junk." On a recent trip to Cuba he learned that miticides are banned there. Beekeepers apparently use drone comb removal with success, noting "if we do nothing, they die."

He is a proponent of early supering for swarm prevention in spring. He does not use IPM (integrated pest management), relying on Apivar (he also makes frequent splits, naturally reducing mite counts). His fall checklist is as follows: unite weak colonies, apply mite treatments, feed, proper hive orientation, wrap and insulate (in the North), attach mouse guards.

He has a unique method for populating nucs. He puts the appropriate frames of brood, honey, etc in 5-frame nuc boxes and places these over an empty box, separated by a queen excluder. He then shakes a colony of bees at the entrance. The young bees all march in and will cover the brood in the nuc boxes, which can then be removed. The queen and drones are excluded, and the foragers will stay with the original box. This way he populates the nucs with only young bees.



MEETING RE-CAP MARCH 2017



3/5/17 General Meeting: Tom Seeley

Heavy attendance again for the newbies Q & A from 1 to 1:45. A quick business meeting followed. Dr Jane Dennison has several sign-up sheets related to the USDA Queen Grant: 1) Is your 2016 Grant queen alive or dead? 2) Sign up for free 2017 queens, and 3) Sign up for volunteers to help with the project. She will also have these at the next meeting. Program director John Rozden put out a call for more volunteers to assist with presentations, noting he already has 14 events scheduled for 2017.

At 2:30 our featured speaker, Dr Tom Seeley of Cornell University, took the stage for a program titled "The Bee Colony as a Honey Factory." He drew parallels with human manufacturing. Bees take in raw

material (nectar) and produce a finished product (honey). They employ a division of labor to ensure efficient honey production. This general division of labor is as follows: **1-10 day old bees: nurse bees, 10-19 day old bees: food storers, 16-28 day old bees: foragers**

In order to capitalize on a honey flow, the colony must do two things: 1) mobilize more foragers, and 2) activate more food storers to process the returning nectar. Four signals are used by the bees to balance out these two requirements. The two signals used to mobilize more foragers are the **waggle dance** and the **shaking signal**. Returning foragers perform waggle dances to communicate the distance and direction to a food source, encouraging other bees to investigate. The waggle dance is highly effective at attracting new foragers to floral sources per Seeley's experiments on Appledore Island, ME. The shaking signal is used to rouse sleeping foragers. Bees will sleep at night and on days of poor weather (true physiological sleep).

In order to activate more food storage workers, a third signal, the **tremble dance**, is performed only by successful nectar foragers. This form of communication has only been decoded within the last 30 years or so, although it was observed at least as far back as the 1920s. Bees have a control system to keep the twin goals of nectar foraging and nectar processing in balance, based on the length of time a forager searches for a food storer. If she searches for a short time, she is likely to perform a waggle dance. If she searches for a long time, she is likely to perform a tremble dance. The bees can also employ a fourth signal to inhibit foragers from waggle dancing, called the **beep signal**. House bees essentially headbutt a waggle dancer and make a high-pitched beeping noise when they want her to stop dancing. This is part of the system that balances the overall needs of the colony regarding foraging and nectar processing.

Dr Seeley's talk was very well received, particularly the videos demonstrating the various signals. He took many questions from the crowd throughout the afternoon and afterwards.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

E-BOARD MEETINGS

MONDAY, MAY 1ST
6:30 - 8:30PM
WARWICK LIBRARY
600 SANDY LANE
WARWICK, RI 02889

BOARD MEETINGS OPEN TO ALL
MEMBERS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

SPRING BANQUET
SUNDAY, APRIL 2ND 1-4
WITH FEATURED SPEAKER
KENT WILLIAMS, MASTER
BEEKEEPER
QUIDNESSETT COUNTRY CLUB
950 NORTH QUIDNESSETT ROAD
NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI 02852

MAY 7

1-1:45 PM NEW BEE
2-4 PM GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP
GUY LEFEBVRE COMMUNITY
CENTER
1277 MAIN ST
COVENTRY, RI 02816

CONGRATULATIONS TO FRANK WOODS!

Our sincerest congratulations to RIBA member, Frank
Woods, for winning a honey tasting contest!

Follow this link for more info:

<http://chbr.org/HoneyContest.aspx>

REGISTER YOUR HIVE!

Please follow this link to find the form and register
your beehive with the state of Rhode Island.

RI DEM Apiary Registration Form

*People interested in a free queen from the Queen Grand
MUST have a registered hive in order to be eligible!!*

USDA HONEY REPORT

The link to the monthly USDA Honey
Report written by James Prasky can be found
here:

[http://marketnews.usda.gov/mnp/fv-
home](http://marketnews.usda.gov/mnp/fv-home)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

TUNE IN!

Malinda Coletta, our very own V.P., and her husband, Phil Griffin, will be featured on *Naturally, Danny Seo* on NBC 10 this Saturday, April 1st at 11:30 A.M., talking about honey and working with her beehives!

Follow the link for channels and more info

[Naturally-Danny Seo](#)

The Valley Breeze also wrote an article about the filming

[Valley Breeze](#)



MORE ISSUES!

Dr. Tom Seeley loved *Bee Cult* so much (as seen in this “candid” and “not staged” photo with Chief Editor Scott Langlais) that the authors decided to do a small second printing. *Bee Cult*, a booklet produced by RIBA members Cynthia Holt, Emily Langlais and Scott Langlais containing informational articles on practical beekeeping and will be coming again soon to a RIBA general meeting near you.

