

Hives of the Rich and Famous

(The RIBA Newsletter)

May 2018



Dandelion, the traditional herald of the first honey flow

I love seeing bees forage on dandelions. The blooms are so radiantly yellow they appear to be comprised of pure distilled sunshine. I also have a tendency to root for the underdog, so the much maligned scourge of suburban lawns holds a soft spot in my heart as a misunderstood asset to pollinator health. Traditionally thought of as the first honey flow in our area, dandelions provide abundant nectar as well as bright orange pollen needed for spring brood rearing. Bees often get a bad rap from the uninformed as well, so it seems a fitting relationship.

This is my debut issue as editor since former editor Cindy Holt has taken over the reins at the RIBA Apiary in Johnston (formerly known as “The Queen Yard”). I think we can all agree she has done a fantastic job in jump starting this project after the newsletter laid dormant for several years and I can only hope to maintain the same level of high quality she brought to the position. If you have ideas, comments, or something to contribute, please contact me at sdlanglais@gmail.com.

-Scott Langlais

The RIBA Library Collection

Over the past three years RIBA has made a concentrated effort to ensure that our members have access to the most current literature in the field of beekeeping. To this end, we have made yearly donations of newly purchased books to the Ocean State Library system, as well as older books of historical interest donated directly by our members. This collection is physically housed at the Greenville branch, but it is accessible to anyone with a valid RI library card. This has been my pet project over the last few years and it is gratifying to see how the collection has grown from a meager handful of tattered and outdated books housed in a Rubbermaid container to an assortment of over 75 titles by the finest names in the field. These books cover a wide range of bee-related subjects including anatomy, disease, alternate hive styles, mead making, honey, bee venom therapy, and many more. There is truly something for everyone here, from the first year newbie to veteran keeper of 20 years (even including a couple in Spanish).

The current list of available titles (note there are multiple copies of some titles):

- A Country Year: Living the Questions (Hubbell)
- ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture (Morse/Flottum, eds)
- Advanced Top Bar Beekeeping (Hemenway)
- Anatomy and Dissection of the Honeybee (Dade)
- Art & Adventure of Beekeeping (Ormond/Aebi)
- Asheville Bee Charmer Cookbook, The (Schloss, 2017)
- Asian Apiculture (Connor, ed)
- Bees, The: A Novel (Paull)
- Bee Cult Vol 1, Issue 1 (Langlais/Holt, 2017)
- Bee Equipment Essentials (Simon)
- Beekeeper's Bible, The (Jones/Lynch)
- Beekeeper's Handbook, The (Sammataro/Avitabile)
- Beekeeper's Problem Solver, The (Tew, 2015)
- Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey (Brother Adam, 1987)
- Beekeeping for All (Warre)
- Beeswax: Production, Harvesting, Processing and Products (Coggshall)
- Beekeeper's Problem Solver, The (Tew, 2015)
- Bible of Bee Venom Therapy, The (Beck, 1997)
- Biology of the Honey Bee (Winston)
- Breeding Super Bees (Taber)
- Breeding the Honeybee (Brother Adam, 1987)
- City of the Bees

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RIBA Officers

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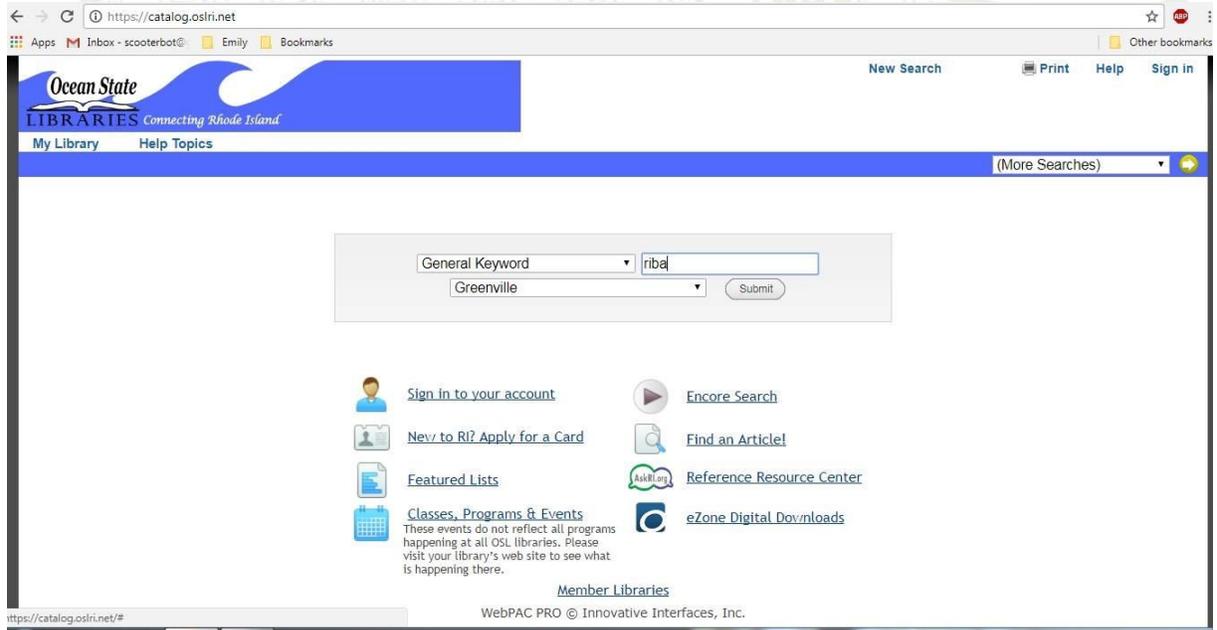
EAS Director: Jane Dennison

Newsletter Editor: Scott Langlais

- Classroom, The: Beekeeping Questions and Answers (Hayes)
- Complete Guide to Making Mead, The (Piatz, 2014)
- Dance Language and Orientation of Bees (Von Frisch)
- Dancing Bees, The: An Account of the Life and Senses of the Honey Bee (Von Frisch)
- Diagnosis and Treatment of Common Bee Disease (Sallmann/Snyder) *Spanish/English language
- First Lessons in Beekeeping (Delaplane)
- Flower and the Bee; Plant Life and Pollination, The (Harvey, 1918)
- Garden Plants for Honey Bees (Lindtner)
- History of American Beekeeping (Pellett, 2013)
- Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping (Caron/Connor)
- Honey Bee Colony Health (Sammataro)
- Honey Bee Pests, Predators, and Diseases (Morse/Flottum, eds)
- Honey Bee Removal: A Step by Step Guide (Bee)
- Honey Plants of North America (Lovell)
- Honeybee Democracy (Seeley)
- Honeybee Ecology (Seeley)
- Honey Maker: How the Honey Bee Worker Does What She Does (Mattingly)
- How to Keep Bees and Sell Honey (Kelley, 1993)
- Hunting Wild Bees: How to Track Bees, Harvest Honey and Beeswax, and Domesticate Swarms (Donovan)
- Life of the Bee, The (Maeterlinck)
- Mating Biology of Honey Bees (Koeniger et al)
- Mites of the Honey Bee (Webster/Delaplane, eds)
- Natural Beekeeping with the Warre Hive (Heaf)
- New Comb Honey Book, The (Taylor)
- Observation Hive Handbook, The (Litton)
- Pollinator Friendly Gardening (Hayes, 2015)
- Pollinator Protection: A Bee and Pesticide Handbook (Mayer)
- Practical Beekeeping (Tompkins/Griffith, 1988)
- Practical Microscopy for Beekeepers (Maurer)
- Primeras Lecciones en Apicultura (Delaplane) *Spanish language
- Queen Bee: Biology, Rearing, and Breeding (Woodward)
- Queen Rearing Essentials (Connor)
- Quest of the Perfect Hive, The (Kritsky)
- Reader's Digest Illustrated Guide to Gardening (Calkins, ed)
- Rearing Queen Honey Bees (Morse)
- Robbing the Bees (Bishop, 2005)
- Scientific Queen Rearing (Doolittle)
- Simple Smart Beekeeping (Traynor, 2015)
- Starting Right With Bees: A Beginner's Handbook (Bee Culture, eds)
- Steve Taber on Beekeeping Vol 2 (Taber)
- Successful Queen Rearing Short Course (Spivak/Reuter) manual and DVD
- Swarm Essentials (Repasky)
- Swarm Prevention: A Procedure for Absolute Control of Swarming (Werner)
- Swarm Traps and Bait Hives: The Easy Way to Get Bees for Free (Taylor)
- Thinking Beekeeper, The: A Guide to Natural Beekeeping in Top Bar Hives (Hemenway)
- Top Bar Beekeeping: Wisdom and Pleasure Combined (Mangum)
- Two Million Blossoms: Discovering the Medicinal Benefits of Honey (Trayner)
- Understanding Bee Anatomy: A Full Colour Guide (Stell)

- What Do You Know? Everything You've Ever Wanted To Know About Honey Bees... (Collinson)
- Wisdom of the Hive, The (Seeley)
- World of Bees, The (Nixon)

The beauty of this system is that the entire collection is searchable online and the books you want can be picked up from whatever branch is most convenient for you. Simply navigate to <https://catalog.oslri.net/> to begin your search. Enter keyword "RIBA" and narrow the focus to Greenville.



Find the book you want and click the request button. You must have a valid library card, and you will be prompted to enter your account number and PIN. Choose which branch you want your book delivered to. You will receive an email notification when it is ready to be picked up.



Book



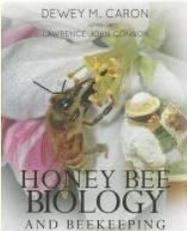
Natural beekeeping with the warré hive : a manual
Heaf, David, collector.
Mytholmroyd, West Yorkshire : Northern Bee Books, [2013]

Request

Copies	Location	Call No.	Status
	Greenville Adult Non-Fiction	RIBA 638.1 HEA	AVAILABLE



Book



Honey bee biology and beekeeping
Caron, Dewey M. (Dewey Maurice)
Kalamazoo, MI : Wicas Press, 2013.

Request

Copies	Location	Call No.	Status
	Greenville Adult Non-Fiction	RIBA 638.1 CAR	AVAILABLE
	Greenville Adult Non-Fiction	RIBA 638.1 CAR	AVAILABLE

Meeting Recap—May 6, 2018

The May general membership meeting was held Sunday, May 6, at the Guy Lefebvre Community Center in Coventry, RI. It was our last indoor meeting of the summer—next month's meeting will be outdoors at Snake Den State Park, on Brown Ave in Johnston, RI.

From 1 to 2pm, the new beekeeper's session featured Sarah Michaud with a very detailed presentation on varroa mite biology, testing methods, and comparisons of various treatment options. Sarah emphasized the need to not only test and apply treatments when necessary, but retest after treatment to make sure it was effective and applied properly. Her talk was too thorough to adequately recap it in the brief format of a newsletter, but some selected slides from her Power Point presentation follow.

Varroa mite testing methods

- **3 standardized methods**
 - Powdered sugar shake
 - Alcohol Wash
 - Ether roll
- **Treatment threshold 2-3%**
- **Many unreliable techniques**
 - Visual inspection for phoretic mites
 - Uncapping drone brood
 - Sticky board observation



Integrative Pest Management

- Various control methods
 - Hygienic behavior
 - Cultural methods
 - Synthetic chemicals
 - Natural chemicals
- **Treatment free does not mean intervention free**
 - More intense management is needed!



Ineffective Treatments

- Checkmite+ (coumaphos)
- Powdered sugar dusting
- Rhubarb leaves
- Homemade blend of essential oils
- Diatomaceous Earth

Mite Treatment Chart

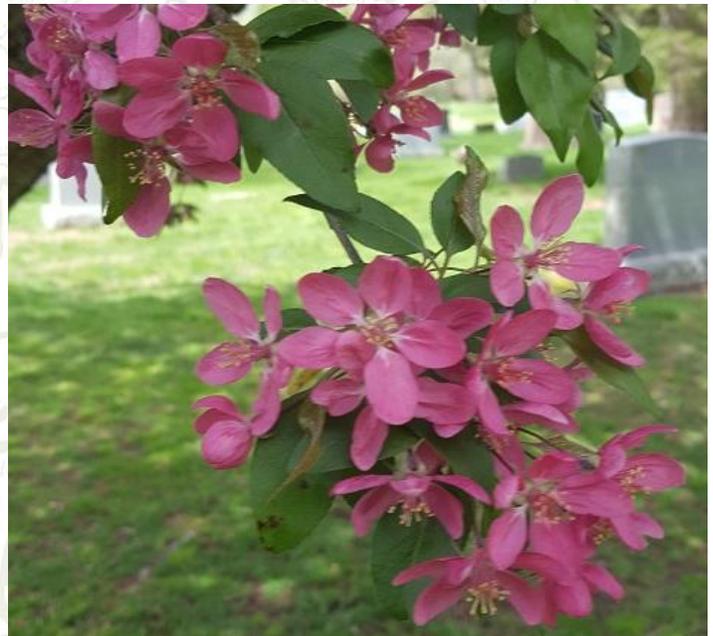
Chemical	Active Ingredient	Temperature	Method	Treatment duration	Treat with supers on?	Time to wait for supers	Max. applications per year	Extra Precautions
Apiguard	Thymol	60-105	Gel tray on brood frames	28 days	No	Immediately		Do not eat honey from brood nest
Api Life Var	Thymol, eucalyptus oil, menthol	65-85	Tablets in corners of brood frames	26-32 days	No	1 month	2x/yr	Combustible Don't apply if robbing evident
Mite Away Quick Strips	Formic acid	50-85 (above 92 degrees, increased queen loss)	Pads on brood nest	7 days (1/2 dose every 2-6 weeks)	Yes	Left on		Wait 3 days after inspection to apply, then do not open after application until removal
Oxalic acid	Oxalic acid dehydrate	Dribble: above 37 Vapor: N/A	Dribble brood nest, vaporize entrance	10 minutes	No	2 weeks	2x/yr	No brood (not registered in US to use with brood) Do not eat honey from brood nest
Hop Guard II	Hops Beta acids	N?A	Strips in brood nest (NO strips in supers)	30 days	Yes	Left on	3x/yr	Do not eat honey from brood box, Can treat packages with different dosing.
Apivar	Amitraz	N/A Not in winter	Strips in brood nest	42-56 days	No	2 weeks	2x/yr	Do not eat honey from brood nest
Apistan	Tau-fluvalinate	Above 50	Strips in brood nest	42-56 days	No	Immediately	2x/yr	Do not consume wax or honey from brood nest

The official meeting started at 2pm. President Keith Salisbury ran through a highly abbreviated business meeting. Word from Dr Jane Dennison is that the first round of DEM grant queens will be available starting Friday, May 11, and continue through to Sunday the 13th (provided they last that long). 100 Minnesota Hygienic queens will be available with a limit of two per person. Your hives must be registered with the state and you must agree to follow RIBA's introduction protocol in order to receive a free queen. Ed Szymanski announced the dates of two upcoming Massachusetts bee events. June 16 will be their annual field day, at UMass Amherst. It is a free event, with an optional paid lunch that you must preregister for. Their November 17 banquet at Bristol Community College in Fall River, MA, will feature Dr Jamie Ellis and Dr Sam Ramsey. Glenn Lawton announced Randy Oliver will be speaking in New Haven CT on June 2 and 3. The rest of the meeting was an open Q & A with topics ranging from how to deal with robbing by yellow jackets, strategies for making splits to prevent swarming, and more.

Beekeeper's Almanac

Looking Back on April/Looking Forward to May

Packages and purchased nucs were installed. Red maple, box elder, willows, grape hyacinth, crocuses, squill, vinca, and more were in bloom. Forsythia was widely in bloom in backyards and along RI highways, but despite the abundant yellow flowers, this plant provides NO nectar or pollen for honey bees! By the end of April, drone brood became much more commonly seen and those who use drone comb removal as part of their IPM system were already cutting out capped brood frames.



L: red maple bloom in April, R: flowering crabapple in May

As May goes on, swarm control will remain a priority, particularly for overwintered hives. The honor of first reported swarm in RI (that I'm aware of) goes to Malinda Coletta on May 8, but many others are finding queen cells under construction. By the time this newsletter is released there will doubtless be many more swarms already quit from their hives. March and April's prolonged cold,

windy weather is probably responsible for the lack of earlier swarms; it is not unknown for strong hives to cast swarms in late April in RI when the weather is more amenable to earlier and prolonged brood rearing. Swarm traps and bait hives are being put out by those with an eye to increase their stocks. Traps may take many forms (commercially available “flower pots,” nuc boxes, DIY efforts). Dr Tom Seeley identified the ideal bait hive as having about the same interior volume as a deep hive body, located 15 feet above ground, with a 2 square inch entrance. Old, dark brood combs are an added inducement, as are commercially available swarm lures (Swarm Commander, etc), or lemongrass oil.



L: redbud in May, R: weeping cherry in May

Diligent beekeepers may begin doing their first mite checks of the season. Crabapples, cherries, dogwoods, dandelions, sassafras and tulip poplars were in bloom as of this writing (first week of May). This is just a partial list based on personal observations, it is not meant to be all-inclusive. The blackberries in my yard have buds but are still not open yet. The first week of the month experienced warm and sunny weather with intermittent bouts of rain, a perfect recipe for nectar production. Spring inspections are revealing new white burr comb under inner covers and inside feeding shims, as well as fresh nectar being stored in the upper corners of brood frames. Supering for overwintered hives is already underway.

Please remember that bloom dates will vary depending on your specific microclimate.

Update From the RIBA Queen-Yard Apiary

Cindy Holt, photos by Emily Langlais

Happy Spring to you all! I hope that your hives are well and you catch them before they start swarming. With my taking the lead at the yard this year, I have decided to shift the focus this season from queen rearing to getting the apiary back to being restocked and healthy. Henceforth we

will no longer be referring to the yard as the *RIBA Queen Yard*, but the *RIBA Apiary*. Ideally, I would like to use the apiary as a teaching tool for the club for basic management techniques, and eventually some queen rearing (most likely next year). The apiary site is not ideal for visitors to come and go, so I am planning to keep the membership updated on what we are doing at the yard through the newsletter and the Facebook page. My hope is it will be a useful tool for beekeepers to see what they should be looking for and doing during the season.



A lovely grafted queen from one of our overwintered colonies.

It has been a tough winter for us at the RIBA Apiary. Despite regular testing and treatment, several hives were hit with high late season mite counts and did not adequately recover from treatment. Because we were raising queens, and trying to identify which if any exhibited a degree of varroa resistance, we only treated hives that specifically crossed a 2% infestation threshold, not the entire apiary at once, which most sources recommend. Let our losses in this area be instructive. We are currently boosting our remaining colonies with supplemental feeding, cleaning up, and going

through equipment to see what will need to be replaced. We have also moved our remaining hives to higher ground, which is a plus, seeing as how it was a mud pit last spring.

We have been doing weekly checks for swarming. We found the beginning of swarm cells last week, so this past Tuesday, Emily and I split Dolly and re-



queened her with a Saskatraz queen from Cedar Lanes. We have heard very good things about these queens and are eager to see how she does. Patsy has been loaded up with syrup and her population is increasing. We are planning to split her this weekend with one of the USDA grant queens. The Sentinel Apiary program begins at the end of May. This year we will be taking samples from four hives instead of eight, as the area is not an ideal spot for such a large apiary (at full strength last year comprising eight full hives and up to a dozen five frame nucs).

Last of all, I want to thank everyone who has volunteered to help at the (former) queen yard. I will be reaching out to people as the season progresses and our hive numbers increase. I realize that it may be disappointing to hear that we are not going to be actively engaged in queen rearing, but I feel strongly that it is best for the bees if we change our focus for the time being. I will let those people who have expressed interest know for certain if I decide to do a round of queens.

Here is a laundry list of things we are doing right now to get everyone up and running:

- Weekly inspections for swarming
- Splits
- Monitoring the hive scale while cursing quietly to ourselves (*Editor's note: Arnia has promised RIBA a newly reengineered hive scale/monitor when the current round of beta testing is finished. Stay tuned for further info*)
- Installation of robber screens and patching up any obvious holes
- Continued supplemental feeding to boost the populations. This includes small amounts of pollen that we are changing with every trip to the yard so as to not encourage small hive beetles.
- Sentinel Apiary sampling for varroa and nosema begins at the end of May.

Honey Recipes

I'm pleased to announce that this issue features the first installment of what I hope will be an ongoing series, showcasing some of the many creative restaurants that our small state has become known for. This month, our special guest contributor is Executive Chef **Matthew Varga**, of **Gracie's** in Providence, RI. Gracie's is one of the most consistently well-reviewed dinner spots in the city, a fine dining restaurant as noted for its elegant atmosphere as for the delectable seasonal menu.

Pistachio Honey

Ingredients:

1 cups Pistachios
3/4 cup Honey
3/4 cup Olive Oil
1/4 teaspoon Red Pepper Flakes, crushed
2 teaspoon Fresh Thyme Leaves, chopped
1 teaspoon Salt
1/4 teaspoon Black Pepper, ground

Directions:

- Toast Pistachios in a 325 degree oven for approximately 6-8 minutes.

- Once toasted blend nuts, honey, oil, and spices in a food processor until combined.
- Serve with your favorite cheese.

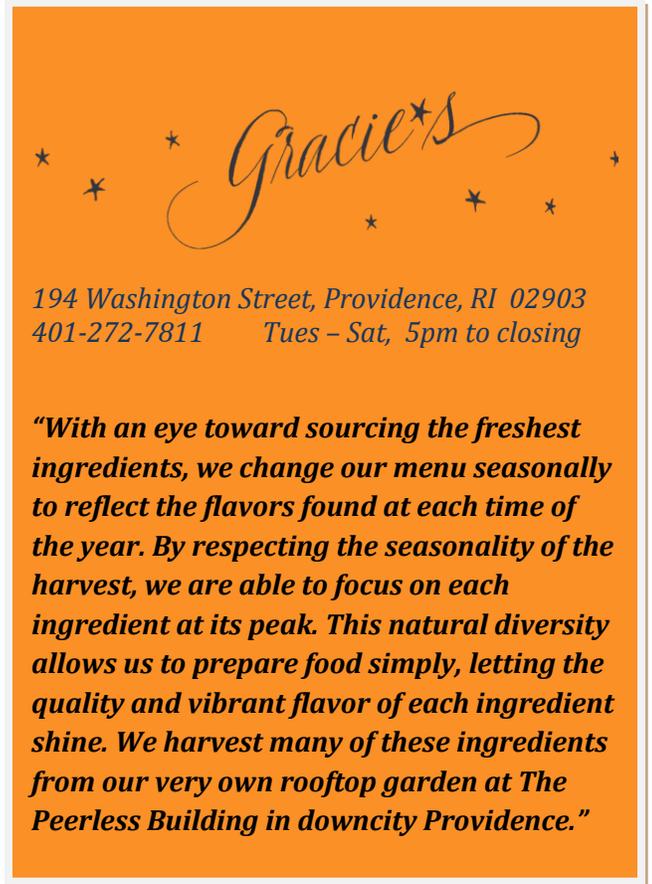
Toasted Seed Granola

Ingredients:

3 cups rolled oats
 1 cup Puffed Rice
 1/2 cup Pumpkin Seeds
 1/2 cup Sunflower Seeds
 1/2 cup Pine Nuts
 1/4 cup Black and White Sesame Seeds (Mixed)
 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons honey
 1/4 cup vegetable oil
 1 Tablespoon Chopped Herbs
 3/4 teaspoon salt

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 250 degrees F.
- In a large bowl, combine the oats, seeds, and herbs.
- In a separate bowl, combine honey, brown sugar, oil, and salt. Combine both mixtures and pour onto a sheet pan. Cook for 1 hour and 15 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes to achieve an even golden brown color.
- Remove from oven to cool and transfer to a large bowl.



Did You Know?

Prior to the end of the 19th century, **cut comb** was the primary form of honey sold in America. It wasn't until the invention of the Langstroth hive, wax foundation, and the honey extractor, that liquid honey came to prominence. The public initially viewed liquid honey with suspicion and distrust.

History of American Beekeeping, Frank Pellett, 2013

Upcoming Dates:

June 2-3 - CT Beekeepers Assn, guest Randy Oliver, New Haven, CT

June 5 - RIBA Executive Board Meeting, 6:30pm, home of Keith Salisbury (open to all members)

June 10 - RIBA General Membership Meeting, 2pm (1pm newbie session), Snake Den State Park

June 10 - Queen Grant distribution (New World Carniolans) (tentative date)

June 16 - Mass Beekeepers Assn Field Day, UMass Amherst

June 19 - Bee Rally at the State House, 2-4pm, Smith Street, Providence, RI



See <https://asri.org/latestnews.html/article/2018/05/11/rhode-island-is-buzzing-about-pollinators> for more info on this event and several other pollinator-themed events sponsored by Audobon in June

July - RIBA Annual Field Day, details still being finalized

August 13-17 - EAS Annual Conference and Short Course, Hampton, VA

November 17 - Mass Beekeepers Assn, guests Jamie Ellis & Sam Ramsety, Bristol Community College, Fall River, MA

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:

Sarah Michaud, Cindy Holt, Emily Langlais, Scott Langlais