



ABee Landing Board



Newsletter 2 – March 2022 Calgary and District Beekeepers Association

Spring 2022 Edition

Ron Miksha, ABLB editor

**"The lovely flowers embarrass me,
They make me regret I am not a bee."**

-Emily Dickinson

Spring always promises so much. The young person's fancy turns to love; the old turns to beekeeping.

Here at **ABee Landing Board**, this spring feels especially hopeful. Are we finally done with COVID? We have whole bunches of new beekeepers who have never seen their colleagues in person. This really bothers me. Beekeeping isn't a group sport, but we all learn bees better in person. I can't wait to meet everyone at our bee club meetings after two years of screen talking.

Once again, I have a huge **"Thank you!"** to send out to the people who help make this newsletter. Malcolm is back (I like his style!) with a long summary from the Alberta Beekeepers Commission Workshop, which he attended last month. He brings us a lot of important info on the latest science about bees written from an experienced beekeeper's perspective.

Liz has contributed so much to our newsletter, copy-edits, CDBA News and backstage stuff. This issue, she tells us about happenings like mentoring programs and photo contests. Glenda returns with interesting thoughts about pollinator plants suitable to Alberta. You might be surprised at her choices this issue!

We also learn about some practical back-saving tips from Russ, ideas from Mark, hot recipes from Carmen (winter's not over yet, I could use a Honey Hot Toddy this evening!), and Olav has the latest on the University of Alberta's Honey Bee Biology and Health Research with news from his newly established bee lab. Glad he's here for us! *I hope you enjoy this issue!*

Here it comes! Spring!



Miksha: Bee returning to wrapped hive, April 18 2019

If you've been in Alberta for a while (this is my 31st year!), you know that you can't depend on the weather. It'll do anything it wants at this time of year.

A good beekeeper stays ahead of the weather and is ready to make quick changes in plans.

By now, you've checked your bees for signs of life. It's been too cold to pull out frames and there's not much brood to look at yet, but a quick lift of the lid, a glance at the cluster and honey stores should be done now on any day without much wind, with some sunshine, and temperatures at least around 5 degrees. Give them feed, especially fondant. Syrup can wait until April.

Don't unwrap your hives; just check and re-wrap. As the queen gets busy and the broodnest grows, the hive needs to conserve heat to keep the broodnest expanding.

Take inventory. Is the cluster large or small? Are any of your hives dead? The Calgary and District Beekeepers Association should have packages available this spring, and other folks offer nucs. Bees sell out quickly. [Check CDBA/bees](https://www.cdba.ca/abeb/abeb-bees). If you need replacements, get your order in right away.



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Dry-Country Blossoms – Glenda Livingston

Glenda Livingston has taught various parts of the beginner beekeeping course for the Calgary and District Beekeepers. Glenda and her husband operate a market garden (and many honey bee hives) on the dry-country prairies east of Calgary.

Spring: /spring/ Noun. When everything seems once again possible.

This long, painful pandemic has had a way of giving meaningful place to the keeping of honeybees, the tending of gardens and interacting with the natural world. Through the quiet act of observing visiting insect pollinators with flowering plants, a person can feel deep awe and hope. Just spending time with nature carries us to a joyful state.

There are plenty of plants, native and introduced, that are well-known as good honey plants, but in this edition of ABee Landing Board, we highlight two plants that provide pollen and nectar for a diverse community of insect pollinators.

Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), and Borage (*Borago officinalis*) share qualities that make them great choices for small and large gardens alike. They are magnets to pollinators, are drought tolerant, super easy to grow year after year and bloom over a very long period. As well, both plants offer benefits to us humans.

Chives? If they don't already grow in a corner of your garden, plant some and let them bloom. As a common resident in herb gardens, they may be overlooked for their flower power. Just give them a chance to produce their purple puffball flowers and watch the pollinators roar in! If you have the time to watch the lineup of insects that visit the newly opening chive flowers, you will appreciate how beneficial and attractive they are to the insect crowd.

In your garden space, or even in a pot, Chives are happy to put down their roots. Keep in mind that chives readily multiply, either by self-seeding with their prolific black seeds or by spreading outwards in their clump. When they get too crowded, and they will in a year or two, then it is simple to divide them to expand or share.

Allowing chives to flower is the end game if you plan to support insect pollinators. You will see a remarkable assortment of insect visitors. Chive flowers attract honeybees, butterflies, solitary bees, hoverflies and bumble bees, to name just a few.

If you are into planting a new patch of chives, you have three options. Transplant a plant from a nursery, a divided chive plant from a neighbour, or start chives from seed. Starting from seed will mean a longer wait for flowering to happen.

Borage? The second great pollinator plant to consider in your garden is Borage. Borage (Starflower) is from the Mediterranean area. An exotic-looking annual with prolific blue or pink flowers, it has a reputation as a generous source of nectar. Five years ago, we started seeding large patches of Borage for bumble bees and honeybees and now expect outcrops of Borage from the previous year's seed drop. If we don't want a borage there, we simply transplant it to the preferred location. The only drawback of Borage's prolific self-seeding is that if you don't notice a tiny Borage invader early on, in short time it has grown into a wide-branching prolific 'monster'. They are easy to pull out when young but, not so easy when they have their hairy greenery. Don't be fooled by the Borage's delicate flowers, this plant is hardy, drought tolerant, and gregarious – it can shade out most any weed! Its wide canopy provides a cool understory and protected soil for beneficial garden insects.



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In mid-July the Borage blooms continually until the hard frost. In 2021, our borage kept the bumble bees happy until late October. If you 'deadhead' the exhausted blooms, Borage will continue flowering longer. How great is that! When all the surrounding fields are dried out, there sits Borage as an oasis for insects.

Borage is commercially grown in Canada for its seed which is the highest plant source of gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) and used as a nutritional supplement. The Borage plant needs insect pollinators to set seed. Commercially it requires at least 1-2 honeybee colonies per acre for seed production. Grow it from seed. You can just seed it directly into your patch of dirt. Just be sure it has plenty of room – as one plant will need 24 inches and full sun. A borage plant can also grow in a large container.

So, here are the details for Chives and Borage, two champion pollinator plants:

	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>)	Borage (<i>Borago officinalis</i>)
Cultivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Full to partial sun -Does well in poor soil and needs moderate water -Thrives in Growing Zone 3 and up. -From seed is ready for transplanting in 2 months. -Starter plants common in garden stores -Easy to divide root clumps and transplant -Can grow in containers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Full sun -Does well in poor soil and, once established needs very little water -Thrives in Growing Zones 3 and up. -Seed directly or can be transplanted when young plants. -Can grow in containers if given at least 2 foot centres
Bloom Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Once established it flowers early in the spring. -By deadheading old flowers, the flowering period is extended well into September. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mid-July until first hard frost -Deadheading old flowers and pruning brown foliage prolongs blooming period.
Pollinators Attracted	-Honeybees, bumble bees, solitary bees, predatory wasps, butterflies, hoverflies	-Bumble bees, honeybees, solitary bees, predatory wasps
Growth Habit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Is a perennial -Self-seeds vigorously -Expands out in root clump -Benefits from thinning out in 2nd year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Is an annual -Self-seeds vigorously -Will shade out weeds around it -Can be pruned of dead vegetation
Other Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leaves for fresh cooking, dries readily -Flowers edible and as an edible garnish -Like member of onion (<i>Allium</i>) family, chives helps repel some pests. -Chives, because of its natural bug-repellant, can help keep other nearby plants safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Seeds are high in gamma linoleic acid (GLA) and used in nutritional supplements tied to reducing inflammation -Flowers are edible (cucumber taste) and used as decoration. -Is a traditional medicinal plant -Planting borage near strawberries attracts bees and increases the yield of fruit -The prolific plant matter of the plant can be chopped up to provide valuable mulch
Pests & Diseases	-Thrips and aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Aphids -Powdery mildew if conditions are too cool.

*(On a sign at the entrance to our gardens, we are reminded that “The Earth Laughs in Flowers”. – Emerson
We hear that laughter through the pollinators who gather on the flowers.)*

Wishing you Happy Beekeeping & Gardening this year! - Glenda



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Chives and borage are herbs you need to spice up your life – and attract pollinators. You know what chives and borage look like, but Glenda has a couple of beautiful pictures for you:

Chives, with pollinator:



Borage, with pollinator:



From Gemma:

So, this guy is sitting in the kitchen when his girlfriend comes in, wearing her white suit, dripping with honey and wax, smelling from the bee smoker. "Yup," he thinks to himself. She's a keeper."

Aggie Days: April 6th – 10th!



Kids waiting to learn about bees – don't let them down!

Aggie Days! Your Calgary Bee Club (CDBA) needs you to talk bees and show off equipment to kids, students, parents, teachers, everyone! Organizers are looking for four volunteers for each six-hour shift. Lunch and parking are provided. A great chance to share your beekeeping knowledge with the public and with each other!

Here's what you can help with:

Set up April 5th.

April 6-8, Wednesday to Friday, 9:00- 3:00, is for school groups. The plan is to have a one-way flow in exhibit areas with a 10 minute time limit at each station for each group. A signal will be broadcast. As well exhibits will be spaced out.

April 9-10, Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 - 4:00 is for the public.

If you are interested in volunteering, [please e-mail Jim Rogers](#) directly with the shifts you can do. It's been two years since the last **Aggie Days**. COVID protocols will be in place and vaccination is preferred.





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Notes from Dr. Olav Rueppell at Alberta's Bee Lab

Editor's remark: Dr. Rueppell highlights research in various-sized cells and the queen's egg-laying response. Maybe we shouldn't be using uniformly-sized foundation in the broodnest. This is important and intriguing work.

The University of Alberta's Honey Bee Biology and Health Research Program is up and running

Considering the vibrant beekeeping communities and a very strong apicultural industry in Alberta, I was surprised about the absence of a honey bee research program at the University of Alberta when I first set foot on its beautiful campus in 2019. I was surprised because I came from North Carolina, where the beekeepers had successfully lobbied for and supported an academic apicultural research program for many decades, resulting in a bastion of state-of-the-art honey bee science under the auspices of my colleague and friend [Dr. David Tarpy](#). I was surprised but also excited because I was joining an outstanding [Department of Biological Sciences](#), which was offering me a stimulating environment and a chance to build a new program.

My start in 2020 was a little delayed by the COVID pandemic, just like a few other things that year, but I was happily starting in the fall. You all are aware that the end of the year is not exactly a perfect time to start honey bee research in Alberta, but it afforded me the time to finish up a number of studies and students from my previous program, get settled in and recruit members for my new group, and plan ahead and write proposals to fund the research that I have planned. All of these activities are still ongoing, but we also had our first research season in 2021 to test the waters and conduct a few experiments. These experiments focused on studies of hygienic behavior and worker body size.

Hygienic behavior is a natural defence mechanism of honey bees against brood diseases and involves the

detection, uncapping, and removal of unhealthy brood. While leading to the demise of the larva or pupa in question, hygienic behavior benefits the health of the colony and many studies have now demonstrated significant apicultural benefits, specifically in relation to reducing *Varroa* mite levels. Consequently, many breeding efforts are underway to increase the hygienic performance of honey bee stocks. These efforts include community efforts in [Ontario](#) and a few other provinces, although we lack a comparable program in Alberta. Led by my former student [Dr. Kaira Wagoner](#), my group has developed a new assay for quantifying hygienic behavior for making, selecting, and breeding hygienic bees more easily and assisting the long-term sustainability of beekeeping in an environmentally friendly way. However, in the light of rapidly evolving resistance to existing Varroacides we need to quickly develop additional treatment options for *Varroa* and I have partnered with [Dr. Stephen Pernal](#) and [Dr. Erika Plettner](#) in the testing of a new compound that they have under development.

Our other main focus in the newly started honey bee lab with adjoining apiary on the South Campus of the University of Alberta (see the photo, next page) was a new experimental approach to study the consequences of differently-sized brood cells. On the one hand, we were interested in the queen's laying behavior and what would influence her decision to produce drone- or female-destined eggs or to lay eggs into cells at all. It turns out that queens can lay into cells of almost any size, even cells that are too small for the workers to get in and feed the larvae. We also may have discovered that cell size affects the egg size laid by the queens, although we need additional studies to confirm this result. It would link this project to some collaborative work that I am engaged in with my former postdoc [Dr. Esmail Amiri](#) and visiting scientist [Dr. Bin Han](#) on the mechanisms of egg size variation in honey bees. Egg size may be relevant for [health](#) and [queen selection](#) in honey bees. On the other hand, the workers emerging from differently-sized cells have different body sizes and



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we want to understand how bees grow to different body sizes and what the consequences are. Many social insects naturally have workers of variable size, enhancing their division of labour and colony efficiency. Maybe this could also be true for honey bees? If so, the uniform foundation that we typically give our bees might not be the best option and we could possibly improve hive health and performance with more variable comb.

This year, we will follow up on our previous research, as well as start some new projects. The most concrete is in collaboration with [Dr. Renata Borba](#), [Dr. Shelley Hoover](#), and [Dr. Stephen Pernal](#) to test different stocks of honey bees in different regions of Alberta and compare the predictive value of genetic, individual, or colony measurements in forecasting colony performance and survival. [Our collaborative research group](#) at the University of Alberta is quickly growing and currently comprises four undergraduate students, three graduate students, one research technician, and one postdoctoral fellow. But there is always room for more people and more projects...

I look forward to getting to know and learn from all of you. If any of these studies are interesting to you or if you have suggestions that will help our work, please reach out and I wish everyone a good 2022 season.

Olav Rueppell



Take your beekeeping skills to the next level with the Calgary and District Beekeepers 2022 Speakers Series.

We have arranged for 15 research scientists, regulatory experts and beekeepers to give engaging and informative lectures that you can attend from the comfort of your home.

The **Speakers Series** is available to members of the Calgary and District Beekeepers Association as part of your \$25/year membership. Most presentations are recorded and available for members to review online.

March 9 - ***How to Increase Honey Production***
(Neil Bertram)

April 13 - ***How a Swarm moves to its chosen site***
(Dr. Thomas Seeley) and

Is Your Comb Drawing you Down?
(Dr. Andony Melathopoulos)

May 11 - ***Practical Varroa Management***
(Randy Oliver)

May 25 - ***Spring Management***
(Dr. Medhat Nasr)

June 8 - ***Queen Rearing*** (Glyn Stevens)

Plus four recorded presentations from Jan and Feb and five more speakers from Sept through Dec.

For the complete list of presentations, please go to [Calgary and District Beekeepers Association](#).





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Alberta Bee Clubs

Here are links to some of Alberta's clubs:

- [Calgary District Beekeeping Association](#)
- [Edmonton District Beekeeping Association](#)
- [Grande Prairie Beekeepers Club](#)
- [Red Deer & Area Beekeepers Association](#)

As COVID restrictions continue, community bee club meetings have had to use Zoom talks. We have access to more speakers than ever. But it will be great to get back together with our fellow beekeepers in person once the world goes back to 2019. Meanwhile, we've got folks showing up to talk to us from some of the great bee research centres, zooming out to Alberta.

We're going to have a lot of catching up when the virus threat goes away. Meanwhile, support your local bee clubs. Renew your membership. Attend their on-line venues. Learn. Participate.

[Edmonton District Beekeeping](#)

EDBA MEMBERSHIPS:

Monthly meetings for Edmonton-area beekeepers. If you are interested in becoming a member or renewing your membership, please contact the EDBA treasurer at: EDBATreasurer@gmail.com. The cost is \$25/yr. Cash, Cheque, or e-Transfer accepted.



The EDBA is considering car pooling members to the **Beaver Lodge Field Day** if it's held on the usual third Friday in June. That would save money and give members a chance to talk about bees all the way over and all the way back!

Malcolm Connell and Craig Toth are offering their bee course, now in its 8th year, in the Edmonton area on March 19, April 23, and May 14. [Contact them here.](#)

Calgary and District
Beekeepers Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

With

Guest Speaker, Neil Bertram
*How to Increase Honey
Production*

March 9 starting at 7 pm
on Zoom

[Calgary and District Beekeeping](#)

Calgary and District Beekeeping Association

(CDBA) is planning its Annual General Meeting at 7pm on March 9. It's on Zoom. Don't miss it or you may find yourself elected to a committee you weren't expecting to be on!



CDBA Member Mentoring Program – 2022

Liz Goldie, Director CDBA

CDBA mentoring has taken place for many years in one form or another. Because we are a club, members try to support each other to become successful and better beekeepers. Recently, members have been provided mentoring in at least 3 ways.

1. **Saturday at the Hive** – This program finds beekeepers with over 5 years of experience who volunteer to open their apiary and operations to other beekeepers. Although this program is normally most beneficial to newer beekeepers, experienced beekeepers also enjoy seeing how other beekeepers manage their bees. This program has been somewhat



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hampered by Covid; however, because the demonstrations are normally outside, the program has continued.

Tammy Jordanov, will be volunteering again in 2022 to coordinate this program. If you are an experienced beekeeper and would like to volunteer, please contact Tammy at Tammy@labbeleech.com. Events will be emailed when dates become available this spring.

- 2. One-on-one Mentoring** – This program is designed to benefit the new beekeeper most. The plan is to extend this program in 2022 to consist of volunteer and paid options.

Volunteer mentoring – The foundation of our mentoring program is built on experienced volunteer beekeepers who offer their time to give guidance to new beekeepers. This may be in the form of emails, texts or telephone conversations. If required, the mentor may visit the mentee's hives one time. For example, this visit may be to help find a good location for the beehive(s) or help hive a nuc or package. This volunteer mentoring may also include the mentor inviting you to visit their hives.

To participate in this program as a mentor, you must have a minimum of 5 years. Exceptions may be made if experienced volunteers are limited say in a rural area. To participate as a mentee, you must be a member and have taken a recognized beekeeping course.

The beekeeper seeking mentoring sends an email with their general location to liz.goldie@shaw.ca. This general information is forwarded to the list of mentors who may volunteer to help. Once the 2 are introduced, CDBA is no longer involved and arrangements are made between the 2. Experienced beekeepers wishing to volunteer as a mentor, may send their information to the above email.

Paid Mentoring – Over the past years, there have been people asking for more than a volunteer mentor can provide. Although one visit and answering questions is often satisfactory, some beekeepers would like more guidance. Therefore, our volunteer mentors will now be available for additional site visits for a fee. Additional site visits will be \$75 for inspection of up to 2 hives. More than 2 hives will be inspected at \$50 per hive (\$75 for 2 hives plus \$50 per additional hive). Some exceptions may apply if the beekeeper needs to travel to a rural location.

If you are not a new beekeeper, yet you would like an experienced beekeeper to visit your apiary say for disease inspection or reasons why your bees are not thriving, a list of beekeepers who may help you will be provided at [For members — Calgary and District Beekeepers Association \(calgarybeekeepers.com\)](http://calgarybeekeepers.com).

- 3. Email questions and answers** – If you have a question about beekeeping, present and past members can email it to calgarybeekeepers@googlegroups.com and beekeepers on the distribution list provide answers.

If you have any questions about the mentoring programs, would like to volunteer or are seeking a mentor, please contact liz.goldie@shaw.ca.

Don't forget our **Speakers' Series** (page 6 in this newsletter) and our AGM on March 9, via Zoom.

With spring upon us, **nosema** can't be far behind. If you suspect this problem in your hives, the club has a high quality microscope and an expert who can check your bees. Tibor Hickman and his Nosema Team have been trained by the provincial apiculturist to test for mites. [Contact Tibor](#) and he'll instruct you on how to take an appropriate sample for testing.

Should you have suggestions or would like to volunteer for any of the club's programs, please contact us at calgarybeekeepers@gmail.com.





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CDBA First Annual Photo Competition

Calgary and District Beekeepers Association is calling for entries to its **First Annual Photo Competition**. The **grand prize winner** of the competition will receive a cash prize of \$150 and their photograph will be displayed at the Calgary Stampede. In addition, there will be **first, second and third place prizes** (\$100, \$50 and \$25) for the winners in each of 5 categories. Cash prizes will total \$1,500. Winning entries will appear in the ABee Landing Board newsletter and be posted on the CDBA website.

Photographs may be entered into the 5 categories described below:

1) Hives during the year. Photos reflecting a particular season are welcome;



Photo: Monica Colville

2) Inside the hive and up close, including hives with evidence of disease;



Photo: Stephen Bennett

3) Beekeepers;



Photo: Liz Goldie

4) Honey bees outside the hive, including swarms, honeybees on flowers and the like; and,



Photo: Cherie Andrews (Chinook Honey)

5) Honey bees in action. Capturing honey bees in action.



Photo: Ron Miksha



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A 6th category, “**Cell Phone Only**”, will be sponsored by Worker and Hive. Gift cards of \$175, \$75 and \$25 will be provided for first, second and third place, respectively. In general, photographs can relate to any aspect of honey bees and beekeeping as long as they were taken with a cell phone.

The competition will be judged by 3 past or present members of CDBA.

Ken Crebbin, former president of CDBA and winner of the prestigious Canadian Geographic Wildlife Photograph of the Year competition (Animals in Action category). Ken is an amateur photographer living in De Winton who is also a sideline beekeeper. He has always had an interest in nature, especially birds and has also had an interest in photography since his youth.

Joanne Liu, past CDBA member and owner of Joanne Liu Images. Joanne now works in a regulatory environment while still enjoying bees and photography.

Stephen Bennett, member of CDBA, amateur photographer, unicycle enthusiast, mushroom grower and adventurer. You may know Stephen as one of our lead honey judges.

All suitable entries will be added to the CDBA website photo gallery that will be populated following the competition.

Terms and Conditions of the 2022 CDBA Photo Competition

Each entrant may submit a total of 5 photos into 1 or more of the 5 categories. Photos must be submitted to Calgarybeekeepers@gmail.com with your name and a list of attached photos clearly identifying the submission category. You may also include captions for your photographs if you wish.

The competition will begin April 15 and the deadline for entries is June 30, 2022.

Entrants must certify that the image(s) they submit is their own work and that they own the copyright. It is

the responsibility of each entrant to ensure that any images they submit have been taken with the permission of the subject and do not infringe the copyright of any third party or any laws.

In providing images for the competition, each entrant agrees that Calgary and District Beekeepers Association may display it on the CDBA website, use it during exhibits such as the Calgary Stampede and use it for educational or marketing purposes. Wherever used, CDBA will endeavour to credit the contributor.

The judges’ decision will be final.

Complete terms and conditions of the competition will be detailed on the CDBA website.

Happy Beekeeping!

Liz Goldie (on behalf of the CDBA board members)



A Bee Walked into a Hive. . .

***A Bee Walked into a Hive...** This feature will brighten everyone's day. Dennis Milbrandt has a great sense of humour and a gift for word-play. Bees, honey, and combs are naturally punny. What could go wrong?*

While looking at the dead bees outside the hives this winter it became apparent that even after die off there are probably more than a thousand bees per human in Canada.

So if the bees got together to form the Canadian Bee Party / Le Party des Abeilles du Canada they would win the next election purely on numbers and Canada would become an elected Monarchy. We would also end up with three official languages, English, Française and Bzzzz 🐝.

– DennisM

And, what is a swarm of really small queen bees called? The royal wee.





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Reports from the Alberta Beekeepers Commission Workshop & Breeder's Day

February 10-12, 2022

Observations from Malcolm Connell about the Alberta Beekeepers Commission Workshop. Malcolm took 21 pages of notes and distilled them here for us.

This is a summary of the key points made by some of the speakers.

On each day there were presentations by about 10 speakers, many from the US. The ABC organizers are to be commended for getting at least 30 speakers to participate. The first two days concentrated on honey bee health research updates, while the third day, which concentrating on queen breeding issues was extra special. I was told there were videos available of the presentations which people could access after the workshop, but so far, I haven't been able to locate them.

ABC Chairman Jeremy Olthof opened the workshop by announcing **3 bursaries worth a thousand dollars each** had been awarded to students studying at Canadian universities and colleges. Also over 100 applications (beekeepers representing over 250,000 hives overall) asking for help had been sent to the Agricultural Minister.

Dr. Mike Simone-Finstrom, Baton Rouge Lab
'Genetics to Nutrition'

Pollen feeding doesn't reduce viral (varroa mite) loads. Controlling varroa mite populations was the key factor in helping hives survive winter, not other viruses. Irradiating boxes from deadouts didn't impact varroa populations later. Bees from the Russian and POL-line bees exhibited more tolerance rather than resistance to varroa mites.

Prof. Olav Rueppell, U. of Alberta

'Honey Bees get Sick from Viruses too'

This talk was very challenging to listen to and extremely difficult to take notes on. Just when I was drifting off into a snooze, he mentioned there were 8 key factors in helping bees be less sick. He rattled them off in about 2 minutes. The ones I heard were

- 1 Put hives such that bees can find their nucs;
- 2 Don't open feed sugar syrup to bees;
- 3 Don't transfer frames from strong hives to sick hives;
- 4 Sterilize hive tools;
- 5 Encourage the creation of propolis;
- 6 Breed for bee health rather than the honey harvest;
- 7 Use the shook swarm technique (for AFB?);
- 8 Requeen.

Prof Adam Dolezal (U. of Illinois)

'How do bees deal with disease?'

Treat on a timeline, not according to mite numbers. I've noticed commercial beekeepers usually do this.

Monitoring once a month is not enough. If you don't treat, it's still risky to do that if mite numbers are low. Miteaway (formic) treatments are not always effective. Use multiple monitor strategies. Check how many mites are on one-day-old bees.

Pascal Brunner and Walter Weiler (Swiss)

'Discover the Thermo Guard' (Vatorex)

This heat treatment has been used for over 40 years. The inventors had wanted to get rid of chemical treatments. Miticide treatments (chemicals), are directly linked to lowered bee immunity, loss of brood, loss of queens and queens diminishing in effectiveness.

Vatorex is a proven heat treatment. A heating coil is used: 100% chemical-free and 100% automated. It's applied frame by frame in the brood nest at 42 °C over 3 hours. Check the internet if you want more information about this.



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Dr. Rassoul Bahreini

'Challenges for Miticides Resistance'

There is still no research documenting resistance to Apivar in Alberta, although resistance has been reported in several Canadian and foreign locations. Barvarol can still be used to control varroa mites, but is not as effective as Apivar. Rassoul's project focuses on finding alternative miticides. Phase 1, 2016-20, involved working with Dr. Medhat Nasr. Rassoul is now involved with similar research at the U. of A. with Prof. Rueppell. Phases 2 (2022-23), and 3 (2024-2026) will be done at the U. of A.

Dr. Sarah Wood, U of Saskatchewan

'European Foulbrood in Western Canada'

This was probably **the best presentation on EFB** I have heard. It gave a simple way of how to detect if it's EFB rather than (AFB) and what to do about it.

EFB has a sour odour with brood of inconsistent ages. It's ropery characteristic is no more than 2-cm long while AFB has longer ropery characteristics. It's a stress disease, occurs early in spring, in hives with old bees, and when there is a lack of nurse bees in the hive.

Suggested IPM (integrated pest management) techniques for dealing with EFB are

- 1 Isolate the colony; it recovers as nectar comes in;
- 2 Add extra frames of brood from a good colony;
- 3 Put in new frames;
- 4 Do a shook swarm;
- 5 Irradiate the boxes (remove bees);
- 6 Requeen;
- 7 Burn the equipment;
- 8 Apply oxytet (need vet's permission);
- 9 Don't harvest from that colony for at least 6 weeks.

2020 was a bad year for EFB outbreaks, 2021 had fewer outbreaks. Resistance has been reported when using oxytet in Alberta.

Richard Raykin

'Edmonton Airport Irradiation Plan Update'

The project would involve the irradiation of agricultural equipment, apiculture equipment, medical devices, cannabis equipment, natural products, and gem stones. This multi-function E-Beam solution would eliminate the need for antibiotics. This would be a Class 2 Nuclear Facility with 6-foot-thick walls.

The plan to purchase a used facility at Edmonton's airport is the cheaper option and will cost 14.3 million dollars. Money has been collected. **This project still needs 2 million dollars to become a reality.**

Send donations to richard@bro9technologies.com.

The facility would be on a solar power grid. They are looking for future investment, federal and provincial support. Several meetings have been held with government ministers to explain the purposes of the project. The hope is that this project receives funding through the Alberta Beekeepers Commission and other industries.

Dr. Rob Currie, Manitoba

'The Importance of Sugar Syrup Quality'

Most beekeepers I know feed with white sugar from sugar beets or cane sugar. **Do feed with sucrose and high fructose corn syrup.**

Don't add acids. Adding acid to the sugar syrup in spring is less dangerous. Don't use unrefined cane sugar in the fall. Don't dilute unused sugar syrup from 6 months ago. It's best to use honey. Corn syrup is the worst. Degradation to sugar syrup increases at higher temperatures.

Collette Mesher (Ont. Tech Team)

'IPM and Sustainability in Ontario'

Ontario has 110,000 hives. There are 200 commercial beekeepers (8% don't monitor for varroa), 3,000 hobby beekeepers (69% don't monitor). Some of the percentage winter hive losses during the past few years: 2021 (17% loss), 2018 (45% loss), (2011, 43% loss).



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Severe loss is being predicted for 2022 for reasons similar to those in 2011: a hotter than usual summer in 2021, a mild fall and bees carrying varroa from other beekeepers. Alberta predictions are similar for 2022. Ontario is expecting a cool spring causing more hive mortality, and therefore more hive splitting. 2023 is expected to be a better year. Following the 1986 UK yard stick, spring is expected to come a month early. For sustainability in the long term, Ontario needs low overwinter mortality, access to high quality queens, more nucs early in the year to replace losses, and access to treatments and medications. There is a need for more indoor wintering and a mid season varroa treatment. No resistance to Apivar treatments for varroa mites has been reported in Ontario. Collette noted Dr. Medhat Nasr had created the 'tech team model' in Ontario in the 1990s, but there seemed to be a lack of information about its beginnings.

Renate Borba, Emily Olsen

'Alberta Tech Team'

Its chief purpose is to monitor bee colony health. Beekeepers wanted this program because of government cutbacks. The process involves checking 10 colonies per yard. 98 apiaries were surveyed. Samples were taken in spring, summer, fall. 230 bee yards were sampled in 2021. Varroa mite levels were up from the previous year. Tech team funding continues until March 2023.

Ann Marie Fauvel

'Tech Transfer for US-based Bee Informed Partnership'

Beeinformed.org. She's a Canadian working in the USA, and her organization seems to be a model for how tech teams are created in Canada now. Dr. Medhat Nasr created the first tech team in Canada in Ontario in the 1990s.

Virus levels follow varroa levels. Varroa does not cause the viruses, but has a high correlation with them.

Now Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) is involved with organizations acting as bee sentinels for backyard

beekeepers, and those linked to state inspections and university extension programs. **'Boots on the Ground'** had to adjust from receiving grants to changing to a **'fee for service'** model. It works with bee breeders in Northern California. Samples are analyzed in Maryland. 10,000 hives owned by 70 beekeepers were checked for varroa mites. The same hives are visited 4 times each year. Beekeepers wanted recommendations, not data. These surveys were carried out in 17 states. The program needs to be more financially sustainable. Data collected include queen survival rates, winter losses, and nutritional analysis of food brought back.

Rosana Punko

'Alberta Farm Animal Care', apiculture consultant

The purpose is to create a comprehensive biosecurity training program for the Alberta Beekeeper industry.

They will create a handbook with 28 community training videos by 2023.

The videos will be 5-10 minutes long and available online. They will be in English and Spanish for commercial beekeepers. The training will be for new employees, biosecurity practices, and will provide references.

Patrick Walther

'AGvisorPro'

AGvisorPro provides an App connecting agriculture farming to its experts. The uses include live chat, live video, uploading videos, uploading images.

Samantha Muirhead, Provincial Apiculturist

'Changes to the Bee Act'

The changes to Alberta's bee act involve Africanized bees, sales of bees and equipment, bee diseases, pests and parasites, and the appeal process. A person receiving complaints will receive a verbal decision within 24 hours of the hearing and a written decision within 20 days. There has been one appeal in the last 30 years. The changes in the bee act go to cabinet and the minister should sign off on it by November 2022.



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February 12: Queen Breeder Seminar

Liz Huxler

'Self Sustaining Systems for Queen & Nuc Production'

Liz's family lives near Grand Forks, BC, and have been in the queen-breeding business for over 30 years. Their children Doug and Emily have set up their own commercial bee businesses in the same region. Nucs are like brood factories. Currently they have 6 times more nucs than hives. It's easy to overwinter 1200-1500 nucs. They sell 90% of them. Nucs are readier than hives in spring. They use 5-frame nuc boxes, and they can be used to produce honey. A 2-lb pollen patty is put into each nuc created. Three weeks later, a nuc can have 2 frames of brood. These nuc sandwiches share heat. In spring these nucs have top and bottom insulation. Nucs can be one box high (a 5-framer) or two boxes high (a 10-framer). A one box nuc is better for queen rearing. Styrofoam lids are used. Sales to prairie customers begin in May. In the last week of April, a second box is added.

The second round of nucs use queen cells, so there is more queen acceptance. Nuc creation stops in July and then the nucs/hives are focused on honey production. Splits can be made in August, but be careful in your decision making. Queens can be overwintered in duplex hives (one queen in 2-3 boxes), or put in mating nucs, 4 nucs to a Langstroth-sized box.

Another alternative is to do two to four rounds of nuc creation in summer. Each nuc has 2 two frames of brood, honey, and a frame feeder plus one or two frames of drawn comb. It's possible to make 4-way quad banks and put them in a shed. Two thousand mating nucs can be created from 100 overwintered hives. This is a self-sustaining system. There is no need to interfere with honey producing colonies. This system was learned from queen breeders in Northern California. The hives are kept in three local regions, one region has hives which have no treatments. Only queens from this region are used for grafting queen cells.

Etienne Tardiff (northof60beekeeping.com) offered another system. In the Yukon, he winters 5-frame nucs outside with one entrance and insulated with clusters not being too tight.

Kirk Webster, in Vermont State, winters two 4-frame nucs in one box with feeders in between. He puts two nucs in a regular box with deep frames. Also, he puts four nucs in a regular deep-size box with each nuc composed of deep frames also to winter outside, on top of a regular duplex (two Langstroth boxes) hive.

BCBBA Education Services Program

(www.bcbeebreeders.ca) has videos of their work and resources. Russian bees in USA can overwinter in outside boxes with no treatment.

Ian Steppler from Manitoba presented a 'Honey Producers Queen Breeding Program' and has 'A Canadian Beekeepers Blog'.

In summary, the **Huxler business model** has 3 types of hives: mating nucs, standard nucs, regular duplex hives. About 500 nucs are overwintered. Four to five thousand queens are grafted each year.

In Canada we need to produce 150,000 queens each year. An oxalic drizzle is done to each nuc in spring. It's possible to do 3-5 rounds of nucs each year.

Grace Strom 'Greidanus Honey Mill'

The family left Holland in the 1970s and established the business in 1978 near High River. In 2012, 40% of the hives did not survive winter. In 2017, only 10% of hives died, and there was no need to acquire packages anymore. So what happened in between?

Find a good queen grafter. Graft cells from local queens. 2018 was a disaster but the nuc yard looked good. The recovery plan was not to spread the problem. Survivor hives were put in one yard and hives marked. Two thousand nucs were created from splits. The California queens used were marked. Two guys were employed from April to July just to scrape out the deadouts. That year the family bought a 1600 hive operation from a guy in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. They just bought the hives. 1150 splits were made from



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the 1600 hives to recover from 2018. Later they made 2629 splits from 1516 hives, same year? With some hives, 3 splits were made.

They let the queen grafter form his own team from the other workers, Grafting starts early in spring. Mating can occur at 14 °C when the sun is out. New queens can start laying in mid-May. Splits are done in April to create hives which focus on honey production. Yards with trees near the hives are chosen to be more likely to have drone congregation areas nearby. Splitting is done using a queen excluder. Splits with the old queen are taken to another yard.

Grafting process. Use the same starter-finisher. Use an excluder to divide a duplex hive. Create a queenless half by removing the queen and remove open brood. Put cell cups in 24 hours ahead. After removing the grafted cells, leave one cell behind. Use a frame feeder filled with sugar syrup, use pollen patties, and shake in lots of nurse bees from other hives. Styrofoam nucs are given two frames of brood.

Pierre Giovenazzo U of Laval

'The Strenuous Road Toward Canadian Honey Bee Stock Self Sufficiency'

Queen banks were created in September from mated queens which had hatched in late August. Forty queens each were put in fifteen very strong queenless duplex hives with winter bees that emerged in October and November. The queen-banked hives were put outside. Also some of the hives were put indoors at room temperature.

60% of these hives survived at a temperature of 6 °C. 55% survived at an indoor temperature of 11 °C. 86% survived at a room temperature of 16 °C. In spring, sperm viability was just as good, at 80%. Being overwintered in a small queen cage with many other queens in separate queen cages in the same large hive did not affect the viability of the sperm. The queens were put in nucs in May. Some workers had lived 200 days. 55% of the queens were still laying in August.

Alberta Beekeepers Commission

Special General Meeting , Feb. 11, 2022.

Meeting began at 7:30 am, but we had to wait until 7:47 when the quorum of 38 people was finally achieved. There are 170 eligible voters. The Alberta Beekeeper Commission regulations are reviewed every 5 years.

Resolutions:

1. **That future bylaws be accepted through the Marketing Council** rather than being submitted to the cabinet of the Provincial Government. I think that all such changes were agreed to.

2. **That the board directors be elected every 2 years.**

No member can serve more than 6 years. At the first meeting after the AGM, amongst themselves, the board elects a chairman, a vice chairman, a treasurer and a rep for the CHC (Canadian Honey Council). The chair serves a one year term but remains on the board in the second year.

Vote: 80% Yes, 20% No. Both one and two passed.

3. **Member fee of \$50 be changed to \$200.** Vote: 78% Yes; 22% No. Passed.

4. **Hive fee per year can't be increased by more than \$2.** The fee is voted on at each AGM.

Vote: 61% Yes; 22% abstained; 17% No. Passed.

5/6. **Increase the fee per hive from \$1.05 to \$1.35 this year.** Vote, 67% Yes; 28% abstained; 6% No. Passed.

7. **Priorize research for new synthetic controls** for producers. Vote 67% Yes; 6% abstained; 28% No. Passed

8. **Resolution process motion.** If funds allocated for 3 years are not used, then the money is returned to the general fund. Vote 76% Yes; 24% No. Passed.

Dustin Ryan was acclaimed to fill the vacant southern director position. The meeting ended at 8:14 am.

These regulation changes are not accepted until they are ratified by the Marketing Council, the Minister, and the Government.

It's not clear yet what increased powers the ABC Board will have. For instance the ABC doesn't allow people to become members until they have 100 hives. Manitoba sets the bar at 50 hives. Quebec sets the bar at 30 hives.

Comments to Malcolm: connellmjm@hotmail.com



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Our series, "It's honey, Honey" will focus on backyard urban beekeeping as performed by a very experienced Haysboro (SW) Calgary beekeeper. Mark is quite active in our bee club, contributing with Saturday at the Hive, organizing the winter banquet, and volunteering in a wide variety of roles, including auditing CDBA's financials. The retired firefighter is an award-winning honey producer and accomplished bee master.

It's honey, Honey

By Mark Soehner
Winter 2022

Greetings to readers of the second edition of the Calgary and District Beekeepers publication.

I am writing on a bright Winter Wednesday afternoon (19 January) with the temperature at minus 15C. The past two weeks has seen a bone chilling Arctic Freeze of minus 25C, up to a balmy plus 9C due to a Chinook.

On the days with the Chinook, bees were flying from half of my ten hives. One hive, with a loose-fitting lid, saw hundreds "sunbathing". I investigated the loose-fitting lid and decided to take no action to correct the poorly placed burlap situation, as I was concerned that those bees may become lost on how to get safely back into the hive, had I made an adjustment. Two years ago, I had decided to close my top entrances and exclusively rely on the bottom opening.

With the Chinook, bees were out "sightseeing" and many bodies were in the snow. Were they lost, chilled, or aged bees? I don't know. But what we do know, is that the colonies' numbers do decline over the Winter, and their deaths over time is inevitable.

February 27 update: I did a brief hive inspection this afternoon with the temperature at 8C. I've added a pollen patty. Of my hives, it appears that 4 of 10 unfortunately have not make it so far through this winter.

I want to mention that the **11th Annual Black Jar International Honey Tasting Contest**, run out of North Carolina, has closed its entries for this year, but you may want to keep an eye on your honey this season and save your three best pounds to submit next February.



Last year, I sent the required 3 pounds of honey by Canada/US Post and was pleasantly surprised months later that my entry was judged a "Finalist" in the

competition. There was the one winner from New Zealand who received \$5,000 US and 9 winners by geography who received \$100 US each. And then another 18 like me who received recognition with bragging rights as being "Finalist" by geography.

So get your act together for next year: consult the website, and get your honey into the mail next year to participate in this World competition.

Here are the results-link from June 2021:

<https://centerforhoneybeerresearch.org/results-2021/>

And the 2022 rules:

<https://centerforhoneybeerresearch.org/contest-rules/>



Photo: Mark Soehner



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Fondant Fun

Editor's note: This was first published in our bee newsletter in 2020, but people have asked for this information again. It's best to hold off with syrup until April, but if your bees are hungry in March, this is a good alternative.

Commercial bee feed for winter feeding is available, and not expensive. Bee economists have said that every dollar of feed invested in your hive makes between three and seven dollars, on average, for the beekeeper. That includes the cost of replacing starved bees and the value of extra honey produced and splits made over the season. I guess there are limits – otherwise, we'd all put a million dollars in feed into each hive and watch the investment grow. Nevertheless, dead, wet, moldy, starved honey bees are an expensive loss. And rather sad for the bees.

Feed them fondant, not syrup, in mid-winter to prevent starvation. Dry, granulated sugar might keep them alive, but even hungry bees are reluctant to use it. So, here's a fondant (hard candy) recipe.



Fondant (or its near-cousin, candy boards) is a quick and easy way to feed when it's cold.

Basic Fondant Recipe:

4 pounds of sugar

2 cups of water

1 teaspoon of vinegar*

Heat to 235 °F

Cool to 180 °F

Stir until it turns white and creamy

Pour and chill in pie pans

Serves up to 15,000 guests

*Vinegar is supposed to convert the sucrose to better sugars for the bees, but some folks caution against using it. Do your own research on this one.

You'll find that it takes a long time to get the temperature up to 235 °F. You can use a cheap infrared, hand-held thermo-gun to monitor the heat. This might take twenty minutes. Vinegar is in the recipe to help break sucrose molecules into glucose and fructose, however some new research suggests acids in sugars might be bad for bees.



Cool it to about 180° and dump the stuff into a Mix Master bowl. Watch for magic.



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Pour at 235°F into mix bowl, cool the thick syrup to 180°F



Mix (or hand stir) until colour turns from clear to white

Consistency changes from almost clear liquid into white taffy-like candy. Pour it into pie pans.



Pour warm fondant into pans



Let the pans cool and harden

When it cools, it shrinks a little and comes out of the pan in one nice solid piece.



Cooled fondant pops out of pan



Fondant atop bee cluster

It takes about 30 minutes to make 8 pounds of this fondant. That's pretty time-intensive, but my bees loved it. Serve the same day, or store until your bees need it.



It might look like this a few days later.

Bees use this hard candy much better and faster than dry granulated sugar.



Beekeeping Highlights 2021

Statistics Canada is showing a slight increase in beehives for 2021 compared to 2020. The number of summer-time honey bee colonies went up 6% to 810,000 colonies, which produced 90 million pounds of honey. That's about 110 pounds per hive, but it includes all of Canada, even areas where production is usually much less than on the prairies. Honey prices were up, giving producers 278 million dollars – a record high!

Honey prices are up. So is hobby beekeeping, with about 1,100 new beekeepers in the country, most of them hobbyists. We might guess at least 100 of the new beekeepers are living in or near Calgary.

In 2021, there were 1512 beekeepers in Alberta. The province produced just a bit under one hundred million dollars worth of honey from its 317,500 honey bee colonies.

Like this newsletter? Want to share it? Before sending the newsletter to anyone, we just need their approval. Subscribers can send a note to ABee Landing Board: [email ABee Landing Board](#).



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Talking Bees will range as far and wide as the bees we keep, covering topics as diverse as how to share your passion for bees with family, friends and the public, tips to keep your back healthy in the apiary, and the importance of mentorship and education in beekeeping, all while recognizing that there's no single flightpath to success in beekeeping.

Talking Bees by Russ Peters

Back health in the bee yard

An apiary bench can reduce wear and tear on your back and make your time in the apiary more efficient.

There are lots of safety hazards that we manage as beekeepers. Bee-suits, veils and gloves might be part of your practice, limiting your exposure to stings. Your trusty smoker can help you keep the bees calm as you go about your work in the apiary, as do the techniques you use to open and inspect your colonies.

While the most obvious hazard is stings, beekeeping using Langstroth hives comes with some serious ergonomic challenges that beekeepers must deal with too. Specifically, the risks associated with lifting, shifting and carrying heavy, sometimes awkward and often delicate loads.

Seriously, if a group of experts set out to purposely design an activity to put your back in peril, they couldn't do much better than beekeeping. Deep honey supers can tip the scales at as much as 80 lbs. Medium supers are a little better, but can still weigh around 50 lbs when they're full.* Brood boxes might not be as heavy, because they're not packed with honey, but the stakes are high; thousands of bees, one of them the queen, all going about their business without too much interruption ... hopefully. I live in fear of wrenching my back halfway through a hive inspection – I'm pretty sure the bees would not respond well to me dropping a super or brood box and then falling on top of it, unable to move. I'm pretty sure I wouldn't like it all that much either.

Anyway, as a middle-aged guy with a dodgy back, I try to pay attention to ergonomics. In our first year as beekeepers, we made the fateful decision to go with medium honey supers. The pros and cons of medium supers versus deeps is a discussion for another day, but I figured that at least it would help me manage my back health in the apiary.

But from an ergonomics perspective, I discovered that honey supers aren't really the issue. Supers are on top of your hive, so you're likely working at waist level and up, in a standing position. No, it's those brood boxes that are the problem.

During hive inspections in our first two seasons, we'd pull the top box off and set it on the lid, on the ground. In our little backyard apiary, this always involved bending, twisting and lowering to/lifting from ground level – that magic combination for a back injury.

Toward the end of our second year, I participated in one of the CDBA's excellent Saturday at the Hive sessions hosted by veteran beekeeper Roy Mulder. Lots of great insights that day, but one that stood out most for me was an apiary bench I saw in Roy's bee yard, designed to hold a couple of boxes, plus a spot to hang a couple frames during inspections or while making hive manipulations.

I'm always on the prowl for good ideas and improvements I can apply in the apiary, and Ron's bench fit the bill. I snapped a couple pictures for reference and went home that afternoon and sketched out a version of my own that I could knock together with my limited carpentry skills. The next day I picked up the materials I needed – three 8-foot 2x4s, three 6-foot-long 5 ½ x ¾ inch fence boards, and a box of 2 ½ inch construction screws. A couple hours in the garage and a coat of stain and the result was the bench in the picture on the next page.



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Don't miss the March 30 dinner-time with the experts session. The so-called experts have over 125 years of beekeeping experience. Zoom your questions!

Since building the bench, almost all the heavy lifting in our apiary is at waist level, what ergonomists call the power zone, where we can lift and carry with the least amount of stress on our backs.

But even if you have a healthy back (lucky!) the bench is well worth adding to your beekeeping practice. Having a sturdy, convenient, clean spot to place your supers and brood boxes makes hive inspections, manipulations, splits and honey harvesting much easier, and it doubles as a handy spot to refuel and relight your smoker, stow your hive tools and keep your other equipment up off the ground.

So, if you're looking for a late winter project to make the upcoming bee season a little easier, especially on your back, then consider taking an hour or two to build a beekeeping bench for your apiary.

* Like everything in beekeeping, there are differing opinions on how much full deep or medium super weighs. Some folks claim more, others less. Doesn't really matter, so long as we can all agree that a full deep box is heavy enough to pose a lifting challenge, particularly after a long day in the apiary.

Editor's note: Like the bench? I do! You can [email Russ](#) and he'll work out the plans on paper for you.



Calgary and District
Beekeepers Association

Q & A Session with Experts

March 30 at 7 pm on Zoom

Panelists:

Dr. Medhat Nasr – SBDC-
Technology Adaptation Program
Lead and former Alberta
Provincial Apiculturist

Ron Miksha – University of
Calgary researcher, [Bad
Beekeeping Blogger](#) and former
CDBA president
and

Neil Bertram – commercial
beekeeper, beekeeping instructor
and former CDBA treasurer

Bring all your beekeeping
questions and have them
answered by experts with over
125 years of combined
beekeeping experience.

For speaker and membership
details, please go to
calgarybeekeepers.com



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Honey Reci-bees is a quarterly series of recipes and cooking/baking ideas from Carmen Peccie and from contributing club members. Carmen is an enthusiastic first-year beekeeper located in De Winton.

HONEY RECI-BEES by Carmen Peccie

It's that time of year where a hot drink is a great way to sit back and relax, and plan for spring warm up, beekeeping!

This reci-bee comes to us from Dingle, Ireland.

HONEY HOT TODDY

1 cup of hot water
1 shot glass of whiskey of your choice
1 tablespoon of honey
1 lemon slice
3 cloves

Drop the shot of whiskey into the cup of hot water and add 1 tablespoon of honey. Insert the 3 cloves into the slice of lemon and drop it in too. Stir and enjoy!



The next reci-bee is great anytime, but especially in the morning, if you had more than a couple of the honey hot toddies the night before.

It was submitted by Dan Jeffrey and is a favorite of his. Thanks Dan!

HONEY OAT MILK COFFEE

Add ½ a cup of oat milk and 1 tablespoon of honey to a cup of coffee and blend until it is frothy.



Join the United Beekeepers of Alberta Council!
Help by educating and encouraging beekeeping in Alberta and western Canada. You can help!

Become a UBAC member.

Visit <https://unitedbeekeepers.org/>

For those of you who are more into cold drinks, here is an easy-to-make smoothie for you.

HONEY BANANA SMOOTHIE

2 chopped bananas that have been frozen
¼ cup almond butter
2 tablespoons of liquid honey
1 good-sized pinch of cinnamon
1 ½ cups of almond milk

Put the first four ingredients into a blender or smoothie maker and pour the almond milk (or other milk of your choice) over them. Blend, pour, and enjoy!

If you have a favorite honey reci-bee that you would like to share with club members, email it to me with "Honey Recipe" as the subject line at: Carmen

Along with her recipes, Carmen sent along this bee photo. It's exquisite in detail and the way the veins in the bees' wings seem to pattern the leaf's veins.



Photo: Carmen Peccie

Got great photos to share in this newsletter?
Send them to [ABee Landing Board](#).



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THE BACK PAGE EDITORIAL

Ron Miksha

Painting bee hives:

The power and peril of social media

I've never seen honey bees living inside a painted tree. But I haven't seen everything yet. Paint? Or not? That was the theme of an interesting exchange on the CDBA gossip channel, calgarybeekeepers@googlegroups.com. Be sure to get subscribed (contact the CDBA for details), then read and comment. There's a lot of good conversation and it's the place to ask bee questions.

The recent question regarding painting hives had some useful advice. It's confusing for new beekeepers (and us old ones) because, well, you know, ask three beekeepers and get six answers. Should I paint my boxes? With what? Will it hurt the bees?

I paint the outsides of my hives with good acrylic. My colour of choice is camo because my backyard opens towards a walking trail in the city. My hives are behind some bushes and painted bush-colour. I would not have painted them, but I bought some thick-walled poly hives (they have great insulation) and they used to be yellow.

But let's look at the chat line. The original question was "To paint or not to paint. Poly stain, all natural stain, paraffin wax, linseed oil? So many products."

John Moerschbacher, one of our area's most knowledgeable keepers answered: "I have used all kinds of protective coatings on beehives. As has been stated, only coat the outside of the hives. As far as environmental and bee health is concerned, as well as giving excellent protection, think of applying a few coats of linseed oil (allowing lots of time between coats for complete drying) and then two coats of 100% acrylic latex paint, exterior grade. This will give maximum protection, and release the least amount of VOC's into the environment."

Liz Goldie answered, "Hives are painted, dipped or stained to protect the integrity of the hive, therefore, you only need to paint (or whatever) the outside and not the inside. Honeybees like to add propolis to the inside of the hive and research suggests that this is good to protect bee health.

"I have painted, stained and done nothing to boxes in the past. Others were painted with off tints from the hardware store (\$5/ quart). The boxes not protected in some way weathered badly. I do not believe the method of protecting my hives impacted the health of the bees nor the volume of honey produced.

"I picked paint colours that would not attract a lot of heat in the summer. In the winter, they are wrapped in black insulation so it doesn't matter."

Having our own conversation group (and other social media) gives us access to smart people who live nearby. Whether the CDBA Facebook page or GoogleGroups, the people answering are your neighbours and they want to do a good job. With much social media, it's beware or don't go there – because you never know who is commenting. Not so with our club.

And sometimes, our people can be really funny. Like Dan Swan, who answered like this: "It really depends upon what year of beekeeping you're in. If it's your first year, you'd want to paint your hives in an exotic and eye-catching pattern, possibly even hiring an artist.

"If it's your second year, you'd buy exterior latex color-matched to your fence or patio furniture. If it's your third year, you'd buy discounted paint from the mis-tint pile at the hardware store. By your fourth year, you'd wait until nightfall and recover whatever paint people have left behind at the fire hall."

Many thanks to all our [ABeeLandingBoard](#) volunteers. All readers are invited to contribute. We'd love to hear from you!

