



# ABee Landing Board



Newsletter 6 – Spring 2023    Calgary and District Beekeepers Association

## SPRING 2023 Edition

Ron Miksha, ABLB editor

**It's Spring! Take time to smell the flowers, and eventually, you'll inhale a bee.**

Spring has been messy and slow. Too cold, too hot, too smoky, and too dry. None of that is good for the bees. But the season is upon us. There are bees and flowers; there will be nectar and honey.

I'm sorry that this newsletter is late. Our goal is to publish before the first day of each new season, though we are typically a few weeks before that. This time, the emerging business of the [Western Apicultural Society Conference](#) (September 29 – October 2) and other unexpected events interfered with deadlines. But that hasn't stopped us from getting the *ABee Landing Board* to you before Spring is completely over!

One of our newsletter's goals is to always present a wide range of ideas, stories, and information to show the diversity of beekeeping and beekeepers. Things have really changed in Calgary's beekeeping demographics since Heather Clay re-started the Calgary and District Beekeepers Association 30 years ago. She and several other women who built our great organization are featured in this issue of *ABee Landing Board*. We'll celebrate this and celebrate the fact that over half of the people attending our bee courses identify as women. It can only make things better as time goes on.

Most of our regular contributors found time to send in articles about beekeeping in the Calgary area. We are fortunate to have diverse and smart beekeepers in [our bee club](#) offering ideas and support to us all.

Want to help this newsletter? We would enjoy your favourite tall tales, tips and tricks. Please send your stories and pictures by [email to ABee Landing Board](#).

## Spring and the promise of life



Here we go! We hope that your package and nuc installations went well. Your kilo of bees looked pathetic a week after installing, but by now they fill two big brood chambers. If the queen is OK, not too many bees drift or die, skunks don't come along and eat them, the sun comes out, rain falls, flowers bloom, and mite populations don't get out of hand, then the colony may survive. Good luck with all that!

If you wintered bees, now is your chance to make up for last autumn's mistakes. Early June is a good time for splitting. You can stimulate the colonies with pollen supplements and energy drinks, further boosting their populations. Big colonies, the source of honey crops, splits, and nuc sales, start from small colonies that are properly tended, as surely as a seed becomes a big-headed sunflower.

### ***Here are some of your late spring duties:***

- The dandelion flow was quick and less than dandy this year. Be sure to keep enough food on the hives during the typical June dearth period.
- If a hive is not collecting pollen, but others are, check for brood. If there isn't any, you may need to give it a frame or two of brood and a new queen.
- Don't forget to add supers ahead of the flow. With this spring's heat, they can use the extra space.



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## Country Blossoms

### A pre-season floral source: caragana

It's not uncommon to have a dearth period after the dandelions and before the major clover and canola flows. This seems to happen in most places in the northern hemisphere. In England, beekeepers call it the [June Gap](#). Here in Alberta, a few minor nectar sources bridge the gap, but beekeepers still need to be vigilant. A few weeks of hot dry weather can reverse the progress of strong hives, right before the main nectar flow. These are times that strong colonies may need a bit of feed.

One plant that may help your bees during this awkward period is [caragana](#). Like most of our honey plants, caragana is not native to Alberta, but was introduced by European settlers, beginning perhaps 150 years ago. Although it is non-native and introduced, it has not spread as much as many other imported plants.



Today, you will mostly find caragana planted as a shelter belt around new and old rural homesteads. Within the city, it may be found where old rural homesteads have become part of urban community. These days, the old shelter belts may surround multi-million dollar inner city homes, as they do in the photo above.



*Caragana, trimmed to about 2-metres high, Pumphill, Calgary*

Pioneer settlers planted the shrub because it grows well in any soil type, in windy locations and full sun, and it survives prolonged drought. Originally, caragana flourished near the deserts of Mongolia and the cold plains of Russia's Siberia, hence its familiar name Siberian Pea Tree. By the way, some species of caragana have seed pods ('peas') that are edible.

Beekeepers like caragana because it secretes a bit of nectar during the spring dearth. It's not surprising that caragana is a nectar-producer. As part of the Fabaceae family, its cousins include legumes such as peas, soybeans, alfalfa, and black locust. The latter three yield considerable quantities of nectar, resulting in millions of pounds of honey each year.

With its pedigree, it is surprising that caragana isn't a huge source of nectar. It's possible that it flowers when the bees need nectar for their own purposes, not for our honey supers. A few weeks later, it is still in bloom when sweet clover begins, but by then, honey bees jump to that very prolific nectar source. So, the yellow caragana flowers of late May to late June may be unacknowledged sources of valuable pollen and nectar, or may be of little more than passing interest to our area's bees. Like everything dealing with bees, it depends on the season.



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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](#)

## 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](mailto:EDBAtreasurer@gmail.com). The cost is \$25/yr. Cash, Cheque, or e-Transfer accepted.



### Edmonton and District Beekeepers Association minutes February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The meeting began at 7:45 pm. About 30 members were present. It was good to see Mario Bevilacqua again and his mentor Richard Farion who was club president in the 1980s.

### Liz Huxler, queen breeder from 'Kettle Valley Hives', Grand Forks, British Columbia

Last winter 62,000 hives in BC went into winter, about 42,000 survived. The 2022 honey production average per hive was 60 lbs. In 2022 there were fewer hives. The 2021 drought was a factor in causing more stress for drone mating. The average retail price for honey was \$7.50 a pound. The total revenue from honey and pollen was \$23,000,000. Apples are being replaced by grapes and cherries in more northern areas of the province. There was a 58% increase in the number of nucs being produced: 55,000 nucs were produced, still not enough.

Apivar treatments are not as effective as before. Some liquid amitraz (illegal) is being used. There has been no increase in European foulbrood cases. There were

almost no cases of small hive infestation. In 2022 there were no new cases of the southern or northern giant hornets found.

In 2021, six beekeepers with 500 hives received \$170,000 compensation for flood losses. The [Bee BC any ideas program](#) funded new ideas endeavours. One grant was awarded to beekeepers growing buckwheat. BC has now had a tech program for two years.

BC has an annual webinar course, go to this link to find it: [www.gov.bc.ca/apiculture](http://www.gov.bc.ca/apiculture). BC imports queen bees from Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Italy, United Kingdom. NZ packages are the best.

### Geoff Wilson, Provincial Apiculturist, Saskatchewan,

Why was 2022 poor for honey bee performance? There was a 34% loss. Mite levels were too high because of lack of rain. A long cool dry spring meant there was little building up of hives from March to July. From August 1, bees stopped getting nutrition because of poor canola crops. There was less brood produced. Rain in September caused more productive canola crops but the canola was not good winter feed. Winter mortality on the prairies is getting worse. Apivar is not being as effective. Thymovar is being used more. Controlling the level of varroa mite infestation is the best way to control viruses.

**Two of EDBA's senior beekeepers** once again trained new beekeepers in 2023. The course offered by Malcolm Connell and Craig Toth is not part of EDBA but with their mentorship program and years of experience, this is a great course. They conducted beginner beekeeper courses for the 8th year in NE and NW Edmonton.

The complete one-day **course costs \$140**. The last course for 2023 was May 13, so look for announcement for new courses this autumn.

**You can register for the Edmonton course at**  
[www.naturalelementshoney.ca](http://www.naturalelementshoney.ca)





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## Calgary and District Beekeeping

CDBA 2023 **memberships** are available on the club's website at: [CDBA membership](#). The executive encourages you to support our club by taking out a membership. The nominal \$25 fee helps to pay for our regular meetings and guest speakers, some free workshops, our website, and other club activities throughout the year.

Membership benefits include: monthly meetings with educational beekeeping presentations, group honeybee package purchase, mentoring programs, social events (Summer BBQ, Winter Potluck and Honey Competition, Bees and Beers), assistance identifying and treating bee diseases and this newsletter. CDBA members also participate in community programs such as educational presentations to schools, horticultural societies, retirement residences, children's clubs and community centres; honeybee swarm recovery; and, bumblebee recovery. They participate at agricultural exhibitions and fairs including Aggie Days, Stampede, Calgary Youth Science Fair, Makers Fair, Priddis and Millarville Fair, Cochrane Pioneer Days and community fall fairs.

Don't forget to [register your beekeeping with the City of Calgary](#) if you keep bees there. You will need proof of proper experience and/or education when you apply – follow [this link](#) for all the details.

## **Announcement from CDBA Directors**

Calgary District Beekeepers Association is pleased to announce that we will be co-hosting the 2023 Northern Lights Beekeeping Conference with the Western Apicultural Society. The conference will be held September 29th - Oct 1st.

This conference will be a great opportunity to learn and engage with experts from across Canada and the USA. We are hoping to see a great turnout from our membership. Come out and network and engage with

fellow beekeepers! Early registrations are only \$150 for the 2 day conference and \$50 for the optional workshop day. Details and pricing for the final-day field trips is yet to be announced. By registering early you will help with conference planning and budgeting. This is an excellent way to show your support! Please register at: <https://www.westernapiculturalsociety.org/2023conference>

Additionally, the CDBA has chosen to contribute up to \$4000 towards sponsoring at least two speakers. The CDBA has input towards who those speakers are, so if you have a speaker you would like to hear in-person at the conference, please forward your request to [CalgaryBeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:CalgaryBeekeepers@gmail.com) with the title "WAS-CDBA Conference Speakers".

## **Volunteer!**

[The CDBA has lots of ways for you to get involved helping the community](#). Opportunities this summer are the BBQ; the CDBA Stampede exhibit; Millarville Fair; mentoring; swarm recovery; and more. It's a great chance to network and learn from other beekeepers!

## **CDBA Updates:**

1. Introductory Beekeeping Courses: Our introductory beekeeping courses were so popular that they were offered three times this winter/spring season. In May we hosted our last spring-time CDBA Introductory Beekeeping Course. It was fully subscribed. Next course will likely be in November.
2. Events: Help show off agriculture's favourite pollinator this July at the Calgary Stampede. For years, the Calgary and District Beekeepers have been hosting thousands of guests at a bee display at the Stampede. We need enthusiastic beekeepers – new and old – to help. Admission to the grounds for the day is among the typical perks. Stay in touch with the club to participate in this fun event.
3. Finally, the CDBA held its annual general meeting on May 17. Elections saw three new board positions and the executive role of president filled.



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## CDBA: New Executive and Board Positions

Four new positions were filled on the CDBA governing body, both in executive and board roles. These four positions are President, Director of Communications, Director of Education, and Director of Community Outreach. All other roles continue with their current leads.

Here is the list of our new (and returning) board members. Congratulations and welcome to our new members!

President – Pierre Marleau  
Vice President – Lyndon Janiskevich  
Secretary – Randy Beaton  
Treasurer – Jean-Francois Cianci  
Secretary of Membership – Ty Callioux  
Director of Communications – Kendra Scott  
Director of Community Outreach – Jim Rogers  
Director of Education – Michael Dabrowski  
Director at Large – Jessie Smulders  
Director at Large – Judith Stanford

Do you ever wonder what each job entails? Having a director or executive position is a lot of work. Here are some of the duties for these positions:

### PRESIDENT:

Provides leadership to the board of directors • Makes sure the board adheres to the by-laws • Prepares the board's agendas with input from board members • Chairs board meetings • Schedules board meetings • Encourages board members to participate in meetings and activities • Keeps board discussions on topic and meetings running on time • Serves as ex-officio of committees and attends their meetings when needed • Acts as signing officer for cheques and other documents • Acts as the board representative/mediator

### VICE PRESIDENT

• Acts as the President in his or her absence • Reports to and works closely with the President to assist with his or her duties • Performs other duties as assigned by the President • Keeps informed on Key issues • Chairs a committee

### SECRETARY

• Maintains records of the board and ensures effective management of the organization's records • Manages the minutes and attendance of board meetings • Ensures minutes are distributed to board members in a timely manner after each meeting • Is sufficiently familiar with legal documents (articles, by-laws, etc.) to note applicability during meetings • Makes sure that there is quorum at meetings • Files updated digital copies of associations by-laws and boards policies • Director insurance (Director and Officer, Club Liability)

### TREASURER

• Manages the finances of the organization, including the board's review of and action related to, financial responsibilities • Acts as signing officer with another officer or executive director (president) • Ensures appropriate financial reports are made available to the board • Regularly reports to board on key financial events, trends, concerns, and assessment of fiscal health • Prepares and presents full and complete accounting records for a yearly audit. • Assists in the selection of an auditor, if needed, and meets with him or her annually • Pays bills and reimbursements approved by the board • Keeps list of board members and information for annual return • Files annual return, amendments to by-laws and incorporating documents with corporate registry • Keeps a copy of current club assets

### DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP

• Manages memberships • Keeps a current membership list • Responds to membership questions • Ensures that



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all members attending events are current and memberships are paid in full • Adds new members to email forum • Manages Membership Portal on website • Co-manages and mediates email forum

## DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION

• Manages club communication between the board and the members • Promotes monthly meetings, events and programs ran by the club • Manages club communications including media • Responds to email enquiries or forwards to director for response • Promotes club initiatives • Newsletter • Co-manages and mediates email forum • Manages Website content and updates • Social Media Management

## DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

• Oversees the planning, registration, and organization of courses, and workshops • Books speakers for monthly meetings • Mentorship • Saturday at the hive

## DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

• Manages the swarm catchers' group • Responds to swarm and 311 emails • Coordinates outreach programs such as Stampede, Millarville Fair, Aggie Days • Coordinates community presentations

## DIRECTOR AT LARGE

• Supporting Directors where needed • Assigned to special events • Chairs Committees



## STAMPEDE 2023

Ya Hoo, it's Stampede time again!

Howdy All!

For our club, the Calgary Stampede is one of our biggest community involvement events. To make it work, we need lots of volunteers! There are approximately 140 shifts (5-6 hours per shift) for you to chose from. Your main task will be to greet visitors to the CDBA beekeeping booth, discuss bees (we have prepared some points for you to talk about). You might also volunteer to assemble or decamp the display. If you volunteer for 5 (five) or more shifts you will get accreditation for the whole Stampede.

[Sign up here!](http://volunteersignup.org/PHHEK) (<http://volunteersignup.org/PHHEK>)

Whether you are a newbee or a seasoned vet, you will know more than the average person and by teaching and working alongside other beekeepers on your shift, you learn even more.

Sign up soon. Any questions contact: Jim Rogers at [clownoftuny@hotmail.com](mailto:clownoftuny@hotmail.com) or Eric Metcalfe at [em403@telus.net](mailto:em403@telus.net)

Bee Well,  
Jim Rogers





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## CDBA Winter Potluck Dinner

There was a nice attendance of about 60 people at the CDBA Winter Banquet on February 12. We were served a great variety of wholesome and healthy food served right next to delicious food. It was lovely seeing beekeeping friends, and listening to the two speakers – Eliese Watson and Katie Merchant.



*Katie Merchant and Eliese Watson*

Unfortunately, it was really hard to hear the speakers as this was very much a family event, with people laughing and eating and chatting while several children were playing hard. So, I was glad that I recorded this public event and could listen to the speakers later.

Eliese Watson spoke the longest, detailing the difficulties women have had breaking into beekeeping. She told us that, as a young woman who doesn't come from a beekeeping background, "I remember an old guy at one of the beekeeping conferences who actually asked me, 'Who's your daddy?' And I looked at him and I'm like you don't know him. And he says, 'Oh, who you here with?' MYSELF. And they are like, 'Oooh,'" and they walked away. That's very much the experience I still have, very often, being present at bee club meetings."

Eliese went on to say how, when she went to her first Calgary Beekeepers meeting fourteen years ago, she might have been the only woman there, except maybe someone had brought a wife. Now, she added, there are women in leadership positions and the club is younger and more represented by women. Elise added, "today, 95% of my beekeeping students are women."

Then the other speaker introduced herself, "Hi, I'm Katie. I'm married to a guy named Will Merchant, so that's my company name, The Honey Merchants." This set the tone of her engaging tale of a very family-centered beekeeping experience. Her husband Will and her family gave her ten hives of bees, which put Katie on an amazing journey. She quickly grew her beekeeping business into a company that sells \$60,000 worth of honey and related products every year, while being able to teach her children how nature (and business) works. Katie had an inspiring story.



*Mark Soehner at the "Tasters Choice" honey table*



*Part of the nearly 60 people enjoying the Winter Banquet*

– Reported by Ron Miksha



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Beekeeping anywhere in the province requires an annual update to your beekeeping and bee equipment status. According to the *Bee Act*, a beekeeper is “a person who owns and possesses bees or beekeeping equipment or both.” **This means that even if you only own used equipment, you are still required to register every year.** This year’s deadline is June 29.

1. Please fill out the [Beekeeper Registration Form](#). If you need help, there is a step by step guide: [Beekeeping Registration](#).
2. Movement of honey bees, queens and/or used equipment across provincial borders is regulated and requires permits. Please check [Movement of bees and equipment](#) for more information and a step by step guide on how to apply. Importation from Ontario and Quebec have special requirements at this time. Please contact the [provincial bee office](#) for details.
3. The provincial website has regulatory and industry information and resources for honey bee health [Honey Bee Health and Apiculture](#).

## 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?

If your boyfriend comes over...  
Wearing a white suit...  
Smelling like honey...  
And covered in bee stings,  
He's a keeper.



A wasp, a hornet, and a bee fly together into a pub and land at the bar.  
The bartender looks at them and says,  
“What is this some kind of a joke?”

Do Hawaiian drone bees get a garland of flowers 🌸 as consolation if they don't mate?

*Our series, "It's honey, Honey" focuses on backyard urban beekeeping as performed by an experienced Calgary beekeeper. Mark is quite active in our bee club, contributing with Saturday at the Hive 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  
Spring 2023

I am back from a visit to Hawaii. I took a jar of my honey to place in my host's kitchen cupboard. While there, I spoke with the gardener who apparently was very knowledgeable in Hawaiian plants and insects. She was offered a sample of that honey from the jar and exclaimed “that is very tasty”.

Another sale. Another jar is on the way to her.

Back here in Calgary this afternoon, the sun is shining and the temperature is 10C.

I had a look at my 7 hives this afternoon and unfortunately three are dead. Only four hives have bee activity.

In my prior writing, I told you what I was doing different this Winter to reduce my losses. One item was that I would be venting the top of the hive. After I wrote that story, a speaker from further north said he closes his hives to retain heat.

Well I changed my plan and did plug the top entrance to retain heat. I knew there would be a resultant moisture buildup. Now I see the results. My hives were wet in the top burlap. Excess moisture killed three hives.

Today, I ensured I have a flow of air from bottom to top. I hope the four surviving hives are strong enough to get to April alive.

Mark Soehner







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## Notes from Dr. Olav Rueppell's Bee Lab at the University of Alberta

*Editor's remark: Dr. Rueppell's research lab is at the University of Alberta. Here he shares some of his important work that affects the health and success of bees in Alberta. In this brief piece, ABee Landing Board is highlighting one recent study coming from the Rueppell Bee Lab.*

### Egg size variation in honey bees

*"The variation in maternal provisioning in honey bees continues to amaze me and in our [newest eLife publication](#), we report on some of the causation of this reproductive plasticity." [January 27 2023, Olav Rueppell](#)*

Alberta's Dr. Rueppell is a lead author of an interesting new paper regarding the variation in size of eggs laid by honey bee queens. It has been known for a long time that there are measurable differences in the sizes of eggs produced by queens, but the cause has not been understood until now.

From the paper: "We show in a series of experiments that queens predictably and reversibly increase egg size in small colonies and decrease egg size in large colonies, while their ovary size changes in the opposite direction. Additional results suggest that these effects cannot be solely explained by egg-laying rate and are due to the queen's perception of colony size. Egg-size plasticity is associated with quantitative changes of 290 ovarian proteins, most of which relate to energy metabolism, protein transport, and cytoskeleton."

As with almost everything happening inside a hive, there are surprises here, too. The size of eggs increases in small colonies "due to the queen's perception of colony size." That's an amazing fact and indicates how little we know about our bees.

[Read the complete paper here.](#)

## Bee Basics from Bill Rayment

A **honey bee** is a eusocial flying insect within the genus *Apis* of the bee clade. The bees we normally raise are from the species *Apis mellifera*.

A successful bee colony contains 3 castes of bees - Queen, Workers, and Drones.

The queen bee is the primary reproductive entity for the colony, She is a fertile female bee that lays eggs, both fertile and sterile. She also produces pheromones that help the colony form a cohesive unit.

The worker bee, a sterile female, makes up most of the population of the colony. The workers do all the "work". They clean the combs, feed and care for the brood, make the combs for the nest, defend the hive, and forage for pollen and nectar. There are many subtasks within each of the tasks above but they are topics for larger volumes.

Drones are the male unit of the colony. Their main task is to mate with virgin queens on the queens' mating flights. One should note the large square body and large eyes, useful in seeing the queen when on her mating flight.

Here is some important bee life cycle information every beekeeper should carry with them at all times.

Number of days:				
Caste	Egg	Larva	Pupa	Maturation
Queen	3	5	9	5
Worker	3	5	13	0
Drones	3	5	16	14

**Queen** adults live up to 4 years, but usually 2 or 3.

**Worker** adult lifespans: <42 days in summer to months in the winter

**Drone** adults live until expelled in the fall or a strong dearth

Note: This information is valuable when determining when and why you would require a new queen.



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## Reasons for a colony to make a new queen.

**Emergency** The queen has died or been removed for some unusual reason.

**Supersedure** The worker bees see the queen as inferior and they make a new one.

**Swarm** All is well in the colony and they decide to split to propagate a new colony.

## Why you might need a queen in the early spring

- Your queen was DOA (Dead on Arrival) in a package
- You lost one having a package - she flew away
- Requeening a weak colony in hopes a new queen will modify performance
- You are doing a split (dividing your colony and its brood) leaving one part queenless
- Making a nucleus colony (basically a split for use for sale)
- Others, e.g., a horse kicked over the hive and the queen is not there.

I will be dealing primarily with package bees and some of the queen considerations.

## The queen is dead on the arrival of your package.

You must keep the cage unopened with the dead queen inside. This is proof that she actually died in transit. During the time of notifying the supplier, release the package bees onto the comb and check if in fact there is a queen in the hive. In filling the package, a queen may have inadvertently been dumped in with the bees. They would likely accept her and be alive and well on the comb. One problem that may arise is the queen may be a virgin queen and will not lay worker eggs but sterile drone eggs. Once verified as a DOA, you should get a new queen from the supplier shortly. She must be introduced properly and hopefully be released within a few days. As one would do in all inspections, monitor for eggs in worker cells and capped worker brood.

**Caution - this one catches many** - when installing the package into their new home - and the queen is being directly released, she may fly away instead of running down on to the comb to join the rest of the bees. There are a few things you can do to try to recover her if you

are very lucky and have very good karma. You can leave the top of the hive open for a bit and hope she wants to fly back to join the colony again. One can also search all around the hive to see if she landed nearby. She will often have collected a few worker bees around her so look for that, too.

If you run out of time or patience, close up the hive (leaving the entrance open) and call for a new queen. The new queen must be introduced by the usual slower methods.

Fresh feed is a very good idea in every case. Suggested feed is a pollen substitute and a sugar source. If there is not adequate supply, the queen may not lay well and give one a sense she is not well.

Finally the number which could give a perspective on hive (queen) performance. All the bees in the packages are adult bees, perhaps newly-emerged and aging during travelling. Most of the others could be much older. A bee from 4 to 12 days, after emerging, feeds brood. They can of course go back to such tasks if they are older and it is required. A queen can only lay enough eggs that her colony can support, hence it appears she has failed. It is not the case. After her new brood emerges she will start again in earnest.

In conclusion, provide abundant protein, energy food, and keep them very “cozy” so they can keep the new brood at the 34.5 C brood temperature.

Bill Rayment



I eat my peas with honey,  
I've done it all my life.  
It makes the peas taste funny,  
but it keeps them on the knife!





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## HONEY RECI-BEES by Carmen Peccie

*Honey Reci-bees is a quarterly series of recipes and cooking/baking ideas from beekeeper Carmen Peccie.*

With spring around the corner (hopefully!), here are some fresh and fun reci-bees to try!

### BEET AND HONEY COLESLAW

- ½ head of shredded cabbage
- 2 raw beets, peeled and shredded
- 2 carrots, peeled and shredded
- 1 apple, peeled and chopped finely
- 1 cup of cashews, soaked overnight
- ½ cup of water
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp of honey



Combine cabbage, beets, carrots, and apple in a bowl.

Blend the soaked cashews and water in a blender until smooth. Add the vinegar and honey to the blender

contents and mix well. Pour the liquid over the bowl of shredded/chopped vegetables and toss thoroughly.

### HONEY MINT LEMONADE

- 2 tbsp of honey
- 2 tbsp of boiling water
- 3 cups of cold water
- 1 cup of fresh lemon juice
- 8 fresh mint leaves, plus extra
- Lemon slices

Dissolve the honey in the boiling water in a cup.

Mix the cold water and lemon juice in a pitcher. Add the honey mixture and the mint, stir well. Serve each glass with a lemon slice and fresh mint leaves. Enjoy!

## Chinook Honey Has Closed

Sadly, we have to face the reality that a big hole has opened in our beekeeping world. After 16 years, Cherie and Art Andrews have retired from their world-renowned honey and mead showcase, Chinook Honey.



Their boutique honey and award-winning meadery was a draw for thousands of visitors who found unique honeys and healthy hive products alongside

some of the best honey-wine (mead) in the world.

Chinook Honey's Winter Festival, with snow-candles and reindeer were as popular as the summer events of bee-bearding and licking honey ice cream while watching the workers in the observation hives.

Cherie has told the *ABee Landing Board* that she and Art feel "crushed by love" that's been coming from their former customers and the beekeeping community. In retirement, they'll keep some hives and experiment with beer and perhaps make a little mead. Their mead remains available at some area outlets.

It's sad to say goodbye to Chinook Honey. Maybe it will live again, but it won't be exactly the same without Cherie and Art Andrews. Meanwhile, we wish them all the best in their new adventures.







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Calgary, Canada | Friday, Saturday, and Sunday

September 29 - October 1, 2023

Everyone likes a good conference. [Western Apicultural Society \(WAS\) is coming to Canada for the first time in a couple of decades.](#) We have partnered with the Calgary and District Beekeepers Association (CDBA). Please join us in Calgary this fall for a yahoo-ing good international conference!

**Save the Date: September 29 – October 1!**

Over its 45-year history, WAS has built a large community of beekeepers from 14 western states, 3 provinces, and the great Yukon Territory. WAS members meet to educate and encourage beekeepers who often endure similar western challenges – mountains, frequently sparse rainfall, irregular Pacific currents, distant marketing, and scattered customers. This year, the annual WAS Conference is taking the uniqueness of geography a step further with a focus on **The North**. The theme, Northern Lights Beekeeping, will focus on beekeeping in the land of long summer days and cold winter nights.

Although many presentations will include universal aspects of care, production, and marketing, several popular speakers with specifically northern beekeeping experience will be entertaining and educating us. The conference includes two days of presentations, a day of workshops, trade show, banquet, local tours, mingling, and endless bee-talk.

Volunteers, sponsors, and donations are contributing to the conference, building a fun atmosphere with engaging presenters, interesting workshops, and opportunities to meet old friends and make new ones.

In addition to a Friday full of workshops (3D-printing, winter preparations, wax working, disease control, and more), the growing speakers' list now includes [Andrew Munn](#), [Andony Melathopoulos](#), [Dewey Caron](#), [Etienne Tardif](#), [Geoff Wilson](#), [Julia Common](#), [Juliana Rangel](#), [Kamon Reynolds](#), [Medhat Nasr](#), [Nuria Morfin](#), [Olav Rueppell](#), [Ron Miksha](#), [Shelley Hoover](#), and more presenters added each week. [See the list on the WAS Conference website.](#)

The growing number of sponsors and trade show vendors now includes Alberta Beekeepers Commission, Andermatt Canada, Beaver Plastics, Calgary and District Beekeepers Association, Community Natural Foods, Mattamy Homes, NOD Apiary Products, North of 60 Beekeeping, Perry Mankatta, Scandia Honey, United Beekeepers of Alberta, and Worker & Hive. Thank you to all of these!

We hope that CDBA member take advantage of this conference. Two full days of hobnobbing with beekeepers will cost just \$150 if you register early. An extra \$50 buys you a pass for the workshop day. More detail and pricing on the final day field trips is yet to be announced. By registering early you will help immensely with conference planning and budgeting. This is an excellent way to show your support! You can register here: [Register for the Conference!](#)





# ABee Landing Board



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## *The WAS/CDBA 2023 Conference Sponsors!*



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## Provincial Apiarist Insight

**Samantha Muirhead (Sam)** is Alberta's chief apiarist. Sam's work concerns a range of issues important to Alberta beekeeping, especially regarding bee health. To reach Sam, contact her office:

Phone: [780-644-8746](tel:780-644-8746) or dial toll free

[310-0000](tel:310-0000) before the phone number (in Alberta)

Email: [bee@gov.ab.ca](mailto:bee@gov.ab.ca)

From Sam, here are recent results regarding tests on the important varroa mite treatment, Apivar.

## Apivar® Efficacy Testing in Alberta using the Apiarium Method

Alberta's Tech Transfer Program (TTP) along with the Government of Alberta's Bee Health Assurance Team (BHAT) have been collaborating since 2021, with help from Dr. Rassol Bahreini from the University of Alberta, with a goal to screen varroa mite populations across the province to determine their susceptibility to Apivar®.

### Apiarium Test Results 2021 and 2022

The following results do not necessarily represent all varroa mite populations in the province. The majority of beekeepers tested in 2021 and 2022 contacted us with concerns regarding the efficacy of Apivar® at controlling mites in their colonies. Meaning, the colonies were not randomly sampled but chosen by the beekeeper(s) for testing because of high varroa counts.

The Apiarium was designed by Dr. Rassol Bahreini as a fast approach for screening miticides for use against varroa mites (Figure 1.). With guidance from Dr. Bahreini, the BHAT and TTP used this method to determine the efficacy of Apivar® on varroa mite populations across Alberta. This is done by placing bees into an Apiarium and exposing them to a strip of

Apivar® for 4 hours. Ideally, each colony has bees placed into 3 Apiariums with a treatment, and 3 Apiariums without a treatment (control). After 4 hours the number of mites dropped on a sticky board are counted and the number of mites left on the bees as well as the number of bees in the Apiarium are

counted. Based on the numbers collected from both the treated and non treated Apiariums, the efficacy of Apivar® is calculated. If you would like more details on the method, please email the BHAT at: [bee@gov.ab.ca](mailto:bee@gov.ab.ca).



Figure 1. Apiarium

In 2021, the BHAT and TTP relied on beekeepers to mail in samples for testing. We received samples from five beekeepers, for a total of 19 colonies. Any samples with less than a 2% mite infestation were removed from the results. The average efficacy ranged from 23 - 84% with an average of 66% (Graph 1.). Issues were noted with samples collected due to the high infestation level of some samples (>40%) and the lack of bees mailed in to from the colonies to have 3 treatment Apiariums and 3 control Apiariums.

In 2022, to ensure enough bees were collected from each colony and varroa infestation levels were not too high or too low, samples were collected by TTP/BHAT staff. Varroa mite levels remained low until the fall, so our sample size again remained small. Overall, a total of 26 colonies from seven beekeepers were tested. The average efficacy ranged from 29 - 92%, with an average efficacy of 44% (Graph 2.). For both 2021 and 2022 samples were to be taken from colonies that had not yet received a treatment in the fall to avoid skewing the results. However, in 2022 beekeepers 5 and 6 were sampled when Apivar® strips were present in the colony (Graph 2.).



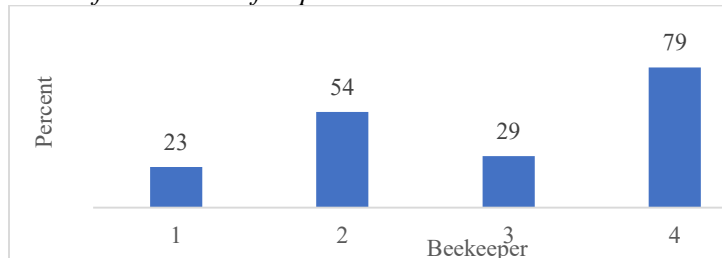


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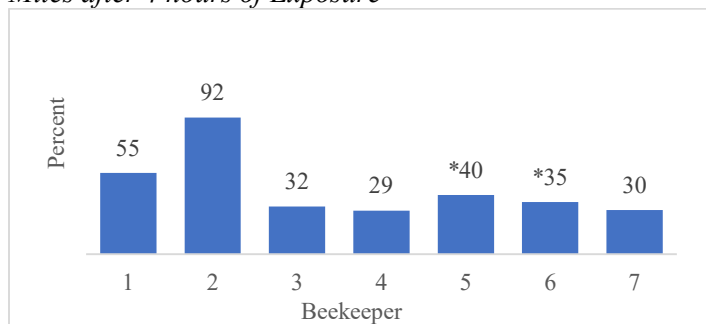


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**Graph 1.** 2021 - Percent Efficacy of Apivar® on Varroa Mites after 4 hours of Exposure



**Graph 2.** 2022 - Percent Efficacy of Apivar® on Varroa Mites after 4 hours of Exposure



\* Apivar® in colonies when sampled

## Molecular Testing

As a follow up to the Apiarium tests, a group of varroa mite samples were randomly collected across the province and in collaboration with the University of Valencia in Spain, selected mite samples will be molecularly analyzed. This data will be used to confirm the validity of the Apiarium test, and to determine the presence/absence of Amitraz (active ingredient in Apivar®) resistant mutations in Alberta.

## How to determine if your miticide treatment is working and what to do if it isn't?

Monitor, monitor, monitor and know what options work best for your operation. In order to properly assess if a treatment is effective at reducing your varroa population, monitoring should take place at a minimum before and after each treatment(s). Never assume the mite issue is solved simply because you have added a varroa treatment. Periodically monitor while the treatment is in the colony or between applications, to

determine if multiple applications are required. This information will also allow you time to switch to a different control strategy if the current method is not effective in decreasing your varroa levels.

It can be difficult to avoid getting into a treatment routine, particularly when it has worked in the past, but remember what worked last year may not be as effective this year due to a number of factors. This includes the varroa infestation level, temperature and humidity (for duration of treatment), number of brood chambers, if brood is present in the colony and strength of the colony. In order to choose the best treatment option, all these factors must be taken into consideration.



**Figure 2.** Mite shaker

In 2023, the TTP and BHAT will be sending all registered beekeepers in Alberta a mite shaker (Figure 2.), a sample monitoring plan for varroa mites, and a varroa mite treatment decision tree. These tools will help make an informed decision when it comes to managing varroa populations. This may seem daunting, but many large and small beekeepers throughout Alberta are able to balance seasonal management with pest management. It may require the appointment of an employee/individual as the monitoring and treatment specialist to monitor and track pests and diseases, as well as coordinate treatments. This could reduce unnecessary costs (treatment, labour, transportation), feeding colonies that are too sick to survive the winter (syrup, labour, transportation), and cleaning dead-outs in the spring (labour, transportation).





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## What about clipped and marked queens?

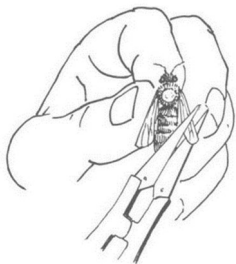
Most of us want to stay as close to natural beekeeping as possible, but sometimes we don't.

**Clipping the wings** of a queen bee is [a somewhat common practice](#) among beekeepers to prevent swarming. Actually, just one side is clipped, and just a bit, as you can see in the photo below.



Credit: Miksha

If a wing is properly clipped, it makes it difficult for the queen to fly, which reduces her ability to leave the hive and start a new colony. This can help reduce swarming. However, this just buys a bit of time. Sometimes an astute beekeeper can use that time to quickly change the crowded conditions that led to swarming and to destroy all the queen cells.



Because of the risk to a queen's health when the clipping is done, and because it just feels like a gross and rude maneuver, many beekeepers don't clip. They find it better to stay ahead of swarming, not chase it from behind.

As far as we know (and we don't know everything) snipping the queen's wing tip does not cause any more pain than a hair cut or nail clip causes either you or Fido.

**Marking**, or painting, the thorax of the queen is [a useful and less controversial activity](#). It's possible to purchase a pre-marked queen, or do it yourself with an inexpensive marking kit, or using a fast-drying paint (such as sold to model-plane enthusiasts) and a small,

trimmed wooden stir-stick. (Next martini, save the stick.) Practice on a drone until you can pick up and dab the animal before turning your paint brush on the queen. Don't get any of the marking material on the abdomen of the bee or on her head – you are marking her, not crowning her!

Marking the queen has two major benefits: she's much easier to spot when you need to find the queen in a hive. You can see the obvious difference here:



The other advantage to marking the queen is that you could use a different colour every year. Then if you look at your queen, you know immediately how old she is. About sixty years ago, queen breeders started offering a colour guide so that everyone, everywhere, would use the same colour.

This year, 2023, is red. To remember which year is which colour, you might use some pithy little mnemonic (“**W**ow! **Y**ou’ve **R**eally **G**ot **B**ees!”) using the first letter of each colour (**W**hite, **Y**ellow, **R**ed, **G**reen, **B**lue) in the order 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; repeating as 6, 7, 8, 9, 0. But for me, a visual image is stronger. So, I created this picture.



2021

2022

2023

2024

2025





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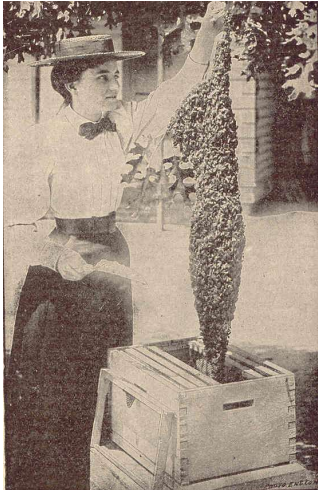


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## THE BACK PAGE EDITORIAL

by Ron Miksha

### Who makes a bee club?



I cringe whenever I hear a beekeeper refer to worker bees as “my girls”. The phrase evokes a crude era when women in the office or on the assembly line were patriarchally referred to as “my girls”. That tone of ownership and condescension should be left behind – even when talking about honey bee workers.

Although rubes still roam the halls of bee club meetings, and often control the scene, it’s important to revisit the enormous contributions that women have long played in Calgary’s beekeeping scene.

First, let’s recognize that the current Calgary and District Beekeepers Association was revived in 1995 by Heather Clay, a former Nova Scotia provincial apiculturist and the [Canadian Honey Council](#) manager. She arrived in Calgary, discovered that the CDBA was dead and she set about breathing life into it.



Heather Clay, left, with Dr. Doug Clay (photo: Miksha)

Upon Heather Clay resurrecting the CDBA, the role of vice-president was filled by Sharon Sullivan. Sharon brought wit and sensibility to the job and helped keep the club’s takeoff focused on beekeepers while she helped find speakers for our meetings.

A brief history of the club’s early days would be remiss without mentioning Ursula Da Rugna, who supported CDBA financially and with her many volunteer activities. This was in addition to Ursula’s job managing Medivet, a pioneer pharmaceutical company for honey bee meds, which she operated and co-owned in High River.



Medhat & Cherie (photo: Miksha)

Among the earliest CDBA volunteers and treasurers was Cherie Anderson, co-owner of Chinook Honey, from which she recently retired. We called her the *Sparkplug* because her energy and tenacity got things done. Here she is, overseeing Medhat Nasr at one of Chinook Honey’s apiaries.

This list could go on with female beekeeping enthusiasts over the years who helped our club grow and be successful. People such as Alberta Sweet, Olga Cerny, Ingrid Jansen, and Catherine Raybould were with CDBA from the early days.

Of course, these early CDBA women faced some rebuke and derision from male bumpkins. That’s even a greater reason to honour them. They didn’t back down. They dove in and contributed. We thank them for that!



As always, we’d like to hear from you – especially if you have contrary ideas and opinions to share! Meanwhile, many thanks to all our

[ABeeLandingBoard](#) volunteers. All readers are invited to contribute stories and photos. Readers want to hear from you!