

The Valley Beekeeper

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A quarterly report from the Cowichan Beekeepers, Box 274, Cobble Hill, B. C., V0R 1L0, Vancouver Island

www.cowichanbeekeepers.ca

The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Club's Executive, Directors or all the members.

WINNERS OF THE HONEY DIVISION AT THE COWICHAN EXHIBITION

- Class 1 White honey: 1st Steve and Gail Mitchell;
2nd Jan Hardie.
- Class 4 Frame of honey, dadant: 1st Jan Hardie.
- Class 5 Frame of Honey, deep: 1st, Jesper Neilsen.
2nd, Jan Hardie.
- Class 8 Bees Wax, 1-lb plus: 1st, Jesper Nielsen.
- Class 10 Observation hive: 1st, Jan Hardie.
- Novice Class: 1st. Julie Robinson.

DIVISION 15 HONEY SPECIAL PRIZES

1. **BC Honey Produces Perpetual Trophy**
Awarded for Best Liquid Honey in the show.
Julie Robinson, 94 pts.
2. **Cowichan Beekeepers Perpetual Trophy** for
Grand Aggregate. Jan Hardie 459.5 pts.
3. **Albert Cole Memorial Trophy** best frame of
honey. Jesper Neilsen, 97 pts.
4. **Bert Mitchell Trophy** for Best Novice. Julie
Robinson.
5. \$25 gift certificate from **Bees & Glass** to Class 1
White honey, Steve and Gail Mitchell.
6. \$20 cash **Cowichan Beekeeping Club** Class 5
Frame of Deep Honey, Jesper Neilsen, 97 pts.
7. \$25 cash prize **Bee Haven Farm** to Class 8,
Bees Wax, 1-lb plus Jesper Nielsen.
8. \$25 **Hardie Honey** to Julie Robinson for Nov-

Meeting monthly, the third Thursday, 7:30pm, Feb.-Nov.
Cowichan Agricultural Office meeting room, little brown building
at the end of Clements St., Duncan.

Report on honey results from a fellow beekeeper in California

The honey flow is about over now for Southern California. Buckwheat once again, along with Sage, were a non-existent entity. Not enough rain - hence no nectar. Some flower, certainly with the buckwheat but dry and saw-dusty to the fingers' crush. No honey.

The avocado groves did not yield anything either. Blossoms came 3 ½ months late and then stayed for three days. In and out. Bees did their best at pollinating so the crop count will be good for the grower, but as to honey ~ nil, none, zilch. Maybe next season will be better.

The bees will remain in the area as eucalyptus, blueberries and other flowering plants grow there, and possibly there might be something in early winter or early spring. We shall see. Happily, we did pull honey from Angeles Crest - not in great abundance but a very tasty treat. And the alfalfa in high deserts is all but gone (flooded fields to restore water table and solar panels), but in the low deserts the fields were green and lush so alfalfa will be back again ~ for now.

We invite you to browse the availabilities and enjoy the products that can be viewed on our website. Keep tuned in to our site (Klausbees) for pictures, information and new honey offerings.

Erika WainDecker, owner

www.ewaindeckerbooks.com

* Once again the Cowichan Beekeepers Club has won high praise for been one of the best displays at the fair in visual appeal and educational value. Thank you to all the members who made this possible. Thank you to Jacques Marc for judging and his assistant Linda Marc for keeping the point count.

Alison Irwin: of the Exhibition Board wrote of the Cowichan Exhibition:

"The general consensus is that the Exhibition was a good show. Attendance was down on the Friday and Saturday, but up on the Sunday. Certainly we had an excellent turnout of school children on the Friday, and the new layout for the Junior exhibits worked out well. Other Divisions that saw an increase in entries included Honey, Photography and Spinning, Weaving & Bobbin Lace. Judging results have been tallied and Hall exhibitors can now pick up their prize winnings from the Exhibition Office. A new feature on the grounds this year was the crane ride courtesy of Andrew Poland set up near the Tractor Pull. Many visitors took advantage of the opportunity to see the Exhibition's property from up on high! The money donated by the riders will go towards more shade trees."

On 30 September 2013 09:26, Brenda Jager <bzbees@telus.net> wrote:
Theo Frederick just let me know that he was robbed over the weekend.
The thieves stole a large amount of pollen. They were organized and seemed to know what they were about.
They did not take anything else, so it was the pollen they were after.
If you notice anyone selling large amounts of pollen that is not a known beekeeper or seems to have too much for their operation, perhaps you could contact Theo Frederick.

Interesting Tidbit

BBC News 7 October, 2013

The islands of Colonsay and Oronsay are to become a Native Honeybee Sanctuary.

A new law will come into effect in January, making it illegal to import any bee other than the *Apis mellifera mellifera* to the area. The Hebridean Islands have about 50 colonies of the species and the new order aims to protect them from cross-breeding and disease. The varroa mite, which has devastated bee colonies across the country, has not affected Colonsay or Oronsay.

There are 250 species of bee in the UK consisting of 24 species of bumblebees, 225 species of solitary bees, but just one honeybee species, the native Black Bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*). The species is much hardier than the Yellow or Italian Bee (*Apis mellifera ligustica*), which means the bees can survive the harsh climate of the Inner Hebrides.

The Scottish government granted the order after a public consultation received overwhelming support. The Bee Keeping (Colonsay and Oronsay) Order comes into force on January 1, 2014.

Creamed Honey

Apiculture Factsheet #603

Creamed honey is honey that has been crystallized under controlled conditions. Most honeys will granulate naturally over time, often forming large crystals separated from liquid honey. The controlled crystallization prevents the formation of large crystals and produces a honey with a creamy consistency throughout. The process of creaming honey is simple without the need of special equipment.

Equipment:

- Liquid honey
- Jar of commercial creamed honey (~seed honey)
- Large pot to liquefy honey to be creamed
- Heavy spoon
- Honey jars for the finished product
- Candy or other cooking thermometer.

Preparation:

1. The seed honey should be warmed and stirred with a strong spoon until softened to a runny, almost liquid consistency.
2. Heat the honey to be creamed to a temperature of 65-70 degrees Celsius or 150-160 F, by placing the container in hot water. Stir frequently, to prevent over-heating at the bottom and sides. Use a kitchen thermometer and check the temperature frequently.
3. The percentage of moisture in the honey will determine the density of your product. Honey with 17.8-20% moisture content will be more runny than honey with less moisture. Some beekeepers use a refractometer to determine the percentage of moisture in their honey. The heating destroys any sugar tolerant yeasts in the honey and prevents fermentation if the honey has moisture content of 17.8% or higher. Heating also dissolves any residual dextrose crystals in the honey which may affect the fine granulation after the seed has been added and blended.

Event: B. C. Honey Producers' Association Annual General Meeting.

Date: October 26-27, 2007 **Location:** Kelowna, British Columbia

The line-up of activities and guest speakers looks well organized and interesting.

Go to the Conference website <http://hiveandthrive.com> for details on the presentations.

Potluck Dinner

November 9th, 2013 has been set aside for the annual Club potluck. Reserve this night, from 6:00 - 8:30+ pm, to taste some of the delicious dishes that Club members and their families/guests will cook-up for this event.

To make this an entertaining evening there will be a fun quizz, enjoyable music and an anonymous gift exchange. Each family is encouraged to bring one gift (homemade or store bought under \$20).

Location for this relaxed gathering is St. John's Anglican Church, 3295 Cobble Hill Road, Cobble Hill. From Duncan turn off the highway at Cobble Hill Road, a few kilometers down the road is the old Cobble Hill Elementary School turn east after the school; if you continue straight this will be Cobble Hill-Shawnigan Lake Road. Drive approximately 1.5 km. along Cobble Hill Road keep a watchful eye for a sharp turn to the left as the dark brown shingled Church is tucked away in the trees.

Trophies and cash prizes for the Cowichan Exhibition Honey Division winners will be presented.



Annual General Meeting at the October Club meeting

Come one, come all. Step up to the plate and get involved in your Club.

Attend the AGM, nominate and vote.

Our elected President, Paul Petersen, has come to the end of his two year term. Needed is a replacement for the next two consecutive years.

As the vice-president, Julie Robinson, has just started into the position a few months ago she can remain for the next two year term.

The directors/officers have only completed their second year of a maximum three consecutive year.

The Secretary and Treasurer can go on until the incumbent leaves or someone is voted in.

Nominations are allowed from the floor.

Join us at the October meeting for coffee and cake and stay for the always entertaining and enlightening "Question & Answer Panel" presentation.

No one has yet asked a question that stumps the participants —want to be the first!

BUY, SELL & TRADE

Stainless steel honey extraction equipment. Estate sale: 24 short/10 standard frame radial extractor/spinner motorized (\$1000), steam knife decapper with drip tray system (\$1000), 3 honey tanks approx. 60 to 80 litres, with water warming systems for jar filling (\$300 to \$375) – Equipment build by beekeeper who was a welder by profession. Quality work and heavier Steel. All must go. Combo price \$2700 takes it all. Good set up for smaller commercial operation or larger hobbyist. Great for Bee Club honey house. Reasonable offers taken. Please pass this to anyone who may be interested. Contact: Brenda Jager / bzbees@telus.net

Mike Pauls knows someone who is selling two hives (no bees) and a smoker. Contact Mike for details at 701-4238 or email: micpau@telus.net.

Lorraine Munroe of Victoria is selling her beekeeping outfit 250-592-1306 or see Larry Lindahl at the Club meeting.

Blaine Hardie has a Jones 300 lb., wrapped bottling tank \$200. email: bjhardie@shaw.ca or 746-4389.

Congratulations to our Club Secretary for getting a Grant and on the start of his First Workshop through the Vancouver Island University, Continuing Education

At the July meeting Ted Leischner presented an update on the situation on native bee decline and the extensive training completed by the Xerces Society For Invertebrate Conservation in the United States on native bee conservation and habitat restoration. Ted has been successful with the assistance of the Cowichan Land Trust to get a grant to bring the complete Xerces extension, education and habitat restoration guidelines to the Cowichan Valley. Workshops and demonstration projects will happen over the next year.

Cleaning Beeswax

By: Ann Harman

Dirty wax doesn't look good or burn well. Here's how to clean it.

A few tips to make cleaning your wax more efficient and to get the best results. Cappings wax will give you the best color, aroma and texture. Keep brood frame wax separate. You will first melt your wax in water. *Please always use a water bath when melting wax.* You need to fashion a double-boiler setup – outer pot with water, inner pot with wax. Never heat wax directly on a stove of any kind. Do not leave your melting project unattended. The second item I wish to pass on is to decide where you are going to melt, strain and pour your wax – and how you are going to keep that area clean. Never pour molten beeswax down a drain. Now the third tip. The wax will have to be strained. Although cappings are basically clean, bits of bees, propolis and other mystery things have to be removed. The highly annoying tiny black specks found in wax are usually soot from the smoker. Use minimal smoke when removing honey. The best wax strainer that evenly removes the tiny black specks is sweatshirt material used fuzzy-side up. Even if you use the pantyhose method (described later) a final straining through sweatshirt material will insure clean wax. If you do not have any used sweatshirts (either from you or your friends) you can purchase the material by the yard from fabric shops. Put any new sweatshirt material through the washing machine and dryer to remove lint and dye and sizing.

Wax can be melted without damage to its color in stainless steel, aluminum and Pyrex. Some people use crock pots but the inner crock can be difficult to monitor the temperature of your wax. Your outer water bath does not need to boil. Wax melts at about 143°F. The highest temperatures you want are only about 150-160°F. Remember that you wish to keep the number of times you heat wax to a minimum since aroma will be lost if over heated or repeatedly heated.

Your inner container will hold the water and the wax. Use more water than wax or you could end up with a weird emulsion that probably can't be used. At this point you have a choice. You can stuff a used panty hose leg with the cappings and immerse it in water until the wax melts, leaving behind bits of stuff *in* the panty hose. Remove the panty hose. At this point it has served its purpose **Or** you can just put your cappings in the water in the inner container and let them melt.

The next step is to turn off the heat. Remove the container of water and melted wax and let it cool. When all has cooled, remove the wax block. Discard the water. That is where the residual honey is from the cappings. Keep this particular pot for your future first melts since it may have bits of propolis and other gunk stuck in it.

On the bottom of the block of wax will be stuff – propolis and other junk. Scrape the bottom of the block until it has very little junk left. Save the scrapings. Those can be melted and poured onto pinecones for firestarters.

Now take a clean container and put in the dry block. No water this time! Now, this new container becomes the inner container for the water bath. Melt the wax. While waiting for the block to melt, prepare your sweatshirt material fuzzy side up on the final pot or pan. The cloth can be held on with binder clips. If the sweatshirt material is new you may have to dampen it a bit. With the wax well above the melting temperature, around 150-155°F, pour it through the cloth. Yes, wax will cool and stick to the cloth but it should be minimal. You will need some containers for your clean wax. These can be non-stick baking pans because the sides are sloping and when the wax hardens the block of wax will come out easily.