

SKAGIT VALLEY BEEKEEPERS



Ed Markus, Editor 421-4296
466-4296 ejmarkus@fidalgo.net

May 2009

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We will meet the second Thursday, May 14 at 7:00 PM at the CENEX office facility just north of Burlington, our regular room.

Our speaker will be Hubertus Kohn from Lake Whatcom and he will speak on practical queen rearing. He has developed a PowerPoint presentation of his own experiences, which he is giving the previous night for the Mount Baker Association. Mr. Kohn has been an instructor and researcher for 40 years at Western Washington University in biology and botany. He will speak on the Hopkins-Case method of queen rearing . In other words, "you can grow your own". He is a firm, firm believer in local only queens and those queens are out there. Hubertus tells me he has done it, he has pictures and that you can easily and reliably produce your own queens. The best time for raising queens is swarm season, beginning in about two weeks depending always on weather. This is very timely information.

Hubertus has offered to speak at the June meeting on his own use of the Jenter system which he uses extensively. This also a great PowerPoint presentation!

Folks, it is swarm season or very nearly so. You have to watch, watch, watch your bees. If you have a living, unsplit, overwintered hive with any strength at all, you should consider that they will want to be in the trees . Pop the lid and stick your head in the hive. If the population is building fast as they should now, they can tip into swarm behavior before you know it. There are great descriptions of bees building swarm cells all over the internet and in the literature from our classes. Basically look at the bottom of the brood frames. You will know queen cells. They are bigger than anything you have seen yet, like a small peanut in appearance. Cut them out or make a split! It is recommended that you requeen swarms if you have them or catch them. So raise a few queens and go to it! And keep an extra box handy if they do go!

Cookies N—Z

This newsletter is on-line.
Please e-mail your e-ddress

I am a proponent of powdered sugar dusting for varroa mite control. Sometimes when I take the kind of hits on bee loss I'm having every year, I wonder how great it really is. Randy Oliver at scientificbeekeeping.com shows if you treat weekly with powdered sugar, you get a flat line on mite reproduction, that is, basic rough control. Do it every two weeks, not as good but OK. Once a month, you are in the game but don't expect miracles. I write this having said I'm suspicious of my own results but I do not dust weekly and have tried but failed at twice monthly. But there is now available from Dadant and Brushy Mountain plus others (it has changed within the last month) a hand driven bellows from Europe. It holds 2.2 pounds of dry powdered sugar. You crack the hive lid a bit, poke the nozzle in the hive entrance and start pumping. You pump until a cloud puffs out the top, drop the lid and do the next one. I learned long ago most things are never as easy as claimed but I'll let you know because I bought one after agonizing for months! I am a gadget nutcase. The freight is a killer but I'm not driving to Iowa any time soon. I couldn't find anything as good or think how to build something although there are some real Rube Goldberg ideas sort of working out there. Mr. Kohn is satisfied with his powdered sugar treatments so we can talk. I will bring the bellows if it arrives in time. Hopefully.

There is much to be aware of this month beekeepers!

- Keep feeding as a lot of pollen sources have gone away now. Look for disease
- Watch for those swarm queen cells and for the crowding which probably causes them. Give your bees lots of empty comb or foundation.
- Reverse your boxes every so often and let your bees have lots of empty comb above themselves
- If you have packages building, have your second brood box ready. They will grow faster than you think.

Now is a great time to check for varroa mites. You need to know what you have on or in your bees. You can do that easily by sifting a cup or so of dry powdered sugar on your bees and dusting it down with a hive brush. You need something flat, white, sticky and as wide as the bottom of your hive shoved in on the bottom board to catch the falling mites in the falling sugar. You can get fancy, I use folded butcher paper sprayed with cheapo cooking spray, currently butter flavored I believe. You can see mites when they fall, OH yes! If you have 4, 5 or 6 mites you better come up with a plan. Is this a scientific number? NO It is true? Yes!

I'm selling big 1 gallon pot size tomato plants again this year. I include my list. Unfortunately, these sales now seem to support my beekeeping, a system which seems backwards somehow.

See you at the meeting Ed Markus



Tomato Plant Order Form 2009

Name _____ Location _____ Ph# _____

Quantity **\$3.50 each**

1. ___ Oregon Spring – very reliable, nice, early
- 2 ___ Stupice- ultra early, solid, reliable, cold tolerant
- 3 ___ Legend- Blight resistant, very early, nice, cold tolerant
- 4 ___ Super Fantastic- Award winning flavor
- 5 ___ Viva Italia- Large paste/salad Solid, nice flavor Great salsa
- 6 ___ Big Beef Hybrid – a hamburger slicer, semi-early, good flavor
- 7 ___ Celebrity – taste test winner, early, nice size, lots of flavor
- 8 ___ Early Girl – solid old NW favorite
9. ___ Siberia – very hardy, fast ripening, sets fruit to 38 °
- 10 ___ Sweet Million Cherry - popular, reliable, SWEET, prolific
11. ___ SunSugar- Cherry -\$\$\$ seed, super sweet, great taste, golden
12. ___ Sweet Baby Girl - award winning cherry, red
13. ___ Suncherry Hybrid \$\$\$ SunSugar's new red sister

ejmarkus@fidalgo.net 466 4296 or return this form, Thanks, Ed Markus