

SKAGIT VALLEY BEEKEEPERS



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Our next meeting is November 12th, the second Thursday of course, at 7:00 PM at the CENEX offices in Burlington. Our speaker for the 12th is Aaron Voorhees from Seminis Seed Company.. He will describe the local seed business and what it means for us as beekeepers and to Skagit County.

I would like to thank all the folks who attended the Northwest Regional meeting of the Washington State Beekeepers Association in October and took the opportunity to hear Randy Oliver speak. It was well attended and I have heard nothing but the best comments about Randy's topics. For me the important take away messages were

- Split every hive you have in spring and let them build. Then recombine for the honey flow. He did not say how much equipment you may need to do this
- If you are Fall feeding, consider a 1/2 gallon of syrup and a 1 pound pollen patty every week or ten days
- Strong queens out produce bugs and disease
- He loves the idea of local queen rearing co-ops



- For winter,, if your upper supers are honey plugged, consider putting an empty foundation frame in the super center to give the bees a place to enter a cell and vibrate their muscles. This is how bees liquefy and warm honey I am STILL hearing of HEAVY mite loads locally. Depending on how you treat, it is still warm enough to treat as I write. You must check for mites often! As a corollary, if you are feeding heavily in Fall to produce young bees you are still raising mites as well. That may be why I am seeing so many mites after having treated what I thought was carefully in September.

I took a beating from all the wasps this Fall and lost 5 or 6 hives, again! Location, location, location. I need a better one. All the brush here makes a lovely hornet home. Now is the time to look about.

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superseded within 30 days like most of the other queens from the same producer of which I am aware. The brood pattern was poor and there was no vigor in the hive. A whole lot of my other queens superseded as well which I wish I understood better. Some real hotshot stock too!

I tried using wood pellets as smoker fuel and for some reason they did not work at all. It thought the darn things would just light and burn but guess again. I even laid lit charcoal in them with no results. That I do not understand. So try it if you will and let me know what the heck.

I spoke briefly to Association member Clyde Caldwell the other day and he is impressed with his small cell/ no chemical results so far. I believe he said he was almost all converted and that the small cell bees seemed to be doing better than the standard cell. That is something to remember for another day! The bee journals say there is no statistical proof of this but I'm more than willing to listen to Clyde.

For those of you who read the bee journals closely as do I, there was comment of real troubles with queen rearing this year on the East Coast, all up and down.

I want to recommend to you the Ben Harden method of queen rearing. It is so simple to set up I cannot believe it. You can find reference to this at Dave Cushman's site in Britain. I raised queens successfully for the first time. I have to see if they mate and lay now. Now if I wasn't so shaky in the hands and could graft easily. Man, did I do a lousy job of it. Besides dropping the selected frame in a ditch and then sliding upside down on my rear on dry long grass trying to retrieve it. After trying to graft, I swear I can stir coffee trying to hold still. It is so intimidating but I really only want a few queens at a time. That is what I got, a very few. There are hands free methods that eliminate grafting but there is so much fooling around involved.

- It is time to pull excess honey. Do it early morning or late to help prevent robbing. Remember how many stores your bees will need for winter
- Treat for mites and nosema, a big deal.
- Yellowjack time is here. Plug holes and reduce entrances or your hives could be destroyed. I can't believe that bees seem so wimpy and tolerant. I'm seeing bald face hornets for the first time and they are big and nasty.
- You can requeen with young queens after pulling honey. You will need to feed syrup.