

SKAGIT VALLEY BEEKEEPERS



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It is important for you to know the date and place of the October meeting has been changed. By vote of the membership, the meeting will be Wednesday, October 13th. This will coincide with the NW Regional Meeting of the Washington State Beekeepers Association. The meeting will be held at the Royal Fork buffet restaurant on Freeway Drive in Mount Vernon just across from the Mount Vernon Wal-Mart Things start at 6:00 PM. The speaker will be Sue Cobey, who with her husband has just moved to Whidbey Island. Ms Cobey is a nationally known researcher and her talk should be most informational.

Remember the Washington State Beekeepers Association meeting will be held jointly with the Oregon Association in Hood River, Oregon October 28, 29, 30. Special rates at the Best Western are available. Check the WSBA website. Always a worthwhile event.

The weather - as I write this we are at the end of a stretch of foggy mornings and stunning afternoons. Bees are flying at my place and pulling in pollen. Vancouver BC



weather says 'enjoy it' while it lasts. NPR radio stated yesterday the we are about to experience the strongest La Nina since the 1950's. A friend reminded me we have had about eight volcanoes erupt this past year. It will be an interesting winter with this mix of circumstances. Make sure the buttons are sewn tight on your long johns.

There is something new to me in our neighborhood. Biofumigation. Mustard seed has been planted on Dodge Valley Road by Hughes Brothers Farms to be turned under as a green manure. This hopefully suppresses pests on what will be potato ground next year reducing the need for pesticides which is not new. What is great is that it is in full bloom right now and my bees are going nuts in the sunshine. We may see more of this if it works.

We have many new members signed up this fall and I want to ask them to attend

Royal Fork Oct 13, 2010

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the meetings and ask your questions. I will send you a map to CENEX if you request it.

People have told me they feel silly asking 'experienced' beekeepers their 'simple' questions. Some of us can only handle simple questions. Sometimes experience is not enough to make you a competent beekeeper. I have tried all summer to expand my hive numbers and am slightly behind where I was last spring. One hive I thought would do poorly was a 'boomer' in an area I know little about. So ask away and we will try to answer. As my friend David Hedlin says, there are two good years for farming, 1916 when cabbage seed prices skyrocketed and his Grandfather paid off the farm mortgage and next year. Always next year.

We had a good apple year at the home place here. I am hearing talk of poor fruit set in the rain last spring. The 'proper' number of hives were in place. I had eight or ten hives for my little orchard and have almost never seen so many apples. Pears, no, pretty spotty. Plums and peaches so, so. We made about 75 gallons of apple cider.

An aside, trying to fill newsletter space, is to share my first attempt at a winter garden. There has been no need in this good weather but it will change soon. Rebar spikes, 1/2" PVC pipe and plastic will tell the tale. Lettuce and radishes with mesclun greens. Garlic goes in in two weeks.

To Do List

- Continue to feed as necessary, pollen patties and syrup will do. If and when it hits 45 degrees or so your bees will not be able to process syrup and will stop taking it. Pollen patties may be offered all winter according to some experts.
- You should be done with mite treatments if you use them. If not done consider, what will still work. Ask questions! We used to recommend fall feeding fumagillin for nosema but I am not sure any more.
- Think about the ventilation needs of your bees heading into winter. We always say moisture kills not cold. Make sure your hives can breathe a bit and vent moisture. A weight on the lids is a good idea.
- Think about keeping your hives out of the wind and out of low wet spots. Some folks reduce entrances for winter. Some folks place mouse guards as well.

All for now, enjoy the meeting. Ed Markus