

Skagit Valley Beekeepers



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February 2015

Fast Forward Slowly

The next meeting will be **February 12th, 2015 at 7:00 PM** at the Skagit Farmers Supply CENEX Administration building, located at 1833 Park Avenue, Burlington WA. The speaker/topic to be announced.

Need bees? Come to the meeting and talk with **Seth Smith** or **Joe McConnaughey** or call Seth at the phone number above.

Time to renew your SVBA membership!

Our annual membership is \$12.00. Please see **Scott Rhodes** this next meeting to pay your dues. At the same time, you can also pay for your Bee Culture subscription. The new magazine subscription rates are: 1 year: \$25.00; 2 years: \$48.00; 3 years: \$69.00.

Spring or Winter Still?

I had one of my hosts email telling me that my bees are acting weird. She said the bees are getting into the chicken and duck feed.

With the warmer weather, the queen wants to lay and the bees are out looking for protein but it's early yet. There really isn't anything for them to visit - so they've found some protein in the poultry food.



Yesterday was the first day that I noticed my Dwarf Iris (Iris lacustris) was fully in bloom and all this last week, the bees have been bringing in pollen from something, just light amounts but the motherload has been from the Willow tree across the way. That tree is just buzzing on these warmer days when the sun is out at the temperature is reaching 50 degrees.

The iris and the willow, they're blooming a lot earlier than last year.

I was watching the hive on one of these nice days and I noticed a lot of bees in front of a hive walking around on the ground. My heart sunk thinking that I am having a problem with disease or varroa. I call these "Walkers". I moved up close to get a good look and all those bees on the ground had their pollen baskets loaded. More like pollen saddle bags. As they returned, some would just miss the landing board and fall to the ground and had to rest and pump their abdomen before another attempt.

It is still winter and the bees have me fearful that they'll lose some brood if they can't cover them the next time we have a cold snap. We do have February and March to get through!

Ah. I'll try not to worry and let the bees handle it and hope for the best.

Things To Do This Month

- Check bees and check if they are alive. Clean entrances, scrape bottoms out and make sure bees are dry. Gently lift or weigh hives to get a feel for how they are doing.
- You might choose to feed pollen patties and feed honey or fondant/candy or dried sugar if needed. If you decide to feed, be prepared to feed as needed until forage is available.
- If you need queens, make plans for ordering. Order packages or nucs if you need to do so. Time is running out!
- Register hives with state, visit <http://goo.gl/IIzXBT> for the form.
- If you're interested in a specific activity like spring splits or queen rearing, etc., read and study those topics now in order to be ready when the need/task arises.

Short and sweet this month!

