

SKAGIT VALLEY BEEKEEPERS



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March 2009

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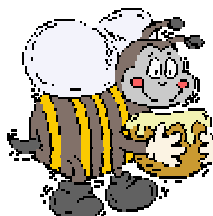
- The big news this month is the Annual Potluck at the Senior Center in Sedro-Woolley, WA on March 12th . We should plan on arriving about 6:00 PM and will be eating by 6:30 PM to allow plenty of time for our speaker . President Bill has asked Dr. Steve Sheppard to speak and his topic will be nosema disease. We will have our regular silent auction in which all may participate. The Association will provide a ham. Paper plates and appropriate dinnerware will be provided. Some folks bring their own plates and utensils as they choose. There will be a map in this issue to help folks find it this place as it is a bit odd!

- I WOULD ASK OTHER CLUBS WHO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER TO FORWARD THIS INFORMATION TO THEIR MEMBERS. Everyone is most welcome, we have a great time and Dr. Sheppard is enjoyable and knowledgeable! JUST BRING YOUR BEST DISH TO SHARE!! Bragging rights are expected.

- There is something of importance to share with you this month and it is STARVATION. Not you, your bees! Folks, with the weather we are having, your bees are brooding up meaning your queen is laying whether you think so or not. The bees can burn through their stores at an unbelievable rate trying to raise brood. And then crash! You can check the weight of your hives by just lifting the back end a little. If it feels oddly light it probably is and you need to figure out a feeding program. I've been watching my bees on these sunny afternoons and pollen is coming in, great wads of it, but the bees need sugar and you can provide it through syrup now or even granulated sugar on the inner covers around the vent hole. As warm as it is in the afternoons the bees are moving and will

POTLUCK!!

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take it down. I remind you about pollen patties and that my bees are taking one as big as my two hands, one a week, regularly. The fondant sugar they are taking more slowly. They are building up on that combination just now.

If the weather turns bad your bees will continue to expand and will need protein and will simply eat the brood for that protein when they run out of options. I will begin feeding thin syrup to further stimulate brood rearing starting in mid-March (that soon) as that allows two brood cycle intervals of 23 days each before cabbage pollination. That should build a solid worker bee population just before going into the seed crops in mid-May depending on how warm things stay. In beekeeping you have to be able to count backwards for brood and check-books.

If you are after early honey in Puget Sound, you need to consider doing the same or something like it.

If you have overwintered nucs, you should consider having enough equipment and space to allow them to grow.

I have good intentions as I have mentioned in previous newsletters, of interviewing successful queen rearers in our local area. All I can say is I know of two. If you know of someone else I might speak with, let me know or if you have some expertise, give me some of your time so that I might pass on information to all of our members.

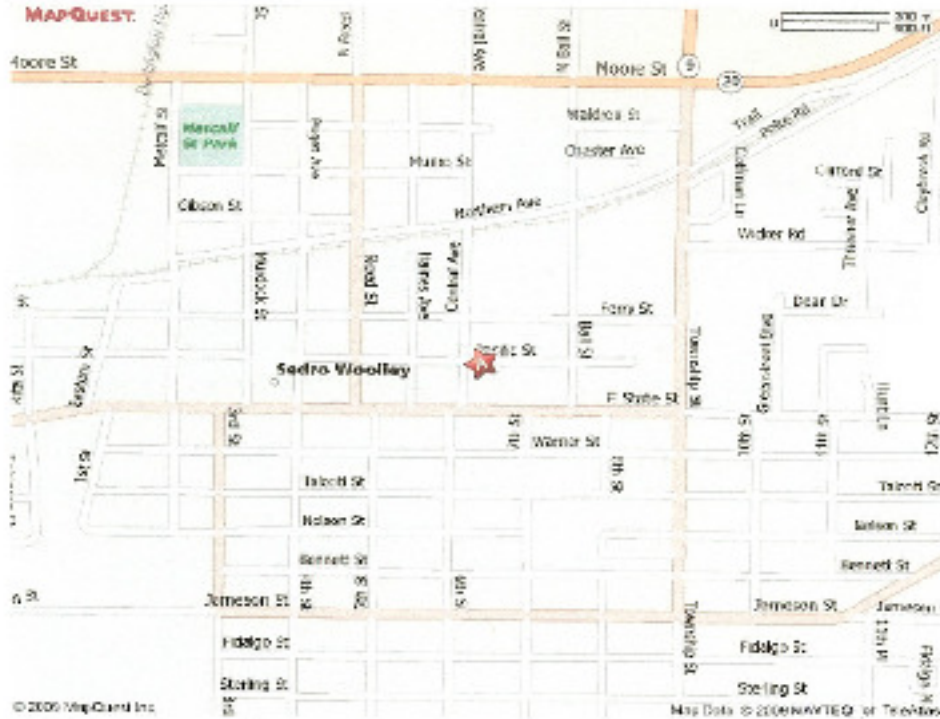
I want to rant a bit about the ads for queen bees in the bee journals. If you do not take these magazines you should, at least one. In them are advertised for sale, all of the best queen bees in the world if you read long enough. And all of our beekeeping problems are solved, guaranteed. Well, I don't think so. I also have to believe that a lot of good people are trying to do good work to improve their product. Are they doing the same old, same old though, or are they finding ways to get us off the chemical band wagon?

I will say if you read the last issue of Bee Culture carefully, Dr. Larry Conner talks of French quality survivor breeder queens being sold for incredible amounts of money, some to Australia to provide package bees for North America. Then in this issue of American Bee Journal, Randy Oliver writes of Australian package bees breaking down once they arrive here, unable to deal with chalkbrood, sacbrood and EFB. If I knew how I would find out who is using the super queens and where are they arriving. Then it is time to ask, how are those super bees actually doing, at least in California. Like I am reading all the time now, all beekeeping is local.

- Feed up your bees. Ask someone how.
- Check for mites and nosema. Bill has sent in test samples to WSU. You can too.

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The Center is an odd place to find. You almost think you are in an alley. The parking is in the center of several small city buildings all of whose doors face into a parking lot, not State Street. See Plaid Phone Book page 23 G-4