President’s Message

by Wayne Esaias

I am looking forward to a good year for MSBA and Beekeeping in Maryland. I am already impressed with the support of members and the Board of Directors in the first month of this term. We have already lined up keynote speakers for our three membership meetings, with a fine selection of speakers and topics, but still some room later in the year for more local speakers and topics. I look forward to your continued support for all of our officers and projects.

While President, I would like the MSBA to advance in two areas. The first is to develop effective communication with our State Legislators on issues of importance to us, so we have established a Legislative Liaison Committee, chaired by David Morris with help from Marc Hoffman. The committee has already been very busy, with the introduction of the Standard of Identity for Honey Bill, which Delegate Afzali asked MSBA to comment and review for technical content in its draft form. Your comments at our November meeting were important, and the MSBA Board of Directors has recommended its support. This bill will help you protect against sale of adulterated and fraudulent honey. Del. Afzali and Sen. Young invited MSBA to sponsor a Bee Day in Annapolis on February 2 to acquaint all Delegates and Senators with Maryland Honey and educate them on its importance, and to meet Maryland beekeepers. Many thanks to those who provided honey, displays, and their time. Please become familiar with the bill (HB 159/SB193, page 9), and let your own legislators know your feelings as soon as possible.

In State-wide initiatives like this, we try to represent all beekeepers. To be successful in delivering what you need, coordination with Local Associations is very important. So our second goal is better communication between MSBA and the 14 local and county bee clubs. We invite local association Presidents to participate in our Board Meetings (in person or remotely via toll free teleconferencing), and to also stay in contact with their MSBA County Vice President. This has worked very well with some counties and clubs - its good to get views from the Eastern Shore, Montgomery, and Allegany County, VA, and DC in addition to the previous usual suspects. I will make plans to attend at least one of your local meetings this year, as well.

Finally, its been a warm winter, bees have been very active and have been eating their stores faster than normal. February and March are the prime starvation months. Lets try to increase our winter survivorship.
**New Local Association:**

**The Lower Eastern Shore Beekeepers Association**

*New group launched in the Delmarva Peninsula*

Beekeepers in Southeastern Maryland have reason to celebrate this year, as 2012 has brought a new local club to the Lower Easter Shore.

With an inaugural meeting of 33 local beekeepers in January 11, the Lower Eastern Shore Beekeepers Association has a growing membership and is already offering a short course and a full program of events for the year! Their 2012 program and officer contact information is below.

Until recently, Delmarva beekeepers have found that attending club meetings has meant a long journey over the bridge or into Delaware. The growth of Maryland beekeeping has created a strong community and supports an ambitious program run by experienced officers.

The Lower Eastern Shore Beekeepers have a website at [www.lowershorebeekeepers.org](http://www.lowershorebeekeepers.org) as well as a Facebook page.

**Lower Eastern Shore Beekeepers Association 2012 Programs**

- **January 11:** Candle Making with Chris Scott
- **February 8:** Hive Gadgets with Oliver Collins
- **March 14:** Installing Pkg. Bees with Ron Wilson
- **April 11:** Flowering Plants with Ginny Rosenkrantz
- **May 9:** Top Bar Hives with Harry McElhone
- **June 13:** Integrated Pest Mgt. with Dean Burroughs
- **July 11:** Honey Harvest, Extracting, Bottling
- **August 8:** Small Hive Beetle with Michael Embrey
- **September 12:** Fall Management
- **October 10:** Honey Show with Dean Burroughs
- **November 14:** Alternative Beekeeping Methods with Ron Wilson
- **December 12:** Annual Dinner & Social

**Beekeeping Short Course**

Saturday March 24, 9:00 – 3:00 p.m. Md. Extension Office, $45.00 each

**LESBA 2012 Officers**

- **President:** Dean Burroughs, nectar22@verizon.net
- **V.President:** Ron Wilson, rbuzzguy@gmail.com
- **Secretary:** Chris Scott, wscott417@comcast.net
- **Treasurer:** Kate Patton, kate.patton@comcast.net
- **Publicity:** George Heath, beeman410@gmail.com

**UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS**

- **DC Beekeepers Meetup,** February 24, 7-8:30 PM
  - Church of the Reformation, 212 E Capitol St., DC.
  - Email dcbees@dcbeekeepers.org for info.
- **Delaware State Beekeepers Annual Meeting,** Saturday, March 10, 2012, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, 818 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover, DE, [www.delawarebeekeepers.com](http://www.delawarebeekeepers.com) for details.
- **Mid-Atlantic Organic Honey Bee Convention,** March 17, 8 AM-4 PM, Richmond, VA. $30 pre-registered, $35 at door, $50 per family, [www.beebustersinc.com](http://www.beebustersinc.com)
- **Beginning Top Bar Hive Beekeeping with Dr. Wyatt Mangum,** April 14, 2012, 8:00 AM to 5 PM, Baltimore location TBA. $35 for MSBA Members, $45 non-members, current members receive preference/limited seating. Email msba@mdbeekeepers.org for info.
- **Queen Rearing Retreat with Larry Connor,** May 4-6, Syria, VA, sponsored by Haywood Honey, LLC and The Northern VA Beekeeping Teaching Consortium. $275 plus meals/accommodation (discount packages available). Limited seating. For more info contact Shirley Ammon (540) 923-5075 or e-mail HaywoodhoneyLLC@aol.com.
- **MSBA Spring Meeting,** June 16, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, UMD/College Park Entomology Dept Plant Sciences Building Auditorium. Dr. Rick Fell, keynote.
- **MSBA Fall Meeting,** November 10, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD, Jennifer Berry/University of Georgia, keynote.
- **Pennsylvania State Beekeepers 2012 Annual Meeting,** Friday and Saturday, November 9-10 at the Best Western/Country Cupboard, Lewisburg, PA, [http://www.pastatebeekeepers.org/fallmeeting.htm](http://www.pastatebeekeepers.org/fallmeeting.htm)

**Other Upcoming Events:**

# Maryland State Beekeepers’ Association Winter Meeting

**February 18, 2012**

**Howard County Fairgrounds**

**West Friendship, MD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Speaker/Note</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>Refreshments, Coffee, Donuts, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Opening and Welcome</td>
<td>Dr. Wayne Esaias, President</td>
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<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Maryland Apiary Inspector’s Report</td>
<td>Jerry Fischer, Maryland State Inspector</td>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>The Bee Informed Partnership: Beekeeper Survey Says What Works and What Doesn’t</td>
<td>Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp, University of Maryland</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>HoneybeeNet Update</td>
<td>Dr. Wayne Esaias, University of Maryland</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Practical Experience in Local Queen Rearing</td>
<td>Paul Dill, Past-President, MSBA</td>
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<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>The Maryland Honey Standard for Free State Consumers and Beekeepers</td>
<td>Delegate Kathy Afzali, District 4A, Frederick County Maryland House of Delegates</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Recent Advances in Honeybee Research</td>
<td>Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp, University of Maryland</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 pm</td>
<td>Ask Expert Beekeepers Your Anonymous Questions</td>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>Dr. Wayne Esaias, President</td>
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**Directions:**

*Via I-70:* Get off I-70 at Exit 80 (Rt. 32 Exit); go south on MD Rt. 32 for 1/8 mile to first traffic light; turn right (west) onto Rt. 144; turn right at crest of hill onto Fairgrounds Road; turn into second entrance; meeting is in the Dining Hall, second building on left

*Via Rt. 32:* Stay on Rt. 32 to West Friendship; turn west (left, if coming from the south) onto Rt. 144, at the traffic light within sight of I-70; turn right at crest of hill onto Fairgrounds Road; turn into second entrance; meeting is in the Dining Hall, second building on left

*From Eastern Shore & Annapolis Area:* From Rt. 50, just west of Annapolis, take I-97 North toward Baltimore; exit onto Rt. 32 toward Columbia; follow directions above, via Rt. 32

*From NE MD:* Proceed to Baltimore Beltway (I- 695); take I-70 west toward Frederick; follow directions above, via I-70 Lunch / Refreshments at the Winter Meeting:

**Refreshments:**

MSBA will provide Coffee and Donuts, Sodas and Water as refreshments during the winter meeting.

**There will be an opportunity to order a Subway sandwich on a cash-only basis** for those who register before 10:00 AM for this meeting. Members/attendees are welcome to order upon registration or are advised to bring their own lunch or to make plans to dine at a local establishment.

**MSBA WINTER MEETING WEATHER POLICY**

In the event of a major winter storm, please listen to WBAL (AM 1090) or WTOP (FM 103.5) for announcements. If a Snow Emergency Plan is in effect for Howard County, the meeting is cancelled.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO REGISTER AND COMPLETE A MEMBER SURVEY**

We are interested in hearing your requests for future meeting and advanced beekeeping instruction topics, and will have a survey which we’d like members to complete at Winter Meeting registration.
MSBA Winter Meeting 2012 Speakers

It is our very good fortune that Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp joined the University of Maryland as Assistant Research Scientist in 2011, and is reaching out energetically to work with Free State Beekeepers. His research focus here is on pollinator health, and honey bee health specifically, with particular attention to using an epidemiological approach to understanding and (importantly) improving honey bee health. This approach is multi-faceted, requiring understanding both the etiology of individual bee diseases and the large scale monitoring of colony health.

Some of the areas his lab is addressing include:

• Identifying determinants of disease in honey bee colonies
• Identifying and promoting management systems which promote colony health
• Broad scale monitoring of pollinator health

He is encouraging UMD students to pursue these themes in their M.S. and Ph.D. studies.

Dr. vanEngelsdorp started keeping bees after taking an undergraduate course in beekeeping at the University of Guelph, Canada. Once ‘stung,’ he pursued a master’s degree in apiculture, and recently completed his Ph.D. He has since worked for the Canadian Government, at Cornell University, where he helped develop their master beekeeping program, as the Acting State Apiarist for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and as an acting supporter of projects supporting beekeeping in developing countries. As one of the founding members of the Colony Collapse working group he spends considerable time investigating and speaking about this latest threat to honey bee populations. You can get a preview of his energetic approach by taking a look at his speech to the TED community at www.ted.com/talks/dennis_vanengelsdorp_a_plea_for_bees.html

Del. Kathy Afzali (R) has represented District 4a in the Maryland House of Delegates since January 2011. Del. Afzali has been active since last year in pursuing a Standard of Identity for Honey, a bill which the MSBA and Maryland Farm Bureau are joining her in supporting this year. Del. Afzali was instrumental in helping our members to interact and forge relationships with their Annapolis representatives this winter, and is a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and its election law subcommittee, as well as a member of the Women Legislators of Maryland.

Dr. Wayne Esaias is current MSBA President, EAS Master Beekeeper, and emeritus NASA research scientist, where he founded the HoneyBeeNet Project, using honey bees as tiny data collectors to understand how climate change is affecting pollination. HoneyBeeNet compares bee data from across North America to satellite imagery in order to gain a big-picture perspective of how our warming climate is affecting both plants and pollinators. He recently joined UMD as an Adjunct Professor of Entomology.

Mr. Paul Dill is the immediate past-President of the MSBA (with many other previous board positions), current president of the Eastern Shore Beekeepers, and former president of the Delaware State Beekeepers. Paul was once a cross-country truck driver riding through Ohio who was intrigued at the sight of bee boxes along the road. One day, he pulled off to talk to a beekeeper and found himself getting the equipment, along with his first package of bees, on his way home. Paul has kept bees commercially for decades, and stresses the importance of developing local queen stocks, nucs, and sustainable genetics for beekeepers at all levels of experience.

“I know things are tight, but I'm sure we can afford to keep more than one bee.”
Bee Day in Annapolis Supports Honey Standard Bill

by David Morris

On February 2, the MSBA and representatives of a half dozen county clubs participated in a “Bee Day” to educate leaders about the Maryland Definition of Honey, HB 159/SB 193. In addition to supporting this important bill, members got to know their reps directly, and our elected leaders came away with a respect for and friendship toward beekeepers in their districts.

In response to both beekeeper and consumer demand for pure food and against adulteration, the MSBA became involved last year in crafting a workable official definition of honey. In this, MSBA and Maryland are joining a nationwide movement seeking protection in federal law. If you attended the MSBA Fall meeting, perhaps you even participated in the discussion about the definition.

The “Bee Day” reception in Annapolis was organized through the generous assistance of Del. Kathy Afzali of Frederick, the original sponsor of the House Bill 159; this bill is cross-filed with Senate Bill 193, sponsored by Senator Ronald Young, also of Frederick. Beekeepers met legislators all morning at the Lowe House Office Building. We had club displays from all over the state, as well as subject matter stations. These included Meme Thomas of Baltimore Honey, with urban beekeeping to demonstrate that beekeepers are everywhere, in every district. Dean Burroughs of the Lower Eastern Shore Beekeepers manned an excellent display on pollination in MD agriculture. BUMBA’s Linda Thompson showcased the number of clubs and their activities to train new beekeepers, to help maintain honey bee populations and to be responsible in their hobby. The Frederick County Beekeepers brought their award-winning display, and Montgomery and Allegany Beekeepers also brought club displays and representatives.

The reception included coffee service generously donated by Starbucks, as well as honey sweetened cupcakes and other treats. The cupcake recipe comes from the White House kitchen and was inspired by the White House Bee Hives, maintained by member Charlie Brandts.

Perhaps the most striking item the legislators and their staff shared was local honey donated by member beekeepers. We were able to give legislators honey from in or nearby their districts, bringing home the value and quality of real honey, and the potential loss to the state should adulterated products be allowed to drive out the real thing.

A hearing on the House Bill took place February 8, before the Environmental Matters Committee, and the Senate committee will hear it February 14.

Now is the time for you to make your voice heard in the legislative process. Find out who your state Delegate and Senator are and write them a brief email of support for the Honey Definition bills, HB159 and SB193.

For More Information

MSBA’s suggested text:
http://www.mdbeekeepers.org/localhoney.html

Official Bill (with co-sponsor information):
http://mlis.state.md.us/2012rs/billfile/HB0159.htm

Beekeepers from across the Maryland participated in staffing exhibits, answering questions, pointing out the importance of bees, and handing out donated local hive products at the Lowe House Office Building on February 2: Photo by beekeeper Fred Sypher.
Writing a grant to support your beekeeping goals may sound implausible and impractical, but a USDA project called the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program might be able to help you pair your local activities with practical scientific research in an accessible way.

SARE’s mission is to advance—to the whole of American agriculture—innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in ground breaking research and education. Any beekeeper in Maryland—probably in the United States!—can tell you that beekeepers and their colonies can use all kinds of help. We need to build our queen-rearing skills and ability to produce local nucs and packages.

We need to get a better grasp of the factors that are affecting our bees and which tools or approaches are most appropriate or most effective at addressing these problems. We need to be able to pass along this knowledge to other beekeepers and would-be newbees. This requires resources, tools that we need to apply scientifically, which is where the SARE Grant Program comes in.

We have had community members and neighbors succeed in acquiring and completing grants in the recent past. In 2011, the Prince William (Virginia) Regional SARE Grants: A Chance to Learn, to Teach, and to Grow Beekeeping Beekeepers earned and completed a SARE project titled “Promoting Sustainable Beekeeping Practices Through Local Production of Nucs (nucleus colonies) and Local Queen Honeybees.” The group received resources to gather data and to train local beekeepers, but also substantially increased their ongoing know-how and the vigor of the colonies they manage.

As many of us may have seen in a recent Washington Post feature story, Maryland beekeepers Adam Finkelstein and Kelly Raush have also accessed SARE resources for their project, “Testing Two Selection Assays’ efficacy for Varroa Mite Tolerant Queen Bee Production.” SARE grants in other nearby states have explored approaches to winter feeding (North Carolina), overwintering techniques (Pennsylvania), and the impact of providing a middle hive entrance on varroa (New Jersey).

SARE grants are administered by region (Maryland is in the Northeast SARE area) and fall into several categories. Individual beekeepers are eligible to apply for “Farmer” grants, the category under which both of the local projects above received funding.

Farmer Grants are for commercial producers who have an innovative idea they want to test using a field trial, on-farm demonstration, marketing initiative, or other technique. A technical advisor—often an extension agent, crop consultant, or other service professional—must also be involved. Projects should seek results other farmers can use, and all projects must have the potential to add to our knowledge about effective sustainable practices. Farmer Grant proposal deadlines are usually in December with awards announced in March.

Step by step information concerning how to apply is online at www.nesare.org, including forms and tip sheets for completing them. Some would-be applicants have shared that identifying a technical collaborator was a barrier to applying: we are fortunate in the Maryland beekeeping community to have many trained scientists and agricultural professional both among MSBA members and as friends to beekeeping.

The MSBA would be happy to help local groups reach out to professionals should they wish to develop a SARE grant application: please feel free to contact us at msba@mdbeekkeepers.org.

With Farmer Grant applications due at the end of the year, perhaps the 2012 season will provide you or your local club with both inspiration and incentives for exploring how local beekeeping can be better understood and better pursued through relevant first hand research!
MSBA to Offer Day-Long Top Bar Hive Seminar April 14

The MSBA is honored to be able to offer a day-long Introduction to Top Bar Hive Beekeeping with Dr. Wyatt Mangum on April 14. The seminar will cost $35 to MSBA members and $45 to non-members in order to cover speaker and room costs. We will be limited to 50 students, with priority given to current MSBA members. For more information and details on how to reserve a place, please email msba@mdbeekeepers.org (preferred) or call (202) 255 4318.

We are able to offer this class due to the assistance of our VA Second Vice President, Mrs. Pat Haskell of the Beekeepers Association of Northern Virginia.

The day is designed to prepare would-bee TBH beginners to manage hives in advance of installing a package into their new gear.

We are still finalizing the location for the seminar, which is currently planned for the Baltimore area with access to public transportation. Students should consider bringing a lunch in order to maximize the available time.

In recent years, many new beekeepers have signaled either curiosity towards or a strong preference in the direction of Top Bar Hive beekeeping.

While the MSBA recognizes that most of our members keep bees in Langstroth gear, a sizable number of us are interested in other options that might help promote bee health, such as Warre or Perone "automatic" hives. As a beekeeping community, it is important to reach out to all practitioners to be sure that they have access to the best information and tools for managing healthy colonies, and to participate in shared group priorities like maintaining the right to keep bees, identifying potential health and management threats early, and communicating freely about new developments.

Should interest continue, we will try to work with Dr. Mangum to schedule a Fall and Winter Management follow up class later in the year. Last Fall, several MD beekeepers showed interest in such a class, but this Spring session is a prerequisite.

Recipe: Chef Bill Yosses’ White House Honey Cupcakes

Honey has found its way into every meal of the day at the White House since MSBA member Charlie Brandts first worked with the chefs there to bring a beehive to the South Lawn. This recipe is all about the honey, absolutely delicious, and easy to make!

**Ingredients**

- 1/4 cup softened butter
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup honey
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt

**For the Icing**

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup honey
- 3 Tbsp. lemon juice

**Directions**

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with cupcake papers.
2. In a stand mixer, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, on high speed. Mix in honey, eggs, buttermilk and vanilla until blended, on medium speed.
3. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt, then mix into the batter until just blended. Scoop the batter into the cupcake cups evenly.
4. Bake for about 20 minutes; cupcakes are done when tops spring back lightly to the touch.

**To prepare icing**

In a small sauce pan, whisk ingredients over medium heat until sugars dissolve together; keep whisking to avoid clumps. Using a spoon, drizzle over the tops of cupcakes, or carefully pour over cupcakes.

Makes one dozen cupcakes.
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BOWIE-UPPER MARLBORO BEEKEEPERS ASSOC.
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HOWARD COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOC.
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HAGERSTOWN VALLEY APIAN SOCIETY
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MSBA HOME PAGE:
www.mdbeekeepers.org, webmaster@mdbeekeepers.org

Please check the MSBA membership “thru date” on your mailing label! If your dues are not current, please pay them at the February 18 meeting or mail to: MSBA Treasurer, Robert Crouse, 1606 Dogwood Lane, Bel Air, MD, 21015. Also note: we will only accept dues payments for a single year. Additional payments may be credited as MSBA donations.
Queen Rearing Retreat
May 4-5-6, 2012
Hands-on Hive and Classroom Instruction
presented by Dr. Larry J. Connor

Retreat starts at Noon May 4th with check-in & Lunch at Graves Mountain Lodge, Syria, VA.

Class size limited to 20 students: first come- first registered.

--Recommend 3 years beekeeping experience to attend--

Retreat Cost:
• Tuition: $275 (includes book Queen Rearing Essentials, a $23 value)

Plus one of the below options:
• 2 Nights & 7 meals (Lunch Friday- Lunch Sunday) includes tax & gratuity:
  o Single room (1 in a room): $224.02 per person
  o Shared room (2 in a room) $201.33 per person
• 7 Meals Only (no lodging) includes tax and gratuity: $124

**All meals served family style – all you can eat**

To register, send check for full amount to: HHS-Continuing Education Initiative, P.O. Box 769, Madison VA 22727, be sure to include type of room selection. Cancelations accepted and money refunded up to 2 weeks before the retreat.

For more information contact Shirley Ammon (540) 923-5075 or e-mail HaywoodhoneyLLC@aol.com.

To see more about Dr. Connor and his activities go to: www.wicwas.com

Sponsored by: Haywood Honey, LLC and The Northern Virginia Beekeeping Teaching Consortium
Pollinator Week is June 18-24, 2012!

The National Pollinator Protection Campaign has created a national program of pro-pollinator events which includes many high-level talks, conferences, and other gatherings right in our area. This week they announced the 2012 dates of June 18–24 in order to provide local groups with the opportunity to build on the campaign and also benefit from its momentum.

This would be an excellent opportunity for beekeepers to reach out to schools, churches, garden clubs, farmers markets, and more with presentations and observation hive demonstrations. Pollinator Week also offers downloadable handouts, tip sheets, and even a phone app that you can use to support such an outreach effort.

According to NAPPC, “Five years ago the U.S. Senate’s unanimous approval and designation of the final week in June as ‘National Pollinator Week’ marked a necessary step toward addressing the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations. Pollinator Week has now grown to be an international celebration of the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats and beetles. The growing concern for pollinators is a sign of progress, but it is vital that we continue to maximize our collective effort. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture signs the proclamation every year.

Pollinating animals, including bees, birds, butterflies, bats, beetles and others, are vital to our delicate ecosystem, supporting terrestrial wildlife, providing healthy watershed, and more. Therefore, Pollinator Week is a week to get the importance of pollinators’ message out to as many people as possible. It’s not too early to start thinking about an event at your school, garden, church, store, etc. Pollinators positively effect all our lives- let’s SAVE them and CELEBRATE them!”

Help in Pollinator Planting

One interest shared by some of our members in working with the state government is encouraging planting of highway medians and other rights of way with pollinator friendly plants. The Pollinator Week site includes a link to an interactive library of planting guides. Based on the zip code of the location in which you are interested, you can download, for FREE, a guide entitled Selecting Plants for Pollinators tailored to your eco-region.

Social or solitary: It’s in bees’ genes

(From an article by Dave Evensen, University of Illinois)

A new study of different types of bees—bumble bees, honeybees, stingless bees, and solitary bees—offers a look at the genetic underpinnings of their different lifestyles.

Beekeepers sometimes face questions about why worker bees opt not to reproduce, or how evolutionary biology can explain such a non-competitive approach to reproduction. It appears that there are genetic footprints for eusocial behavior, but not all species may have arrived at the strategy in the same manner.

The Illinois study focuses on the evolution of “eusociality,” a system of collective living in which most members of a colony forego their reproductive rights and instead devote themselves to specialized tasks that enhance the survival of the group. Eusociality is a rarity in the animal world, says Gene Robinson, professor of entomology at University of Illinois and the director of the Institute for Genomic Biology, who led the study. Ants, termites, some bees and wasps, a few other arthropods, and a couple of mole rat species are the only animals known to be eusocial.

“People talk about the evolution of eusociality,” Robinson says. “But we want to emphasize that these were independent evolutionary events. And we wanted to trace the independent stories of each.”

To accomplish this, the researchers sequenced active genes in nine species of bees representing every lifestyle from the solitary leaf-cutter bee, Megachile rotundata, to the highly eusocial dwarf honey bee, Apis florea.

Then co-author Matt Hudson, a professor of crop sciences, used the only available bee genome, that of the honey bee, as a guide to help assemble and identify the sequenced genes in the other species, and the team looked for patterns of genetic change that coincided with the evolution of the differing social systems.

“Are there genes that are unique to the primitively eusocial bees that aren’t found in the highly eusocial bees?” Cameron asks. “Or if you lump all the eusocial bees together, are there unique genes that unite those groups compared to the solitaries?”

The analysis did find significant differences in gene sequence between the eusocial and solitary bees. The researchers also saw patterns of genetic change unique to either the highly eusocial or primitively eusocial bees.

“What we find is that there are some genes that show signatures of selection across the different independent evolutions [of eusocial bees],” Robinson says. “They might be representatives of the ‘gotta have it’ genes if you’re going to evolve eusociality. But others are more lineage-specific.”
News Briefs:  
Breaking Bee Info from Around the Web

Almonds without Honeybee Pollination?  
(From an article by Chuck Garvey of The Business Journal) The Independence almond — a self-fertile variety needing few bees to produce numerous large nuts — is creating a buzz among almond growers. Created by Zaiger Genetics Inc., the Independence almond was released in 2008. Dave Wilson Nursery, which holds the patent on the trees, has a producing Independence orchard in Modesto. At the nursery, orders for the trees now exceed orders for the popular Nonpareil variety.

Nonpareil has been the dominant variety in the area producing large almonds with attractive shells. But the variety needs plenty of pollination. Dennis Tarry, CEO of Dave Wilson Nursery, points out that growers could save as much as $250 to $300 an acre by eliminating the cost of bees. Pollination accounts for about 16 percent of the per-acre cultural cost of growing almonds.

The prospect of the new almond has some beekeepers a little concerned. Roger Everett, a Tulare County beekeeper and past president of the California State Beekeepers, said his industry is keeping an eye on the success of commercial plantings of the Independence almond. “Depending on how well Independence plays out in the real world, it could result in a decrease in the need for bees,” Everett said.

Rent for a single pollinating bee colony reached as high as $140 a few years ago when colony collapse disorder caused widespread bee disappearances.

USDA Releases First New Plant Hardiness Zone Map since 1990: Min Temps Generally Up

The USDA has revised the Plant Hardiness Zone Maps used by farmers and gardeners around the country to select appropriate plant stocks. The maps are made up of 30-year averages of extreme low temperature weather events, and the USDA stresses that they are therefore not reliable evidence of climate change.

While a few areas were moved to slightly cooler zones, the majority of the changes reflect a shift to warmer zones, however. Zone boundaries generally moved up by a half zone, or a five degree change. In Maryland, the picture is mixed. Annapolis was classed as Zone 7a on the older map, with yearly average lows between 0°F and 5°F. Now the capital is in 7b, with minimums of 5°F-10°F. Hagerstown remains in Zone 6b (lows of -5°F to 0°F), while Cumberland has moved from 6b to 7a (0°F-5°F).

While many of these changes are due to changes in climate patterns, some are a result of the increased regional accuracy of the map to better reflect the influence of local geography, like changes in elevation or nearness to a body of water.

For beekeepers, this means keeping an eye on gradual changes in local bee forage plants, as well as potentially recalculating the winter behavior and stores consumption of our colonies.

You can get a zip code by zip code breakdown via the USDA’s Interactive Plant Hardiness Zone Map.

Phorid Fly Found Killing Honey Bees

(From Catch the Buzz) Now after you finally clear away the questions about cell phones and Colony Collapse Disorder, you may have another candidate featured in the popular press to discuss with garden clubs, school groups, or any of the other non-beekeepers with whom you share honeybee information.

Entomologist Dr. Brian Brown of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles accidently noticed and has since documented the parasitism of honeybees by Phorid flies, Apocephalus borealis, creating what the press has called “Zombie bees.” Brown and his colleagues say they have proof that parasitized honey bees show hive abandonment behavior, leaving their hives at night and dying shortly thereafter.

The Phorid fly is a known parasite of bumblebees, however, and has been identified in Maryland for decades. The missing piece of this research, to date, is whether honeybees are displaying any new vulnerability to this parasitism, or whether the dynamics of this parasite/host relationship shed any useful light on Colony Collapse Disorder. Most entomologists show little worry about Phorid flies as a primary threat, though perhaps they could contribute to a difficult environment.

Phorid flies have a colorful history in entomology. They are used in crime scene investigations for developing time lines for remains, and some species are known to decapitate fire ants, also creating “zombies.”
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PLANT PROTECTION SECTION
APIARY INSPECTION
50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF HONEY BEE COLONIES FOR ________

If blank, print Name and Address Below

PHONE NO. (H) ______________ (W) ______________ IDENTIFICATION NO. ______________

By law, all honey bee colonies in the State of Maryland must be registered with the Maryland Department of Agriculture.
Will you be keeping bees on another persons property this year? ________ Yes ________ No
If yes, at least one colony in apiary must be identified as to ownership with an approved name or number.
If an ID number has not been assigned, check 1 or 2 below.
1. Assign me an ID number or
2. Assign me the following name or number ID

PLEASE NOTE THE SPECIFIC LOCATION OF EACH APIARY BELOW

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YARD</th>
<th>LOCATION (Street address, road name, town, etc.)</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF COLONIES</th>
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Total colonies ______________

__________________________________________
SIGNATURE

__________________________________________
DATE

SEE BACK

BEE-API.WPD:August 11, 1998
Mandatory information - Please fill out

Have you purchased queens, packaged bees, nucs of colonies form out-of-state during the previous year?

Yes ______ No ______

If yes the MDA may examine your bees for mites. Please answer the following:

Date of Purchase_______ State of Purchase_______ Items Purchased_______

Do you employ one or more persons in beekeeping?

Yes ______ No ______

If yes, you must file with the Department a Certificate of Compliance with the State Workmen’s Compensation Laws, or you may provide the Department, as evidence of insurance, a workmen’s compensation policy number or binder number.

POLICY NUMBER/BINDER NUMBER, EXPIRATION DATE: _____________________

Optional information - You are not required to complete this section

Honey For Sale, Collecting Bee Swarms, Stinging Insect Removal

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Offices (CES) receive calls from the public requesting sources of local honey, and reporting honey bee swarms during the spring swarming season. Occasionally a local beekeeper cannot be found that has honey for sale or to collect these bees (usually collected free of charge). Calls are also received regarding honey bee nests in the walls of houses, and yellow jacket and hornet’s nests that homeowners would like someone to come and remove (usually removed for a fee).

If you plan on having honey for sale and you would like your name, town and telephone number included on a list that will be distributed to the public, please indicate this below. If you are seriously interested in collection honey bee swarms and/or removing honey bee, yellow jacket or hornet nests, and you would like to have your name included on a list that will be used by the MDA and CES, indicate this below. Your name will be given out to the public when calls that pertain to the categories you have checked are received.

Please note: If you use any insecticides when collecting stinging insects, Maryland Law requires that you be licensed and certified to use pesticides by the MDA or be employed by a licensed pest control company. Collecting stinging insects without using an insecticide does not require any license.

Check Appropriate Boxes. I want to be included on your list and receive calls for:

☐ 1. Honey for sale
☐ 2. Removing honey bee swarms
☐ 3. Removing honey bee nests in walls of buildings, etc.
☐ 4. Removing yellow jacket and hornet nests

County or counties in which I am interested in collecting/removing stinging insects: