

# Essex County Beekeepers Society, Inc.



Edition: June, 2008  
Next Meeting: June 14  
Place: Landi's Boonton Apiary  
Time: 10:00 AM—2:00 PM  
Subject: Queen Rearing for the  
Hobbyist Beekeeper  
Speaker: Landi  
ECBS Feature: BugFest  
June 28 at Environmental Center

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## President's Message

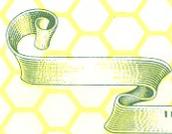
Why is it that, once the first dandelion blooms, everything seems to happen at double speed like one of those time lapse photography shots in the movies? No sooner have I reversed my brood supers and verified my bees to be queenright and disease-free, but I'm needing a third honey super on this one and that one's up in an apple tree! (I really did have one up in an apple tree, the day of the state meeting, and my farmer landlord gave me a ride up in the bucket of a backhoe to retrieve it. I consider this 'first class' travel for swarm retrieval, much better than ladders!) In spite of a rather cool, wet spring, the bees in our area seem to be doing pretty well and I have some hives with 6, and even 7 honey supers on. It's been quite the season for swarms, too, with most beekeepers kept pretty busy catching not only our own but plenty of mystery swarms, too.

Remember to give your bees plenty of room to store that nectar, which takes up much more space than honey. I try to put on as much equipment as I have early in the flow, consolidating as it ends so I can take home nice fat, well-filled honey supers for extraction.

Tim Schuler gave us a great AFB workshop in May with a lot of good advice for minimizing the risk of contracting this deadly bacterial disease and tools for recognizing it.

The spring state meeting featured Diana Cox-Foster and Mary Ann Frasier of Penn State with some fascinating research. Diana spoke on viruses and their relation to CCD. Mary Ann's been working on the pesticide angle. Here are some surprising tidbits I picked up: Varroa mite infestation suppresses the production of the enzyme glucose oxidase in bees. This is the enzyme that acts on glucose to produce glycogen and hydrogen peroxide, and so is responsible for significant antimicrobial activity in the colony. This is one avenue for a colony's final mite collapse from viruses (Parasitic Mite Syndrome).

Kashmir Bee Virus and Deformed Wing Bee Virus (DWV) are in the same family as polio and foot and mouth disease. DWV is usually present in the hive, as are many other viruses, but it seems to remain asymptomatic until the bees' exoskeletons are pierced by the mites, allowing for the entry of *bacteria*. It's the presence of the bacteria that activates the virus so that the young bees



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emerge with deformed wings. Migratory stress is NOT associated with CCD. As many hobbyists and sideliners experienced CCD as did migratory beekeepers.

In a small controlled experiment in a greenhouse, IAPV (Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus) was introduced to a virus-free hive. CCD-like symptoms occurred, with bees flying out of the hive and not returning, leaving large amounts of uncovered brood and the queen. The bees were found on the floor of the greenhouse, twitching and trembling until they died. This experiment is *not* conclusive, however, it's very intriguing. Black Queen Cell Virus can cause the bees to supersede their queen with abnormal frequency. BQCV was found in high levels in many of the samples Diana's research team tested.

One strain of survivor bees seems to be able to clear up viruses introduced to the colony. These bees have increased resistance. Mary Ann has been testing bees, pollen and wax for pesticides. She has found extremely high levels of all classes of pesticides in all of these – approaching toxic levels in some cases. Fluvalinate (Apistan) and coumaphos (Check-Mite) are especially prevalent, but many agricultural chemicals were also found.

Pollen in particular contained many pesticides. Some colonies actually had 'entombed' pollen-filled cells with propolis. The pollen in these cells was tested and found to contain much higher pesticide levels than adjacent pollen-filled cells that had not been "entombed."

Beeswax is a sponge for pesticides. It soaks up these chemicals so well that it's like a fossil record of historical pesticide use. Foundation wax, commercially purchased from all suppliers, contains high levels of pesticides. Presence of pesticides in a colony is NOT associated with CCD.

Fluvalinate (Apistan) is much more toxic to bees than previously thought. Mary Ann recommends avoiding Apistan completely.

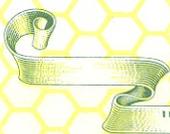
Formic acid treatment may cause a colony to be more susceptible to viruses. This was not part of the research presented, but Dr. Lena Brattson of Rutgers (who attended our ECBS short course and is also doing research at the university) is working on a project that seems to indicate thymol is also toxic to bees. Thymol is the active ingredient in Apiguard and Api-Life Var.

This research confirmed for me that, until we have bred a strong survivor bee with the ability to resist all these pests, pathogens and environmental toxins, it is critical to use Integrated Pest Management rather than just treating our bees across the board. Even the 'soft' chemicals like formic acid and thymol have a down side and should not be used unless absolutely needed. And the more toxic ones get soaked up by our beeswax and remain in the hive long after the strips have been removed. I remove old comb regularly from my colonies, dating new frames of foundation as I put them in, and trying to take out the older stuff so I have nothing more than 5 years old in there. I'm considering reducing this rotation schedule to 3 years and going to only a top inch-wide strip of foundation on frames in my queen operation. I would recommend all of us look at getting rid of any old comb we can't see through.

Keeping healthy bees is not an easy job, and it just seems to get harder all the time. However, I try to take it a day at a time, and I don't let information like this take away from the joy I feel when I look at a frame loaded with brood, honey and bees.

I hope to see you all next week. Don't forget your chairs!!

Landi



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## ECBS News

### June Picnic Meeting

#### RAISE YOUR OWN QUEENS – SIMPLE METHODS FOR THE HOBBYIST

We'll be sharing food, company and information on Saturday June 14 in Boonton Township at Landi's *new* Queen Rearing yard in Boonton Township at Four Corners. For those of you who attended our last 'queen' meeting at her Pine Brook yard, the Boonton yard is much roomier, being located at the back of a farmer's field, but lacks all the nice amenities of Pat and Dick Gamsby's kennel yard. So **BE SURE TO BRING A CHAIR!** Or you may have to sit on a honey super....

Come to learn a few methods of raising queens that *don't* involve grafting – Miller, Nicot/Jenter, and a few home-grown even simpler methods.

Learn what's really important to raise good quality queens, and get a chance to check out a modest commercial queen operation. We won't have queens available for sale just yet, but they should be 'cooking' by the time of the meeting.

We'll definitely be looking at bees, so bring a veil.

Bring food or drink to share. Doesn't matter what – can be as simple as a loaf of bread or bottle of soda. We want you to come, so if you don't have time to cook, don't! But be sure to come anyway.

*Time:* 10:00 – 2:00

*Directions:* Take Route 287 North to Exit 45, Wootton Street, Boonton. Straight off the exit to the stop sign. Left at the stop sign.

Right at the light onto Myrtle Avenue (Route 202N). Go about a mile and turn left at the brick firehouse onto Taylortown Road. Go up Taylortown, past Landi's house (Gooserock Farm), past Boonton Avenue, several miles until you come to a stop sign. This is known as Four Corners to the locals, though there's nothing to indicate that! Turn right at the stop sign onto Powerville Road, which will become Kinnelon Road further down. There will be a farmer's field on your left, and just past a small bridge, there will be a wooden post-and-rail fence and a young Christmas tree plot, with the treeline ahead of you. Turn left at the break in the wooden fence just before the treeline. (If you see West Road, you went a little too far, and don't be fooled by the white post and rail fence before the bridge.) You'll be off-road, driving along wheel ruts in grass. Follow the trail to the apiary, about 1000 feet in.

*Rain Date:* June 21.

*Remember to Bring:* Chair, Dish to share for lunch, Veil

### Bugfest

Saturday June 28, 621B Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland, NJ 07068, 10:30 – 2:00. You won't want to miss the fun as Joe Treimel dons a bee beard and I get outfitted in a live bee bikini.

That will happen at noon, weather permitting. The center has invited us to sell honey, and there will be a table there for that purpose, so **BRING HONEY TO SELL** if you wish. We're also going to dress kids in bee suits and photograph them holding a frame of bees, so we'll need volunteers to help with opening the hives and dressing the children.

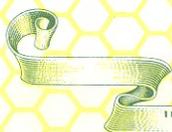
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Jonathan Glasser working with a great looking frame of bees.



Landi demonstrates removing a swarm while standing in a bucket loader



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