



THE BUZZ FROM HERE

The Newsletter of the Newfoundland & Labrador Beekeeping Association

- *By Catherine Dempsey*

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

To date the Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeeping Association has 68 members. Thank you to everybody who answered the questions on the membership form. In looking it over it is evident that we have five general groups;

- Experienced commercial apiarists, who have numerous hives. They are producing honey and other bee products for sale and wholesale, queens and nucs, and working on other products as well.
- Experienced members who are managing a personal bee yard, with little desire to produce honey in excess of their needs. These members are also a valuable source of information on beekeeping in the province.
- New "Wannabees". Many of these people are trying to learn about beekeeping as they wait to buy or build their equipment, and purchase a queen and nuc.
- People studying bees in the province.
- People who don't want to raise honeybees but support the protection of the native pollinators and want to attract them to their gardens.

That is a wide variety of interests within the membership and a lot of different goals. The one thing that I hope unites all of the members is a desire to protect our pollinators and to be able to continue beekeeping without importing any of the viruses, mites, small hive beetles and other pests that would mean using medications on our hives. That means education, and keeping a watchful eye on people who are in a rush to jump on the bee wagon, want to bring in used equipment, or even bring in bees from other provinces or countries.

NEW REGULATIONS COMING

As the interest grows, more regulations are going to be necessary. Many of us started when finding out how to start was like a big secret. With the surge of interest, more issues start to arise, and new regulations are discussed at every level of government. It is important that we be part of these discussions. There are now a number of initiatives we can work on to ensure that new regulations are beneficial for the province, the communities, the beekeepers and most importantly, for the bees!

The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency is working towards registering **every beekeeper in** the province. This will lead to some record keeping on the part of the beekeepers. The NLBKA wants to work with the province to encourage registration. There is no charge to register. If you don't have a registration number yet, please contact Karen Kennedy, Provincial Apiarist. Karen.Kennedy@gov.nl.ca or 709-637-2662.

Some municipalities are worried about people keeping bees within their boundaries, and the reflex action could be for some councils to order removal of hives. At the present time there are no regulations in place. The NLBKA has proposed working with the Federation of Municipalities and the Province to develop a set of regulations for beekeeping within municipal boundaries. This might mean some rules like setting a limit on the number of hives on an urban property, having a fence around the bee yard, some signage to inform trespassers that the yard is present. If there are regulations and bylaws prepared in cooperation that all municipalities can agree to, beekeepers will be in a better position to keep their hives, and the councils will have the knowledge and backup regulations to respond to anonymous complaints from people with little knowledge of bees. Of course it is up to all of us to help educate our neighbours.

If you are interested in volunteering for a committee to work on these regulations, please let us know by emailing catherine@cormorant-ltd.com

FALL AGM AND RESEARCH WORKSHOP - save the dates!

First week of November! The provincial Forestry and Agrifoods Agency is holding the “**Our Food for Our Future**” Symposium at the Holiday Inn in St John’s November 1 – 3, 2016. NLBKA will add a pollinator research component to this event.

The NLBKA is aiming to hold the AGM and Workshop in Gander over the weekend of November 18, 19, 20. I recommend you save the dates in your calendar!

SUPPLIES NOW AVAILABLE HERE IN THE PROVINCE

Two of our NLBKA members are now carrying beekeeping supplies here in the province. One in Grand Falls-Windsor, and One in Freshwater, Placentia Bay

Trevor Tuck of Tucks Bee Better in Grand Falls-Windsor tucksbeebetter@gmail.com, or 709-486-0177 passes on the following information:

“For anyone interested in growing flowers for the bees. I sell 4 varieties of clover seed, alfalfa, and buckwheat. All of these are good sources of nectar and pollen. Also if anyone is looking for pollen patties or substitutes for spring feeding. I carry Bee Tech (tech transfer recipe), bee pro, global 15% irradiated pollen patties, as well as Dave Mendez’s personal recipe patties, ultra bee from Mann lake, and Feed Bee dry powder, that can be used in variety of ways. And I have the feeding stimulant “honey bee healthy”. Also have a variety of bee yard warning signs. Bee suites from child sizes all the way to 5XL. And so on...”

G&M Beekeeping Retail Store: Freshwater, Placentia Bay

We are pleased to announce our partnership with Mann Lake Beekeeping Supplies. We intend to stock a large assortment of beekeeping equipment to service our NL & Atlantic Canada customers. For more information or to purchase beekeeping supplies, contact James at:

(709) 213-BEES (2337) or gandmbeesupply@gmail.com

BEE HOTELS – A GOOD INTENTION, BUT NOT THE BEST IDEA –

We had an inquiry from a member about the possibility of encouraging native bees by building a bee house, using the Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). We checked and Dr. Barry Hicks is the Vice President of the NLBKA, and a researcher into native bees and pollinators had this response:

"I often get emails from gardeners who are looking for advice on construction or purchase of trap-nests also known as "bee-hotels". The idea is that they provide nesting boxes for cavity nesting bees and thus help increase the population of these bees.

Two things:

1. I have been putting nest-boxes out in both urban and agricultural settings for a number of years and I have yet to attract a cavity nester to the box.
2. Newfoundland has a low diversity and abundance of cavity nesting bees (around 9 of the 76 recorded bee species).

A recent paper by a PhD student in Toronto shows that "bee-hotels" do not work as well as the commercial suppliers may indicate.

The uptake of the trap-nests by native bees was low, while introduced bees and wasps utilized the nest at a higher (but still low) rate. He also suggests that the trap-nests actually help parasitic wasps find hosts and therefore increase the rate of parasitism in the bees.

1..Male Wool Carder Bee –
image from internet, no
attribution available



In Newfoundland, we have the invasive cavity nesting Wool Carder Bee (*Anthidium manicatum*) recorded from Corner Brook, Grand Falls and St. John's. At present we are unsure of the abundance of this particular bee. But supplying potential trap-nests for this species may increase its spread and thus its negative impact of native bee species. If you have Lamb's Ears in your garden, have a look out for a large bee on this particular plant. Let me know if you see it this summer."

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE –

There has been a great surge of interest in beekeeping in the last two years. While this is ultimately a good thing, the very interest means the people producing queens and nucs could have more orders than they can fill. When the good weather comes, in March or April, and you are making garden plans, and the urge to save the bees or to start a hive of your own hits, the "wannabee" is faced by restrictions on obtaining bees and equipment. This is not a bad thing. There is a fair bit of reading and research that

you should undertake, including the type of hives you wish to use, what forage is available for your future colony, how to build your hives, where and how to obtain your nucs, and how your neighbours are going to be educated to appreciate your new hobby. It takes about a year to get ready.

At the present time there are only a few people who are raising queens and nucs for sale in Newfoundland. They take orders in January, and so far the orders have outstripped the filling capacity. This will change in the future, as the number of beekeepers grows, and number of people going into queen rearing increases. Don't forget that new genetic stock is also important to the ultimate success of future colonies, and our queen breeders are working diligently on keeping the stock fresh while maintaining the calm, good tempered population that survive in our difficult climate.

For the first time in about forty years a couple of people have worked through the federal provincial permitting processes to apply to import West Australian Bees. The isolation of the Perth Area of Australia is supposed to have protected their bees from varroa mites and many of the other pests and diseases that afflict bee populations in all of the rest of the world – except for Newfoundland. Nova Scotia allows importation of disease and mite free Western Australian bees, but that province already has the diseases that we do not have.

Importing requires a permit from the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency (FAA). Without a permit, one cannot bring ANY bees or queens into the province. These permits were issued on a one time basis because at the present time NL bee suppliers could not fill the current demand.

We understand from the FAA that just because a permit was issued this year does not mean that a permit or permits will be issued in successive years. The ultimate aim is for NL to meet its own demand of requests coming from beekeepers for nucs and queens.

Nucs or packages of bees brought into Newfoundland from Australia are inspected before leaving Australia and upon entry to Canada by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. When they arrive in Newfoundland they will be inspected on a regular basis again by the provincial Apiarist. They will have to be quarantined for a year, hopefully not interacting with any apiaries or native pollinators nearby. New beekeepers are NOT good candidates to go this route because they will not have familiarity with what to look for in a healthy or sick hive. They will not have the experience to deal with anything that they find. It is much better to wait a year and start with a population of Newfoundland grown queens and nucs.

While you are waiting for your queen and nuc you can be busy reading, building, and finding people who do have bees and who might let you come to work with them. You will need to order some protective clothing, (hat, veil, gloves, jacket or full bee suit) It is a good idea to read a number of books, and to attend some of the workshops being offered. Also, there is one fellow in the province, who has set up an excellent blog about his hives. Check out www.mudsongs.org for information on what is needed for building and setting up Langstroth hives, and numerous blog posts on beekeeping activities for

different seasons, adaptations to combat moisture, cold, mice and shrews and other problems.

So, when it comes to beekeeping, patience is a virtue, and you will have lots to do to prepare for the new hive.

PLASTIC FRAMES VS WOODEN FRAMES?

Another question from a member: Have the experienced beekeepers found any difference between using plastic frames vs the traditional wooden frames? I found a website with a discussion about this, but perhaps some people would like to weigh in with their opinions, based on the Newfoundland experience. We don't have diseases like foulbrood which would lead to burning the frames. Don't forget you cannot burn plastic frames. They would have to be irradiated, and that involves shipping them to be irradiated. The website link is

<https://berkshirerfarmsapiary.wordpress.com/2011/03/31/choosing-frames-wood-or-plastic/>

SLOVENIAN HIVES –AN INTERESTING “NEW” DESIGN

You learn so much from the membership. I had a conversation with Randy Skinner on the west coast, who has spent much of the past year working on engineering some Slovenian beehives. These hives are an old, traditional design, which allow for working in a protected setting, and even for inspecting your hives from a sitting down position. You can look the Slovenian hives up online, but meanwhile Randy and his father in law are developing plans and building a couple of the hives in order to test the efficiency of the Slovenian Hives vs the Langstroth hives. We'll keep you posted on their progress.

NATIVE POLLINATORS CORNER – HOVERFLIES

When looking for your bees out in the garden you have probably seen some of the other bee like pollinators. One fellow suggested ways to encourage hoverflies, so I looked them up. Dr. Barry Hicks knows much more about them than my quick online search turned up, but:

1. They look a lot like bees, (and wasps) but do not bite or sting.
2. Like the bees the adults can often be seen hovering in the air near flowers. They feed on nectar, and so help with pollination by moving from flower to flower.
3. Their larvae eat aphids! A good reason to like hoverflies!

HOW TO BUILD A HIVE SCALE FOR UNDER \$50.

Finally, here is a link to an interesting device that allows you to weigh your hives through the season without lifting it. If you build one, or have already build one, let us know how you like it! http://www.beehacker.com/wp/?page_id=55

That is it for now. Don't forget to check in with the website www.nlbeekeeping.ca or the Facebook page, Newfoundland beekeeping.