



INLAND BEEEMAIL

Monthly newsletter of the Inland Empire Beekeepers Association

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Presidents Corner:

7 May 2006

Our recent bee class graduates are now officially keepers of bees. Lets make sure we say hello to these folks, ask them how their bees are doing, and encourage them to attend all our meetings. Networking is a wonderful thing and is these times it is becoming more and more important. Beekeeping changes very rapidly now. Information flow is even more critical.

The IEBA yard is up and running. 24 packages where installed and most of them looked good yesterday (Saturday). Bob Arnold and crew have done a great job. Hopefully the WSU queens will come in soon. We also have 24 honey supers that need to be put together and painted. Supers on new hives do not usually happen the first year but we can always hope and we need to be ready.

I am leaving for CA this morning and intend to be back before our meeting this Friday. It is time to get the hives and the last of the Nucs home!

Hope to see all of you Friday.

How to Control Swarming

By Bob Arnold

Swarm season can be a nightmare or an opportunity depending upon your preparations! It is a nightmare if you have a 1000 hives and you have made no preparations. It is an opportunity if you want to increase your hive count to replace hives that have died out or you want to expand the number of hives that you have.

The essential task of all of our beekeeping that is directed to honey production is to bring colony strength to its maximum at the time the main honey flow in our area occurs. This will produce the maximum honey production and is a goal to work toward. If the hive population peaks two or three weeks before the main honey flow you can almost guarantee the hive will produce nothing but swarms. If the main honey flow occurs when the hive barely fills one deep box of bees you can almost guarantee the hive will not produce surplus honey. Both situations often lead to poor wintering.

An important principle with our honey bees is that the colony will build up to a maximum strength and will then start to decrease in strength. This is approximately 60,000 bees in a single queen colony.

For some reason our European bees want to reach this maximum strength. By timing the growth of our colonies to achieve this maximum strength just at the onset of the honey flow we minimize the swarming and maximize our surplus honey production.

The bees naturally expand explosively in spring and want to swarm to populate the area with more hives. Hives that do not build up explosively in the spring usually have disease or are headed with poor queens that need to be replaced. These issues must be addressed immediately if there is to be a honey crop.

Hive development progresses with the bees filling the top box with brood, honey and pollen leaving the bottom box filled with bees some pollen and honey and little brood. The queen will not lay any significant brood in the bottom box until the top box is plumb full of brood, bees, pollen and honey and the bottom box is filled with bees. The queen will start laying eggs in the top portion of the frames in the bottom box gradually filling the frames with brood once the bees fill both boxes.

Switching the top and bottom boxes before the top box is filled will often encourage the queen to begin

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laying in the second box before both are plumb full of bees. This places the bottom box frames above the queen's brood in a position that is more attractive for her to lay eggs. The warmth and humidity of the lower box naturally rises warming the frames above.

This manipulation will stimulate hive expansion and delay the initial urges for swarming. It will also provide you with many frames of brood to make new hives. It will not stop swarming but will encourage rapid expansion of the colony which is essential for honey production.

Vigorous, healthy new queens are always the beekeepers best bet for good honey production. Colonies headed with new queens may not swarm even if the colony population gets to swarm strength before the main honey flow occurs. This is not to say that first year queens will not swarm. If your first year queen is a good one and her colony gets to swarm strength much before the major honey flow it will likely swarm. The key again is getting your hive to maximum strength at the time of the major honey flow.

Swarming is often blamed on old queens. Older queens seem to be more prone to swarming but when properly managed their swarming can generally be controlled. What is important is that the queen is an excellent brood producer and that the hive is managed to bring it to maximum population when the major honey flow starts.

Controlling swarming is really keeping the hive population below the peak until the major honey flow starts. When the honey starts pouring in, the hive forgets its desire to start swarm cells unless the queen is failing. In fact in a good honey flow the queen is often totally shut down from laying as the nectar is placed in the comb she is laying in. She will not lay in comb that is partially filled with nectar. Just try and find a queen during a good honey flow. You are looking for eggs to find where the queen might be and you cannot find any as the brood chamber has been flooded with fresh nectar.

The strength of the hive can be readily controlled by removing bees and brood. The bees and brood can be used to make a new hive or can be placed in a weaker hive to improve its strength. A normal healthy overwintered hive will have two boxes of bees and brood sometime during the dandelion bloom. This hive will

surely be at swarm strength before the major honey flow starts in early to mid-June. You can remove half the brood and half the bees early in May and this hive will bounce back to full strength in time for the honey flow.

The bees and brood you remove can be combined to strengthen a weak hive or used to start a new hive by giving it a mated queen on a new hive stand. Just place the brood and bees into the new hive. The bees will readily accept the new brood and bees without fighting. Do not let the new hive raise its own queen. The new queen takes approximately 30 days to develop, mate and begin laying. The hive may or may not be successful in rearing a queen.

If you do not wish to start new colonies and you do not need brood to strengthen weak colonies then use the brood to start some nucleus hives with purchased mated queens or queen cells that you raise. This provides you with the best method for re-queening your hives after the honey flow using your nucleus hives for the new queen—the only guaranteed method for introducing a new queen.

In summary the goal for honey producers is to control the strength of the colony to be at a maximum level when the major honey flow starts. This requires a healthy colony headed by a vigorous laying queen. In normal circumstances this queen will expand the colony size to be at a maximum level before the major honey flow starts. It is more than likely that the colony will swarm unless some action is taken to control colony strength. Removing brood and bees to control the hive population to meet this goal will also provide increase for your stock, will minimize swarming and will provide you with the best chance for having a good honey crop.



Catching and Hiving a Swarm - by Frank Seiler

The inevitable phone call will come—be they your bees or someone else's—bees menacingly hanging in a tree ready to attack (or so the caller will tell you).

Here is your chance as a beekeeper for some wonderful PR. In many cases you will be able to collect and keep the swarm, and also educate those that are watching you about our fascinating bees.

The biggest challenge is being ready for swarming season. Just when you think you've got enough equipment to handle any and all catastrophes of the beekeeping year, you will be inundated with calls asking you to please take more bees. It happens.

First, we'll discuss what you need to have ready to go capturing swarms, then we'll discuss some scenarios that you might encounter and some ways of dealing with them.

Here is a list of essentials that you should have ready and available:

- Bee suit, hive tool, bee brush, smoker
- Duct tape, large cardboard box (folded)
- White cloth sheet about 4' x 6'
- White plastic dust pan
- A few drawn combs, with partial honey best
- 2 brood boxes, solid bottom board, migratory cover
- Hand saw or limb cutters
- 8' Step ladder
- A couple of 1 pound jars of honey and a handful of honey sticks

If you plan to also offer to extract established colonies, you will want to add the following items to your readiness kit:

- Hammer & cat's paw
- Sharp 6" knife, 2" spackling knife
- Queen cage
- 10 empty frames, cotton twine
- Hinged frames
- Bee Vac

Another article will focus on extricating established colonies out of wall, eaves, and crawl spaces. This time we'll focus on new swarms.

To most callers, any and all winged insects with a stinger are "bees". Be sure to ask some questions of the caller. How many are there? Dozens, hundreds, thousands? If the answer is not "thousands" they probably are not what you want to take home. How high are they off the ground (Add at least 3 feet to callers estimate). And double check that what the see is a big mass of bees, not a paper nest with a few "bees" going in and out.

One time, I asked all the right questions, and was pretty sure that the lady had a good sized swarm. In fact, she was rather irritated with me when I kept asking about the shape and size of the cluster and the color of the "bees". She assured me that her husband could tell bees and wasps apart quite well. I was not able to get to the lady's house, so I asked a fellow swarm catcher if he would go rescue this bundle of joy out of her tree. A while later John Pierce called me back, laughing heartily, wondering where I'd like to put my hornets' nest. You just can't ever ask enough questions!

First, let us remind ourselves what a swarm of bees is: The natural way for bees to increase in colony numbers is for the colony to raise a new queen. Shortly before she hatches out, the old queen will leave with about half of the original colony in search of a new home. Before they leave, the worker bees will gorge on honey stores in anticipation of having to live off their stores for a few days. This bunch of 20 to 30 thousand bees will settle on a nearby branch and send out scouts in search of a new home. Sometimes this scouting lasts several days, sometimes a couple of hours. When you come upon a swarm, they are usually very docile, unless they are low on food stores. The more recently they have left the hive, the more gentle they will be.

The difficulty of capturing a swarm is directly proportional to its height. Ideally, the bees will have clustered on a young tree a few feet above the ground. Don your protective gear and place the white sheet underneath the swarm. Set the hive body up directly underneath the clustering bees with a few drawn frames, and literally shake them into their new home. Many will fly back onto the branch, so you may have to repeat the process a few times. Pay attention to the front entrance and the bees on the top bars. Once they start fanning with their rear ends in the air, they are saying "This is home."

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Replace the cover as you are able and shake the remaining bees in front of the hive. Eventually they will start marching in. You will have to wait until evening for the activity to settle down. I usually leave them til dusk before trying to move them. Close off the entrance with screen and secure the hive top with duct tape or staples. Make sure that the bottom board is also stapled to the hive body, and take your treasure home.

With more height come greater challenges. If the cluster of bees is more than a few feet above the ground, you may be better off using a ladder and cutting the branch, taking it down and shaking it out on top of the hive body. Sometimes the best you can do is cut the branch and have it drop down onto the hive box. If you have help, you may be able to shake the bees into a cardboard box and then dump them out over top of the newly prepared home.

No swarm of bees is worth risking life and limb for. If you cannot safely retrieve the swarm, do not attempt it. If you need help, call another member of the association. Someone will usually be able to assist you. If you are serious about retrieving high swarms, you can fashion a 5 gallon bucket to attach to a painter's extension pole. Reach up with the bucket, give a good shake, and bring the contents of the bucket to their new home. This bee bucket is even available from several retailers and works quite well.

Some swarms are not neatly clustered on a small tree limb. I have had mail boxes, tree trunks, and a flat brick wall play host to a swarm and this takes some creative bee herding. Bees have a tendency to move up and move toward light. Let us assume that we have bees on a tree trunk. I would place the sheet on the ground and the bee box adjacent to it, with the entrance facing the sun if possible. Here is where the bee brush and dust pan come in. Gently brush and scoop up bees, depositing them in and on the hive and on the front porch until you see the fanning bees signaling "This is home." Keep using the brush and brush the rest of the bees onto the sheet—they will follow the scent of the fanning bees and march right on in.

In the list of equipment you see the smoker, and as yet I have not discussed it. Nine out of ten times, it will not be of any use. Remember that when bees are exposed to smoke, their instinct is to fill themselves with honey. Without combs, they cannot do that, and

smoke will be more an irritant than a help. If the bees have been in a location for a while, the queen's pheromones may still linger strongly on a branch and large numbers of bees will continue returning to it rather than the new home. Smoke will help mask that smell. Light puffs of smoke may also be useful when trying to place the lid on a box or in directing bees on the ground toward the hive entrance.

Bees hanging in a tree always attract curious bystanders. Here is where we get a chance to educate, inform and have a little fun. Keep observers at a safe distance, tell them why the bees are there, why they are useful, and most importantly explain what you are about to do, so that you don't have a panicked audience when the bees get airborne.

A while back, Dave Bearden and I had a fun little swarm capture. As some of you know, Dave works for USDA's Risk Management Agency (Insurance) program. A local bar and restaurant found that the swarm of bees in the parking lot's pine tree needed "Risk Management," so that is who they called. Dave and I met there in mid-afternoon—he in a suit and tie, me in a beesuit, no tie. A few inebriated folks out on the patio watched eagerly until I cut and dropped the branch with the cluster. Alarmed at the thought of stinging insects filling the air, the patrons made a hasty retreat to the inside. Meanwhile, the bees found their new home accommodating and proceeded to march in. With nothing better to do than wait, we joined the observers in the restaurant til dusk.

There is nothing quite like the rush of hiving your first swarm. Get prepared, then be ready for that call!



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WSBA Website

www.wasba.org

MAY

TED SWENSON

Agenda May 2006

Reports:

- ◆ The Secretary's Report - Linda
- ◆ The Treasurer's Report - Ky
- ◆ Joy in Beekeeping Report - Joe
- ◆ Fair Reports
- ◆ Inland Beemail Report - Dave / Frank
- ◆ WSBA Report - Jerry
- ◆ Four Corner Bee Reports – All

Old Business:

- ◆ IEBA Charter/Constitution Update – Nothing to report.
- ◆ IEBA Non-Profit Corporation Renewal is complete

New Business:

- ◆ No Idaho Fair will be from August 23-27
- ◆ Jack has heard of a source of good grade containers available from Eagle Peak Container near Athol
- ◆ IEBA Apiary Field Days May 20 & Sometime in June....TBD

Presentation by Bob Arnold:

- ◆ How to control swarming
- ◆ What to do if your hive has swarmed



Supercedure Queen Cell.
Photo © Z. Huang

Hive Care :

MAY

The Bees. Now the activity really starts hopping. The nectar and pollen should begin to come into the hive and may get heavy at times. The queen will be reaching her greatest rate of egg laying. The hive should be bursting with activity.

The Beekeeper. You can remove your Apistan strips (if they have been in the hive for 45 days). Also remove the menthol if you were using that for Tracheal Mite control. Add a queen excluder if you choose to use them, and place honey supers on top of the top deep. Watch out for swarming. **See Bob Arnold's article starting on page one in this issue.** Inspect the hive weekly. Attend bee club meetings and workshops. And, if you are like rest of us, keep making up those frames to get ready in time for the honey flow.

If you have hives really busting at the seams, consider making up some splits to make up for any winter losses. An extra nuc or two always comes in handy.

-adapted from
www.backyardbeekeepers.com

April Minutes

—Dave Bearden for Linda Carney,
Secretary
Minutes



With limited officers available again this month, the business part of the meeting was fairly short. Vice President Frank Seiler called the meeting to order, and as Linda was not able to attend asked Dave Bearden to fill in with notes of the meeting (hope Linda gets better soon) anyway here goes. The March minutes were accepted as printed in the Inland Beemail. Ky reported \$1862.24 in savings and \$4,999.00 in Checking. The Treasures report was also accepted.

Joy in Beekeeping—No report

Fair Reports - Frank mentioned we still need someone to step up and take on the Spokane Fair.

Beemail - send articles and any suggestions to Dave and or Frank and we will work to get them in.

WSBA - Jerry Tate had no recent news to share and will have more by next meeting.

Four Corners Report - Jerry Tate reported that the bees in the Valley are way ahead of his north yards and are laying brood well. He also noted the packages are doing well and the first dandelions of the year were seen last week. He has been feeding some pollen substitute. Bob Arnold reported that up north there was very little pollen and he hasn't unpacked his bees yet.

Old Business

Jr. Livestock Show—Frank will be attending with a bee display May 2-4 and has had a few volunteers to help and asked for more folks if interested.

New Business

Discussion then shifted to the WSU queen North Yard and plans to install the packages were covered. A map to the apiary site is in April Beemail. Plans were then discussed to install the packages on Saturday 4/21 at 3:00PM (see pictures and notes on pg XXX. Dave and Frank volunteered to pick up the packages at Tates. The meeting was adjourned, and we enjoyed Bob Arnolds discussions on

- ◆ How to increase your number of hives
- ◆ Methods for starting Nucleus hives and using Nucleus hives
- ◆ How to introduce a new queen into a strong hive

2006 Program

Program for 2006

May

- ◆ How to control swarming
- ◆ What to do if your hive has swarmed
- ◆ Spring field day at IEBA Apiary

June

- ◆ How to set up and operate a queen bank
- ◆ Raising your own queens
- ◆ Late summer requeening

July

- ◆ Evaluating your hives for mites
- ◆ Treating your hives for mites
- ◆ Summer field day, mating nucs at IEBA Apiary

August

- ◆ Picnic

September

- ◆ Preparations for Fair
- ◆ Fall feeding of bees
- ◆ Fall field day at IEBA Apiary

October

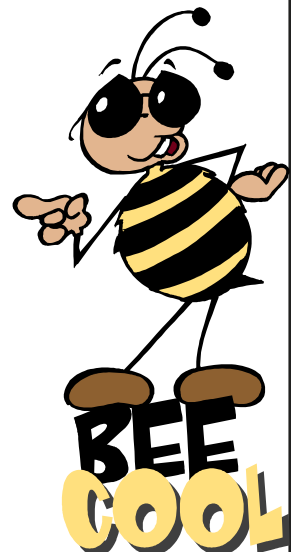
- ◆ Selection of hives for wintering
- ◆ Preparing your hives for winter

November

- ◆ Annual Thanksgiving dinner
- ◆ Invited speaker

December

- ◆ Elections
- ◆ Annual dinner
- ◆ Invited speaker



Classified Ads

Tate's Honey Farm has all of your extracting and packaging needs as well as spring packages and queens. Woodenware for all your winter projects and spring needs. Shop hours are 8:30—2:00 every Saturday at E. 8900 Maringo, Millwood. Contact us at 509-924-6669 or 891-7428 online at www.tateshoneyfarm.com

BEEBOXES BY LEE

Woodenware, standard or custom orders, IPM bottom boards, Hive top feeders, etc, select lumber. Order now to be ready for spring. Lee Berchtold (208) 687-1300

NUC's - For Sale

Now taking orders for 06 Queens and Nucs 4.9mm and standard cell sizes available. Contact Travis Sammons at 509-928-4326 / 509-991-3758

Miller's Homestead

Jim and Jenine Miller

Cheney, WA 1-509-299-9085
14606 Stangland Rd., Cheney. Look at our web site for prices on all available items.
www.millershomestead.com

NUC's For Sale

RUSSIAN or KONA Queens

You Get:

Proven Queen

- ◆ 3 frames brood
- ◆ 1 frame honey
- ◆ 1 frame honey/empty comb
- ◆ 3 lbs. of bees

Chattaroy Hills Honey Farm
Ted Swenson 220-0185

Available: 21 or 28 April

Limited #, First Come First Serve



FOR SALE - Approximately 50 used westerns \$11.00 each Contact Paul Schultz @ (509) 926-8550
Wanted: Good - Serviceable Honey Extractor.

Contact: Dave Evans - 466-7572 (Home) 951-4857 (Cel)

Going Out of Business Sale: 8 & 10 Frame Hives, Bottom Boards, Excluders, Top Covers etc. (4-5 Hives) 2 Sets of suits and gloves, smoker etc. over \$500 new sell for \$250 Contact Penny, Sean or Brad Davis (509) 891-7428

Web Site of the Month

Each month IEBA members share the latest in favorite web sites on Beekeeping. Take some time to check this month's selections out.

ARS Bee Research Laboratory Beltsville MD

http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=12-75-05-00

Mid Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium

<http://maarec.cas.psu.edu/pest&disease/pppdIndex.html>

The Bumblebee Pages

<http://www.bumblebee.org/>

IEBA Apiary Status

By Bob Arnold

On Saturday May 6 about 15 of us met at 2:00 PM to go through the package bees we installed on April 22. We installed 24 3 pound packages that we purchased through Tate's Honey Farm. The packages were each fed approximately 2 gallons of syrup over the period. Alvin Dwinell and Allen Bremner fed on Wednesday April 22 and Daren Mumau fed on Sunday April 30. Most of the feeders were empty when we arrived. One of the packages had absconded and was nowhere to be found. None of the colonies appeared to have two times the bees in it.

All of the colonies were drawing out the Pierco foundation with no apparent problem. Portions of 5 frames were drawn out in all of the colonies. Sealed and open brood was observed in all of the colonies with some having brood on portions of 3 frames or so. Some of the brood did not look like we had good queens. These were marked. We are expecting perhaps a fourth of the hives will need to have the queen replaced within the next 2 weeks.

Special thanks go to Frank Seiler for donating and installing a storage cabinet for various items. His method of mixing concrete will remain a secret for those who attended!



TEAMWORK



IBEA APICARY



FUN

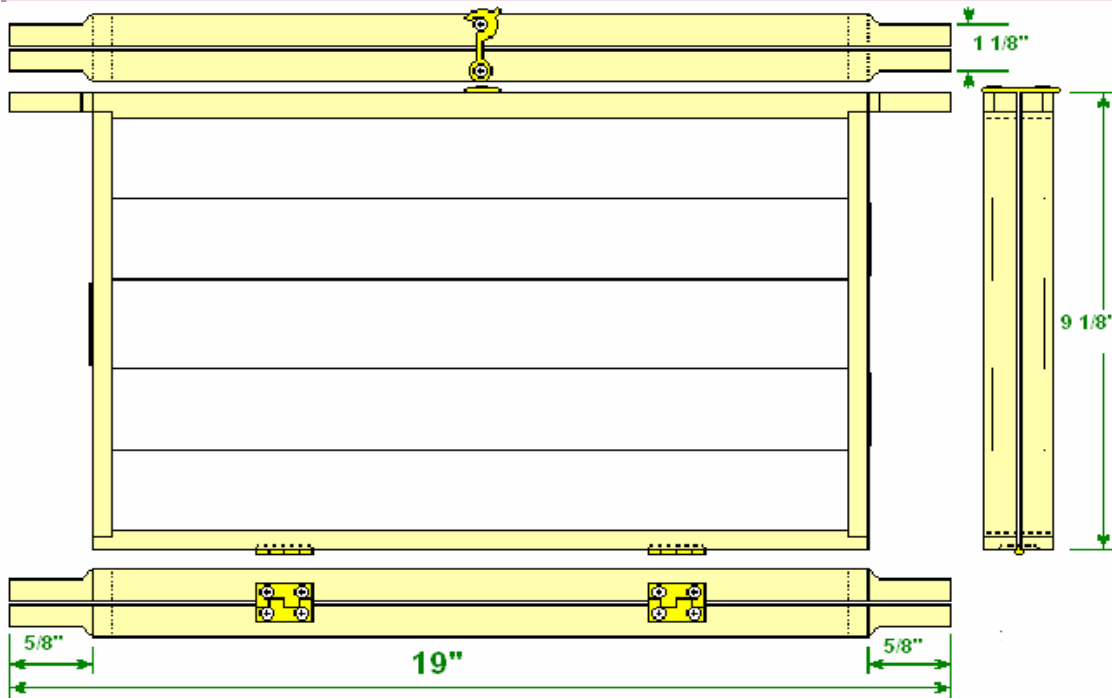


HANDS ON

EDUCATION

Participants:
 Daren Mumau
 Bill & Julie Watts
 Elizabeth Bianchi
 Brian Smith
 Sterling Smith
 Allen B Bremner
 Dave Hopkins
 Scott Ingles

Sally Fleming
 Bob Hegerberg
 Al Dwinell
 Jack & Phyllis Knox
 Dave Bearden
 Bob Arnold
 XXXX- Alright who was this???



Swarm Trapping Frame

Swarming Trapping Frame

By David A. Cushman

The principle of putting wild comb in frames using cotton thread or string is well known.

If you intend to do much in the way of swarm collecting that involves wild comb then this method is well suited as the use of these frames will speed up the operation and make you appear more professional in the public's estimation.

Many of these frames may be prepared during the winter so that you can save time when things are busier.

Frame wire or nylon fishing line is suitable. If the pieces of wild comb are large, then select areas with sealed brood and open brood and cut using a sharp knife or serrated bread saw. Place the chunks in the frame and close up using the small latch.

When the brood has emerged, work the frame to the outside of the box so that it can be removed, cleaned and re-wired for future use.

A small application of [Petroleum Jelly](#) to the hinges and the latch will render them free from propolis.

Recipe of the Month



2	cups apple cider
2	cups cranberry juice
1/4	cup honey
1	cinnamon stick
4	slices lemon
4	whole cloves

Combine all ingredients in saucepan; heat only until mixture boils. Pour into serving glasses or mugs; serve immediately.

Tip
One to two cups of dry red wine can be added.





**Inland Empire
Beekeepers
Association**

Next Meeting:
Friday May 12
7:00 PM Social Time
7:30 Meeting

The Inland Empire Beekeepers Association (IEBA) meets the 2nd Friday of every month at the Spokane County Ag Extension office by the County Fairgrounds, at 222 N. Havana. The association is affiliated with the Washington State Beekeepers Association (WSBA). IEBA membership dues are \$5.00 for an individual or \$10.00 for the entire family. This includes your receiving the *Inland Beemail*, which is published by the association every month.

We also discussed various ideas for hive stands but did not come to a conclusion. Bob Hegerberg offered to donate some concrete blocks but they are a little too short for the screened bottom boards. Another idea (Ted Swenson's) proposed was to use two concrete blocks with 4x4's resting across for two hives together.

The purpose of this apiary is to provide members with a place to have regular field days to provide the practical side of beekeeping to beginners. We also will establish WSU's line of queens here and use the yard to provide queen cells and mating for participating member's nucleus hives. If you want to have your nuc's filled with a WSU queen you must participate. Please provide your email or phone number to me.

We will meet again at the apiary on May 20. A couple of the fellows present offered to feed on Wednesday May 10, Al and Allen Bremner and Daren Mumau on Sunday May 14. We will need some more help feeding on May 17th. I will have feed at the site in the 5 gallon buckets. We will discuss plans for the future at our next IEBA meeting May 12.

INLAND BEEMAIL

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New: IEBA 2004 & 2005 CD Now Available

For the cost of \$5.00, you can now obtain a CD containing all of the 2004 & 2005 *Inland Beemails* in PDF format, as well as a good number of pictures that were taken at various club activities. This is a great resource for all the new beekeepers as many excellent management articles were discussed in the past 2 years. You can order your 2004/2005 CD by sending an E-Mail to seilerbees@att.net or calling Frank at (509) 991-3019 and your CD will be waiting for you at the next meeting of the IEBA. All proceeds are to benefit the IEBA in expanding its educational programs.

I hope to build up the CD and reissue it every year with the latest information. Think of it as an IEBA library in progress. System requirements are fairly minimal and will work well for both Windows and Linux users.

Frank Seiler