



# INLAND BEEMAIL

Monthly newsletter of the Inland Empire Beekeepers Association

Volume 12, Issue 8 — August 2007 — [www.inlandbeemail.com](http://www.inlandbeemail.com)

Presidents  
Corner:

Hello Members

Hope your summer is going great guns. Lots of Honey Bees, Honey and very few yellow jackets.

Jenine put out some yellow jacket traps back in May. They were the box looking ones. They don't appear to work. The yellow jackets don't like them. Several days ago she put out one that is yellow and tube shaped. After about three days it is  $\frac{3}{4}$  quarters full. We need to get several more of these soon.

About two Sundays ago my neighbor to the north called. My honey bees are in his tree and in the grass. I wanted to see this problem. The bees were in a hemlock tree and it was alive. The ground was full of bees underneath the tree. When you walked in the grass they would jump up and fly to a new location. There were thousands of them. But they were not honey bees they were yellow jackets. They were feeding on the sap of the hemlock tree. I suggested spraying with soapy water to kill the bees. I left feeling sorry that my neighbor that was having this problem with yellow jackets.

The picnic will be August 12<sup>th</sup> and lunch will be served at high noon (12:00 noon). The association will furnish the hamburgers, hot dogs, buns and drink. We are asking the members to bring a covered dish. **Remember December 2007. We will elect a new president and if you are interested talk with Roger.**

Don't forget to sign up for the fair booths at Idaho and Spokane your help is needed.

See you at the picnic.

Jim Miller, President

**Wintering Weak Colonies**

By: [James E. Tew](#)

Yet another change of plans.

*Why are they weak?*

This is the third article in an unintended series of somewhat negative articles in which I have described my battles with colonies that are too light going into the upcoming Winter. Because they began the year as splits or packages and because last spring's nectar flow was minimal, about half of my colonies are dangerously weak. I began to write these pieces for you when I realized that a lot was hanging on my colonies getting a good Fall flow. In retrospect, this past Fall's nectar flow was below average, but at least there was something. My guess is that about 50% of my colonies are okay while the other half are in harm's way. That pretty much brings you up to date. Now, I am wintering weak colonies. How can I be helpful to these stressed colonies at this time of the year?

*The feeders*

I used top feeders, of various designs, some 'quail waterers', and I had planned to use division board feeders. In the November article I stated that I did not intend to open feed. I also said that my efforts to assist should be helpful and not harmful to stressed colonies. My report that follows presents mixed results.

I did put the top feeders on and I did transport corn syrup to the yard, but the process was less than satisfying. I have a variety of top feeders – some beekeeper-made and some commercial-made. The commercial units are made of either wood or plastic or some combination of both. I presented a photo in October of a general collection of feeders. I would like to present the following comments about top feeders.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

## Hive top feeders

### 1. Colonies should sit level.

For those of you never having used them, from the outside, top feeders look like a shallow super with a bottom attached. If they are commercially-made of plastic, they look like a strange 'thing' atop the colony. Inside the feeder is a partition that runs either the length or the breadth of the unit that allows bees access to the feeder. The black top feeder shown in the figure has the feeder partition running lengthwise.

Beekeepers are instructed, from day one, to position their colonies so the hive leans slightly forward. This angle prevents rain water from accumulating inside the rear of the hive. This angle means that the liquid feed does not touch the feeder screen level all the way across. In the black feeder pictured, this is not a problem because bees can reach the feed at any level, but in feeders having the access running across the feeder, as the syrup level drops beyond the bees' reach, bees cannot completely empty the feeder. The red hive top feeder pictured shows this restricted configuration.

A small amount of feed would be left in red top feeder on the low end. Bees cannot get out into the feeder to gather the remaining feed. This is not a big problem, but I am left with each feeder having a few ounces of feed to be spilled and scattered on me and my truck. But read the next comment.

### 2. Bees should not be allowed in the hive top feeder body.

Bees should only be allowed in the feeder access and not in the reservoir. If bees are allowed into the feeder reservoir, they seem to have no luck finding their way back into the hive. They die in the feeder reservoir in significant numbers. While the red feeder<sup>1</sup>, having an aluminum insert, does require sitting perfectly level, it allows no bees access to the reservoir while the hardware cloth on the black feeder lets bees too many bees by. Many bees died in the feeding process in this type of feeder.

Many years ago, I built about twenty-five hive top feeders and I built them well. However, I encountered the problem with remnants of syrup remaining so I cut a small opening to allow bees to finish up the feeding process in the reservoir. I have had to go back to the woodshop to plug each of these holes to prevent killing so many bees in the feeding process.

### 3. The hive top feeder *MUST* be perfectly covered.

Robbing is a serious problem frequently encountered when feeding large populations of hungry bees. As you position feeders and install feed, a robbing frenzy starts that is truly amazing. If robber bees can get under the inner and outer cover into the feeder reservoir, they will enter in great numbers, and they will drown in the feed in great numbers. It results in a mess. An Alabama beekeeper told me he sticks on strips of the dense foam insulation used to weather-strip windows or doors. It's about 3/8' thick and about 1' wide and is sticky only on one side. While I have not used this procedure, it is simple and reasonable. Otherwise, I will need to completely scrape all propolis and wax from the inner cover (or outer cover) in order for the cover to sit completely flush with the hive top feeder at all points.

### 4. The top feeder must not seep nor leak.

Even if the robbers can't get in, they attack the colony being fed frantically searching for any opening. The leaking/seeping feeder is an attractive beacon that should be avoided.

### *Robbing – irrational bee behavior?*

You don't have to be a gifted beekeeper to know that hungry colonies in the Fall are prime candidates for aggressive robbing behavior. I knew that point before starting this feeding process. With nearly 40 colonies in this yard, how could robbing not be an issue? In fact, it was so great an issue it became a worthless task to open the colonies and remove frames to install division board feeders. I

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

never even took this style feeder from the truck.

**T**

### *he robbing scenario in my apiary*

Robbing behavior starts slowly. I can usually work two to three colonies before noticing too many bees that are too curious and trying to enter the hive via any crack or crevice. As I move to subsequent colonies, the number of inquisitive bees grows and become increasingly annoying. They get in the syrup bucket, they get into the feeder reservoir, and they hang around to explore the colony that was just worked. They frantically check any empty hive equipment sitting around and bits of burr comb on a removed queen excluder is like Thanksgiving Day dinner. There are an ever-increasing number of frantic, flying bees. It looks like a swarm is in the air. I don't mean to be dramatic and I don't have good science to support the following comment, but it seems like there is a point where the yard abruptly erupts into an uncontrolled robbing frenzy. Even if I work fast and close entrances, the robbers give me no chance to complete the feeding task before they are exploring the opened colony. *(At this point, I have some concerns about screen bottom boards. Does the openness of these colonies make them more attractive to robbers?)* Some colonies are attacked worse than others but all are explored by the busy-body robber bees.

It is unfair to tell most of you that my biggest asset is having a box truck that is very nearly bee-tight. It's a luxury that many of you don't have. If I were using my open truck, I would have had an even greater problem and I would be required to keep all equipment closed while sitting on the truck bed.

As per the instructions in many bee books, during early morning hours of the following day, I put out a large open feeding container and poured five gallons of syrup in it. I had not planned to use the open feeding procedure but neither had I planned for such vicious thieving. In theory, the open feeder should keep the robbers occupied while I work the other colonies.

Open feeding really didn't help and only made things worse. I tried to smoke and disturb all colonies in the yard so that all were defensive

rather than some being offensive. That, too, didn't help. Since my yard is accessible to the public, I considered posting a sign notifying joggers and dog walkers to beware, but night was falling the situation seemed to be subsiding.

Even if some colonies were still very light, my feeding efforts were killing more bees and stressing light colonies even more. I can only wait for cooler days when the bees are not so prone to flight and try to feed then. I am not defeated, though this will continue to be a troublesome task. Obviously, if I can pull this feeding project off, you will learn of it in upcoming articles.

### *Honey and syrup pumps*

In the November, 2006, issue of *Bee Culture*, I described a modification of Kelley's gasoline comb filler. Since Kelley no longer makes the machine, it is a moot point for those of you not already having one of the devices. The engine spins a centrifugal pump that sprays empty combs with syrup. I had hoped to modify the comb filler device to pump from syrup drums on the truck directly to the feeders on the colony. This modification may still work, but the excessive robbing behavior made it cumbersome to pull the device around the apiary. Until next spring, this project is on hold.

However electrically powered pumps proved invaluable when pumping syrup from the drums to five-gallon buckets. Several of these pumps are older model gear-driven pumps rather than belt driven pumps. Kelley representatives told me that these gear driven pumps were discontinued in favor of belt-driven pumps due to the ever-increasing costs of the geared wheel. I tell you this because these pumps are commonly available as used beekeeping equipment. If you get a chance to buy a used one, do it. The pump seems to run forever and motors are easy to come by. I was rushing to get these pumps pumping so I could get to the beeyard. It is a common problem for these devices to be jammed with crystallized honey or syrup. I found that using a heat gun, though a hair dryer would work, to heat the pump re-liquefied crystallized honey and freed the pump up. However, these pumps only have two

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

moving parts inside so opening them up is simple. If you do disassemble them, replace the paper gasket which is available from Kelley. Without these pumps, I don't know how I would have gotten the syrup out of the drums.

### Screened bottom boards.

On a few colonies having screened bottom boards, I left the metal insert in place during the warm months. Healthy wax moth larva happily lived there on the hive droppings, just out of reach of the colony's housekeepers. How serious is this to the colony?

### Silly Fall swarms

I had several little strange swarms this Fall. They didn't act right, didn't appear to have a queen, and certainly were not worth hiving. What was that all about?

### Some good colonies and some poor colonies

It's puzzling why some of my new colonies did fine while others were exceptionally poor producers. I can see neither rhyme nor reason, but there is clearly a cause.

### For now, that's all

While many of the colonies did make a modest Fall crop, I will have to continue to struggle to keep the light colonies alive through the upcoming winter months. We're supposed to have a mild Winter, which should help. If necessary, I have yet another plan to feed a fondant mixture during winter months to see if that buys me and my colonies some time. Though I have been less than positive in my last three articles, I still am enthralled with beekeeping and will keep trying to keep bees properly. Don't confuse my frustration with discouragement. It's just me complaining.

*Dr. James E. Tew, State Specialist, Beekeeping,  
The Ohio State University, Wooster, OH 44691,  
330.263.3684, [Tew.1@osu.edu](mailto:Tew.1@osu.edu),  
[www2.oardc.ohio-state.edu/agnic/bee/](http://www2.oardc.ohio-state.edu/agnic/bee/); [bee-lab.osu.edu/](http://bee-lab.osu.edu/)*



Zach's Bee Photos [(c) Zachary Huang



Zach's Bee Photos [(c) Zachary Huang

## Fuzzy-Faced Bees Take To Cranberry Bogs



By [Jill Lee](#) - September 24, 1998

One difference between the mustached mud bee and the familiar honey bee relates to perfume, facial hair and sex. To woo females of the species, the male mud bee grows a mustache soaked in plant sap and the bee's own sex attractant. But scientists' interest in the mud bee centers on its apparent knack for pollinating cranberries. This bee may someday offer cranberry growers an inexpensive alternative to the honey bee, according to entomologist Suzanne Batra at the [Agricultural Research Service](#) in Beltsville, Md. Wet, cold cranberry bogs would not seem like fun places for any bee. But mustached mud bees are pollinating pros under pressure. In rainy, windy weather, they tend to be more active than honey bees. Mud bees (*Anthophora abrupta*) don't build honeycombs or make honey--except to feed their young. They dig nests in dry clay in the ground or, when raised by beekeepers, in tiny manmade "adobe huts." Mustached mud bees from Maryland form a re-

search colony at a cranberry bog in New Jersey. [University of Delaware](#) entomologist Harold Bechmann established the colony with Batra's help.

Despite fierce winds, flat lands and lack of trees, the transplanted mud bees have expanded their colonies and gathered more cranberry pollen each year than in the previous year. Batra collected some of the bees from a Baltimore chicken coop. Bechmann obtained the rest from an Elkton, Md., home built in 1735, when clay was used as mortar.

In addition to their pollinating expertise, mud bees have lower maintenance costs than honey bees, which keepers must feed and maintain in hives during the winter.

A story about mud bees appears in the September *Agricultural Research* magazine. The story is also on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/sep98/poll0998.htm>

ARS is the principal scientific agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**Scientific contact:** Suzanne Batra, ARS Bee Research Laboratory, Beltsville, MD 20705-2350, phone (301) 504-8384, fax (301) 504-8736.

---

## July

**Linda Carney, Secretary**  
Friday July 13th

Meeting Minutes not available at press time. Will be read at the August Meeting - See you at the Picnic

# 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 online at [www.tateshoneyfarm.com](http://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 07 Queens and Nucs 4.9mm and standard cell sizes available. Also 2nd. generation Australian Nuc's available please call for prices. 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](http://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 (509)220-0185

Available: 21 or 28 April

Limited #, First Come First Serve



**Beeboxes, frames, foundation, tools and equipment open M-S 9-5:30**

**East Farms Feed**

21518 E. Gilbert  
Otis Orchards, Wash. 99027  
509.928.3616

## IEBA Contacts

### President

Jim Miller  
509-299-9085  
jandj@cet.com

### Vice President

Daren L. Mumau  
509-926-4177  
dmuma@wildblue.net

### Treasurer

Colette Lehinger  
509-924-1001  
blehinger@aol.com

### Secretary

Linda Carney  
509-448-0417  
tlclimo@yahoo.com

### Newsletter Editor

Dave Bearden  
509-226-5231  
nmsuaggie@icehouse.net

### Associate Editor

Frank Seiler  
509-991-3019  
seilerbees@msn.com

### Spokane County Fair Chairman

Linda and Rodger Carney  
509-448-0417  
tlclimo@yahoo.com

### WSU County Extension Liaison

Joan Nolan  
509-838-6347

### North Idaho State Fair Chairman

Kelly McSheehy  
(208) 687-6016  
McSheehy@aol.com

### Web Master

John Pierce  
509-242-2035  
admin@bee-mail.org

### WSBA at Large Delegate, Technical Advisory Program, & IEBA Bee Class Instructor

Jim Miller  
509-299-9085  
jandj@cet.com

### IEBA Program Chair & WSBA Area 6 Delegate

Bob Arnold  
509-276-2399  
sar3140@aol.com

### Joy in Beekeeping

Joe Jovanovich (Chair)  
Al Dwinell  
Julie Watts

### IEBA Historian

Jon Burcham  
509-928-4829

### IEBA Website

[www.inlandbeemail.com](http://www.inlandbeemail.com)

### WSBA Website

[www.wasba.org](http://www.wasba.org)

Hive Care :

# August

## The Bees.

Nectar flows are slowing down. In some areas, the honey flow is over. Bees can be found curing the honey and capping it. Other areas can still have a flow, especially after a good rain.

## The Beekeeper.

For most of us, this is extracting month. Get your supers off, extract, or cut comb. As you survey your crop, ready some of your efforts for fair entries.

If you are expecting some more flow, you can put some of the wet supers back on.

This is also the time that you need to take stock of your hives in terms of overall health, varroa infestation, and queen vitality. For a good article on fall (that means August here) requeening, please give Bob Arnold's suggestions a read.

Be sure that no honey supers are on when you start medicating. Treatments such as Apilife Var™ are very temperature dependant, and need to be administered when the weather is warm. You may also wish to consider alternatives to Checkmite™ and Apistan™ by trying Sucrose Octoanoate this fall. Again, you need three weeks of decent weather to apply it.

*adapted from  
[www.backyardbeekeepers.com](http://www.backyardbeekeepers.com)*

# Agenda

8/10/07

## Welcome!

Primary Focus – Picnic

Short meeting at end

## Reports:

Fair Reports

Spokane – Roger and Linda Carney

N Idaho - Kelly McSheehy and Jack Knox

Inland Beemail Report - Dave

Four Corner Bee Reports – All!!

## Old Business:

Idaho and Spokane Fairs

## New Business:

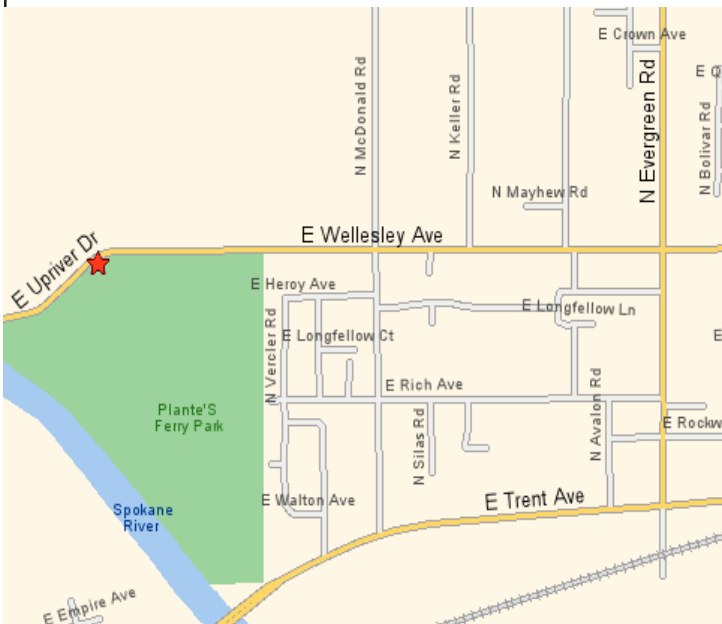
Honey Straws

Meeting Adjourned - ICE CRÈME

## Annual Beekeeping Task Calendar for Small Beekeepers Spokane Area - by Bob Arnold

### August

Remove honey supers if the flow has ended. Mark production on each colony. Mark colonies that need to have new queens. Keep feed on nucs. Move stronger nucs into single hive bodies and keep feeding. On colonies with supers removed check for AFB and do natural mite fall counts. Get mite controls on as soon as temperatures permit. For years with poor honey flow conditions watch carefully for pollen and nectar availability. If conditions are poor prepare to feed both pollen and syrup starting in August. Remove all supers before the end of August in order to get mite counts and controls on before September. Introduce mated queens or nucs for those hives that need requeening. Put feed on the hive during introduction. Extract honey while it is hot outside—get it done in August.



Zach's Bee Photos [(c) Zachary Huang



**Inland Empire  
Beekeepers  
Association**

Next Meeting:  
Friday August 10th  
7:00 PM Social Time  
7:30 Meeting

**T**he Inland Empire Beekeepers Association (IEBA) meets each month at the Spokane County Fairgrounds, at 2227 W. Fairgrounds, at 2227 W. Fairgrounds. IEBA is affiliated with the Washington State Beekeepers Association (WSBA). IEBA membership is \$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.

**AUGUST PICNIC  
See details on Page 1**

## *INLAND BEEMAIL*

Dave Bearden, Editor  
5319 N Simpson Rd  
Otis Orchards  
WA 99027

Phone: (509) 226-5231  
email: nmsuaggie@icehouse.net

Send To:

### Web Site's 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

**Tates News Page**—[www.tateshoneyfarm.com/news.htm](http://www.tateshoneyfarm.com/news.htm)

**BEEHOO - beekeeping directory for beekeepers**  
[www.beehoo.com/f\\_the.php?theme=Bumblebees&page=4](http://www.beehoo.com/f_the.php?theme=Bumblebees&page=4)

**APINEWS -** [apinews.morkland.org/?m=200706](http://apinews.morkland.org/?m=200706)

### Birthdays and Anniversaries August 2007

#### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Greg Warren -- 8th  
Cindy Lundberg --10th  
Jenine Miller -- 12th  
Bob Arnold -- 14th  
Robyn Ancker -- 16th  
Ray Wright -- 17th  
Ann Bearden -- 17th  
Allen Bremner -- 18th  
Lee Berchtold -- 24th  
Jill Spock -- 25th  
Joan Nolan -- 28th

#### AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

Kathryn & Jerry Gray -- 5th  
Dave & Ann Bearden --14th  
Jerry & Rita Tate -- 23rd  
Allen & Lois Bremner --  
26th  
Boyd & Cindy Lundberg --  
27th