

COMB Courier

Mid-Michigan—Land of the bee

Vol. 4 No. 4

April 2017

Editor: mike ffrench

Big Idea

The bee drone

How much technology would it take to replace a bee? That's the question industrial-design student Anna Haldewang aims to answer with Plan Bee, a hand-size drone that detects flowers with an ultraviolet camera, then uses a suction mechanism to suck pollen from one plant and blow it into another. For now, the product prototype — which won't hit the market for at least two years — is meant to help people understand how bees pollinate, says Haldewang, adding that she has no plans to "take over bee population". But similar technology may soon be necessary on a larger scale, as pesticides and climate change threaten the future of bee colonies around the world — and by extension, the crops they pollinate.

-Julia Zortian : *Time* magazine, March 2017.



Say what!

Beekeeping is said to be the second oldest profession—*The Beekeepers Bible* (COMB library).

Ed: Considering what the oldest profession is, I'm not sure whether we would want to be bracketed in that group.

Musings

Are we underestimating the bees ability to decide what's best for the colony?
Queen rearing—another thin slice off the beekeepers wallet.

Because queens need to mate within a radius of 2-3 miles, colonies must overlap, therefore simply isolating colonies would not work. But, by using hygienic bees a web of colonies could be isolated from other webs. So what is desirable is to break the chain of colonies until such time as varroa is brought under control or eradicated entirely.

Travel time

While the recognized distance a bee will travel from the hive to collect nectar is four kilometers, according to Prof. Tom Seely, bees will travel up to 12 miles for food if desperate.

My first package

I picked up my bees from the Old Mill in Onstead. The warehouse was stacked high with bee packages, loose bees were flying all over the place. Would they sting me, I thought. Little did I realize I had nothing to fear. Bees without a hive are as harmless as a citizen who doesn't vote.

The Old Mill inherited the bee package business from Groebs (the biggest supplier of honey in the U.S.) who decided to stick to honey sales as their main product. The Old Mill went out of business a year later. I trust it was not connected to my patronage.

C.O.M.B. Monthly meeting.
2nd Monday of the month 6:30pm.
MSU Pavilion, Farm Lane, E. Lansing

The perils of early spring

ENDANGERED FOOD SUPPLIES Many creatures rely on plants for food (including humans). And if flowering schedules change, those food supplies could be in jeopardy. Bears, for example, could awake from hibernation out of sync with the plants they normally eat, and pollinators like bees could have a tougher time pollinating crops (and thereby sparking seed production). That's bad for plants and human farmers alike, since pollinators are needed to produce more than 90 nuts, fruits and vegetables.

—Justin Worland *Time* magazine, February 2017

Bee packages

Shaun Strubel, Nectar Sweet Apiaries, Howell, MI COMB

Contact: **Mary Hobbs** blackberrymary@yahoo.com Tel: 517-242-4463 or **Robert Johnson** ioniapcwizard@gmail.com Tel: 616-841-1083 or packagebees@combbees.com for more information. Prices: 3lb. package \$102.00, 2lb. package \$97.00 **Final payment due: April 1st.**
Delivery date: April 16th.

Dale Woods beeman53@wowway.com

Tel: 517-294-0425,

Kay Barber barberk@msu.edu **Tel: 517-927-3541**

NUCS \$160.00 each. **Delivery date:** last week in April.

Dave Anthony A.W.S. Bees LLC 1268 Nichols Road, Swartz Creek, MI 48473 www.awsbeesllc.com

Tel: 810-621-4371 Prices: 3lb. package \$122.00; 2lb package \$112.00; Queens \$30.00 each.

Delivery date: April 10-15

C.O.M.B. officers

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Dr. Roger Hoopingarner

Communications:

Editor Mike French

Asst. Editor Debbie Foote

First day of spring

I trod the fields

At an early hour

Hoping to see, a bee

Alight on its first flower

I gazed in awe
At this tiny beast
As it circled the flower
Before the feast

You need not travel far
To see nature in the raw
All it takes is a few steps
To see what's in store

— B. B. Stunge

Editors note: This is not poetry at its finest, if you think you can do better, we will be pleased to hear from you.

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Deadline for next issue is April 30th