

COMB Courier

Mid-Michigan—Land of the bee

Vol. 2 No. 3

March 2015

Editor: Mike French

Jane Receives a Letter

By Jane Carhartt

As Mike, Deb, and I have stated several times, this is your newsletter. We welcome, and encourage, your feedback and comments. I have created a new email account for you to use for such comments and ideas. Please contact me any time at janesbees@yahoo.com.

Last month I posed the question of which is better, a bee tree or Langstroth hive. Maybe a bee tree is much better insulated, and therefore better suited for the bees' survival. I received a letter from former COMB member, John Miller, who wrote, in part "...I would like to research the best type of hive box. (M)y thoughts are that the biggest problem is not keeping warm, ...but dealing with the humidity created by the bees keeping warm." John listed the R-values of a few substances, two of which were 1" expanded polyurethane board (6.3) and 1" softwood (1.25). Based on these values, my hive (with 2 inches of added insulation) has an R-value of nearly 14. With the wind chills we've had recently, I think my bees may be very grateful, and hopefully, just as warm.

Don't miss ANR week

Don't miss ANR week at the Kellogg Center, MSU campus on Harrison Road, East Lansing. It's not an actual week, but two days, Friday, March 13, and Saturday, March 14. Two days of everything for the beekeeper, be they first-year beekeepers or long-time graybeards. This venue is in the midst of our membership area, and it is hoped COMB can put up a good showing.

As a regular attendee at these conferences, I can attest to the high level of knowledge and expertise of the instructors. Classes galore, plus speakers who knoweth of what they speak. It is a great opportunity to mix with your fellow beekeepers and extract as much useful information out of them as you can. I do! Plus there is a plethora of vendors selling all things bee. If you don't get what you're looking for at this conference, be it knowledge or equipment, then you aren't trying.

Truth alert: I am not being paid to advertise this event, I believe ANR week is beneficial to Michigan beekeepers as a whole, and our members in particular. I would be remiss if I did not bring it to your attention.

Hear, hear, Herman

When you discover your bees have swarmed, and despondency sets in, remember the words of Herman Sherman, the wise old German: "Don't despair, *mein lieblich*, they're still out there."

Some comfort you are, Herm.

Tea bee cozy

In England, drinking tea has been elevated to a level occupied by champagne in France. The container for the tea is the teapot. In order to keep the tea hot, the teapot is covered with a ‘hat.’ The hat is called a cozy. The cozy is similar in shape and form to a skep. What we need now is for someone to invent a bee cozy for winter.

To bee or not to bee

Ah, the queen excluder. To exclude or not to exclude, aye there’s the rub. My apologies to Bill Shakespeare for ‘lifting’ his stuff. While the excluder prevents her majesty from laying brood in the honey supers, wax build-up—aka burr comb—an excluder narrows the choices for passage for bees returning from forage with a gutful of honey and two bags of pollen strapped to her legs.

Bun in the oven

Bee equipment expert, Albert Thumbscrews, opined, “Cooking in my head are two items not in the bee catalogues. Item one: a simple device for weighing the hive body going into winter. Item two: a tilting platform for draining the ‘bottom’ honey from the bucket and extractor. Item one uses a fulcrum, and item two involves a pivot point. I am sure we have some ingenious beekeepers out there who can solve these much-neglected, but needed items.”

This begs the question: if both use a pivot point—aka a fulcrum—why can’t the two items be combined? Thumbscrews tells me he has run this through his half-baked cranium, but does not yet have an answer.

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

C.O.M.B. officers
President Mike Risk
Vice-President Dale Woods
Treasurer Kay Barber
Secretary Mike French
COMB Founder and ex officio
Dr. Roger Hoopingarner

Communications:
Editor Mike French
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Bee Read

If you have a comment, query, problem, or an interesting story or anecdote concerning bees that you would like to share with your fellow beekeepers, here is your chance. Send it in to mjbusybee@frontier.com or debbie.foote1962@gmail.com or hand it in at the meeting. Jane Carhartt may be contacted at janesbees@yahoo.com
This is your newsletter, make use of it!

Bee Classifieds

If you have any bee-related items you would like to buy, sell, or trade, this section is for you. This service is free for members of C.O.M.B. You may submit ads to Mike French or Deb Foote. There will be a nominal fee for associate members.

Deadline for next issue is April 3rd