Visit LCBA Online: www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org

January 2016 LCBA Newsletter

In This Edition:

Questions? Suggestions? Resources you'd like to share, stories you'd like to tell?
Please contact LCBA Secretary Susanne Weil: susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com or call 360 880 8130

UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 11: Deadline for Youth Scholarship applications.

See LCBA's website for details:
http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org/youth_scholarship_program/want_to_apply_2016_lcba_youth_in_beekeeping_scholarship_program_application_forms

Above left – Steve Howard's hand-tooled hinged top bar hive; Steve will share how he built it at our January 14 meeting. Right, Terrie Phillips won Howard Mullins' home-made oxalic acid fume vaporizer at our holiday potluck – on Jan 14, Terrie will present on her experiences shifting from Langstroth to top bar beekeeping, and Herb Zile will present how he made his oxalic acid fume vaporizer.

January 14: LCBA Monthly Meeting

PLEASE NOTE – LCBA NOW MEETS ON 2ND THURSDAYS!

When: 6 – 9 p.m.: Social Time 6 to 6:30; Speaker 6:30 to 7:30; Break & Brief Business Meeting, 7:30- 8:45.

Where: 103 Washington Hall, Centralia College, 701 W. Walnut St., Centralia WA

What: ***Do It Yourself Beekeeping Projects & New Product Demos by LCBA Members***

We've got some pretty handy folks in this club, & several are going to share some projects that others might want to try before the weather warms up & we launch into active bee season again:

- Herb Zile will explain how he made his oxalic acid fume vaporizer;
- Steve Howard will show his hand-tooled hinged-top bar hive;

- Terrie Phillips will share her experience shifting to top bar hives after several years of Langstroth-style beekeeping;
- Dan Maughan will display his new digital scale for weighing hives (a great way to assess weight of winter stores); &
- Rick Battin will share his experiences with foundationless frame beekeeping.
- **Also:** Short business meeting with update on club bee order progress, & Beekeeping Q&A. **Questions?** Contact Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com or call 360 880 8130.

Saturday, January 16: How To Get Started in Beekeeping – Free Orientation

When: 10:30 a.m. ~ 12:30 p.m.

Where: Centralia Timberland Library, 110 S. Silver St, Centralia WA 98531

Topics: Benefits of Beekeeping, "Bee Biology 101,"Equipment You'll Need, Apiary Set Up, Getting & Managing Bees, "A Year in the Life of a Beekeeper," Harvesting Honey, Over-Wintering, Parasite Control, & More. LCBA Board members will present & take questions. Show & tell materials & instructional PowerPoint slideshow give visuals.

Questions? Call 360-880-8130360-880-8130 or email susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com;

Above left, Norm Switzler demonstrating package bee hiving methods at LCBA's spring 2015 beginning beekeeping course; right, member Nancy Toenyan & swarm at an LCBA management workshop.

Starting Saturday, January 30: LCBA's Beginning Beekeeping Course

When: 5 Saturdays: Jan 30, Feb 6, 13, 27, & March 5, 9 a.m. to noon; Sat Feb 20 will be our first hive assembly workshop at a member's shop (space is limited, but other dates & times will be made available, TBA)

Where: Centralia College Cafeteria, 212 S. Rock, Centralia WA 98531

Topics Covered: LCBA's class follows the Washington State Beekeepers' Association curriculum. Topics include: Honey Bee Basic Biology & Life Cycle, Bee Behavior, Equipment & Apiary Set-up, Starting & Maintaining Bee Colonies, Performing Effective Hive Inspections, Seasonal Management, Swarm Prevention & Capture, Bee Diseases, Pests, & Treatment Methods, How to Harvest Honey, Improving Your Garden Through Pollination.

Post-Course Support: Hands-on workshops led by LCBA mentors help new beekeepers practice effective hive inspection techniques, careful observation, detection of mites & disease, treatment options, honey supering & removal, fall management, & preparing bees to over-winter.

Teachers: our WSBA-certified instructors are longtime beekeepers & members of LCBA's board: Education Coordinator Peter Glover, Past President Norm Switzler, & Secretary Susanne Weil. Also: guest lecturers, demonstration materials, & instructional PowerPoint slideshows.

Cost: $35/individual; $50 couple/family covers workbook, tests, & supporting materials. Preregistration is appreciated, but first day registration is OK, too. For more details on the course, including registration information, visit our website to download the course brochure: http://lewiscountybeekeepers.org/upcoming_events.

Questions? Email susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com or call 360-880-8130360-880-8130.

Thursday, February 11: LCBA Monthly Meeting

When: 6 – 8:45 p.m.: Social Time, 6 to 6:30 p.m.; 6:30-7:30, presentation; 7:30, break; 7:45-8:45 business meeting & beekeeping Q&A.

Where: 103 Washington Hall, Centralia College, 701 W. Walnut St., Centralia WA

Topic: Longtime beekeeper & LCBA Mentor Gottfried Fritz will share his experiences from over 50 years as a beekeeper, focusing on how things have changed. Prefaced by short film, "The Beekeeper." Also: Short business meeting & "beekeeping Q&A."

Above, Gottfried Fritz sharing fresh honey with a young visitor to LBCA's booth at the Spring Youth Fair.

Notes from LCBA's December 9 Monthly Meeting

Over 80 beekeepers & family members braved the rains & roads & made it to the Newaukum Grange to share good food & fellowship at LCBA's 7th Annual Holiday Potluck. Our members brought a wonderful array of dishes & we all enjoyed a great meal. We also filled a donation box for the Greater Lewis County Food Bank. We welcomed our new president, Kevin Reichert, said

thank you to our outgoing president, Norm Switzler, and, thanks to generous folks who donated fun items for our drawing, as well as our members who bought tickets, we raised $703 for our 2016 Youth Scholarship Program. More news on that below!

Special thanks to our volunteers: Steve Howard and Cheryl Howard brought the table-toppers (fir boughs & ornaments to make the hall festive) . . . Kevin and Jeanne Reichert and Peter Glover & Susanne Weil brought 2 hams . . . . Richelle Johnson, Harold Mullins, Ron Black, Phil Wilson, Dan Maughan and Larissa Maughan all helped Susanne, Peter, Steve, & Cheryl set up the hall . . . . Treasurer Rick Battin manned the ticket sales . . . Barbara Grega helped arrange the potluck abundance in the kitchen . . . Pamela Guzzo Daudet baked five boxes of fabulous cookies . . . and many members donated items to help us raise funds with our drawing (see the photos on our website's photo gallery: http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org/photo_gallery/lcbas_7th_annual_holiday_potluck_dec_9_2015).

Above, potluck attendees watching the drawing; right, woodenware hand-made and donated by Martin Stenzig, Dan Maughan, and Mel Grigorich got snapped up early in the drawing.

Below, Kevin Reichert, LCBA's incoming president, carving one of the holiday hams (left to right, Jeanne Reichert, Peter Glover, & Kevin); right, LCBA's president from 2011 through 2015, Norm Switzler, with Marcelle Stenzig, one of our Facebook page admins, and Martin Stenzig, our Mentorship Coordinator:

December 9 Business Meeting: Our business was brief, as befits a holiday party!

2016 LCBA Board: Kevin introduced the 2016 board: himself as president, Rick Battin as Treasurer, Peter Glover as Education Coordinator, Dan Maughan as Community Outreach Coordinator, Martin Stenzig as Mentorship Coordinator, and Susanne Weil as Secretary. Our Vice President, Bob Harris, will be at our January meeting. Bob is known to some as LCBA's founding president and to others as host of some of our management workshops at Rose of Sharon Farm in Chehalis. Norm Switzler, our president for the past four years, now becomes our ex-officio Past President, a non-voting role on the board but key for preserving institutional history.

As noted in our December newsletter, per our bylaws, since no additional nominations were made to the slate distributed to members in October by November 15, the slate was *de facto* elected (offices that had been up for election in 2015 were president, mentorship coordinator, community outreach coordinator, and treasurer; the vice presidency was open because Kevin, then our vice president, ran for president).

Kevin noted that all the board members are hard-working volunteers, and urged members to let the board know suggestions and concerns. For board members' contact information, visit our website: http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org/home/board_of_directors . Board meetings in 2016 will be 4th Thursdays at Centralia College (3rd Thursdays in November & December because of the holidays); to get an item on the agenda, contact Secretary Susanne Weil (Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com; 360 880 8130).

Above, Martin Stenzig presenting LCBA's outgoing President, Norm Switzler, with the hand-tooled bee vacuum box that Martin made at the board's behest to honor Norm's extraordinary service to LCBA.

Thanks to Our 2011-2015 President, Norm Switzler: Susanne announced that in honor of President Norm Switzler's extraordinary service to LCBA, the 2016 board had unanimously voted to make him our 2nd honorary lifetime member (our founding president, Bob Harris, is our first). Under Norm's leadership, LCBA grew from a small club of about 50 meeting at the Old Chehalis Courtroom in the Extension office classroom to an association whose monthly meetings

fill the large lecture hall, Washington Hall 103, at Centralia College. What follows is a short list of the new initiatives that LCBA took on with Norm at the helm:

- Hands-on Hive Management & other workshops (started in 2013), a move that has helped so many of our beekeepers practice and hone their skills working bees;
- Our Youth Scholarship program (2014);
- Our Mentor Program that links our new beekeepers with experienced helpers (2013);
- LCBA took over managing the Apprentice Beekeeping course (2014);
- Expanded our exhibit at the Southwest Washington Fair (2013) and began staffing a booth at the Spring Youth Fair (2014);
- Instituted a website (2012) and Facebook page (2014) to do more effective outreach;
- Expanded our Swarm & Colony Removal project to include team workshops where members gained invaluable experience and new beekeepers took home bees.

Norm would be the first to say that he didn't do all of this himself: however, Norm marshalled a dedicated group of board members and volunteers who worked with him to make these things happen. Norm has spent countless hours answering members' questions about their bees over the phone as well as visiting members' apiaries to do troubleshooting, and it would be fair to say that his adventures in swarm and colony removals are legendary by now. To help with the latter, Martin Stenzig made a special bee vacuum box for Norm with the LCBA logo burned into the wood and presented it to Norm.

Above left, members Herb Zile and Howard Mullins gave an impromptu talk on how they made their oxalic acid fume vaporizers for the Youth Scholarship drawing – as well as how they use them for Varroa control; right, some of the items donated by members.

Bylaws revisions: Members voted by secret ballot on 3 proposed bylaws revisions and the proposed change of our monthly meeting date from 2nd Wednesdays to 2nd Thursdays. The ballots contained the full text of the bylaws language changes. *FYI: Members received the ballots and a summary electronically or by U.S. mail the month prior to the election so they could consider them in advance. Paper copies were provided at the meeting. To see the complete revised bylaws language, visit:* *http://www.lewiscountybeekeepers.org/home/constitution__bylaws*

Per our bylaws, two non-board members counted the ballots – Steve Howard and Phil Wilson. The results were as follows: ***(continued next page)***

Item #1: Bylaws revision providing for how monthly meeting dates can be changed:

50 yes, 0 no.

Item #2: Monthly meeting date: Shall LCBA change its monthly meeting date from 2nd Wednesdays to 2nd Thursdays?

43 yes, 7 no.

Item #3: Bylaws revision clarifying who appoints committees – the president or the board: the language proposed provides for the president to appoint committees with approval of a majority of the board.

46 yes, 0 no.

Item #4: Bylaws revision adding to the Treasurer's job description filing LCBA's 990N form with the IRS, per our new status as a 501(c)3 organization:

49 yes, 0 no.



Above left, Kent Collins won the hive set made by Martin Stenzig; middle, President Norm's drawing helper Michaela won a prize; right, Gordon Bellevue won the cedar hive box crafted by Dan Maughan.

Youth Scholarship Program: Many thanks to local businesses that supported us with donated items & gift certificates for our fundraising drawing: Reichert's Choice Meats, Reichert's Distributing, Inc, Kaija's Garden and Pet, The Tiki Tap House, The Pearl Cafe, Jeremy's Farm to Table restaurant, and Beeline Apiaries & Woodenware. Also, a special thank-you to our talented members who actually made items and donated them for the drawing: Martin Stenzig, who made a hive set from screened bottom board, medium hive box & frames, inner cover, and Warre-style outer cover; Dan Maughan, who made a cedar deep box; Mel Grigorich, who made two ventilation boxes and brought cedar chips to fill them with; Herb Zile and Howard Mullins, who each made an oxalic acid fume vaporizer. Thanks, too, to all of you who brought cute bee-themed and other items!

Our donors' and members' generosity means that LCBA can fund 3 to 4 young beekeepers next year! Applications are due by January 11, so if you know young people - grades

6 to 11; home schooled children are eligible, too – who are interested in becoming beekeepers, who are from a family new to beekeeping, who live in Lewis County, and who are willing to commit to take LCBA's class (see above, Upcoming Events), please encourage them to apply (forms are available on our website - link above under Events too). Community Outreach Coordinator Dan Maughan and Education Coordinator Peter Glover visited middle and high schools in Adna and Winlock, where the board had planned to situate the scholarship program in 2016 (we started in 2014 in Toledo and went to Onalaska in 2015); in Adna and Winlock, Dan and Peter talked with about 200 young people about LCBA's program. At our November meeting, members encouraged us to go county-wide, so we're trying! We're hoping for applicants who realize that beekeeping is awesome fun that also involves real work. Finally, if you'd like to help by serving as a mentor for a 2016 or future youth scholar, please let Susanne know!



Above, Gillian Davis took home a set of honey bee holiday lights; Nancy Toenyan won a bee-themed wreath made by Tammy Nelson; right, the oxalic acid fume vaporizer made by Howard Mullins.

WINTER BEE MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

By Dr. Gordon Wardell, Chairman, Project Apis m. ~ thanks to Fran Bach for including this important message in WSBA's Notes for Beekeepers!

"The Holiday Season is a joyous time of year and yet a nervous time for beekeepers. This is the season when all of the efforts since the summer are realized. If not managed correctly earlier in the fall, colonies will begin crashing this time of year for a number of reasons making the Holidays less than festive. Wintering success starts in late summer. The most obvious challenge is mite control. If mites go unchecked too far into the fall, the bees that make up your winter cluster are compromised. The bees' life expectancy will have been shortened by Varroa mites and the viruses they vector, reducing a bee's potential life by as much as half. Summer bees have a life expectancy of approximately 6 weeks - they literally work themselves to death. But healthy bees destined for the winter cluster are different. A winter bee's life expectancy can be as great as four to six months. You can see why mite management in the fall is so critical. Shortening a winter bee's life expectancy by half would predict its demise in December instead of February or

March. Early loss of population will make the colony susceptible to chill and even starvation because they can't move to the food when temperatures drop.

“The greater longevity of winter bees is largely due to a storage protein sequestered in the bee's abdomen called vitellogenin. This protein, carbohydrate, lipid complex is the currency that keeps the colony going and rearing brood even in the middle of the winter.

“This buildup of vitellogenin doesn't happen by accident; it's a delicate balance between colony population, available food stores, the queen's egg production and emerging workers. In the fall, as days begin to shorten, the queen's egg production begins to decrease. Soon the nurse bee-to-brood ratio shifts. There are still numerous workers emerging from brood cells, eating stored pollen (or protein supplement), becoming nurse bees and producing royal jelly as nurse bees do so well. But alas, there aren't enough larvae to accept all the royal jelly being produced because the queen is shutting down egg laying, so the surplus royal jelly is passed around the colony and internalized by the newly emerged bees. They "fatten up" much like a bear preparing for winter, but instead of hibernating, the bees are active, calling on the vitellogenin as added food stores, and it proves an essential resource when the queen resumes egg-laying in January.

“Too many times we hear about the doom and gloom of what is wrong with our colonies but no suggestions about what we can do to help remediate the situation. So I'll take a stab at what we can do to help colonies that are sliding backwards this time of year. It's not easy, and there is no guaranteed fix. There are so many factors that could be playing into the colony's drop in population, but we do know a few things that can help.

Bee Colonies in Winter ~ photo by Marcelle Stenzig

“You can reduce the colony down to a size the remaining bees can manage. Help them conserve heat. Feed them and make the food available to the cluster. A high carbohydrate (sugar) protein supplement patty or candy board placed near the cluster can provide the energy needed to keep the cluster warm, and the small amount of protein in the mix helps extend the life of the bees in the cluster. In bees, as in most animals, protein equals longevity. You can combine colonies as well, if you are worried about their survival. Stacking weak colonies over stronger colonies separated with a double screen can help the weaker colony by sharing heat with the stronger colony. Later in the spring they can be split apart again.

"Another thing to watch for this year is starvation. The central and eastern parts of the country are currently experiencing unseasonably warm temperatures. This sounds counter-intuitive but warmer than normal temperatures could lead to colonies consuming their honey stores faster than expected leading to starvation when the cold temperatures do return. The problem is that when it is unseasonably warm bees are out foraging for resources that aren't there, burning up their honey reserves only to be caught short later. Monitor your colonies closely. Practice lifting the back of the colony to judge its weight and stores inside without having to open the colony.

"Many experienced beekeepers will say that a colony is weak for a reason, and there is not much you can do to bring them back especially this time of year. However, when we are able to bring that colony back from the brink it makes us feel like the stewards of the bees that we want to be. I hope you all have a great Holiday Season and prosperous colonies in the New Year."

My Bee Story...by Linda S. Bird-Sonne

New member Linda shared this great story & photos – thank you, Linda, & welcome to LCBA! If readers have a bee story to share, please send it to Susanne. We'd love to have more stories by members in the newsletter!

"My husband Peter and I bought a house and land in Toledo, Washington a year ago October. The property has a nice barn in the backyard that we noticed is also a home to a thriving colony of honey bees. Their 'front door' is a two-inch hole in the outside back wall that is facing a forested area. The discovery of the bees was made this past May when we finally made it across country with our stuff and moved into our new home.

Above, two views of Linda's improvised feeder: "room service" for her barn bees.

"I started entertaining the idea of becoming a beekeeper shortly thereafter, did some reading, and bought a new hive. While I was painting the new hive, Peter and I witnessed our first swarm. They made their bee beard about 70-feet up in a Douglas Fir on the property. I quickly set up the hive and some sugar syrup containing 'Honey Bee Healthy' to try to entice them to this great new hive. I now know that a new hive needs more of a bee-scent to it to be interesting, so nothing happened and the swarm just moved on. Maybe the swarm was from our barn bees, maybe not.

"As summer progressed, I continued trying to entice honey bees into my awaiting hive with lemon grass and feeder jars filled with thick sugar water. I attended meetings of bee groups and did more reading. I was witness to the carnivorous bald-faced wasps and yellow jackets picking up bees that were trying to feed in and around my empty hive, so I just stopped that.

"The year wore on and I learned it was getting way too late for a colony to start up anywhere. Hearing how sparse nectar was from the drought conditions we were all experiencing, I listened closely in LCBA meetings when feeding was being discussed. My barn bee colony was getting kind of quiet and I was getting concerned. I set up a watering station with a floating piece of wood for them and kept the water fresh and started wondering how on earth to feed wild bees from a tiny hole in the side of a barn. My interest in feeding them is to keep them somewhat energized and proliferating and maybe they'll notice my hive again in the spring.

"I figured out a way (please see photos, above) to give them 'room service' and have noticed a lot more activity and 'happy buzzing' in the past month since I started successfully getting food to them and only to them. There don't seem to be any honey-robbers or bee-carnivores with this arrangement either. Enjoy the photos!"

Washington's New "Beekeepers Are Farmers" Law: How Does It Affect Hobbyists?

Thanks to Tim Hiatt, WSBA's legislative analyst, for passing along this guide to the new law, annotated for beekeepers. Want to help support honey bees through legislative action? Tim has suggestions & he can help: visit his site, http://wasba.org/wa4bees_legislative_action/

With the passing of recent legislation (Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6057) the Department received several questions on how this new law applies to beekeepers. Below is a representative list of those questions and our answers.

Q: If a beekeeper registers with the Washington State Department of Agriculture (RCW 15.60.021), is he or she considered to be a "farmer" if the beekeeper owns or keeps at least one hive?

The answer is yes if, in addition to registering with Washington State Department of Agriculture and owning or keeping at least one hive, the beekeeper must also meet the definition of an "eligible apiarist" (see description above)

Q: The new legislation exempts the gross income from bee pollination services provided by all eligible apiarists to farmers from B&O tax. This means that beekeepers who don't register with WSDA are subject to B&O taxes, correct?

If an apiarist doesn't register under RCW 15.60.021 (with WSDA), then they do not qualify as an "eligible apiarist" and would not be considered a "farmer" even if they make wholesale sales of honey bee products. They would not qualify for any of the exemptions listed in this document that are contingent on an apiarist being an "eligible apiarist" or a "farmer."

Please note: A beekeeper that does not register with WSDA, but provides bee pollination services, would be subject to B&O tax under the Service and Other Activities classification on their charges for these services.

Q: Does Washington's litter tax apply to the sale of honey?

Retail sales of honey are subject to litter tax. Wholesale sales of honey by an eligible apiarist are exempt from litter tax. (WAC 458-20-243(5)(b)). Retail sales of manufactured honey bee products are subject to litter tax.

Q: Are sales of food generally sales tax free?

Sales of food and food ingredients for human consumption are exempt from sales tax. (WAC 458-20-244)

Q: Are B&O taxes due from sales of honey bee products (queen honey bees, packaged honey bees, honey, pollen, bees wax, propolis, or other substances obtained from honey bees)? Will sales tax be collected on the sales of these? What is the current state of beekeepers' DOR obligations on sales of honey bee products?

Wholesale sales of honey bee products (see definition above) by an eligible apiarist are exempt from B&O tax. Such sales are also exempt from litter tax (RCW 82.19.050). If an eligible apiarist's only business activity is the wholesaling of honey bee products then they are not required to register with the Department of Revenue.

Retail sales (sales to end consumers) of honey bee products are subject to B&O tax under the Retailing classification and, in general, are subject to sales tax. Sales tax exemptions include:

Food and food ingredients: for example retail sales of honey are exempt from sales tax. (WAC 458-20-244)

Interstate and foreign sales – Sales of honey products delivered by the seller to an out-of-state location are exempt from retail sales tax as interstate and foreign sales. Note: such sales are also exempt from B&O tax. (WAC 458-20-193)

Note: Sales of honey bees by an eligible apiarist to a farmer for providing pollination services are exempt from B&O tax and sales tax.

Q: Are eligible apiarists exempt from paying retail sales tax on the following purchases of agricultural inputs?

Chemicals for use on bees: Eligible apiarists are exempt from paying sales tax on "spray materials." The term "spray materials" is limited to any substance or mixture of substances in liquid, powder, granular, dry flowable, or gaseous form, which is intended to prevent, destroy, control, repel, or mitigate any insect, rodent, nematode, mollusk, fungus, weed, and any other form of plant or animal life normally considered to be a pest. (Emphasis added) (WAC 458-20-210)

Creatures like the varroa mite are "pests" and purchases of chemical sprays to destroy, control, repel, or mitigate the pest would qualify for this exemption from sales tax..

Medications for bees: There is a sales tax exemption for animal pharmaceuticals. Animal pharmaceuticals are only exempt when:

The medication is administered by the farmer (eligible apiarist); and

The medication is listed in either the FDA “Green Book” or the USDA “Veterinary Biologics Product Catalogue”

If both of these requirements are met, then the purchase is exempt from sales tax; if not then the purchase is subject to sales tax. (WAC 458-20-210)

Feed for bees (corn syrup, sugar, pollen patties or protein supplements containing brewers yeast, soy flour, pollen, corn syrup, vitamins, minerals, sometimes medications). Since some beekeepers make their own pollen patties, are the purchases of the components of patties also exempt from sales tax such as a 50-pound bag of sugar, pallets of soy flour, etc?:

“Feed" is any substance used as food to sustain or improve animals, birds, fish, or insects, including whole and processed grains or mixtures thereof, hay and forages or meals made therefrom, mill feeds and feeding concentrates, stock salt, hay salt, bone meal, fish meal, cod liver oil, double purpose limestone grit, oyster shell, and other similar substances. Food additives that are given for their beneficial growth or weight effects are "feed." Hormones or similar products that do not make a direct nutritional or energy contribution to the body are not "feed," nor are products used as medicines.

The purchases of “feed” by an eligible apiarist, including items purchased to make feed (e.g. pollen patties), are exempt from sales tax, except for the purchases of hormones or similar products. When making such purchases the eligible apiarist must provide their vendor with a completed Farmers’ Certificate for Wholesale Purchases and Sales Tax Exemptions.

Q: Are all apiarists exempt from collecting retail sales tax on pollination services?

Yes, both eligible and non-eligible apiarists are exempt from collecting retail sales tax on pollination services to farmers. (An eligible apiarist would not owe B&O tax. While a non-eligible apiarist would owe B&O tax under the service and other activities classification.)

Q: Can eligible apiarists use the sales tax exemption on replacement parts for qualifying farm machinery and equipment and labor and services to repair that equipment if their gross annual sales of agricultural products, including honey bee products, and bee pollination services are at least $10,000?

Yes, eligible apiarists who have at least annual gross income from pollination services or from sales of agricultural products (including honey bee products) of at least $10,000, or both qualify for this exemption.

It is up to the individual eligible apiarist to determine if they qualify for this exemption and they must maintain records documenting that they qualify for the exemption. To obtain the exemption, the eligible apiarist must provide the seller with a completed Farmers’ Certificate for Wholesale Purchases and Sales Tax Exemptions, and the eligible apiarist must mark block 9 (Replacement Parts and Repair Services for Qualifying Farm Machinery and Equipment).

Q: Do the following items qualify for the exemption from sales tax for replacement parts and labor and services to repair such equipment?

Forklift (for moving bees): A forklift primarily used to grow, raise or produce an agricultural product (e.g. honey bee products) qualifies as farm machinery and equipment. Therefore the purchase of replacement parts for such forklifts is exempt from sales tax.

Note: Only the replacement parts and repair services on such forklifts is exempt; the exemption does not extend to the purchase of a forklift.

Extracting equipment (machinery used for extracting the honey from the combs, usually stainless steel): Extracting equipment qualifies as farm machinery and equipment. Therefore, the purchase of replacement parts for extracting equipment is exempt from sales tax.

Note: Only the replacement parts and repair services on extracting equipment is exempt; the exemption does not extend to the purchase of actual extracting equipment.

Honey bottling equipment/tanks (stainless steel again, for filling containers of honey): Honey bottling equipment qualifies as farm machinery and equipment. Therefore, the purchase of replacement parts for honey bottling equipment is exempt from sales tax.

Note: Only the replacement parts and repair services on honey bottling equipment is exempt; the exemption does not extend to the purchase of actual honey bottling equipment.

Refrigeration units for stored pollen: Refrigeration units for storing pollen do not qualify as farm machinery and equipment. Therefore the purchase of replacement parts for refrigeration units do not qualify for this exemption.

The exemption is limited to machinery and equipment used primarily in the growing, raising or producing the agricultural product. Here the refrigeration unit is used to store the product; not grow, raise or produce the product.

Honey pumps (for transferring honey from a sump to a tank or from a tank to a barrel or jar): Honey pumps qualify as farm machinery and equipment. Therefore the purchase of replacement parts for honey pumps is exempt from sales tax. Note: Only the replacement parts and repair services on honey pumps are exempt; the exemption does not extend to the purchase of actual honey pumps.

Syrup pumps (for putting corn syrup or sugar water from a tank into an in-hive container): Syrup pumps qualify as farm machinery and equipment. Therefore the purchase of replacement parts for syrup pumps is exempt from sales tax.

Note: Only the replacement parts and repair services on syrup pumps are exempt; the exemption does not extend to the purchase of actual syrup pumps.

Carpentry equipment (table saw, radial arm saw, planer, etc, used for building woodenware [hive boxes, lids, pallets, frames, etc]): Carpentry equipment for building hives does not qualify as farm machinery and equipment. Therefore the purchase of replacement parts for carpentry equipment does not qualify for this exemption. The exemption is limited to machinery and equipment used primarily in the growing, raising or producing the agricultural product. Here the carpentry equipment is used to build something that is used for the raising or producing of an agricultural product. These tools are not used themselves to grow, raise or produce the agricultural product.

Hives of bees, bought as replacement hives for hives lost to fire or stolen or died by spray or other causes: Hives of bees are not “machinery or equipment” therefore they are not eligible for this exemption from sales tax. However, the sale of bees to an eligible apiarist is exempt from retail sales tax if sold to an eligible apiarist.

Bee boxes (and lids/pallets/frames), bought to replace worn out ones, by those who don't do carpentry to build replacements: Bee hive boxes to replace worn-out bee boxes are not replacement parts but are replacement equipment. Consequently, these replacements do not qualify for this exemption.

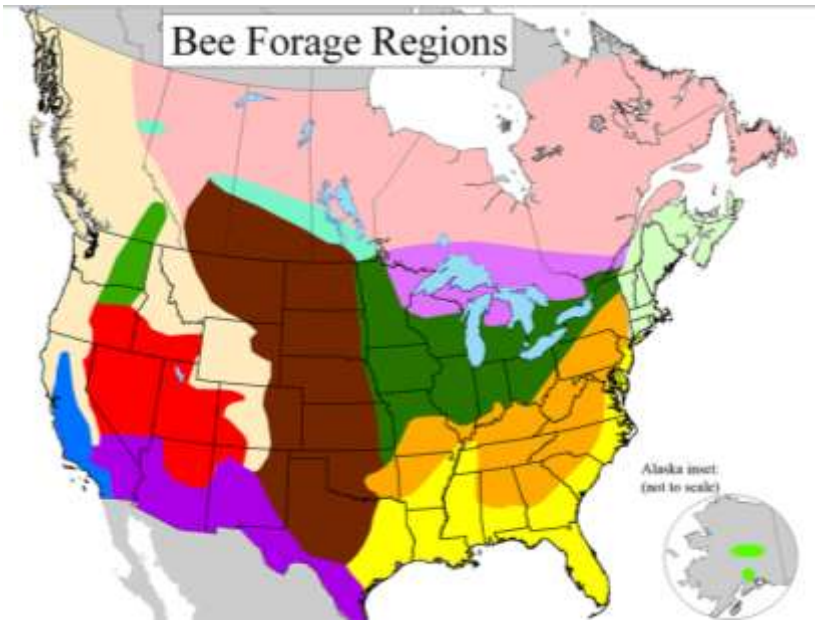
Note: The exemption only extends to parts that replace an existing part, not the entire piece of qualifying machinery or equipment.

If a frame breaks, the replacement of the frame would qualify. If a panel of a bee box is damaged and the damaged side of the bee box needs replacing, the replacement panel used to patch the bee box would be considered a replacement part.

For more information, visit:

http://dor.wa.gov/Content/DoingBusiness/BusinessTypes/Industry/BeeKeepers/

NASA Publishes Interactive Honey Bee Forage Map of the U.S.



One great feature of this map is that when you click on your region, plants are listed in order of months when they bloom: helpful for those thinking about planting for year-round bee forage.

Interactive map: http://honeybeenet.gsfc.nasa.gov/Honeybees/Forage.htm

To go directly to the Washington State Bloom list, paste this URL in your browser:
http://honeybeenet.gsfc.nasa.gov/Honeybees/ForageRegion.php?StReg=WA_2

BEES IN THE NEWS

Thanks to Fran Bach, Sheila Gray, Steve Norton, & the folks at Bee Culture, American Bee Journal, & WSBA for bee news stories. Please keep 'em coming!

"Bacteria improve honeybee larvae survival rate": May 2015, Agricultural Research Service

We tend to think of bacteria as a bad thing, but researchers have discovered a new species of bacteria, named *Parasaccharibacter apium* and so far found only in bee colonies, which actually gives bee larvae a 20-40% better chance of survival. *P. apium* inhabits royal jelly, secreted by nurse bees, who feed that jelly to larvae; the bacteria has also been found by the honey that nurse bees transition larvae to feed on after their first few days post-hatching.

What makes P. apium such a positive influence? Lead researchers at the ARS Research Center in Tucson, AZ say "We haven't yet identified what P. apium does that confers this survival advantage to the larvae. It could involve the production of organic acids and lowering pH, which might have an antiseptic effect, or its presence might induce an immune response that could later work against larval pathogens."

The scientists have found that a very similar bacterium inhabits certain nectars, such as that from apple blossoms, thistles, and daisies. They are now field testing these nectars to see whether bacteria from them might help bee larvae, and they are seeking ways to use it as a management tool.

To read more, visit: https://agresearchmag.ars.usda.gov/2015/may/honeybee/

"Another Kind Of Miticide": WSBA December 2015 Notes for Beekeepers

Researchers at Liverpool University have found that natural plant-based miticides may be even more effective than miticides – without the risk of mites' developing resistance. What these plant-based miticides do stops the Varroa mites from finding the larvae and "attaching themselves" to them. The lead researcher explains that "[t]he miticides activate a sensory protein found on the mites' front legs which prevents mites from finding their honeybee hosts. Several plant-derived miticides activated the protein but had no negative effect on honeybees."

These plant-based miticides have benefits for humans: synthetic miticides are tough for the human body to break down, but our digestive system "easily" breaks down the natural miticides.

The researchers are working on ways to help commercial beekeepers incorporate these natural miticides into their operations.

"Herbicides, Not Insecticides, Biggest Threat To Bees": WSBA December 2015 Notes for Beekeepers

Beekeepers have many legitimate concerns about pesticides; however, herbicides can harm bees more severely by destroying bee's food supplies, according to scientists at the Mississippi State University Extension Service: "When farmers burn down weeds before spring planting, or

people spray for goldenrod, asters and spring flowers, or when power companies spray their rights-of-way, they're killing a lot of potential food sources for bees and wild pollinators."

Farmers can consider physically removing problem plants rather than spraying herbicides, though this means a major change in management. "Crops in the field, especially soybeans, are great sources of bee forage, and farmers and beekeepers can coordinate to protect both of their interests." Further, "farmland is not the only place bees find food. Yards, roadsides, golf courses and power line rights-of-way are other places bees forage when plants are allowed to bloom naturally." A shift is needed: "We need to stop looking at them as weeds and instead look at these plants as forage," the researchers said. "If herbicide use means there's nothing for a bee to eat, there's no reason to put a hive in an area."

To read more, visit: http://agfax.com/2015/12/17/pollinators-herbicides-not-insecticides-biggest-threat-to-bees/

"Bumblebees more at risk from neonicotinoids": 8 Nov 2015, *Bee Culture*

An new international study has found that neonicotinoids have a more serious impact on bumblebees than honey bees. As with honey bees, debate centers on the degree of field exposure that causes harm.

Lead scientist Nigel Raine, Canada, University of Guelph environmental sciences professor, was involved with the first study in 2014 that summarized over 400 separate research studies. As more and more studies are published, Raine's group has published a subsequent review, which revealed the dangers to native bees.

"Our aim was to act as honest brokers, providing an account of the evidence, its strengths and limitations, but without making any direct policy recommendations," Raine says. To read more and find links to the original reviews, visit:

http://www.beeculture.com/catch-the-buzz-still-more-on-neonicotinoids/?utm_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm_campaign=d1024b2c36-Catch_The_Buzz_4_29_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0272f190ab-d1024b2c36-256261065

"Wild Bee Decline Threatens US Crop Production: Following Obama's call for pollinator assessment, first-ever national bee map shows much farmland at risk": 21 Dec 2015, *American Bee Journal*

The first national study that maps where wild bees are prevalent in the U.S. offers evidence that these native bees are vanishing from "many of the country's most important farmlands--including California's Central Valley, the Midwest's corn belt, and the Mississippi River valley." From 2008 and 2013, native bee populations dropped by 23%.

"The study also shows that 39% of US croplands that depend on pollinators--from apple orchards to pumpkin patches--face a threatening mismatch between rising demand for pollination and a falling supply of wild bees." Among crops facing the worst pollinator/crop mismatches are "pumpkins, watermelons, pears, peaches, plums, apples and blueberries." Because native bees play a key role in pollinating these crops, farmers may face a higher cost of doing business, and consumers may be affected since this has the potential to "destabilize the nation's crop production."

Part of the problem has been that "in eleven key states where the new study shows bees in decline, the amount of land tilled to grow corn spiked by two hundred percent in five years--replacing grasslands and pastures that once supported bee populations." Biofuel production has also spurred conversion of natural habitats to cornfields.

The researchers are asking that "seven million acres of land to be protected as pollinator habitat over the next five years." The new map will help determine where to focus efforts to preserve forage and restore habitat.

To read more details about how the map was made and what it reveals, visit: http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/?u=5fd2b1aa990e63193af2a573d&id=e186168349&e=e9ff21e0bb For BBC News' coverage of this story, visit: http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35153196

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Want a Beautiful, Free 2016 Bee Calendar? Check out VITA-Europe's FREE 2016 calendar, featuring winners of their 2015 Photo Contest Winners: visit http://www.vita-europe.com/news/2015photocompresults/

Got Clay Soil? An LCBA Member is looking and would like to get a couple of truck bed loads. If you can help, please contact Kaylene Tate: kaylenet@fairpoint.net .

New Photo Contest Coming To Bee Culture's Web Page! - To start the year out right, Bee Culture Magazine will be featuring a photo contest each month, beginning Jan. 4, 2016. There's a different theme every month (January's theme is winter beeyards), and you can enter with your own photos! Best of all, you get to vote for the best photo each month. The photo that gathers the most votes wins a full free year of Bee Culture's Digital Magazine! (Why not get your friends to help?)

But wait, there's more! Each month the editorial staff at Bee Culture will pick their favorite for the month, and the photographer chosen will receive a free copy of the 41st edition of The ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture! So get out those cameras, go visit a snowy, cold or winter beeyard and snap away. A prize is waiting for you!

For details, visit: http://www.beeculture.com/catch-the-buzz-new-photo-contest-coming-to-bee-cultures-web-page

Jan 24: 2nd Year Beekeeping Refresher Course, 1 - 4 pm, Pizza Factory (123 S. Boad) Medical Lake WA. Free for West Plains Beekeepers Association members; $10 non-members. Info www.wpbeekeepers.org or westplainsbeekeepers@gmail.

March 29: Capitol Region Educational Services District 113 has invited LCBA to participate in a large watershed celebration and workshops for about 350 4-8th graders at Centralia College. LCBA volunteers will offer 2 50-minute classes on honey bee behavior and beekeeping. CRESD says, "All of the students are from the Chehalis Basin Region and would love to learn about bees and their importance to the environment!"

The Honey Bee Health Coalition (HBHC) 4th quarter newsletter has been posted at http://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/category/newsletter . Dewey Caron reports that newsletter highlights include a review of their semi-annual meeting at the American Farm Bureau Federation in Washington, D.C. . . . information on HBHC partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) to bring key Managed Pollinator Protection Plan (MP3) stakeholders together in early 2016. . . . and news of the coming update of HBHC's "Tools for Varroa Management Guide" (available at http://honeybeecoaltion.org/varroa/).

WAS 2016 Conference: Honolulu, Hawaii, October 13-15, 2016: The Western Apicultural Society's new President, Dr. Ethel Villalobos, has just announced the dates of WAS 2016 in Hawaii. Dr. Villalobos is Director of the University of Hawaii Honeybee Project at UH Manoa. She extends a warm welcome to all beekeepers to attend.

Western Apicultural Society Newsletters: http://groups.ucanr.org/WAS/WAS_Journal. Click on the line in the paragraph on the right as directed. If you're still getting the old issue, click on "empty cache" in your browser or "refresh" or "reload" under VIEW in your menu bar.

WSBA Newsletter: Pick up your copy online at www.wasba.org: click on "Newsletters."

That's all for now ~ take care, & bee happy!

~~ Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary (Susanne.beekeeper@gmail.com; 360 880 8130)