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# NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS



## ASSOCIATION



## NEWS

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**VOL 21 ISSUE 1**

**DEC / JAN 07**

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Hi everyone

Well, we had our fall meeting and thanks to those in the Essex Branch it was a great one. Very informative and of course good food. Had a very nice turn out and had a chance to meet and talk with some new beekeepers who I had never met before.

I was very disheartened to see that our new Governor has decided not to have a bear hunt as long as he is in office, much against the wisdom of those people who are in the know as to what is best for the state and its people. Politics as usual in New Jersey, but what else would you expect.

By now the leaves have fallen, the weather has gotten a lot colder and the bees should be heavy with food stores and ready for winter. I can tell you that in my case, I have never seen such a poor fall flow in my 20 some years of bee keeping. I also understand that what I found is not that uncommon in the state. I had to feed better than 60 % of my bees several times this fall and will more than likely have to feed some of them again in early spring. That's a tip to those who might not have already looked if it's not already too late.

For those of you that might not already know, the N.J. Ag. Convention / N.J.B.A. winter meeting is going to be a little later this year than in the past. The Ag. Convention will be on Feb. 12-14 and our winter meeting will be on Saturday Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>. Again, as in the past, I ask that everyone try very hard to enter the Honey

Show with at least one entry as this gets great press coverage and allows lots of people to realize that there are bee keepers through out the state. You can find a copy of the new rules on our N.J.B.A. web site; there are changes and additions to the rules from last year. For those that don't have a computer, you can contact either Janet Katz or me and we will see to it that you get a copy and answer any questions that you might have. Entries must be in the hands of an executive board member no later than Feb.9. That is when we will have our state executive board meeting and items are sent to the convention from there.

As I have mentioned earlier, our Winter Meeting will again be at the Columbus Grange. I have been promised heat this year, and it will start at 8: 30 a.m. with coffee and donuts. The agenda for the meeting and the cost will be in our next news letter. Make it a point to attend

Just one more reminder before I call it quits. This is an election year for us when my term as president is over and the executive board makes changes. Give some consideration to becoming a board member and making this Association even better than it already is. If you're interested, Contact Madeleine Nist at [mnist@spamcop.net](mailto:mnist@spamcop.net) or Tel # 732-833-8211. She will handle our elections this year.

Have a great holiday everybody.

Bob H

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The redesign of the New Jersey Beekeepers Association has been completed, and the new site has replaced the old. Menus should be more readable, with the more frequently viewed pages, such as the calendar and hive products on the top level. Drop down menus have been slightly expanded and are also more readable. Care has been taken to make sure that the pages display correctly in the two most popular browsers, Internet Explorer and Firefox. Please visit the new site and let me know what you think, i.e., what you like and what you don't like and what you think is missing or should be included. Also, if you find any errors or links that do not work, please let me know that, too.

I still have some outstanding updates to make, most notably in posting photographs that have been submitted to me. I will be able to catch up on that as soon as I can stop feeding bees and the garden/yard is put to bed. (I finally managed to clean and seal the deck just ahead of today's rain!) If you have submitted an update or addition that does not appear on the new website, feel free to send me a reminder. The past few weeks have been spent on working on the redesign rather than making updates.

Janet A. Katz, Webmaster

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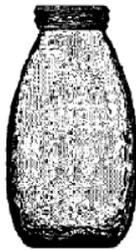
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## There's much more to bees than honey

A report from Reuters Press in England states scientists have unraveled the genetic code of the honey bee, and have discovered clues about its complex social behavior, heightened sense of smell and its origins in Africa. It is the third insect to have its genome mapped and joins the fruit fly and mosquito in the exclusive club.

The honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, is reported to have evolved more slowly than the other insects and has more genes related to smell.

Honey bees use pheromones, substances secreted by glands, to distinguish the gender, caste and age of other bees, according to the scientists. (As well as a number of other functions. That is why their sense of smell is so important.)

Gene Robinson, director of the University of Illinois Bee Research Facility, one of the leaders of the project, was quoted as stating "In biology and biomedicine, honey bees are used to study many diverse areas, including allergic disease, development, gerontology, neuroscience, social behavior and venom toxicology. The

honey bee genome project is ushering in a bright era of bee research for the benefit of agriculture, biological research and human health."

The article also claimed that with its highly evolved social structure of tens of thousands of worker bees commanded by the Queen, the honey bee genome could also improve the search for genes linked to social behavior. (Isn't it great that even in a science article about a specific subject they can get things so wrong? We beekeepers know that even though the queen's pheromones are responsible for a lot that goes on in a hive, she is hardly in "command.")

The consortium of scientists, reporting their findings in the scientific journal *Nature*, said a more comprehensive analysis of the honey bee and other species will be needed to before we can fully understand its social life.

The scientists who analyzed the genetic code have discovered the honey bee originated in Africa and spread to Europe in two ancient migrations.

"The African bees' spread throughout the New World is a spectacular example of biological invasion," the scientists said in the *Nature* report.

The Queen has 10 times the

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engineer an advanced colonial insect?" said Edward Wilson, of Harvard University in a commentary on the research.



The honey bee genome could improve the search for genes linked to social behavior.

lifespan of workers and lays up to 2,000 eggs a day. Despite having tiny brains, honey bees display honed cognitive abilities and learn to associate a flower's color, shape and scent with food, which increases its foraging ability.

The number of genes in honey bees related to smell outnumber those linked to taste. The insects also have fewer genes than the fruitfly or mosquito for immunity. "This DNA sequence is a major step towards answering a basic question of social evolution: at the genomic level, what does it take to

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Troy Joshua, Director of the field office in Trenton says that his office is arranging to mail out the annual “Bee and Honey Inquiry” forms early in December.

Earlier this year information is kept confidential. According to the

USDA, “The results will be used by the bee & honey industry, universities, and government agencies to support a wide array of industry concerns, all of which affect the industry producers including: research, marketing, industry trends, financing and legislation.”

The NJBA does not make our membership list available to outside groups, but the NASS would like to hear from you if you are not on their mailing list. Contact Troy at (609) 292-6385 or [nass-nj@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-nj@nass.usda.gov) to participate.

Curtis Crowell

## From George's Pink Pages

### Feeding: Why? When? With What? How Much?

You have to eat, don't you? Your dog has to eat, doesn't it? Your car has to "eat" gasoline, or it won't run. Cockroaches eat your birthday cake crumbs unless they are cleaned up. Varroa mites "ride around" on worker bees and feed on the bee's "blood", injuring the bee. Even germs and bacteria have to feed to stay alive. When anything doesn't get fed, it becomes weak or sick, and can no longer work very well or it dies.

MUCH TO OFTEN, a colony of honey bees does not get fed by the beekeeper and it gets weak or dies. Package bees, a swarm, a nuc, or a split is put in a hive of foundation and the bees are expected to make that foundation into drawn comb, and the beekeeper provides them with a pint of sugar water - ONE PINT! Bees have to consume 8 pounds of honey to make 1 pound of wax. TOO MANY beekeepers believe that nature is going to provide enough nectar that the bees can do all of this work without any supplemental feed. Can bees gather nectar in cold weather, rain, nighttime, or during a dearth? If you want the bees to produce honey for you, don't you think that you owe them the feed to help them build the

comb (furniture), a large population of workers to get through the winter, something that contains Fumadil-B to prevent Nosema disease, and some Back-Up food stores in case the fall nectar flow is meager? Have you forgotten that bees positively will not build comb (draw foundation) without a nectar flow, or an artificial nectar flow of sugar syrup? Are you in good spirits when there is "nothing to do"? Don't try to requeen a hive when the bees have "nothing to do" like out foraging, so you feed bees when you try to requeen. Brood rearing requires a tremendous amount of feed to raise all those eggs and larvae into adult bees, so if you want your queen to heavily lay eggs, feed your bees!

Basically, when you want your bees to do something that you have dreamed-up and it did not come to pass naturally, like requeening, building foundation into comb, getting them to eat certain medicines, or increasing their population, FEED THEM and feed them long enough to get the job done. Starting a new colony in April with a package of bees is a good example. That colony is going to require the building of at least 20 deep frames of foundation into drawn comb that will hold a minimum of 70 pounds of honey to get it through the coming winter, and all this work will require a large population of bees to get it done. Yet beekeeper after beekeeper only feeds this new colony maybe one jar of sugar syrup. The proper way to prepare



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a really strong colony is to feed it STOPPING, from the day it began in April for another 4 months into September! You might even get some foundation drawn for supers. This might require about 50 pounds of sugar which costs about 30¢/pound or \$15. Isn't building a real strong colony ready to really produce a large honey crop next year worth an

CONTINUOUSLY, WITHOUT extra \$15, rather than have a pitiful weak colony that might not make it through the winter? Are you a beeHAVER or a beeKEEPER? WHAT do you feed? Just plain table sugar is by far the best feed you can use. Anything else, such as honey, high fructose, coke syrup, left over candies, molasses, or you-name-it might have

disease germs like Foul Brood spores, or starches or indigestible minerals that give a bee diarrhea. Just plain sucrose (table sugar) dissolved in water is absolutely the BEST feed. Someone is going to ask: Why not honey that they made themselves, and hence it is their “favorite” food. Honey is NOT the favorite food of a bee! Honey is an emergency food used in the winter when no nectar is available. NECTAR, which is a watery solution of primarily SUCROSE (table sugar) is the favorite food of a bee!

Sugar syrup can be made up into three different strengths, and you use different strengths for different purposes and at different times of the year, as follows:

- 1:2 - 1 pound of sugar dissolved in 2 pints of water is primarily used as a egg laying stimulant for the queen in late winter and early spring
- 1:1 - 1 pound of sugar dissolved in 1 pint of water is primarily used as an artificial nectar to get bees to build comb and feed brood larvae in spring and summer
- 2:1 - 2 pounds of sugar dissolved in 1 pint of water is a winter feed substituting for honey in the fall or early winter

### **Which Month Do Most Bees Starve and Why?**

Records show that more colonies of bees die of starvation during the month of March than any other month, with February running a close second. Many beginners think that January is the most difficult month because it is so cold, and the bees have to eat more honey to keep warm. That is not true, and what is the reason that March is so bad? Bee scientists have investigated this for 200-300 years, and all have shown that bees actually eat practically nothing during November, December, and early January when they are generally tightly clustered to maintain body warmth, and there is little or no brood being raised during this time. But when the queen starts laying eggs in January, brood rearing requires a lot of “heat”, because the brood nest must be kept at a temperature of 91-96 degrees for the queen to lay eggs, and feeding all those thousands of bee larvae for 6 days when their weight increases from 1 milligram to about 100 milligrams each requires a tremendous amount of feed. By the time March gets around, the queen is laying at an accelerated pace, maybe 1500 eggs per day, and this means the bees have to warm a much larger area brood nest to 91-96 degrees and feed a tremendous number of larvae each of which increases its egg weight 100 times in 6 days. There is a tremendous use of food supplies in February and much more in March; and there is very little nectar

available in March to replace that stored winter honey.

If you remove the telescoping top cover of a colony during the winter months and you see a large number of bees through the inner cover hole, immediately begin to be concerned that the colony is **SHORT** of honey stores, because the bees should not have eaten honey that far up in the colony before the spring nectar flow. Immediately (not tomorrow) put a feeder of sugar syrup over that inner cover hole. On the next day (not the next weekend) that the temperature is over 50 degrees, take off that inner cover and inspect the frames in that top body for stored honey. If the outside frames have honey, but the center frames are almost empty, switch these frames. When it is cold and the bees are clustered, bees will **NOT** move to the outside frames for honey, but starve to death on the center frames. A bee cluster moves

**UPWARDS** in a colony like smoke in a chimney, and does not spread out sideways.

Why do I insist that you do something **IMMEDIATELY**, or the first day the temperature is over 50 degrees and **NOT** wait for a weekend? 24 hours may be the difference between live bees or dead bees, and if they died because they were short on stored food, it was not an Act of God or an unusual cold spell, but rather, **IT WAS YOUR FAULT!** You killed your bees, because you did not have a full 70 pounds of honey in the colony by December 1st for them to get through the winter!

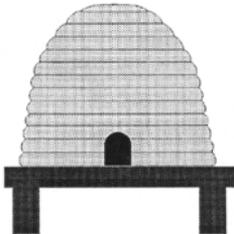
### **70 and 80 degree Temperatures in December!**

I was removing the last few strips of Apistan from my colonies during the first week of December when the temperature hit 80j, and I found frames with open brood in quantities the size of my hand! Is this good or not good? It is good to have nice young new bees going into the cold winter, because they will have a longer life span to warm the brood nest when the queen starts heavy laying in February. However, it is bad to have weather warm enough to have brood, because it opens the door to female varroa mites to lay new mite eggs with the bee larvae, and these new adult mites will feed on the new adult bees during the winter. This unseasonable warm weather plays havoc with the winter feed stores for the bees, because it is



brood rearing that uses so much stored honey. KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON YOUR WINTER FOOD SUPPLY.

George's Pink Pages are written by Master Beekeeper George Imirie. See George's writing here in this newsletter or on the web. Find a link to many of his writings at Christopherpetree.com

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**NJBA MEETING DATES**

Executive Board Meeting, Feb 9, Ag Building, Trenton

NJ State Honey Show, February 12-14, 2007  
Tropicana Hotel, Atlantic City

Winter Meeting, Feb 17

**CENTRAL JERSEY**

December 16 – Central Jersey Holiday Party

**ESSEX COUNTY**

Second Tuesday, Extensive schedule of events at Essex County Environmental Center. Contact Landi Simone for dates and topics.

Dec 8: 7:00 - 10 PM, First Annual ECBS Christmas Dinner with speaker and entertainment.

**JERSEY CAPE**

Third Thursday, 7:00 PM at Cape May County Extension Office

**MORRIS COUNTY**

Dec 3, Annual holiday party

**NORTH EAST**

Third Friday, 678 S. Maple Ave, Glen Rock

**NORTH WEST**

Dec 9, Annual winter party at Echo Hill Park

**SUSSEX**

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**OTHER EVENTS**

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1/2 page	rest of newsletter	\$75
1/4 page	rest of newsletter	\$50

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## NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

### Membership Form

**Note: Memberships start in January and expire in December**

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