

NEWSLETTER

MCBA Motto: *Beekeepers Helping*

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Presidential Musings on Fall 2018

The summer is over and as usual we had a great summer picnic attended by many. The fall is here and I'm still finishing up my second honey crop and doing final mite treatments. Make sure your mite levels are low and your hives are at weight. There is still time to feed to fatten them up and knock mites down as we still have some warm weather ahead. Consider your plans for emergency and supplemental feeding if need be when it's too cold for syrup. Fondant and commercial winter patties are good options to consider. Next on our agenda is the October meeting with Jim Bobb talking about his adventure to Nairobi and African honey bees. December 1 is our annual fall banquet and December 16th is the holiday party and Ann at Charlie Breinig's house. I hope to see everyone at these events. - Dan Boylan

Calendar of Events

Oct 9 Executive Board Meeting 7 pm, 4-H Center

Oct 13-14 Beehive Hot Wax Dipping, All Day, 1115 Camp Hill Avenue, Dresher

Oct 25 General Meeting, 7-9 pm, 4-H Center

Nov 2-3 PSBA Annual Conference, State College (see pastatebeekers.org for deadlines and to register)

Nov 13 Executive Board Meeting - 7 pm, 4-H Center

Dec 1 MCBA Annual Banquet - 4 - 9 pm, Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield (see MBCA website to register)

Dec 11 Executive Board Meeting - 7:00 pm, 4-H Center

Mar 10 Chester County Beekeepers' Conference chescobees.org/ccba-annual-conference-info/

Mar 12 - Irradiation Sterilization Event - 10:30 am Location TBA

In Brief

See pastatebeekeepers.org for more information on the following:

Blueberry Pollination Survey -

If you grow blueberries on a farm or know someone who does, take a short survey to help researchers learn about the status of pollination services to blueberries in the Mid-Atlantic region. The survey will help identify growers' needs for pollination and specific gaps in understanding how to fulfill those needs.

Pennsylvania Honey Queen Program is seeking 2019 Honey Queen and Princess. Applicants must be unmarried and aged 18-24 as of Nov 1.

Pennsylvania Pollinator Protection Plan summarizes the current state of pollinators in Pennsylvania, and provides recommendations for best practices and resources to support and expand pollinator populations. There is an opportunity for comments at the end. Comments will be accepted until Dec 15th. The document is fluid and will be reviewed and updated annually. The final chapter will be written based on comments that will help guide how it may be published and implemented.

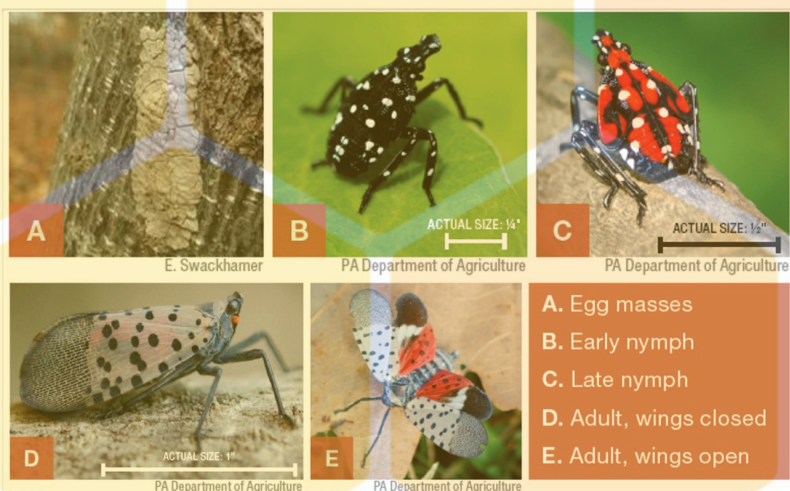
Feral Colony Health Citizen science helps researchers assess the health of feral colonies when you report their locations.

Recommendations for Upcoming Bee Courses?

Congratulations on completing your 2018 beekeeping course! I'm sure you have seen and learned a great deal on the many aspects of beekeeping and also realize there is more to learn. An excellent way to obtain further knowledge is by attending general meetings of the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association. During the 9 monthly meetings, educational, interesting, and entertaining information is presented on a variety of topics related to beekeeping as well as the opportunity to network with other beekeepers and discuss your specific questions. As one of the association board members who is involved in planning the meeting programs, I am reaching out to beginner and second year graduates as well as other association members of all levels to obtain their input on general meeting topics of interest. You can email me your requests and ideas at mzittel@verizon.net. This is your association. Please help us tailor the meeting programs to meet your needs. - Margaret Zittel

Updates for Beekeepers about Spotted Lanternfly and the Current Quarantine

SLF has been adapting to life in Pennsylvania. It has expanded its range rapidly, primarily by hitchhiking on vehicles and cargo. Be on the lookout for SLF in all its life stages. If you can, avoid parking or storing things under trees in infested areas, or moving yard waste such as woody plant debris like fallen trees, branches or tree trimmings (fall leaves and yard clippings are okay).



In the News

In Hatfield, suburban neighbors are in a dispute over backyard beekeeping By Vinny Vella

from Philadelphia Inquirer 10/1/18

Beekeeping has been a part of Keith Snyder's life since his childhood, when a colony hung just beyond the kitchen where he and his parents cooked all their meals. Decades later, that kitchen - and the house it sits in - is his. Snyder also inherited his father's knack for keeping apiaries, with 14 hives thriving in his Hatfield backyard, the most he's had in years.

It's a measure of success that experts say is uncommon, keeping so many bees alive throughout the bitter Pennsylvania winters. But Snyder's neighbors aren't as appreciative. Since June, they've lobbied the Borough Council to enact an ordinance that would limit the number of hives on any property in Hatfield. After months of meetings, discussions and public hearings, the measure is scheduled to be weighed at a council meeting on Wednesday. If it passes, it will be the first of its kind enacted into law in the Philadelphia region.

"I want this done, squashed, off the table," Snyder said. "I explained in that meeting that I realize I have my limit right here and would

actually like to reduce it some. But I want to work with Montgomery County and work with other beekeepers."

Such legislation is uncommon in Pennsylvania, with limits on beekeeping in effect almost exclusively in the western half of the state. No other municipality in the collar counties has enacted limits on residential beekeeping, and Philadelphia itself was named a "bee friendly city" by a 2016 City Council resolution.

"Local municipal ordinances are the exception, not the rule," said Mark Antunes, a master beekeeper and former president of the Montgomery County Beekeeper's Association. "And in my experience, these come to fruition because of fears and concerns by people who live within a close vicinity of the beekeeper."

Antunes said much of that fear is through

exaggerated reports of stings. The majority of such cases are actually caused by other insects, such as



photo credit David Swanson

yellow jackets, which he said are often mistaken for honey bees. In most instances, he said, honey bees are docile, attacking only when they or their hives are threatened.

"When you ask about what's the 'right number of bees,' there is no state-established number per acre or square foot or property size," Antunes said.

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Hatfield, suburban neighbors, continued.

"It comes down to what the ability of the person is, what the conditions are like, and what they are doing. And from what I can gather, Keith is being highly responsible and managing things well."

Shannon Powers, a spokeswoman for the Department of Agriculture, said all beekeepers must be licensed with the state, have their apiaries registered and be subject to inspection twice a year. These regulations are in place to control diseases that affect bees and protect the overall health of an insect that is vital to agriculture. Anything beyond that is left to local government.

Snyder has his hives registered with the state Department of Agriculture, and they were inspected in June after one of his neighbors filed a complaint. He passed with a "clean bill of health," he said.

Anne Clayton, the neighbor who first brought the issue of his bees to the Borough Council's attention at its June meeting, lives catty-corner to the Snyders on School Street. She declined to speak to a reporter at length last week, saying only that "there are too many bees being introduced into this small neighborhood."

Hatfield's solicitor, Catherine Harper, said the borough's leadership did not pursue this issue on its own, but felt compelled to act after repeated complaints from Clayton and others. "The borough council is trying to balance the equity of people who want to keep bees with people who are living in homes in a densely populated community," she said. "We're not against bees altogether, we just want to be sensitive to people who have family members with allergies and are fearful of getting stung."

Harper said the proposed ordinance was modeled after similar legislation in Forest Hills, a suburb of Pittsburgh. In its current form, it limits residential beekeepers to two hives for every 2,000 square feet of property and requires the purchase of an

annual borough license for beekeeping, among other measures.

Under Hatfield's proposed ordinance, Snyder would be allowed eight hives on his property, which county records show is about 7,400 square feet. That seems a reasonable number to Dave Ardelean, one of Snyder's neighbors who voiced concerns at Borough Council meetings this summer about the growing number of hives. "I am pro-bee, and when the hives were in the lower single digits, it was no big deal," said Ardelean, who is allergic to bee stings. "Now, it's gotten to the point where they're swarming in our trees and entering other properties...I know you can't control exactly where the bees go, and I know they're not aggressive," he added. "But one way to think of it is, when there's less of them, there's less of a chance to get stung."

Ardelean's wife, Karie, said that she and her son have both been stung, and that the higher numbers of bees flying around their property made it difficult to weed her garden this summer. "Nobody wants a war, and we don't want him to stop beekeeping," she said. "We just want him to do it in a way that's respectful to us and our needs."

Update: Co-editor Robin Ernst attended the October 3 meeting and said that after much discussion, Hatfield's Borough Council delayed the vote until October 17 due to changes made to the proposed ordinance based upon public comments from September and October meetings. The Motion to consider Ordinance No. 533, began with Borough Council reading the new draft aloud, highlighting changes to best beekeeping management practices, obtaining Borough permits, determining maximum number of hives, and apiary related inspections. The public was then allowed to address the Borough Council, leading to additional debate and changes to the ordinance. The new ordinance draft should be available before the next meeting admin@hatfieldborough.com. Robin's take-home message was: We need to proactively support suburban bee keepers by increasing public education on the seasonal behavior of bees and their management.

In the News

Study: Roundup Weed Killer Could Be Linked To Widespread Bee Deaths

by Vanessa Romo
from National Public Radio 9/25/2018

A new study from the University of Texas at Austin suggests that bees exposed to glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, lose some of the beneficial bacteria in their guts and are more susceptible to infection and death.



Photo Credit: Vivian Abagiu/College of Natural Sciences at University of Texas in Austin

The controversial herbicide Roundup has been accused of [causing cancer](#) in humans and now scientists in Texas argue that the world's most popular weed killer could be partly responsible for killing off bee populations around the world. A new [study](#) by scientists at the University of Texas at Austin posit that glyphosate — the active ingredient in the herbicide — destroys specialized gut bacteria in bees, leaving them more susceptible to infection and death from harmful bacteria.

Researchers Nancy Moran, Erick Motta and Kasie Raymann suggest their findings are evidence that glyphosate might be contributing to [colony collapse disorder](#), a phenomenon that has been wreaking havoc on honey bees and native bees for more than a decade.

They hope their results will convince farmers, landscapers and homeowners to stop spraying glyphosate-based herbicides on flowering plants that are likely to be pollinated by bees.

"We need better guidelines for glyphosate use, especially regarding bee exposure, because right now the guidelines assume bees are not harmed by the herbicide," Motta, the graduate student who led the research, said according to the university. "Our study shows that's not true."

The company that owns Roundup contests the findings published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* this week.

"No large-scale study has ever found a link between glyphosate and honey bee health issues," Bayer said in a [statement](#), adding that the new study "does not change that."

In June, German-based pharmaceutical giant Bayer bought the agriculture behemoth Monsanto, the company that developed Roundup.

Bayer noted the study relied on a small sample of individual bees and that it does not meet regulatory research criteria on pesticides stipulated by international guidelines developed by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development and other international organizations. Additionally, the company suggested it is "questionable whether the concentrations of the substance tested could at all be absorbed by bee populations in the open over a relevant period of time."

According to the report in the journal, the researchers focused on honey bees and used "hundreds of adult worker bees from a single hive" and treated them with varying levels of glyphosate. "Native bumble bees have microbiomes similar to honey bees, so Moran said it's likely that they would be affected by glyphosate in a similar way," [notes](#) a release from the University of Texas at Austin.

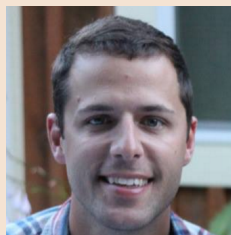
To read the study in full, go to <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2018/09/18/1803880115>

Of Interest

A Paradise Within Reach

By Chad Towarnicki, MCBA

member. Published in the Oct 2018 *American Bee Journal*



An article recently ran in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* entitled “Philly Millennials are Buzzing about Beekeeping”, citing a youth movement interested in having a hands-on positive impact on the environment. It wasn’t until after reading the article that I googled the age band and discovered –gasp!– that I was, in fact, one of those millennial beekeepers. The article begs the question: why the resurgence at time where *Vaerroat destructor*, myriad diseases, pesticides, and township regulations can make it such a difficult tough task to see through to that first honey jar?

It is an interesting dichotomy; a generation dependent on screens, social media, and data, afflicted with a supposed deteriorating attention span, unplugging and engaging in a hobby that demands routine attention and careful citizen-scientific interventions. Admittedly, it gets a lot of “likes”. It also offers the unique opportunity to reach back into a hobby that has not changed much since the 1850s, when

that US Patent #9300 was issued to Philadelphia native Reverend L. L. Laongstroth. He had recently discovered “bee space” and applied it to the budding concept of the box and frame design, which remains the standard. People have been pulling frames, much the same, ever since.

As it turns out, Laongstroth was not an anomaly by any means. The mid 1800s featured a well-known back-to-nature renaissance of its own where human interaction with the natural world was under thorough examination. One writer in particular, German immigrant John Adolphus Etzler, shared a surprisingly “millennial” perspective of merging technology and the natural world in order to eliminate the citizens’ obligation to work.

In his text entitled *The Paradise Within the Reach of all Men, Without Labor by Powers of Nature and Machinery*, Etzler predicted a world where the man-manipulated mechanisms embedded in nature would be so advanced that they would be turned by “invisible cranks” to serve human means of comfort and luxury. An admirable projection that called for taming the wind, the tides, and waves for generating energy. Hundreds of magnifying glasses, called “burning mirrors”, would produce heat and steam power. Insofar as

Etzler was concerned, within 10 years the environmental scientists of his era could engineer this global utopia. Lazy twenty-somethings of the 1840s held their breath.

One of those twenty-somethings of the 1840s, Henry David Thoreau, knew of Etzler’s work and wrote a review in response entitled *A Paradise (to be) Regained*. He questioned Etzler’s desire to industrialize the natural world so that man could live in “palaces of luxury”. Rather, Thoreau argued, it is worthwhile to develop one’s self through good labor, sound thought (such as love and truth), and, as always, a respectful appreciation of the natural world. Etzler’s utopian prediction oversimplified man’s rough dominion over nature to say the least. “How meanly and grossly do we deal with nature!”, Thoreau wrote. He went on to reference working with nature, rather than domesticating it— a task not unlike that of a beekeeper. “There are certain pursuits,” he writes, “which, if not wholly poetic and true, do at least suggest a nobler and finer relation to nature than we know. The keeping of bees, for instance, is a very slight interference. It is like directing the sunbeams.”

Continued, next page

Of Interest

Paradise, continued.

With a bit of sarcasm, Thoreau confronted the primary utopic issue: eliminating labor does not improve the inherent quality of a person. It would be more worthwhile to improve the soul of a person, rather than comforts.

Man shall no more earn his living by the sweat of his brow. All labor shall be reduced to 'a short turn of some crank,' and 'taking the finished article away.' But there is a crank, — oh, how hard to be turned! Could there not be a crank upon a crank, — an infinitely small crank? — we would fain inquire. No, — alas! Not. But there is a certain divine energy in every man, but sparingly employed as yet, which may be called the crank within, — the crank after all, — the prime mover in all machinery, — quite indispensable to all work. Would that we might get our hands on its handle!

Thoreau had it right; beekeeping is a lot like directing a sunbeam. From the 1800s to the new millennium, still stacking wooden boxes one atop the other, we get to engage in that good labor in communion with nature. The flora, fauna, and weather are all sewn together by the foraging flight of every tiny honey bee. Ironically, it is a modern invisible mechanism, the internet, which delivers the supplies to the garage in a dozen grinning boxes. It was a social network of community members that offer guidance and education in the task at hand. Now, in my apiary, one on one with these natural movers, I find that I do feel closer to the crank within. Dare I say, *I feel it turn!* The paradise was within reach the whole time, right under the nose of the sweating, smiling beekeeper.

Citizen Science

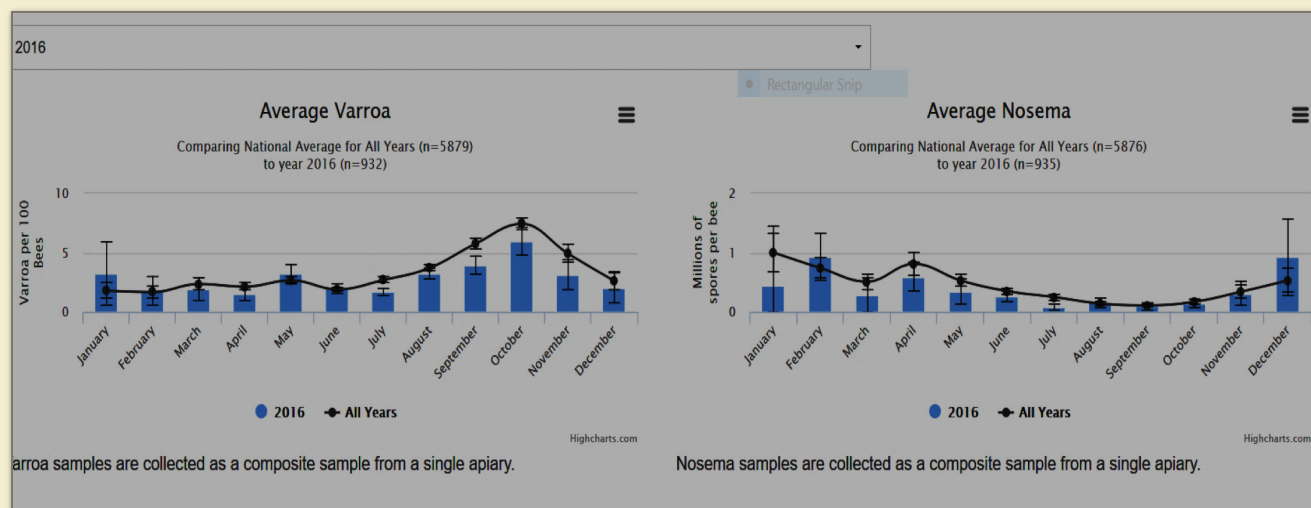
Volunteers Invited to a Nosema Chase by Don Coats

A few Chester County Beekeeper Association members invite beekeepers to pool efforts in a Citizen Science Project to study the incidence patterns of Nosema spp. We invite participants to collect a sample of 25 older bees from each of two of their hives per month for one year. **The purpose of this project** is to explore the natural occurrence of Nosema throughout the 4 seasons and share in the interpretation of these findings with a pooled audience of beekeepers. Participants can personally assess the question of whether Nosema causes diarrhea and discover that Nosema's presence is very common at variable levels and not connected to disease that is discernable by the average beekeeper. All of this is to gain a perspective of where or if Nosemosis is a serious health issue. Participants will have access to help and dialogue on issues and results in a timely manner. Your sample identity will be kept confidential, referenced by code on shared reports.

Project Summary: Each participant will supply bee samples to monitor Nosema spore count seasonal changes and possibly link high spore counts with other health signs, using a **health and survival record form**.

Background: Nosema spp. is identified as a one-cell (spore) parasite that invades the stomach (ventriculus) lining cells of the honey bee. Its association with disease, however, is unclear. Reports and respected opinions vary as to how significant it might be in the spectrum of stressors against colony health and survival. Having researched and interviewed resources about Nosema, I offer a clinician's opinion that the need to medicate colonies against this organism was highly overrated for decades. The Nosema infestation cycle is predictable with season, higher in late winter/spring in temperate climates. Some geographical areas may have more infestations than others and poor flight conditions such as cold and rain favor high counts. Robust colonies can have high spore counts without apparent effect. **Continued, next page**

Citizen Science, continued. A frequent misinterpretation is that *Nosema* causes diarrhea, which has prompted treatment by the beekeepers responding to advice commonly found in instruction books.



By tracking the natural occurrence of *Nosema* accompanied with colony health records, we hope to:

- 1) Gain insight to the significance of *Nosema* as a pathogen, or as an opportunist organism
- 2) Defuse the alarm caused by the removal of Fumagillin from the market place
- 3) Help beta test a functional health assessment data form
- 4) Attempt to identify management practices that discourage *Nosema* infestation
- 5) Explore options for lab testing for other pathogens as signs of disease/interest might justify cost

Method: Participants will collect a sample of 25 older bees from each of two of their hives per month. To collect the samples, from under the cover or outer frame held horizontally, you can “scoop” bees directly into a sample cup or baggie containing a tablespoon of 70% rubbing alcohol in the bottom of the container. Collecting bees from the inner cover or an outer frame is representative sampling. Interestingly, foragers have the highest incidence of spores but may over-state what is occurring in the hive. Owners with hive counts above 8M for two samples in a row will be asked to keep additional health records for that hive.

LABEL EACH SAMPLE: 1. Hive ID 2. Date 3. Owner name & email 4. How collected 5. If hive is small, average, large (est) < 8, >8, or >16 deep frames of bees. Samples should be alcohol wet in a double baggie and mailed to: Don Coats, 1 Walnut Valley Rd., Chadds Ford, PA 19317

Optional Diagnostics: Sampling here targets older bees which tend to have the highest incidence of *Nosema*. This will identify hives that may have high spore counts in nurse bees and/or a high percentage of individual positive bees - as well as other health issues in the hive. Owners of these hives may choose to have additional tests performed. Some hives, as sick signs may dictate, high counts (> 8M) and beekeeper willing to submit live bee samples, can be tested by, N C State Queen and Disease Clinic. Coordinated mailing can achieve this.

Questions? Write to: doncoats@verizon.net or Elliot Mitchel eam20500@gmail.com

Of Interest

Abuzz About Bees!

As the new MCBA Newsletter editor, I'm beginning a quarterly column where beekeepers from around the world tell us about their experiences with beekeeping, and how their geography and weather make for a different experience. In this issue, I'll be talking with a beekeeper in Morocco. I'm open to hearing questions you'd like me to ask!

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself.

A: My name is Ahmed Abargh, and I live in Marrakesh, Morocco, and I am 33 years old. When I am not beekeeping, I work as a director in a nursery school. I have been keeping bees for three years - one as an amateur and two as a professional. I have always loved honey, so I decided to buy two hives to produce my own honey for my own consumption. That is how I got started.

Q: When people learn you keep bees, what is their response?

A: They are astonished that a director of a school would become a beekeeper, mostly because I have two master's degrees in hotel business, and no connection with agriculture and the world of the farming.

Q: What is your hive set-up like?

A: I use Langstroth hives, and I have 50 beehives. Each year I double the number of hives. My goal is to reach 1000 beehives. I have African black bees (*apis mellifera intermissa*). Our bees in Morocco are not very productive and are extremely aggressive, and potentially deadly without proper handling.

Q: How much honey do you usually get from your hives?

A: I don't produce much yet because most of my colonies are swarms, as I increase my number of hives with divisions. Making divisions affects my honey production because one hive can produce a lot of honey. But if you divide it in swarms, they don't produce much honey. This year I only produced 150kg (330 lbs). I sell my honey to my clients on Facebook while I wait for my production to increase. Once it does, I will open a shop in Marrakech. **Continued, next page**



Of Interest

Continued

Q: Describe the area where you keep bees.

A: Beekeeping in Morocco is very different than it is in the United States. A lot of beekeepers have bees in baskets or in the trunks of cut trees, and lots of beekeepers don't have much formal education about bees but raise bees using their experience alone. The climate where I live is very arid, with temperatures reaching higher than 45°C (115°F). But we have an immense variety of honey producing plants in the Atlas Mountains.



very difficult to learn and it is hard to find the best spots to produce lots of honey and to keep the hives strong and populous. It's also difficult because once you find a spot and place your hives there, other beekeepers will notice and place their hives there too. I transhume my hives all year, seeking many sorts of plants, including alfalfa, eucalyptus, carob trees, euphorbia cactus, orange trees, multiflora, sesame plants, almond trees, jujubier (scientific name *Ziziphus*), and eryngium campestre (common name *field eryngo*).

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Q: What type of pests affect your bees, and what treatment do you use?

A: Varroa mites and wax moths, which I treat with oxalic acid and thymol. I only use organic products. I also have a problem with bee-eater birds (scientific name *Merops apiaster*) in the fall. They can eat up to 300 bees a day, and bees won't leave the hive when these birds fly near the apiary. Birds remove bees' stingers before eating them by striking them against a hard surface.

Q: What is your biggest challenge?

A: Transhumance is my biggest challenge. [Transhumance is defined as moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle. In Ahmed's case, it's moving hives from lowland to highland areas according to the availability of pollen.] Transhumance is



Of Interest

Continued

Q: What impact has beekeeping had on your life?

A: Since I started keeping bees I have become an addict. I don't have a mentor, so I spend most of my time learning and reading about the subject to master it as much as possible, and I also have to travel a lot to research the best pastures for my bees.

Q: This question is totally unrelated to beekeeping, but can you tell me about learning to ride a bike? I always ask this question when I meet someone with a different background than mine because while almost everyone knows how to ride a bike, how/where/when they learned reveals something interesting about their social and cultural experience in the world. It reminds me that everyone is alike in a lot of ways, but that there's a lot of variety too.

A: I learned how to ride a bike alone at the age of 6 or 7 in Marrakech on the pavement. :)

Thank you, Ahmed! See more of his photos on Facebook at Ahmed les miels marrakech

Translated from French by Thad Bashaw



Have the Adventure of a Lifetime Beekeeping Tour of Kenya

9-days in-country
January 16-26, 2019

Space is limited
To 15 participants



Estimated Cost
\$3,500 per person
including airfare



To sign up or for more
information contact
Maryann Frazier
maryann.frazier15@gmail.com

This 9-day tour (January 16-26, 2019) of Eastern Kenya is a great opportunity to see a beautiful African country, meet real beekeepers and experience African bees and beekeeping. Tour will be led by Dr. Elliud Muli, a renowned Kenyan beekeeping specialist, Kenyan beekeeper Joseph Kilonzo and Maryann Frazier, retired Penn State honey bee extension specialist who has worked with bees in Kenya for 10 years. Contact maryann.frazier15@gmail.com for more information.

In Every Issue

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Send in your Dues today for Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Dues are applied on a calendar year basis. January 1st to December 31st

New membership _____ Renewing membership _____

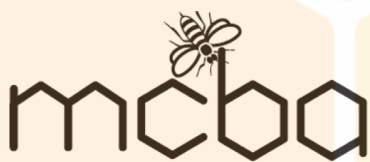
MCBA DUES \$15.00 per household* per year \$ _____

PSBA DUES** \$20.00 for one person per year or \$25.00 per household per year \$ _____ TOTAL

ENCLOSED \$ _____

**** We recommend:** that you also pay dues for PA State Beekeepers in order to encourage research on bee health, and promote efforts to dissuade local township and boroughs from restricting beekeeping. You will also benefit from the 10 annual state newsletters and information sharing. (*household = 2 adults and all children living at one address.)

Mail to: MCBAPA PO Box 203, Hatfield, PA 19440 or join/renew online at
www.montcopabees.org



Montgomery County Beekeepers Association
PO Box 203
Hatfield, PA 19440