

Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association

President's Report

This spring has been busy for the Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association. We are moving ahead on the Birdsfoot Trefoil for roadside vegetation management pilot project, an idea that started many years ago, and has finally come to fruition in partnership with the Municipality of Oliver-Paipoonge. I have managed to gain support from the Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council, Staals Soil & Sod and Seed Suppliers, Thunder Bay Feeds, & Pickseed. The aim of the project is to determine if Birdsfoot Trefoil can be used by municipalities for roadside vegetation management to eliminate the mowing that occurs, usually at the height of the sweet clover flow. If it works for Oliver-Paipoonge, then the TBBA will be able to present the use of Birdsfoot Trefoil as a management tool to other municipalities, including yours!

The Past-President, Joanne Henderson, has established a connection between TBBA and Willow Springs, who have installed a bee yard. The benefit of partnership with Willow Springs is that it would provide a venue for TBBA workshops, as well as providing on-going apiculture education to the public on most Sundays throughout the summer. Our side of the partnership includes volunteers working in the bee yard throughout the summer.

Partnerships are important for all non-profit organizations because funding is limited for all. Working together in partnerships with other groups is a means of promoting your organization. Your Executive is exploring further opportunities to expand our connections.

Working together to promote beekeeping is important within the organization, as well. One of the best ways to meet other beekeepers is to volunteer for one of the activities that TBBA organizes or attends. It is also the best way to get information out about our unique status and why it is important to remain free of mites!! Why not plan on attending or helping to organize, the workshop featuring Werner Gysi

on June 15? And for sure plan on attending the July workshop to be held at Willow Springs this July 8th.

Membership in the organization has its benefits, one of which is participating in bulk purchasing of equipment or supplies. Currently, the TBBA is organizing a bulk purchase order with Dominion & Grimm who feature North American glass containers, along with the usual plastic containers. Samples of their containers have been at two meetings (fall 2011 and spring 2012). They will be available for viewing at the July workshop and can be viewed at my shop, 1170 Lakeshore Drive. There are benefits to members of the organization as well as TBBA!

- Ordering together will reduce the shipping costs for each of us.
- D&G offer a rebate system that gives a nice donation back to the TBBA.

Dominion & Grimm has donated a refractometer to TBBA which will be offered on loan to members along with instructions on how to use it.

We are trying to meet the education needs of members and appreciate the suggestions listed on the membership forms. To this end, we are arranging for an informal "chat time" with an experienced beekeeper at each meeting from 6 – 6:30 followed by a ½ hour formal education time with presentations, again, by some of our members. Thanks to those who have volunteered to share their knowledge and experiences and to those who have taken advantage of the opportunity to talk about their bees! In between meetings, we have a lot of discussion on our Facebook page where we have at least 4 experienced beekeepers helping out those who are less experienced. This venue provides an avenue for discussion at no cost to the organization.



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The biggest news regarding education is the workshop in September presenting OBA's Tech Transfer Team! This will be a 2-day workshop and is bound to have something that all of us can learn! Plan on being there; you won't be disappointed!

I will be attending on behalf of TBBA the Ontario Bee Associations Presidents' meeting on June 23 in Milton Ontario. This is to address concerns that local Associations have with the direction, or lack of, being taken in the industry. I am excited at this opportunity and will report back to the membership in September.

Good luck and see you all July 8th!!Barry

Schedule

- **Werner Gysi**, a published and much sought after speaker about Biodynamic Beekeeping and he will be coming to Thunder Bay!

Werner will be keynote speaking about **Beekeeping: The Wholistic Approach**

DATE: When: June 15th

LOCATION: Lakehead University Community Garden (Rain location RC 1001)

***bring a blanket or lawn chair to sit on!*

TIME: 7 p.m.

COST: donation to go towards the speaker's honorarium

Hosted by FSRN (Food Security & Research Network) and the TBBA

- July Workshop – *Protecting your Bee Yard from Predators, grafting queens, hygienic testing & more!*

DATE: July 8th 1 – 4 p.m.

For potluck dinner, please bring a pizza topping, cheese, (non-alcoholic) beverage & dessert. Coordinator is Diana Bockus.

Location: [Willow Springs](#) 10160 Mapleward Road

- September 15 & 16 —Workshop with the Tech Transfer Team (See below)
Location: Kakabeka Legion
- November 13th regular meeting (Kakabeka Legion)

Please remember to **bring your 2012 membership card** with you to meetings.

Tech Transfer Team

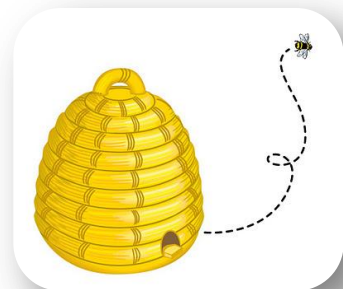
Coming to Thunder Bay.

The team is planning a 2 day (weekend) workshop in Thunder Bay in September. One day will be a seminar type day with guest speakers on topics **such as**

- Food Safety and Traceability,
- Make Marketing Work for you,
- Financial Record Keeping, Taxation essentials,
- Blueberry Growers,
- Local/Northern Development,
- Pollination contracts
- OBA and CHC update (membership, insurance, etc.),
- OMAFRA - Bees Act
- Honey house set-up
- Getting things done,
- Beekeeper Profile,
- Human Resource Management - Seasonal Workers

NOTE: *actual topics are dependent on the availability of presenters).*

Day 2, the Tech Transfer Team will be doing an **introduction to beekeeping course.**



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Mark your calendar for Sept 15/16 and watch the website for more info as it becomes available.

Honey Containers – Bulk Ordering

Join in with other members to order your honey containers from D&G (Dominion & Grimm), a Canadian company who supporting products made in Canada and the USA. Products made in Ontario are the priority, then the rest of Canada and then, finally, the United States. Many of the new items are made in Ontario! Samples of their containers were at the meetings last fall and also in May. If you need to see them we can make those arrangements!



Check out their information and price listing at www.dominiongrimm.ca.

Let's Get Together and reduce our costs, buy Canadian and support a company that supports us with an annual donation!

1. Decide on what you will need (styles of containers, lids & how many)
2. Submit your order & payment to TBBA to be included in the bulk order, by July 15th.

Once we have the order collated, we will let you know your share of the shipping cost which can be paid when you pick up your order.

Need to see the samples? They will be at the Willow Springs Workshop on July 8th.

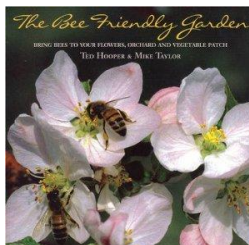
Book Review

by Darlene Spakowski:

The Bee Friendly Garden

by Ted Hooper and Mike Taylor

ISBN 1-899296-29-9



Well, I finally found a book dedicated to bee-friendly plants! It is a guide to help you choose the plants that bees will love with the information you need to plant and maintain a beautiful garden. It includes a comprehensive A-Z guide of over 300 plants including climbers, shrubs, trees, vegetables and fruit bushes accompanied by concise cultivation notes on flowering months, soil type, sun and shade requirements and good nectar or pollen providers. Definitely one that I'll keep handy when planning my gardens. Thanks to Our Volunteers!

Volunteer	# of events in 2012
Gerry Stricker	3
Darleen Spakowski	3
Barry Tabor	3
Simon Hoad	3
Evelyn Harris	3
Bob Hughdie	2
Linda Turk	2
Joanne Henderson	1
Alice Villa	1
Ann McGoey	1

To volunteer, please contact:

evelynharris@tbaytel.net

Earth Day at the Market

By Linda Turk

Thunder Bay's Country Market celebrated Earth Day on Saturday, April 21, and Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association helped with the festivities. We had two tables upstairs in the Dove Building, with displays of beekeeping equipment, a super, frames, information on flowers and herbs that appeals, and -- most popular of all! -- a honey-tasting display.

Earth Day seemed the perfect opportunity to remind visitors to the Market of the work done by honeybees here and around the world. We

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had more than a hundred visitors to our display, with time to talk about honeybees, Mason bees, local honey, and beekeepers in the area.



For the honey-tasting display, we used blueberry and buckwheat honey provided by Barry Tabor, and wildflower honey from Jim Heald's Jasper Cove and contrasted those with two commercial honeys from supermarkets. Overwhelmingly, our visitors preferred the local honey.

Such a successful event couldn't have happened without our volunteers: Darlene Spakowski, Evelyn Harris, Gerry Stricker, Barry Tabor, Simon Hoad, and Bob Hughdie. Thank you all for preparing and participating in such a good day at the Market.

Kite Festival

Despite the rain, the kite festival went on and the TBBA was there!! The interest in our display was great and 44 mason bee condos went out! Thanks to Barry Tabor & Ann McGoey for their efforts.

Next year the Kite Festival will have a theme – BEES!! We need to have a TBBA Bee Kite to fly at the festival!

Contribute to the Newsletter?

If YOU would like to write an article or share your beekeeping experiences, please send your document in either Word or plain text to the secretary by email (clayacres@tbaytel.net)

Deadline for next newsletter is August 15th.

Classified ads (such as beekeeping items for sale or rent) can be placed in the newsletter for TBBA members at no charge

Where is your Bee Yard?

At the last AGM, we started a district map noting the placement of bee yards. It is fun just to see where all the bees are!

The future plan is to have the map digitalized!

TBBA does not share personal information (such as whose bee yards are where) but it is handy for TBBA to know whose bee yards are in a particular township.

Add your "dots" to the map.

Birdsfoot trefoil is a common pea plant grown all over North America for feeding



livestock and covering farm fields. Though common, it has a complicated flower, making it difficult to get inside to collect nectar or pollinate. Only bees can figure out how to enter a birdsfoot trefoil blossom and the honeybee is especially good at it.¹

Birdsfoot trefoil is a deep-rooted perennial and can be long-lived in areas where it is adapted. Trefoil pods are very prone to shatter, therefore the long-lived reputation of this crop can often be attributed to the growth and seed production of volunteers. It thrives on poorly drained soils of moderate to high acidity, and is also fairly tolerant of salinity. The traditional production

¹ Adaptations for Pollination – Birdsfoot Trefoil.
www.exploringnature.org

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area was eastern Canada, but winter-hardy varieties have resulted in a large movement of seed acres to Manitoba.²

The plants are poor competitors in the seeding stage and slow to establish. A companion crop is definitely not recommended. Early seeding and good weed control are essential.

The TBBA is currently participating in a pilot project to determine the usefulness of birdsfoot trefoil in roadside management. Since it is low growing it need not be cut down by roads crew thus presenting a food source for bees.

If the project is successful the TBBA will be able to approach other municipalities where bee yards are prevalent, to encourage them to adopt this new roadside management protocol. If you would like to be part of the pilot project, you are encouraged to buy a bag of seed to plant (preferably at your roadside in keeping with the project).

Bags of trefoil seed, and instructions for planting, are available for members at a nominal fee. Please contact Linda Turk. Let's **get together** & join the pilot project.

TBBA
Suite 228
1100 Memorial Ave
Thunder Bay ON P7B 4A3

TBBA Website

This is a 2-Dimensional Bar code or "QR code" for the Beekeepers Association website. When someone scans it with a smartphone, it will take them to our site. We will be including it on



² Birdsfoot Trefoil Seed
www.forageseed.net

any brochures or print ads, posters, etc. If you have a smartphone, or know somebody with one, try it out!

There are 58 people on our Face Book group participating with chats on a variety of topics with pictures & videos of our bees!

There are 54 members in the TBBA in 2012 (to date).

There is an offer of safe, roof-top site for *anyone interested in putting a hive in downtown Fort William.*

The Hive Mind Reader: My Smithsonian profile of Thomas Seeley

(Submitted by Simon Hoad)

In the March issue of *Smithsonian*, ..read the article including the [profile](#) of Thomas Seeley, a Cornell scientist who has spent forty years pondering how honeybees make up their collective minds. His discoveries reveal some striking parallels between honeybee swarms and our own brains. There are even some lessons we can learn from bees about how to run a democracy.

Through years of study, Seeley and his colleagues have uncovered a few principles honeybees use to make these smart decisions. The first is enthusiasm. A scout coming back from an ideal cavity will dance with passion, making 200 circuits or more and wagging violently all the way. But if she inspects a mediocre cavity, she will dance fewer circuits.

Enthusiasm translates into attention. An enthusiastic scout will inspire more bees to go check out her site. And when the second-wave

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scouts return, they persuade more scouts to investigate the better site.

The second principle is flexibility. Once a scout finds a site, she travels back and forth from site to hive. Each time she returns, she dances to win over other scouts. But the number of dance repetitions declines, until she stops dancing altogether. Seeley and his colleagues found that honeybees that visit good sites keep dancing for more trips than honeybees from mediocre ones.

This decaying dance allows a swarm to avoid getting stuck in a bad decision. Even when a mediocre site has attracted a lot of scouts, a single scout returning from a better one can cause the hive to change its collective mind.



“It’s beautiful when you see how well it works,” Seeley said. “Things don’t bog down when individuals get too stubborn. In fact, they’re all pretty modest. They say, ‘Well, I found something, and I think it’s interesting. I don’t know if it’s the best, but I’ll report what I found and let the best site win.’”

.... Scouts, he found, purposefully ram one another head-on while deciding on a new nest location. They head-butt scouts coming from other locations—pink scouts bumping into blue scouts and vice versa—causing the rammed bee to stop dancing. As more scouts dance for a popular site, they also, by head-butting, drive down the number of dancers for other sites.

And once the scouts reach a quorum of 15 bees all dancing for the same location, they start to head-butt one another, silencing their own side so that the swarm can prepare to fly.

One of the things Seeley has been thinking about during his vigils with his swarms is how much they’re like our own minds. “I think of a swarm as an exposed brain that hangs quietly from a tree branch,” Seeley said.

A swarm and a brain both make decisions. Our brains have to make quick judgments about a flood of neural signals from our eyes, for example, figuring out what we’re seeing and deciding how to respond.

Both swarms and brains make their decisions democratically. Despite her royal title, a honeybee queen does not make decisions for the hive. The hive makes decisions for her. In our brain, no single neuron takes in all the information from our senses and makes a decision. Millions make a collective choice.

“Bees are to hives as neurons are to brains,” says Jeffrey Schall, a neuroscientist at Vanderbilt University. Neurons use some of the same tricks honeybees use to come to decisions. A single visual neuron is like a single scout. It reports about a tiny patch of what we see, just as a scout dances for a single site. Different neurons may give us conflicting ideas about what we’re actually seeing, but we have to quickly choose between the alternatives. That red blob seen from the corner of your eye may be a stop sign, or it may be a car barreling down the street.

To make the right choice, our neurons hold a competition, and different coalitions recruit more neurons to their interpretation of reality, much as scouts recruit more bees.

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Our brains need a way to avoid stalemates. Like the decaying dances of honeybees, a coalition starts to get weaker if it doesn't get a continual supply of signals from the eyes. As a result, it doesn't get locked early into the wrong choice. Just as honeybees use a quorum, our brain waits until one coalition hits a threshold and then makes a decision.

Seeley thinks that this convergence between bees and brains can teach people a lot about how to make decisions in groups. "Living in groups, there's a wisdom to finding a way for members to make better decisions collectively than as individuals," he said.

....Groups work well, he argues, if the power of leaders is minimized. A group of people can propose many different ideas—the more the better, in fact. But those ideas will only lead to a good decision if listeners take the time to judge their merits for themselves, just as scouts go to check out potential homes for themselves.

Groups also do well if they're flexible, ensuring that good ideas don't lose out simply because they come late in the discussion. And rather than try to debate an issue until everyone in a group agrees, Seeley advises using a honeybee-style quorum. Otherwise the debate will drag on.

One of the strengths of honeybees is that they share the same goal: finding a new home. People who come together in a democracy, however, may have competing interests. Seeley advises that people should be made to feel that they are part of the decision-making group, so that their debates don't become about destroying the enemy, but about finding a solution for everyone. "That sense of belonging can be nurtured," Seeley said. The more we

fashion our democracies after honeybees, Seeley argues, the better off we'll be.³



May 8, 2012

Honey bee health in southern Ontario

Recently there have been a number of reports of honey bee deaths in southern Ontario. Bees play an important role in agriculture and the plant science industry is deeply concerned about these incidents and any potential link to pesticides.

So far, anecdotal reports have linked these deaths to treated corn planted in surrounding areas. Inspections of bee yards are ongoing and no results have been released; therefore it is too early to draw any conclusions about the potential cause(s) of these bee deaths.

As an industry we have offered our support to the various provincial and federal departments investigating these bee deaths. We seek to gain a better understanding of the causes of these events so that we can enhance the stewardship of our products should they be implicated.

Seed treatments are a key tool used in agriculture to protect crops from insect pests and diseases to ensure a sustainable and abundant food supply. Without the use of crop protection products, at least 40 per cent of the world's food would not exist.

Treated seed allows for targeted use of insecticides, which helps to reduce exposure of beneficial insects such as pollinators. In order to

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<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/loom/2012/02/22/the-hive-mind-reader-my-smithsonian-profile-of-thomas-seeley/>

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ensure these products are used safely, our industry delivers technical advice on best practices for the proper treatment and handling of treated seed. We are also currently developing a set of best management practices (BMPs) designed to help growers minimize inadvertent exposure of pollinators during planting. We are making every effort to be engaged in the current investigation to ensure that the information we provide in the BMP guide is as relevant as possible.

The industry remains engaged on this issue and willing to work with all stakeholders to promote an open and productive dialogue that will help to address this issue quickly.

CropLife Canada is developing additional information tools on this subject and will share them as they become available.

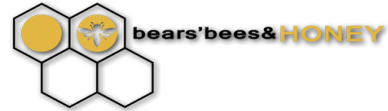
If you have further questions please don't hesitate to contact Maria Trainer at trainer@croplife.ca or 613-230-9881 ext. 3230.

CropLife Canada is the trade association representing the manufacturers, developers and distributors of plant science innovations — pest control products and plant biotechnology — for use in agriculture, urban and public health settings.

Classified

Selling honey? Would you like the retail location of your honey on the website? Inform consumers where they can find your honey. Let us know your details.

Education in my bee yard (Hwy 608): Join me in my bee yard for beekeeping instruction for all levels of Beekeepers. Call or text Chris at 620-4071



Bees	Price
Spring- 1 Brood chamber overwintered (last year's mated queen) limited quantities available	\$300.00
4 Frame nucleus mid June – July 15	\$160.00
4 Frame nucleus July 15	\$140.00
3 lb package of bees	\$130.00
Mated Queen* June 15 to Sept	\$25.00

***Our Queen stock has been chosen from colonies that tested positive for hygienic behaviour using the industry testing standard-liquid nitrogen brood kill test.**

*Equipment Description	Price
9 5/8"x 20" Honey Super/ Brood chamber	\$12.50
Unassembled	\$15.00
Assembled- Glued stapled & primed	
3/4 depth Super- Assembled- Glued stapled & primed	\$12.50
9 1/8" Langstroth frame Unassembled standard size	\$1.00 ea
8 1/2" Plastic Waxed Foundation	\$1.25 ea
Screened bottom board with tray	\$15.00
Bottom board	\$10.00
Ventilated Inner Cover (upper entrance & primed)	\$10.00
Telescoping Cover	\$15.00
1- Entrance reducer	\$2.50
Starter Kit 2- Assembled- 9 5/8"x 20" Honey Supers 20- 9 1/8" Langstroth frame Unassembled 20- 8 1/2" Waxed Foundation 1- IPM Screened bottom board 1- Ventilated Inner Cover 1- Telescoping Cover 1- Entrance reducer	\$125.00
Bumble Bee nesting Box Kit	\$20.00

(807) 983-2341 masya@tbaytel.net