

Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association

President's Report

With the year drawing to an end, I can reflect on the past year's events and challenges.

The most recent announcement of the parasitic Varroa mite being found in our area is quite disturbing.

I personally and as President of the Association have been advocating how important it is to constantly monitor your colonies for the Varroa mite. The test is easy and harmless to the bees. I feel that the mites' presence could have been detected far sooner than September had beekeepers been diligent in checking their colonies. This may have allowed for effective treatments, and possible eradication of the mite before it spread. If it is any consolation, this is not a new problem in the industry and can be controlled with a proper management plan.

Next season will be an interesting one that will pose many challenges for our bees and beekeepers as a whole. I hope that everyone who keeps bees will be diligent in the management and health of their colonies!

So in reflecting on the year, here are some of the accomplishments I have made as your President.....

Successful in getting the OMAFRA Apiculture program to reinstate the Varroa mite and Tracheal mite sampling in Thunder Bay! *We probably would have never found the mite had this testing not be conducted by OMAFRA.*

Successful in getting all beekeepers recognized and entitled to the New Growing Forward Wildlife Damage Compensation Program. *The FBRN (Farm Business Registration Number) and PIN (Premise Identification Number) are now not a requirement if you are a registered beekeeper.*

Successful in relaying to OMAFRA Management, the value of and urgency of filling the local bee inspector vacancy.

Met with the Minister of Agriculture to speak about local concerns specifically our mite free status and how we can get OMAFRA to recognize and support a "Quarantine" of our Area to maintain this status.

I worked very hard with the industry to get their (OBA, OMAFRA,CHC) support and endorsement on developing policies and procedures for the Transportation of or importation of honeybees through the Thunder Bay District. *This was to move forward once there was a 3rd Party confirmation that we are in fact "Varroa mite free"!*

Some other accomplishments include having the Tech Transfer Program conduct an IPM workshop, we had a social evening with a Biodynamic Beekeeper- Werner Gysi, showed the screening of the movie *Queen of the Sun*, Partnered with Oliver Paipoonge & Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council on a Trefoil seeding project to name a few. The Trefoil project has been postponed until next spring because of the flooding in May and volunteer availability. It became too late in the spring to effectively plant the seed.

There will be many challenges in the upcoming years and I hope that the Association can meet the needs of its membership as far as providing effective training and expertise in the effective management of healthy honeybee colonies.

In closing I hope all your colonies are healthy, well fed and ready for the long winter! Good luck!! Barry

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Betty Ann Paradis receives her life-time membership certificate at the T.B. market

Thunder Bay District Beekeepers Association -- BEGINNINGS

By Jeanette Momot

A group of beekeepers from the Thunder Bay area initially gathered in response to a herbicide spraying for brush and tree control that occurred along highway 11-17 on both sides of Kakabeka Falls in early July of 1984.

At that time herbicides were considered non-toxic to bees, but this incident resulted in a massive die-off in 18 colonies belonging to Jeanette Momot located at Cornell's nursery, and also in 24 colonies belonging to Steve Dudzinski at the Kakabeka Falls Game Farm.

Mike Gratz along Hwy 61 also had bees die after the roadside was sprayed. Piles of dead bees accumulated right in front of the hives, and nothing was left in the hives but the queen and a few house bees.

The foragers were gone, and as a result, there was no honey at all from Jeanette's hives that year. The colonies were weakened so much that wintering them would likely fail, and many of them did in fact die as a result the next winter.

We were told by the Ministry of the Environment that Roundup (a mixture of picloram and 2-4-D) had been sprayed, and that it would dissipate in a few days. Many days later, bees were still dying.

The sweet clover was in full bloom at the time. It is about the most attractive plant there is for honeybees, as it secretes a nectar with a very high sugar concentration. The bees will work it in preference to other plants, as they are able to detect differences in nectar concentrations, and will not waste their time on anything inferior. Unfortunately, the sweet clover in this case had received enough Roundup to be contaminated, and bees were found dead on the sweet clover blooming along the roadside, right on the flowers.

Our local bee inspector, John Jansekovich, was consulted, and said it looked like a case of bee poisoning, and advised us to get a sample of bees analyzed. We sent a sample to the Provincial Agricultural Lab for testing, and they did indeed find 2-4-D and picloram in those bees. We were then told the concentrations were too low to affect the bees, and herbicides were non-toxic to bees, and besides, they had read their map wrong, and those chemicals were not in fact sprayed there after all.

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In spite of all the evidence we had of the bee kills, and the chemicals being found in the bees gathered on the blooming sweet clover in the ditch less than a block from the location of the hives, no compensation would be given. The results of the lab analysis were not received until Feb 1985, and when it became apparent that we were getting nowhere with our case, we more formally organized the beekeepers club.

We elected officers; Penny Smith was the first president, Betty Paradis the first secretary, and Jeanette Momot the first treasurer. Dues of \$ 10 per year per member were collected.

We decided to go to the media with our problem of losing bees to herbicides, since we were getting no help from our Ministries. We wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper, The Chronicle Journal, and spoke on the radio about the problem with herbicides. We suggested that [the department maintaining] highways cut the brush instead of spraying it, and plant something like birdsfoot trefoil, an attractive low growing legume that would not even need to be cut. In fact, that was later done in some cases where new roads were built. Letters were also sent to our local school boards and municipalities about the dangers of using herbicides on their grounds, not only for insects but for people as well.

At first, the club met at each other's houses.

We also discussed common beekeeping problems, such as swarming, wintering,

diseases, and disease control. There was a problem in Thunder Bay District with American Foulbrood at the time, and it was known that hygienic behavior in bees was one mechanism of resistance to it.

Hygienic behavior is genetically determined, and expressed by homozygosity in two pairs of recessive genes. Some members began selecting for that trait, from bees that also wintered well, were gentle and productive.

Those beekeepers then raised their own queens. When the border closed in 1987 because of the fear of importing mites into Canada from the U S, we did in fact need to be able to produce our own queens.

This continues to be one of our tasks, and keeping mites out of our district is still one of our primary objectives



Doug McRory showing AFB infected comb & microscope work so participants could witness the spores

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IN THE NEWS

September 18, 2012

McGuinty Government Planning to Introduce Local Food Act

Ontario is planning to introduce a bill that supports, promotes and celebrates the good things grown and made in Ontario.

Farmers in Ontario grow more than 200 different agricultural commodities including a variety of fruits, vegetables, meat and dairy products -- and each farmer produces enough food to feed 120 people a year.

If passed, the Local Food Act would:

- * Support one of the province's leading industries, one that contributes more than \$33 billion to the economy each year and employs more than 700,000 Ontarians.
- * Promote and celebrate the local things Ontarians grow, make, serve, sell or eat.
- * Provide a framework for developing goals and targets around the production, processing, distribution, sales and marketing of Ontario food.

A strong agri-food industry is part of the McGuinty government's plan to create jobs and opportunities that will grow the economy.

QUOTE: "Our government is committed to supporting, promoting and celebrating local food. That's why we're building on the good work we've accomplished with our industry and community partners, to help the sector be even more prosperous, competitive and sustainable." - Ted McMeekin
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

QUICK FACTS

- * Ontario is home to Canada's largest food processing sector.
- * Ontario accounts for 22% of Canada's agri-food exports.
- * The U.S., Asia and Europe are the top destinations for Ontario food exports.

The prorogation of the Legislature means the Local Food Act has been dropped; it will need to be reintroduced and go through the legislative process all over again, once the legislature reopens

Rant of a New Beekeeper

Submitted by Darlene Spakowski

Different, strong, committed opinions can be very confusing.

I've decided to learn as much as possible, listen to all the advice, watch and check my bees, read as much as possible, learn from beekeepers who are, and have been, dealing with mites for many years, and then make up my own mind.

I keep telling myself that it's not about who is right or wrong but it is very much about the bees and what is best for healthy, happy, productive colonies.

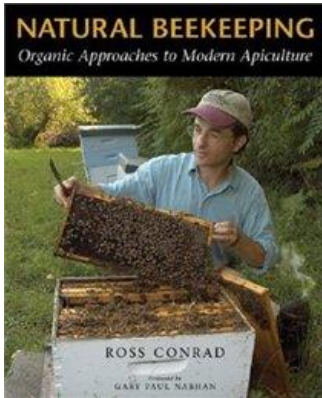
I keep thinking about how much we could accomplish if we all worked together.

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FROM THE BOOKSHELF:

By Darlene Spakowski

I would like to recommend a book entitled "[Natural Beekeeping. Organic Approaches to Modern Apiculture](#)" by Ross Conrad, published by Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, Vermont.



This seems to be an interesting book to read because of our discovery of the mites in our area.

Over 100 pages of this book are dedicated to the natural treatments of the mites and other insect pests. The following is a

quote that drew my attention from this book:

"Newly introduced pests like the Varroa (destructor) mite have made chemical treatment of hives standard practice, but pest resistance is building, which in turn creates demand for new and even more toxic chemicals. In fact, there is evidence that chemical treatments are making matter worse.

Ross Conrad brings together the best "do no harm" strategies for keeping honeybees healthy and productive with nontoxic methods of controlling mites, eliminating American foul-brood disease (without the use of antibiotics), selective breeding for naturally resistant bees, and many other tips and techniques."

In our individual research into caring for our bees, this may be a book you would like to read. I hope this will help in our search for a solution on how to handle the mite situation in our area.

AMERICAN BEE JOURNAL

This Journal has the honor of being the oldest English language beekeeping publication in the world. for subscribers throughout the world.

The Journal is available to Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association members (bring your membership card) at the Waverly Library.

In the October Issue

- Building an Economical Self-service Honey Chalet
- The Creation of Dancing Bee Winery
- The Mystery and Myth of Organic Beekeeping—Part I
- The Evidence for the Use of Local Honey for the Relief of Pollen Allergies
- Low-tech Swarm Catching
- The Bee That Punked Me
- The Bee Trailer
- Managed Pollinator Coordinated Agricultural Project
—Varroa Mite Reproductive Biology
- Sick Bees—Part 18C: Colony Collapse Revisited

FEEDBACK WOULD BE GOOD?

Yu dbid sldif asig eigds sldif kd sfld sidf Does djfdi sidjfd anyone erdkd f actually idjsdf

Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association

dkiidjfds fid read dkiifds the dkkifjd pytdis
newsletter??

2013 – 2014 Election in March

Position: President

If you are interested in the position, or wish to nominate someone who is willing stand for election, please contact a member of the nominating committee ([Dean Harron](#) 935-3242 or [Chris Carolan](#) 475-9711)

Hopefully we will be able to provide a short bio of candidate(s) in the January newsletter.

IDEAS ON EDUCATIONAL TOPICS?

It's YOUR association what would you like to learn or discuss in 2013? Share your ideas with any member of your 2012 executive (click on their name for an MS Office hyperlink).

- President: [Barry Tabor](#)
- Vice-President: [Shane MacLeod](#)
- Treasurer: [Diana Bockus](#)
- Secretary: [Beth Stewart](#)
- Past-Pres: [Joanne Henderson](#)

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Join 85 members/friends on the Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association Group Face Book Page for beekeeping discussions.

RECENT INFORMATION ON MITE MANAGEMENT

September workshop included **Beekeeping & Integrated Pest Management which included a Bee Yard Session - Treatment Application**

- oxalic acid, Thymovar
- formic acid, MAQS™
- oxytetracycline, Fumagilin-B
- Apistan®, CheckMite+™, Apivar®, Treatment Abuse, Resistance Management

Mailouts from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs sent to all registered beekeepers and included:

- [2012 Ontario Treatment Recommendations for Honey Bee Disease and Mite Control](#)
- [Varroa Mites -- Biology & Diagnosis](#)
- [Varroa Mites – Sampling & Monitoring](#)

FYI: at a recent meeting of Thunder Bay beekeepers, our local inspector explained that approximately 15 beeyards were identified as infected with Varroa mites. All infected hives are within a defined area from the Slate River Valley and extending like an inverted triangle down to an apex on highway 597. There is one outlier in the city of Thunder Bay. There is also an infected hive in Dryden.

Statistics:

Total hives-Yards checked 291 + 49 nucs
Total Yards Sampled 46
Total # Hives Sampled 112

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Total # Yards + Varroa D. 15
Hives in infected Yards 92
Conc. ETOH Roll 1/300 - 10/300; 61/300;
(Dryden 156/300 !!!!!)

The beekeeper of the one outlier in the city had been in contact with the infected area for extracting.

Dryden hive - has been identified in same yard since spring 2011. It originally came from clean Thunder Bay yard, so looks like caught the mites in Dryden.

The Bee Inspector was in Red Lake but was shut down with a blizzard so will have to wait until next year.

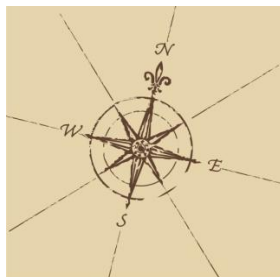
Plans for the education component at the new few meetings/workshops of the Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association will centre of the mite problem – identification and control.

Mites are here and they will spread throughout the area. As there was not 100% agreement at the September meeting to destroy infected hives, we will have to learn how to identify infection in all our hives and learn how to deal with the situation.

If you are interested in presenting to the membership on this topic, please contact a member of the executive. Share your expertise with other beekeepers ... let's help each other.

MAPPING BEE YARDS

Members are encouraged to participate in the



Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association map of bee yards. This will be particularly important as the Association monitors the spread of mites throughout our area. The map will be available at the next meeting – support your fellow beekeepers and participate in the yard location project.

Are you experienced in Public Communication? To participate effectively in venues available to the Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association throughout the year, we need useful visual display material.

**UPDATING
TBBA DISPLAY
MATERIAL**

Why is it important? Volunteer time is significant and to make the best use of it, we need to develop material that will make the viewer stop and take notice.

Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association may exhibit to a variety of different target audiences where different messages are needed. For example, the impact of pesticides is important in agricultural venues but not particularly effective in trying to attract local consumers of the product.

If you can help on this project, please let one of the executive know!

FAMOUS BEEKEEPERS

Sir Harold Rupert Leofric George Alexander, Viscount Alexander, 1st Earl Alexander of Tunis and Baron Rideau of Ottawa, and of Castle Derg, county Tyrone, kept bees in Rideau Park (Ottawa) while he was Governor-General of Canada (1946-1952).

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BEES IN THE CLASSROOM

.....from Dryden on behalf of "Agriculture in the Classroom".

Our "Bee" display has been a tremendous success this year.

To make the exhibit more interactive, I am looking for old / outdated / not used anymore beekeeper outfit, gloves, smoker..... any item which is safe for students to handle.

Should you or any of your colleagues have an article / tool they don't need anymore and can't sell, please contact me.

Christel Kamm

"AITC" Dryden

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Participants in the Tech Transfer Program
Sept 16, 2012
Integrated Pest Management training session.

Next TBBA meeting

November 13th

Kakabeka Legion. (Bar)

Social get-together (6-6:30) Come out for dinner from the Legion kitchen & enjoy chatting with other beekeepers about your bees.

Education Portion: Varroa Mite

Additional Topics for Discussion:

- Is the membership interested in a workshop in February on the topic of hive health and Varroa mite management?
- microscope rental and lab space for at LU .
- Membership fees.
- Eliminate the \$10.00 membership fee.
 - Eliminate the Membership form
 - Explore the idea of a Family membership