

February 09, 2016
2015 Winter Issue



the Queen City BUZZZZZZ

Regina and District Bee Club (RDBC)

2015 Agribition Report

Special Interest Articles:

Bear Fence
Program 4

Flow Hives 5

Individual Highlights:

AGM 2

Executive
Report 3

Honey Inspired
Recipes 7

Geoff's Corner 8

About Our Club 8

This year's Trade Show booth at Agribition was a big success! Our products of the hive included liquid honey, creamed honey, comb honey, and flavoured honey, as well as lip balms, body butter, lotion bars, soaps, wax blocks and a variety of candles. Honey sales were brisk with the comb honey and wax blocks selling out.

Sales seemed to increase as the week went along with Friday and Saturday being VERY busy days!

Once again we had an observation hive which seemed to grab the attention of many.

It sparked questions and conversation and provided an opportunity for us to talk bees with the general public. Young and old had many interesting questions to ask and we, in turn, heard many interesting bee stories. One such conversation lead to a road trip for Andrew and me but that's another story!!

I would like to thank the following members for volunteering full days at our booth: Keara Lueke, Angela Fuller, Michelle Frischholz, Linda Kletchko, Andrew Hamilton and Avril Biggin. These folks, along with Colette Stushnoff, supplied

the product this year as well.

I encourage all members to consider taking a day and working at our Trade Show booth in the upcoming year. It's an opportunity to meet people from around the world. You don't have to be an expert, just willing to make some sales and interact with the interested public. As well, we are always looking for new items to add to our booth so mark your calendars, plan on participating and we will see you in November!

 Judi



Figure 1 Michelle and Angela at the Trade Show booth

Annual General Meeting

March is fast approaching and with it, our club AGM. We will be sending out formal AGM information closer to but there are a few things that we want our members to start thinking about now.

Executive Nominations – are you interested in being on the board of directors? Please let a director know on or before AGM and of course let us know if you have questions. We will have three positions to fill this year so don't be shy!

Motions – Please consider this your official notice of the following motions that will be presented at the AGM, Saturday, March 12.

Motion #1: Be it resolved that one delegate from the Regina and District Bee Club Executive attend the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association Annual Meeting, expenses paid by the club, and they must report back to the club on the event.

Motion #2: Whereas Canadian Western Agribition will be holding its annual fair November 21 to 26, 2016, be it resolved that the Regina and District Bee Club enter a display with live bees into the Agri-Ed Showcase for the full period of the event at the 2016 Agribition.

Motion #3: Whereas Canadian Western Agribition will be holding its annual fair November 21 to 26, 2016, be it resolved that the Regina and District Bee Club will enter a display with live bees into the Tradeshow section to sell products of the hive for the full period of the event at the 2016 Agribition.



Figure 2 Slide from RDBC AGM 2015



***** AGM Notice *****

Date: Saturday, March 12, 2016

Location: Deer Valley Golf Club

Registration: 9:00 am
Meeting: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

It is almost that time of year again. Mark your calendars for the AGM and check out the RDBC website for more details on the schedule of the day's events. The AGM is a great opportunity to visit with other members, catch up on the latest bee news and find opportunities to get involved in the club. We hope to see you there!

Hamilton Apiaries
has
Liquid Sugar

\$1.36 / liter

\$1.17 / liter if picking up
500 Liters or more

It is suggested that pickup be done using a larger poly tank. These tanks can be purchased from Peavy Mart or from Coop Agro centers. Large tanks have the benefit of minimized spillage during transport. Individual pails can be filled also.

Pickup can be arranged for evenings after 5pm or on weekends.

Contact
Andrew Hamilton
crazy_bee_man@hotmail.com
306-526-9277

Varroa Mites?

RDBC is selling Varroa Mite Treatment – **Apivar Strips**.

Price: \$3.00 x 1 strip
\$5.00 x 2 strips

Contact: (306) 757-5958
ilovebees@reginabeeclub.ca



Executive Report

This is the first newsletter of 2016. It's only a month into the year and already it seems like so much has happened. The executive team had our annual year end board meeting just before Christmas where we finalized the books from Agribition and discussed the overall outcome for the event. The Agri-Ed had a new microscope station and a picture and question hive to be added for next year. The trade show booth operated an observation hive again this year for the second year in a row and it received a lot of positive feedback. Sales at the booth remained consistent with previous years. Notable sale details included candle sales continuing to drop as they have been for the past few years, body lotions sold very well, and wax blocks were in extreme demand.

The board has also been busy planning this year's AGM. Issues like location, building capacity, speakers, and displays have required great discussion. I look forward to seeing all of you at the AGM. This year's AGM is shaping up to be very interesting. We have some excellent speakers planned. The AGM is also an excellent opportunity to socialize with your fellow beekeepers. Even if you are not attending the AGM, be sure to renew your membership, it is the best way to stay abreast of new information affecting bees in this province.

There are 3 board positions up for election this year. If you're interested in becoming a board member I urge you to be nominated. It is an excellent experience with modest time requirements. It gives you a better understanding of the bee

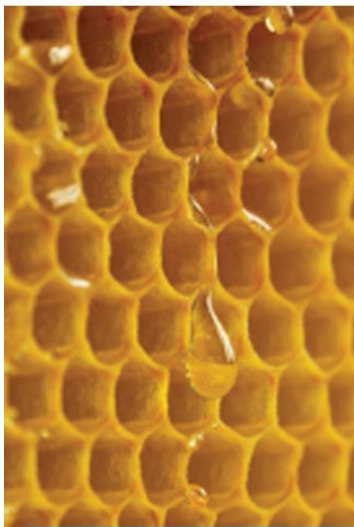
issues in our province and allows you to connect with the local bee community. Bee expertise is not necessary as the board does not hold meetings in the bee yard. ☺ Board members are responsible for administrative duties needed for club operation. The more diverse the board members the better the board operates. The club is also in need of mentors for new beekeepers. Mentorship is an opportunity to share your experience and marvel at the wonders of bees with new and upcoming beekeepers!

 *Andrew*



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Whatever your requirements we would be glad to help. Quality products for the beekeeping industry, including:

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- Beekeepers Apparel -Honey Containers -Extracting Equipment
- Beekeeping Tools -Novelties -Foundation -Medication & Chemicals.

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Alberta Honey Producers Co-Operative
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 Spruce Grove, AB T7X 3B1
 T: 780-962-5667 F: 780-962-1653

Bee Outfitters
 625 Roseberry Street
 Winnipeg, MB R3H 0T4
 T: 204-783-2240 F: 204-783-8468

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 Hwy 3 West
 Tisdale, SK S0E 1T0
 T: 306-873-2521 F: 306-873-3455



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Bear Fence Program



Figure 4 Illustration by Wade Henry (from DNR).

The Wildlife Compensation Program is a program which pays for honey bee losses due to bears. The program pays compensation for preventative measures taken to prevent bear damage. Under the program 80% of the material costs need for erecting a bear fence will be paid back to a maximum of \$3000. The program is applied for through the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association.

It is an excellent program to help safe guard your bees and save on labour cost associated with bear attacks.

<http://www.saskbeekeepers.com/docs/SBA/Electric%20Bear%20Fence%20rebate%20form.pdf>

 *Andrew*




RDBC at Regina Seedy Saturday

The Regina & District Bee Club will be at Regina's Seedy Saturday. Come and chat with us about this coming beekeeping and gardening season.



Figure 3 Honey bee on flower.



Regina Seedy Saturday

A Mid-Winter garden and seed event

NEW Downtown Location:
St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral
(1861 McIntyre Street)

DATE and TIME: March 5, 2016 - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- ◆ Heirloom seed vendors
- ◆ Seed exchange
- ◆ Children's area

Learn to Garden Presentations:

- ◆ How to Plan Your Garden
- ◆ How to Choose Your Seed
- ◆ How to Improve your Soil

ADMISSION BY DONATION



Flow Hive Fit for Honey Wagon

If someone knows you're interested in bees, then someone will have also asked if you've seen this neat invention called the Flow Hive. Likely, this has happened to you a couple dozen times. There's no shortage of grandiose statements from the promoters, such as "It will help the bees and it will help beekeepers." It's "the gentlest beekeeping system ever developed." Most people are surprised to hear that my reaction to the Flow Hive is unflattering.



Figure 4 Flow Hive. Image from www.honeyflow.com



Figure 5 Flow Hive plastic combs. Image from www.honeyflow.com

If by some chance, the Flow Hive has escaped your notice, the premise is this: special designed plastic combs split apart to permit the honey to drain out through a trough and tube to the exterior of the hive, directly into your honey container. The way the Flow Hive works is that a small L-shaped tool (like an Allan wrench) inserted in the end of a Flow Frame is turned 90°. This causes a slight shift in the

comb, breaking the round/hexagonal shape of each cell, permitting the honey to drain out.

It is truly an ingenious piece of mechanical engineering. But if you have bees, you know that mechanical engineering can't replace beekeeping. And if you keep bees, you likely don't just do it for the honey – you do it because bees fascinate you. Ask any beekeeper about his/her bees, and it will be hard to shut them up. This fascination comes from the intimate knowledge gained by actually going into your hive and interacting with the bees.

It comes from paying attention to their behavior, their sounds, smells, and actions. This is where the Flow Hive is fundamentally flawed – it is based upon the premise that by going into the hive, you "stress out all the bees". But in my view, it is learning to go into the hive in an unobtrusive way that creates the symbiotic relationship between the beekeeper and bees. In the words of Jack Mills, who teaches beekeeping "... without veil or gloves. If you enter a hive without the overwhelming force of a bee suit, you actually have to care about how the bees are feeling today, and you have to be interested in any subtle messages they may give you about your actions." If the way you go into your hive stresses out your bees, you need to learn how to be a better beekeeper.

In addition to my objection to the underlying premise of the Flow Hive, there are a number of technical problems that I foresee – at least in our climate.

Wax & Propolis – For a design that depends on the smooth mechanical movement of the combs, extra wax and propolis will at a minimum make it difficult to manipulate the combs, and may outright prevent it. In my experience, when I go into a strong hive during honey flow, the bees have been busy adding wax and propolis in lots of spots including joining the combs. Have you ever tried to remove a comb from a super in such a colony without first 'breaking the seal' with your hive tool? It's difficult. Sure if it's a weak hive without honey flow, then you can do it, but weak hives are not the standard to measure against. I have great difficulty imagining that these moving parts will work smoothly without little bits of wax gumming up the sliding action. The Flow Hive promoters claim the wax doesn't interfere – I remain skeptical.

Disease – The biggest issue with the Flow Hive is the potential for bad beekeeping and disease problems. Good management requires the beekeeper to go into the hive to inspect it, something the Flow Hive inventors claim "stresses the bees". Anything that gives beginning or unknowledgeable beekeepers the idea that it is acceptable to not inspect their bees, is in my view extremely dangerous. While the Flow Hive promoters do say that regular hive inspections are needed, in the same paragraph they claim that experienced beekeepers can usually judge whether they need to open the hive for inspection simply by observing bee behaviour at the hive entrance.

- Continued on page 6

Flow Hive Fit for Honey Wagon (continued)

Yet neither Varroa mites nor American Foul Brood (the two most deadly, contagious bee conditions in our part of the world) can be detected at the entrance of a hive. The Flow Hive also has a handy little glass window, which I fear will encourage the belief that an inspection can be done by simply looking in. Australia, where the Flow Hive originates, has to date escaped the ravages of the Varroa mite. But in my estimation, the vast majority of Flow Hive sales in North America will be to people who have little knowledge or experience with beekeeping. This means a substantial risk of the spread of diseases to other beekeepers' bees.

Expense – At a mere \$700 US per hive (not including bees), the direct equipment cost of the Flow Hive dwarfs the cost of traditional Langstroth equipment. In our climate, this will be exacerbated by needing more supers per hive. The promoters claim there is a cost saving due to not having to purchase extracting equipment, but that math escapes me.

Swarms – As every beekeeper in this part of the world knows, allowing your hive to swarm should be avoided. The best case scenario is that swarms only weaken your hive. But a swarm can be a death sentence for the colony if the virgin left behind doesn't get mated. Then there is the significant potential for bad public relations, particularly in urban areas. To prevent swarms requires not only ensuring that your bees have adequate space, but checking regularly for swarm cells. How do you check for swarm cells, without going into the hive?

Honey – We are all familiar with the viscosity of honey. It is considerably thicker and stickier than water. Take a container of water and tip it so it drains out, and only a couple drops will be left. Take that same container with honey and you find that much more honey remains, depending on the temperature and moisture content. That effect is multiplied likely a hundred-fold with comb (because honey comb has so much more surface area). Combine that simple issue with the fact that our summer honey crystallizes quickly, and I think the result will be that a lot of honey will not drain out of the Flow Hive, and will instead crystallize. It is my experience that the bees will not uncap crystallized honey in the summer, but will instead build new cells on top of that capping which they fill with honey and cap again. However, in the winter, when they get around to uncapping the honey to eat it, they do not uncap the second layer because they think it is the bottom of the cell. That crystallization and second layer of cells is a significant engineering problem of the Flow Hive, to my knowledge yet unsolved. If the honey did drain out well, that would imply that it was quite wet honey, thus requiring the beekeeper to dry the honey after collection to avoid fermentation.

Robbing - Most times of the year that there is exposed honey, it attracts foraging wasps and robbing honey bees. Neither are to be encouraged. While it should be possible to have the Flow Hive drain into a covered container, that means that a beekeeper with a Flow Hive may need to invest in yet additional equipment for that purpose.

In my view, the Flow Hive is simply the latest example of how social media and the internet has been used to spread misinformation about bees. It's great that people are concerned about bees, but sensationalist headlines about the "death of 6 million bees", simplistic petitions and ingenious technical inventions may cause as much harm as help. As Maryam Henein wrote, "Flow Hive has been described as a possible 'key' in keeping the world's bee population from further decline. Really? How so? This just makes honey collection simpler and easier. How does it help bees survive the issues they are currently grappling with? Like systemic pesticides and loss of habitat???"

The Flow Hive may work in Australia, but on the Canadian Plains it is only fit for the honey wagon.



Yens

Honey Inspired Recipes

Pumpkin Honey Bread



- 1 cup - honey
- 1/2 cup - butter or margarine, softened
- 1 can (16 oz.) - solid-pack pumpkin
- 4 - eggs
- 4 cups - flour
- 4 teaspoons - baking powder
- 2 teaspoons - ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons - ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon - baking soda
- 1 teaspoon - salt
- 1 teaspoon - ground nutmeg

In large bowl, cream honey with butter until light and fluffy. Stir in pumpkin. Beat in eggs, one at a time, until thoroughly incorporated. Sift together remaining ingredients. Stir into pumpkin mixture. Divide batter equally between two well-greased 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Let loaves cool in pans for 10 minutes; invert pans to remove loaves and allow to finish cooling on racks.



Almond Crusted French Toast with Whipped Ricotta and Honey

For the filling:

- 3/4 cup - ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup - cream cheese, softened
- zest of 1 orange

For the syrup:

- 3/4 cup - honey
- juice of 1/2 orange
- 1/2 teaspoon - cinnamon

For the french toast:

- 1/2 cup - sliced almond
- 3 - eggs
- 3/4 cup - milk
- splash - vanilla
- pinch - salt
- 8 - thick slices of challah or brioche bread
- 3 tablespoons - butter



Preheat the oven to 350°.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the ricotta and cream cheese until smooth. Stir in orange zest. In another small bowl, whisk the honey, orange juice and cinnamon. Add three tablespoons of that mixture to the ricotta and stir. Reserve the rest for the topping. In a shallow wide bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, vanilla and salt. Spread the almonds out on a plate.

Heat a skillet over medium heat. Melt half the butter in the skillet. Dip half the bread slices in the egg mixture, letting it soak in for about five seconds on each side. Place both sides of the bread in the almonds, pressing them into the side. Put the bread in the melted butter and grill until browned, about 2-3 minutes on each side. Put the finished bread on an ungreased baking sheet. Melt the rest of the butter in the skillet and repeat with remaining bread slices. Bake the grilled bread in the oven for 8-10 minutes or until cooked through.

If desired, heat the honey mixture on the stove top or in the microwave. Serve the french toast slices with a dollop of ricotta and the honey.



See something you like?

Have questions?

Do you have ideas or feedback?

Let us know!!!

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(306) 757-5958

E-MAIL:
ilovebees@reginabeeclub.ca

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.reginabeeclub.ca



Geoff's Corner

Have questions and need information about beekeeping in Saskatchewan?

Do you want to become a registered Beekeeper in our Province?


Contact Saskatchewan's Provincial Apiarist:


Geoff Wilson (306.953.2304)


Email: geoff.wilson@gov.sk.ca



Honey Today

 Wholesale Honey was averaged at \$5.04/lb during January 2016.

 Retail Honey was averaged at \$6.74/lb during January 2016.

 Canadian Bulk Honey was averaged at \$1.66/lb during November 2015.

Statistics taken from the National Honey Board



About Our Club...

The Regina and District Bee Club has been active in the City of Regina for over fifty years as a cooperative for ordering honey bees and as a network for education and information on beekeeping.

It is a priority to inform members about current issues in the beekeeping industry to ensure that a proactive role is taken with all industry issues such as bee diseases, mites and pesticides.

The Regina and District Bee Club participates in the Agri-Ed Show Case at Canadian Western Agribition. The focus is to educate children from Grades 4-6 about agriculture and food. Club members volunteer their time to speak about the

bees and beekeeping to well in excess of 10,000 visitors each year.

The Regina and District Bee Club in partnership with the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association profile the bee keeping industry as a whole in the Trade Show area in order to:

- Promote and sell products of the hive;
- Inform visitors about the industry and its role in the Saskatchewan economy; and
- Develop a relationship with other Saskatchewan agriculture producers.

Want to Advertise in the Queen City Buzzzzzz?

Business Card \$10.00

1/4 pg \$25.00

1/3 pg \$30.00

1/2 pg \$45.00

1 pg \$80.00

Our next Newsletter will be in April. Deadline for submissions is April 8, 2016.

Membership Benefits:

- A cooperative for ordering bees;
- At the annual meeting, guest speakers are invited to give presentations on current issues;
- Communication of industry issues to enable members to have a voice in provincial decision making;
- Hold "Field Days" to enable members to learn about beekeeping best practice methods; and
- Information and support system for fellow beekeepers.

