

Orange County Beekeepers Association

Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2024

Elisa Bailey, OCBA Vice-president, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone for the April meeting. There were 55 in-person attendees and 7 on zoom.

Hive Chat

This month's topic of discussion was how to boost honey production - with OCBA member Lisa Vogel. Some key takeaways:

- When splitting hives, you can split for more colonies or for honey production, not both.
- Honey production requires a lot of bees, but you need to prevent them from swarming.
- Sugar water and anise oil can be sprayed on frames to draw the bees into the honey supers

What's in Bloom

Many members submitted photos of what is currently blooming in their area: hollies, tulip poplar, painted buckeye, hellebores, blueberries, crabapple, cherries, autumn olive, dandelion, rosemary, kale and mustards, quince, and more.

Presentations

2023 Youth Apprentice #3 – Mateo Aguirre

Vicki Robertson introduced the third OCBA Apprentice from 2023, Mateo Aguirre. Brad Kosiba was Mateo's mentor.

Mateo gave a great PowerPoint presentation, in which he talked extensively about his biggest challenge: keeping bees and having a neighbor with a pool. He successfully managed to encourage his bees to not use his neighbor's pool as a water source by placing multiple water sources closer to the hive, including using boardman feeders filled with water at the hive entrance.

Mateo hopes to inspire others to get into beekeeping. He currently co-teaches a class on beekeeping at his school and he's helping his cousin (in Uruguay) to study the differences in bees between North and South America.

Mentorship Director, Jose Olmeda, then presented the 3 apprentices from 2023 with their certificates.

“Planting for Honeybees” – Mary Leonhardi

Elisa introduced fellow beekeeper, OCBA member, and Master Gardener, Mary Leonhardi.

Some important considerations:

- Try for a variety of flower color, shape, and pattern. White, blue, purple, and yellow flowers are typically more attractive to pollinators than red, pink, or orange.
- In addition to planting for nectar and pollen sources, consider plants that serve as host plants for the larval development of native moths and butterflies.

- Mary's favorite plants (by season) for pollinators:
 - o Spring – tulip poplar, fruit trees like cherry and apple
 - o Summer – echinacea (purple coneflower), sunflowers, mountain mint
 - o Fall – goldenrod, milkweed, asters

Club Business

Update from our NCSBA Piedmont Regional Director

- Ira Poston visited to introduce himself and award Axel Elling and Nerissa Rivera their Journeyman certificates.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Temporary Hive Care and Rehoming Coordinator: we are still looking for someone to take over this role.
- Blackwood Farm Park Hives: We would like to recruit 2 to 3 experienced beekeepers to take over in the next six months for Lisa Vogel and Cynthia Woodsong. Duties would include hive care and demos.
- Hillsborough Last Fridays event leader: make requests for the spot each month and coordinate participants.
- Hive Chat Coordinator: recruit facilitators to lead the discussions.
- State Fair booth: if interested in participating, email Daniel Curry-Corcoran

Education:

- Randall reminded members to contact him if interested in taking (or helping to administer) the certified practical (in hive) exam.

Membership

- Cindy gave an update on membership numbers: 258 total, of these, 106 are lifetime members.
- There have been 88 membership renewals over the last month.

OCBA MBP Study Kit

- Celeste Mayer will head up a new initiative to help those interested in pursuing their journeyman or master beekeeper certification. Small study groups (4-6 people) will self-organize, and be given a study kit with sample questions. The groups should plan to meet every ~2 weeks to discuss a topic.

Mentorship

- Jose reported that both apprentices have installed their hives.
- First year clusters have had ~ 50% attendance.
- Collaboratives: ~ 30 people have signed up (deadline is Apr 15).

Outreach (Volunteer Opportunities)

- Looking for volunteers for 3 Grade 2 classes at Sewell School
- Pollinator Day event at Gold Park in Hillsborough

- STEAM nights at local middle/high schools.
- Jeanne Arnts will send out more information to the listserv.

Upcoming Events

- Blackwood Farm Park: an in-hive demo is planned for April - stay tuned for details.
- Save the date: Bee Jamboree June 2, at Blackwood Farm Park.
- Tobacco Road Honey Classic

Next Month's Speaker

At the May meeting, we will have a round table discussion on varroa treatment options, including apiguard, oxalic acid, formic pro and VHS queens

Erika Wittchen
OCBA Secretary