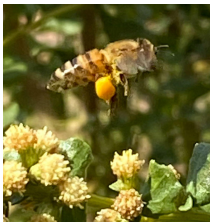




Napa County Beekeepers' Association Newsletter - August, 2026 issue #30

Our Mission: Supporting Napa's beekeeping community through educational outreach, treatment-free management, and pollinator habitat advocacy.

A few words from Martin



Greetings to you all! I don't know about all of you folks, but so far, 2026 has gone by at an unbelievable pace. It's difficult for me to wrap my head around the fact that August is already here. Each spring and summer are unique and we beekeepers need to roll with whatever unfolds.

Things are plenty dry out there, so be extremely careful with your smokers and torches. Big thank yous to Emmanuelle for hosting and Rob for leading a fantastic hive dive on Varroa mite testing. These events are always fun and incredibly educational. At this latest one, we tried a new testing method that uses carbon dioxide gas to render the bees and mites unconscious. The theory is that it makes the mites drop off so that they can be counted, but as air/oxygen is restored, the bees wake up and can be returned to the hive unharmed. The test was a little unorthodox due to some missing equipment; we made a field modification involving a "Soda Stream" machine which was creative and surprisingly effective. You can, in fact, use that sort of device to sedate honey bees for a mite test and they *do* wake back up, but are admittedly a little worse for wear (see Photo Gallery for pics).

While this was only one test, it didn't give us the most accurate results. This CO₂ method resulted in a mite count of 10. We then put aside about 20 still-groggy bees to see how they recovered; most of them did and were returned to the hive. For the remaining bees, we conducted the traditional alcohol wash on them. An *additional* 20 mites, or 200% more, dropped off the bees, bringing the grand total to 30! Again, this was

only one test and we had to make a few game-time modifications, but the difference in the count was so large, I wouldn't trust the CO₂ test to provide reliable numbers just yet. We will continue to explore this method and keep you updated on the results. However, accurate mite testing without needing to sacrifice 300 bees *would* be a wonderful thing.

Regular readers might have noticed that this is our 30th NCBA newsletter! Noting this achievement, we would like to take a moment and ask all of you for a bit of feedback. What can *WE* be doing to improve the newsletter content and better serve our beekeeping community? Topics you would like to see covered in more detail? Speakers or events that would be helpful? It is our goal to not only provide the best possible information to our club members and readers, but to do so in a format that is enjoyable and respectful of their time. With this in mind, we've put together a brief (2-4 minute) survey.

There are two versions of the survey:

- **For NCBA dues-paying members:** you will be emailed a separate link. Your survey includes questions about the newsletter and events - it's a wee bit more extensive.
- **For NCBA newsletter and email recipients (if you have not paid for a membership level):** please click [here](#) to complete a survey that pertains primarily to the newsletter, but invites you to sound in on other areas as well.

We hope to hear from many of you, members and readers alike, so that we may better meet all your beekeeping interests and needs. Thank you!!

- Martin Podell

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Save the Date - NCBA and Other Happenings

JULY NCBA CLUB MEETING

When: Monday, August 17 *Come for one or all portions of the evening.*

5 - 6pm: Club Hive Dive

6 - 6:30pm: Q&A (casual time for questions & guidance)

6:30 - 8pm: General Club Meeting

Where: Napa Grange, [3275 Hagen Road, Napa](#)

Focus: Guest Christine Kurtz, on winter hive prep for bees and beekeepers alike



AT THE NAPA GRANGE:

Mike Marshall, Caterina Lichtenberg & the Gravenstein Mandolin Ensemble

When: Saturday, August 15

Tickets here: [Mike Marshall & Caterina Lichtenberg/Gravenstein Mandolin Ensemble](#)



Ann Savoy & the Magnolia Sisters of Louisiana, featuring our 2nd annual Crawfish Boil

When: Friday, September 11

Tickets here: [Cajun Dance Party & Crawfish Boil with Ann Savoy and the Magnolia Sisters](#)

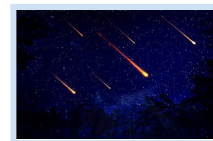
Swing Dance Party with the Dogweed String Band

When: Saturday, November 14 at 6pm

Tickets here: [The Dogweeds Concert](#)

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST:

Perseid Meteor Shower: Although it will be visible from July 17 through August 24, this nighttime show peaks on the night of August 12-13, coinciding with a new moon so the skies will be fantastically dark. Ideal viewing window is late night on the 12th to predawn on the 13th. Face towards the northeast sky where meteors will appear to originate.



Connolly Ranch Back to Nature Night

When: Sat, August 16, 5-8pm

Where: Connolly Ranch, 3141 Browns Valley Road, Napa

What: Bring the family and spend time with the animals, join in nature-based activities, dance under the stars to the rhythmic sounds of a local band, and enjoy good food and drink with friends

Cost: Adults \$15, Children (over 2) \$10; Children (under 2) Free (*advanced ticket purchase required*)

For more info: <https://www.connollyranch.org/events/earth-night>

NCBA T-Shirt Orders

Beautifully printed locally by Grapeleaf Graphics with our logo, 100% cotton, available in S/M/L/XL. Choose from short-sleeved (regular or ladies cut, \$25) or long-sleeved in grey (\$40). Shirts will shrink a bit, so order a size larger if you like a looser fit. Purchase with cash or check (see t-shirt order form linked below).

Send completed [NCBA T-Shirt Order Form](#) to Martin at martinp.ncba@gmail.com or pick up at an upcoming NCBA meeting.



Photo Gallery

Our Varroa testing hive dive at Emmanuelle's in July - pretty high mite count, not a great sign... fingers crossed for these bees.



Only 10 mites after CO₂ treatment

Given a bit of honey for their troubles, the bees below woke up after a few minutes.

SodaStream?! Yup



NCBA Membership - we welcome you!

The Napa County Beekeepers' Association has an active membership program. We welcome beekeepers of any level, as well as folks that just enjoy learning about bees and the greater world of pollinators. Your membership dollars enable us to offer the benefits below, In addition to covering various administrative and website expenses:

- Guest speakers on a range of topics
- Hands-on educational events & workshops
- Various swag discounts & freebies
- Individualized mentoring/consultation
- Monthly meetings and seasonal gatherings
- Monthly newsletter



You may also submit a membership form online at our website: <https://www.beekeepersofnapavalley.org/form>

Note: a digital payment/donation option via Square is now in place on our website.



Napa County Beekeepers' Association

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Facebook: [Beekeepers of Napa Valley/Napa County Beekeepers Association | Facebook](#)