



## The PSBA Buzz

Monthly Meetings are held  
every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday  
(except July, Nov, Dec)

Location:

Graham Visitor Center of  
Washington Arboretum.  
2200 Arboretum Drive E.,  
Seattle, WA 98112

Harvesting Honey?  
Rent a PSBA extractor



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## Hive Calendar

### June Brings Major Lowland Nectar Flow

Blackberry, the major lowland Puget Sound nectar flow, starts in June and lasts 2-4 weeks, depending on altitude, weather, and location. Check for swarm cells each 7 – 10 days. Remove and extract capped supers. Bottle and sell honey and beeswax.

Nectar Sources in June: Blackberry (lowlands), Dandelion & Clover

June Meeting:

❖ *Beginner Lesson: 6:30-7:00pm*

❖ *Announcements: 7:00-7:15 Get the latest info on what's happening with PSBA*

❖ *General Meeting 7:30–9:00pm Owner of Olson's Honey in Yakima, WA, Eric Olson will talk about his commercial beekeeping business and his efforts to save his bees from CCD by overwintering them indoors.*

June Apiary Work Parties: Sign up [here](#) Next Party: June 29th, 12-2pm: Gail Eshom, 206-579-4343 [volunteer@pugetsoundbees.org](mailto:volunteer@pugetsoundbees.org)

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 12-3 : PSBA Picnic beside the apiary. Bring a potluck dish to share – always a fun social event! PSBA will provide beverages and dessert.

## Bee Lunch

By Jeff Steenbergen



Linden/Basswood  
Tree (*Tilia americana*)  
- A Sweet Summer  
Delight

When June arrives in the Puget Sound area most beekeepers are thinking about the Blackberry flow.

However in other parts of the country the Basswood tree helps make up the major June flow. While not native to the northwest they historically were planted as street trees around neighborhoods in Seattle. Linden trees are slow growing upright trees that can get quite large over time providing summer shade. Unfortunately they have become unpopular as they are susceptible to aphids which cause them to drip sticky sap on sidewalks and cars. However if you are fortunate enough to have some of these now giant trees in your neighborhood the nectar produced from their tiny yellow flowers makes for an appealing light honey.

## President's Message *Krista Conner*

PSBA had a great month in May with a successful Field Day. "Thank You!" to all who helped and all who attended – you made the day very special.

Field Day couldn't have happened without our presenters: Randy Oliver, Washington State Beekeepers Association President: Mark Emrich, West Sound Beekeepers Association board members: George Purkett and Jean Ball, PSBA members: Daniel Najera and Mel Bird; Whole Foods Market: Maura Hardman. Thanks go to our many sponsors: Whole Foods Market Interbay, PCC Market West Seattle, Macrina Bakery, City People's Nursery, Ace Hardware Maple Leaf, Sky River Winery, Urban Hardwoods, Bufographo Design, and Kajort Designs. Photos from the event are on our website.



*PSBA President:  
Krista Conner*

The day after Field Day, PSBA volunteers stepped up to help celebrate the opening of the West Seattle Bee Garden, a project run by PSBA member Lauren Englund. PSBA was in the parade for the arrival of the beehives and later were on hand to answer questions about bees. Our observation hive was a big hit, as usual. You can view a video of the parade [here](#). Lauren was awarded "Westsider of the Year" by West Seattle's Chamber of Commerce as a result of her community engagement.

It's easy to see how when we work together PSBA can make great things happen for bees, beekeeping and the community. Let's keep up the good work!

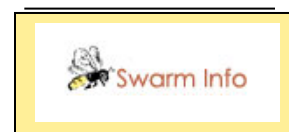
PSBA would like to thank Western Bee Supply for their generous donation of woodenware to support our apiary.

[www.westernbee.com](http://www.westernbee.com)



**Pollinator Week is  
June 17<sup>th</sup> – June 23<sup>rd</sup>!**

Learn more at  
[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)



*PSBA Swarm List is a  
way to help protect  
honeybees – please  
share!*

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

PSBA will be attending several summer festivals to educate on honeybees, beekeeping, and to raise funds via honey sales.

Come on out and help!

Sign up [here](#)

### **July 13<sup>th</sup> West Seattle Summer Festival:**

GreenLife Expo.  
Saturday July 13<sup>th</sup>  
from 10am to 6pm

**July 27<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>  
annual NW SolarFest**  
[www.shorelinesolar.org](http://www.shorelinesolar.org)

## PSBA Needs Your Help!

### **Supplier Info Wanted**

Our supplier list on our website needs updates. Do you sell queens, nucs, packages or beekeeping equipment? or know someone who does? Please send information including business name, website, address, email address, phone number and what is sold (nucs, queens, packages, beekeeping supplies) to [editor@pugetsoundbees.org](mailto:editor@pugetsoundbees.org)

### **Apiary Repairs**

The roof on both the sheds at the Apiary need replacing due to leaks. If you have roofing experience, building experience, and/or materials and equipment for this project please let us know by contacting [secretary@pugetsoundbees.org](mailto:secretary@pugetsoundbees.org)

### **Extractors**

Do you have an extractor that you're not using? Why not donate it to Puget Sound Beekeepers? PSBA's extractors are getting old and worn from use. If you have an extractor in good working condition that you'd like to donate please contact [treasurer@pugetsoundbees.org](mailto:treasurer@pugetsoundbees.org)

## Learning From the Bees

By Jeff Steenbergen, *Trustee*

It is often said in beekeeping that if you ask a group of beekeepers the same question you will get multiple and sometimes conflicting answers. Beekeeping books are great for generalizing what you should expect to see going on in the hive but do a poor job of pointing out that hives can have distinctive qualities from each other and how to adjust when a hive does something strange. In a commercial setting, individual hive traits are generalized and if a few hives swarm or a small percentage dies it's a small price to pay for the gains in management efficiency. However when you only have a couple hives in your backyard you do not want to lose any or have swarms going into the neighbors eaves. Being able to understand and respond to what an individual hive is doing becomes an essential skill to master (actually this is a lifelong effort).

One way to become more familiar with the characteristics of your hive is by taking detailed notes. Notes can be brief or detailed but should answer the basic questions about what is going on in the hive. Recording hive observations is one of the secrets of good beekeepers everywhere, so don't let a little propolis discourage you from taking a few quick notes after an inspection. Over time your notes can help you identify patterns that you might not have noticed at the time or weren't obvious until several weeks later.

What the bees are doing today will prepare them for what is coming several weeks ahead and ultimately to meet their reproduction and winter survival needs. Having good notes goes hand in hand with regular inspections every 7-10 days which are especially important if you are a new beekeeper. Not only does this give you hands-on time with the bees but it will help you catch any unexpected swarm attempts before they occur!

Finally, before starting a hive inspection you should think about what you want to learn before opening the hive. To do this you should review your previous notes and take into consideration the weather patterns and floral sources in bloom. Some general questions you should always be looking to answer are: What problems exist that need to be addressed? Is the queen performing well with brood in all stages? How do their food stores look for the time of year? For example, this time of year we are entering the busy June nectar flow and you should see a surplus of nectar coming in. Your primary concerns are to make sure that they don't back-fill

the brood nest with stores so that the queen has nowhere to lay eggs and to watch for swarm attempts. This is also a more difficult time of year to do an inspection because the hives will be nearing their maximum population and likely overflowing with bees.

Like any endeavor you wish to master it can take several seasons to become familiar with what's going on in your hives. With good notes and some simple goals outlined for inspections you will become more efficient at checking hives and better predict the needs of your colonies. While you may never know for sure what a hive is going to do ahead of time, you can learn to identify the opportunities that exist which will help or hinder the colony and can take steps which maximize on the potential of your colonies.



## Volunteer Beekeeping in Fiji

By PSBA member:  
Rob Stevens

I was on a 4 week volunteer abroad stint with a group called Global Vision International, on a small island in the Yasawa Island chain of Fiji. Our purpose was to help some remote island inhabitants establish and fix rainwater harvesting systems. The groundwater on these small islands is mostly impacted by saltwater so to improve their health (high sodium diet) and to have a year round supply of safe drinking water, we were installing gutters, downspouts, cisterns and filters to provide safe water year round for these small islands.

But in the last week I was there our group of 4 volunteers was given the option to build a top bar hive using some scrap wood. We didn't have much to work with; basically just a dull hand saw, a very rusty circular saw, hammer, nails and a bunch of scrap wood. We had to choose between making a Kenyan or a Tanzanian top bar hive. (Continued on pg 4)



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## Marketplace

\*\*\* please [see our website](#) for new marketplace fees and guidelines \*\*\*

Interested in advertising or sponsoring PSBA's Newsletter? Get in touch!  
Editor@psbees.org

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### We're on the Web!

[www.pugetsoundbees.org](http://www.pugetsoundbees.org)  
[www.psbees.org](http://www.psbees.org)  
[Facebook](#)

## Volunteer Beekeeping in Fiji *By Rob Stevens* Continued from page 3

The main difference between these is the Tanzanian has vertical sides whereas the Kenyan has slightly angled sides to mimic the angle of natural honeycomb. But with our limited tools, the Tanzanian hive was really the only practical option for us; cutting angles was asking too much. We had rough dimensions to aim for but had to improvise just about every aspect of the construction.

The toughest part was getting the top bars to the crucial dimension of 33 mm. Since I've been back I've learned that an Italian bee has a natural honeycomb spacing of 35 mm and African bees are closer to 32 mm. Our bars varied from 32 to 38 mm in width, so we alternated the wide and narrow ones out to ensure the honeycomb didn't span two bars. And the top bars weren't constructed to the same detail that local top bar hives are. They were basically just a flat piece of ¾" thick wood with a bead of beeswax applied to the bottom side. No chance of cutting a groove or a tab for the bees to start their honeycomb on; but luckily enough, we did have some 100% pure beeswax that we could lay a bead of wax down the center of the bar to entice them to place their honeycomb in the middle of each bar. And we didn't cut shoulders on the bars; we used nails in each bar to keep it from falling off of the hive sides and keep the bar centered. It looks like it should work perfectly.

There was a wild hive nearby that has occupied a hole in a cliff for a few decades. If a wild hive can survive for so many years, I'm sure it sends out swarms frequently. The locals told me that it didn't have a queen and wasn't honey bees, but they definitely looked exactly like my bees and since it had continued for so many years, it definitely had a queen. There is a resort about 1 mile away that does have actively managed hives, so there are plenty of sources for new bees. I have no clue when the swarming season in Fiji is; it's pretty much always between 65 and 85 degrees. But right now is the rainy season so presumably the bees will be swarming soon after the rains stop. I hope to hear the good news that we have attracted a colony to our beautiful new hive above the restroom on Nanuya Lai Lai.

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Puget Sound Beekeepers  
Association

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