



BROOKWOOD COMMUNITY FARM CSA NEWSLETTER

JULY 4 2010

Field Notes: Beekeeping at the Farm

by Judy Lieberman

While the farm crew rushes around the fields pulling weeds, tying tomatoes, planting seeds, harvesting crops, shoveling dirt and attending to the plants like busy bees, the honey bees themselves at Brookwood and Bradley have been equally busy and extremely productive.

Last summer was a difficult year for both crops and honey bees, who depend on each other for survival. The cool, rainy weather resulted in late blight for tomatoes and severely hampered our bees' ability to perform their vital work of pollinating flowers and collecting nectar, resulting in low stores of honey and weak hives going into the winter. Only one of last season's six hives--three apiece at Brookwood and Bradley--survived to grow anew during another spring at the farm. Yet, at this moment in early summer, there are plenty of bees buzzing around the three hives at each site, all six filled once again with active honeybee colonies.



Bees!!

The three hives at Brookwood belong to three different beekeepers--myself, Lauri Webster, and Cathy Smith. It's a pleasure to have other beekeepers with whom to work, to compare notes, and to share our experiences with our bees. All three of these hives were restarted this spring with new "nucs," a nuc being a small hive comprising five frames of comb

This week's share

Fennel
Cucumbers
Squash
Swiss Chard
Carrots
Mini Onions
Basil
Lettuce
Turnips

Coming Soon!
Fresh Garlic
Peppers

**SAVE THE DATE
for our 2nd Potluck!**

Thanks to everyone for coming to our June potluck last Tuesday!

Our **SECOND** potluck will be Thurs, July 29th at 6pm in the red barn. Put it in your calendars!!!

It's going to be really fun!

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containing eggs and larvae, a laying queen, and worker bees.

At Bradley we had one strong hive that over-wintered. These bees had a strong queen who proved able to start laying eggs as soon as the days got longer and plants started growing again. By the end of April there were probably more than 20,000 bees in that hive, each with his or her own task: feeding larvae, housekeeping in the hive, or foraging to bring back nectar and pollen to maintain the group. In early May, with the help of Ed Karle, an experienced beekeeper from the Norfolk County Beekeeper's Association, we split the hive to create a new one and, we hoped, to avoid the possibility of a swarm from that strong hive (a "swarm" is the method honey bees use to produce another complete hive). A "walk-away split" involves removing five of the ten frames from the hive box where the bees live to start a new hive. We took frames with young brood and day-old larvae, along with the nurse bees who take care of them, and moved them into a new box with five more frames of drawn comb and stored honey, making sure not to move the existing queen. These bees would make a new queen from some of the eggs, and thus begin a new hive. The frames removed from the original hive would be replaced and that group would continue to function and increase in size.

This it did and in a short time it was necessary to add a "honey super" (an extra box for honey storage, once the two deep hive body boxes below are filled) to give the bees more space. A "queen excluder" is placed below this box to keep the larger queen out so that she doesn't lay eggs in these frames, ensuring that they will only contain honey.

All seemed to be going well, but the first weekend in June, Jason reported that the bees from the over-wintered hive were swarming. A massive cloud of bees had left the hive and settled into the tree in front. However, by the time I arrived a few hours later, they were gone and it appeared as though they had returned to the hive (just practicing, as it turned out). Upon inspection I saw that the honey super was getting full so I added another, hoping to provide more space and avoid a swarm (not likely!).

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Vegetable of the Week!

FENNEL



This furry-top vegetable is popular in the European cuisine, especially in France and Italy, where they use it in fish sauces and in mayonnaise. Lesser known in the American cuisine, fennel is known for its licorice taste and is often confused with anise in the markets. In Greek mythology, Prometheus used the stalk of the fennel to steal fire from the gods! Don't have quite an acquired taste for licorice? No worries! Cooking and roasting fennel dims down the licorice taste and makes it a bit sweeter. Try slicing the fennel bulb and sauteing with some fresh or dry basil and eggs. It makes a delicious breakfast combination! Ask around and research about it! Try the fennel recipe in this newsletter! We hope that even if you don't become a fennel convert after this week's share, you at least admire this beautiful and unique vegetable!

Gazette

Please pickup your share this week:

Tuesday 7/6 : 1 – 6pm

Thursday 7/8 : 1 – 6pm

Saturday 7/10 : 9am – 12pm

Brookwood Honey!

Last week we extracted 34 lbs of honey from one of the hives at Bradley! It will be available for sale this week in 1 lb and 1/2 lb jars. Due to the limited supply, if you bring your own jars, please make sure they are small (not more than 1 lb) because we need to limit each person to a lb so that more people can enjoy the farm honey. If the bees continue at this rate of production there will be more coming during the summer and fall.

Reusable Bags

We will also be selling reusable produce bags, made locally by Milton resident Christine Fisk. These are small bags that can replace the clear plastic one we provide for salad greens and other small, loose items. They can be machine washed and are quite nice looking and durable. The price is \$3.50 for 1 and \$10 for a set of 3. They will be on the table at pick-up in the shed, and also at our stand at the Milton Farmer's Market, on Thursdays. You can leave payment in the box, as with the eggs.

Get your Fruit Share!

Where's the fruit coming from? Hill Orchard in Johnston, RI from Farmer Allan Hill

How much? And How long? It's \$102 for a share that will start the week of August 8th . It goes for 12 weeks until the week of October 24th. Pickups for the fruit will be the same as your CSA pickup times.

What's in a share? Plums, apples, peaches, and a small selection of nectarines and grapes!

Great. I'm in. How do I pay? Checks payable to Brookwood Community Farm, Please mail them to 18 Capen St., Milton, MA 02186 OR leave them in the box labeled "Fruit Share Payments" on the table in the red barn.

When's the deadline? We will receive checks through August 1st, but we recommend you to send your checks in ASAP!

A Poem – Food for the Soul

In celebration of Independence Day!

“I Hear America Singing”

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe
 and strong,
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
 The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off
 work,
 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deck-
 hand singing on the steamboat deck,
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing
 as he stands,
 The woodcutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morn-
 ing, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
 The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work,
 or of the girl sewing or washing,
 Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
 The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young
 fellows, robust, friendly,
 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

-- Walt Whitman



Carrots



Flowers



Volunteer Drop-in Hours:

We're getting busy on the farm and the weeds are picking up! Please come join us in the fields and help us out!

Wednesdays from 7am – noon at BRADLEY

First and third Saturday of every month from 8am – noon AT BROOKWOOD

Questions? Email Anna at volunteer@brookwoodcommunityfarm.org

Wish list

Riding mower, pruners, scissors, pool skimmer, hanging scales, paint and paintbrushes to make signs for our flower bed!

Thank you for the fabric and bed sheets for keeping produce cool!!

Recipe: Fennel, Mushroom, & Parmesan Salad

Ingredients

Dressing

1/2 cup less 1 Tbsp. mild olive oil
2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
salt & freshly ground white pepper to taste
a tiny pinch of nutmeg
1 tbsp. firmly packed fennel leaves, finely chopped

Salad

4 sm. bulbs fennel, sliced paper-thin
1 oz. Parmesan cheese, shaved paper-thin
4 plump mushrooms, about 1 oz each, sliced paper-thin
freshly ground white pepper to taste

Directions

Use a fork to blend the dressing ingredients in a small bowl. Taste for seasoning. Cover and keep in a cool place. Combine the fennel and cheese in a mixing bowl. Beat the dressing to blend it and add 1/4 cup to the bowl. Blend carefully with your hands - the cheese tends to sink to the bottom, and you don't want to end up with just crumbles. Spread a handful of this mixture on 4 salad plates, filling the plates. Heap the mushroom slices lightly over the fennel, leaving a curly border of the fennel. Beat the dressing again and spoon 1 Tbsp. over the mushrooms on each plate. Grind pepper over the salads and serve at once as a separate course with bread sticks.

The Kitchen Garden Cookbook, Sylvia
Thompson

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But a week and a half later they did it again and a massive group of bees settled around the queen on a branch at the top of the same small, half-dead tree.

Why? Well, when the numbers of bees in the hive expand, the workers will make queen cells and feed the larvae in each "royal jelly" to create a new queen. Before those new queens emerge (they make a bunch, but the first to hatch will kill the rest, since there can only be one queen) the original queen will leave the hive and about one-third of the worker bees will follow her. They settle nearby and cluster around her while some workers scout for a new home. It is at this point that we can catch the swarm--quite the adventure! The operation involves climbing the tree and knocking the mass of bees, queen included, into a box, then dumping this buzzing mass into a new hive. A challenging and exciting endeavor, to say the least, but we were eventually successful, as proved by humming hives at Bradley. A hive check with Ed Karle last week confirmed that each has a laying queen and lots of new workers, all doing what they should be doing, so all's well with the Bradley bees

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Judy's Field Notes, cont'd

The hive at Brookwood, however, was experiencing troubles of its own. Upon inspection we discovered that there was no queen and very few workers. But, lucky for us, Cathy Smith had caught a swarm and couldn't keep it. So these bees have now joined the queenless hive at Brookwood and--we hope!--they are now all one big, happy family.

*Beekeepers*

The sweetest part of this very enlightening hobby is the honey the bees provide us. Lots of farm members were able to participate in the season's first (but surely not last) honey harvest. We removed a very heavy honey super from the hive at Bradley and brought it to the sugar house at Brookwood for extracting. All ten frames were full of capped honey (bees process nectar, fill wax cells, fan the frames to remove water, and cap the cells with wax to store the honey). Our job was to uncap the cells with a special knife and load the frames into the extractor, where it would be spun to release the sweet, gooey stuff and collected below. The process was lots of fun and yielded 34 lbs of honey! Yeah bees!!! Honey will be for sale at pick-up next week (\$8 per lb, \$4 per ½ lb). You can buy it bottled or bring your own jar, but please bring small ones (limit of 1 lb per person) so that more people will have a chance to try some.

Next time you come to the farm, take a close look around and you will probably notice the fuzzy, striped girls zooming from flower to flower in the fields, ensuring fruit production and gathering the ingredients for all the products that sustain them--and for the honey we enjoy. Please remember to thank them for their hard work on our behalf and be humble when you think of being "busy as a bee."