NMBKA NEWSLETTER
NEW MEXICO BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

December 2017


Photo: Aaron Burden

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SAVE THE DATE!

February 2–3, 2018
NMBKA Annual Conference
Albuquerque, NM

THE NEW MEXICO BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
is dedicated to informing and inspiring persons interested in beekeeping, and educating the general public.

Bee Kills: What Beekeepers Should Know

We asked staff from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture's Office of Pesticide Compliance for some tips about bee kills and how they deal with them. Here's what they told us…

Manufacturers have added language to pesticide labels to help prevent bees from being exposed to pesticides, but many commonly-used pesticides still have the potential to harm bees if misused. Apiaries located in commercial farming areas are at a higher risk for pesticide exposure, but urban apiaries can also be affected.

PESTICIDE EXPOSURE

Pesticide-related mortality in hives can result from either acute or chronic pesticide exposure. Acute exposure may result from hives getting sprayed directly with pesticides, or from bees foraging in a field that was recently sprayed. One likely sign of acute exposure would be a significant drop in bee population in a short period of time, or significant numbers of dead bees at the hive. Chronic exposure results from sublethal levels of pesticides that affect bees over time, resulting in weak colonies and a more gradual decline in bee population and/or health.

OTHER CAUSES

Compared with other states, many of New Mexico's crops do not require bee pollination. That means that bee exposure to agriculture pesticides is significantly reduced, and recent surveys and investigations have shown that pesticides are actually the least common cause of bee kills in New Mexico. Therefore, if you do observe problems, it is important to evaluate whether non-pesticide related factors may be a primary cause. For instance, rapid changes between temperature extremes also commonly result in rapid declines, while diseases, parasites and poor nutrition may result in more gradual population declines.

NEW MEXICO TRENDS

The primary contributor to weak colonies in New Mexico is high populations of varroa mite. In most cases evaluated by New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the bee loss is usually determined to be associated

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Message from The President

Dearest friends,

2017 was my fourth year as NMBKA president, preceded by two years as secretary and treasurer. The years I have spent in the beekeeping community have helped form me into the person I am now, and I am incredibly thankful to have had this opportunity to serve. It is therefore with regret that I must announce that I will not be running for reelection as president of the New Mexico Beekeepers Association in 2018.

I have been very fortunate to be able to stay home with my children for the last 10 years, but now it is important to my family for me to begin working towards a new career. I am currently taking a full load of classes, as I work towards the goal of eventually becoming a Certified Public Accountant. Unfortunately, this new workload does not allow me the time I would need to devote to the Association in 2018.

Together, we have made amazing strides to help protect and support honeybees and pollinators, and to build a community of support here in New Mexico. I know that this will continue with the next NMBKA president, and I also believe that any organization benefits greatly from periodic changes in leadership, ushering in new points of view and new skill sets.

The position of president will be voted on at the NM Beekeepers Association Annual Meeting on February 2–3, 2018. I hope you all can make it to this event, which will feature Dr. Tom Seeley! After the election, the new President will be able to meet with members and begin the next phase in our organization's future of collaboration with you in your community.

Thank you all so much for making these past several years truly remarkable!

Kindly,

Jessie Brown, President
New Mexico Beekeepers Association

NMBKA President Jessie Brown meets with some of her constituents

NEW MEXICO BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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info@ nmbeekeepers.org
www.nmbeekeepers.org

2017 NM BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

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Treasurer: Albert Gibson treasurer@nmbeekeepers.org

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Bee Kills: What Beekeepers Should Know

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with poor apiary management. Poor management practices can result in insufficient nutrition, harmful temperatures, and poor hive placement—particularly in the months leading up to winter. However, pesticides should always be included as one of many possible causes.

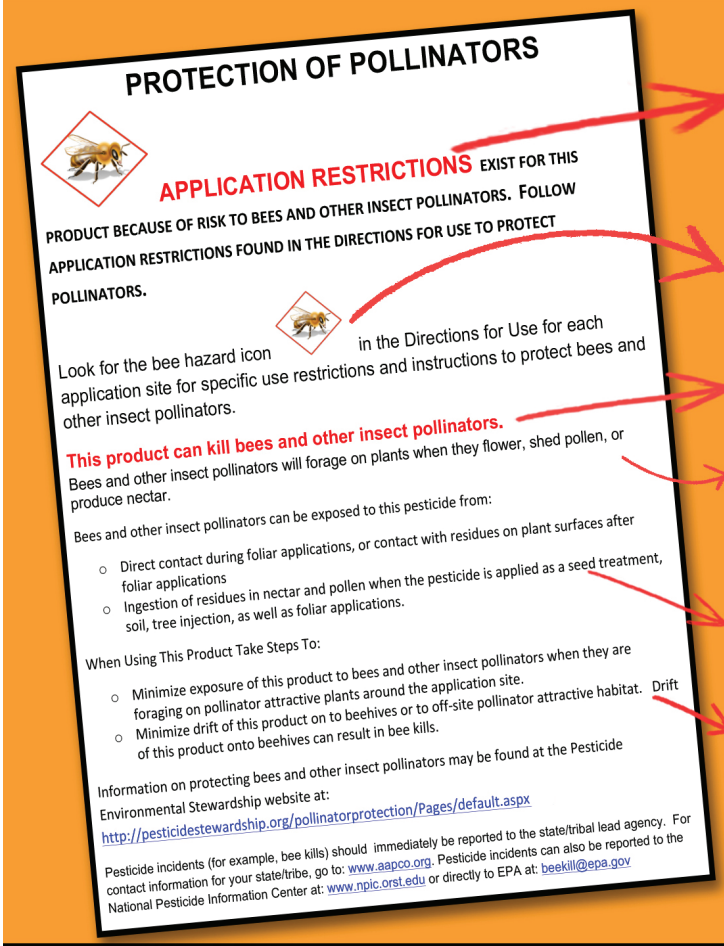
WHOM TO CALL

In case of a hive kill, New Mexico beekeepers can contact the New Mexico Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Compliance Office at (575)646-2134. On the average, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture handles approximately ten calls per year. The most common scenario we encounter is when a beekeeper observes a number of dead bees around the hive, and a decline in bee population. We then collect specific details about the situation, such as hive location, surrounding environmental landscape, and condition of the hive with respect to bee diseases and pests. We also ask for a general description of population loss, when signs were first noticed, if any changes to environmental conditions have occurred since then. Field staff may conduct onsite inspections including additional information gathering. If needed, samples are collected and sent to our laboratory for analysis. Results are then compiled and evaluated by enforcement staff. (It is important to note that even if pesticides are found in collected samples, it is often impossible to determine where they came from unless a drift event was witnessed and reported as part of the preliminary complaint call.)

This information was compiled by NMDA's Office of Pesticide Compliance. Special thanks to Brad Lewis, Interim Division Director; Irene King, Assistant Division Director; and Steve Baca, Inspector Supervisor. Visit NMDA's Office of Pesticide Compliance website for more information and links related to pesticides and pollinators. USDA beekeeping information can be found ***here.***

THE NEW EPA BEE ADVISORY BOX

On EPA's new and strengthened pesticide label to protect pollinators



PROTECTION OF POLLINATORS

APPLICATION RESTRICTIONS EXIST FOR THIS PRODUCT BECAUSE OF RISK TO BEES AND OTHER INSECT POLLINATORS. FOLLOW APPLICATION RESTRICTIONS FOUND IN THE DIRECTIONS FOR USE TO PROTECT POLLINATORS.

Look for the bee hazard icon in the Directions for Use for each application site for specific use restrictions and instructions to protect bees and other insect pollinators.

This product can kill bees and other insect pollinators.

Bees and other insect pollinators will forage on plants when they flower, shed pollen, or produce nectar.

Bees and other insect pollinators can be exposed to this pesticide from:

- Direct contact during foliar applications, or contact with residues on plant surfaces after foliar applications
- Ingestion of residues in nectar and pollen when the pesticide is applied as a seed treatment, soil, tree injection, as well as foliar applications.

When Using This Product Take Steps To:

- Minimize exposure of this product to bees and other insect pollinators when they are foraging on pollinator attractive plants around the application site.
- Minimize drift of this product on to beehives or to off-site pollinator attractive habitat. Drift of this product onto beehives can result in bee kills.

Information on protecting bees and other insect pollinators may be found at the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship website at:
http://pesticidestewardship.org/pollinatorprotection/Pages/default.aspx

Pesticide incidents (for example, bee kills) should immediately be reported to the state/tribal lead agency. For contact information for your state/tribe, go to: www.aapco.org. Pesticide incidents can also be reported to the National Pesticide Information Center at: www.npic.orst.edu or directly to EPA at: beekill@epa.gov

Alerts users to separate restrictions on the label. These prohibit certain pesticide use when bees are present.

The new bee icon helps signal the pesticide's potential hazard to bees.

Makes clear that pesticide products can kill bees and pollinators.

Bees are often present and foraging when plants and trees flower. EPA's new label makes it clear that pesticides cannot be applied until all petals have fallen.

Warns users that direct contact and ingestion could harm pollinators. EPA is working with beekeepers, growers, pesticide companies, and others to advance pesticide management practices.

Highlights the importance of avoiding drift. Sometimes, wind can cause pesticides to drift to new areas and can cause bee kills.

The science says that there are many causes for a decline in pollinator health, including pesticide exposure. EPA's new label will help protect pollinators.

EPA

Read EPA's new and strengthened label requirements: http://go.usa.gov/jHH4

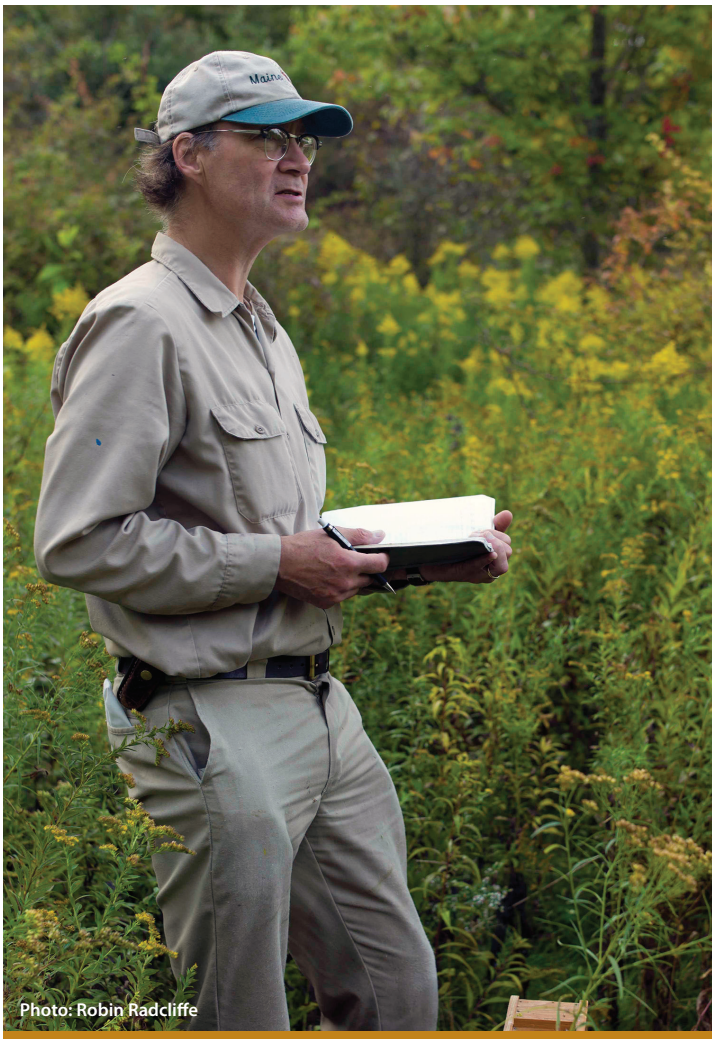


Photo: Robin Radcliffe

2018 KEYNOTE SPEAKER
DR. TOM SEELEY

Thomas D. Seeley, biologist and writer, is a professor in the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University. He teaches courses on animal behavior and does research on the behavior, social life, and ecology of honey bees. An avid beekeeper, Tom began keeping bees while a high school student, when he shook a swarm into a box and brought it home. His work includes the books *Honeybee Ecology* (1985), *The Wisdom of the Hive* (1995), *Honeybee Democracy* (2010), and *Following the Wild Bees* (2016). In recognition of his scientific contributions, he has been honored by an Alexander von Humboldt Distinguished U.S. Scientist Award, awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, and elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences—but he writes that his "most important prizes by far are the discoveries that I have made about the inner workings of honey bee colonies."

New Mexico Beekeepers Association 2018 Annual Conference February 2–3, 2018

Hive Mind: Decision-Making Secrets of Bees
Featuring special guest
Dr. Tom Seeley

This year's conference features an impressive roster of amazing guests. Our keynote speaker will be the renowned author and scientist, Dr. Tom Seeley. We are also honored to welcome Joseph S. Wilson and Olivia Messinger Carril, authors of *The Bees in Your Backyard*. We will learn about the massive pollinator art project, "Cross Pollination," from curator Valerie Roybal. Master gardener Wes Brittenham will talk about plants for bees, and will also be joined by Susan Kent Reed for a reading of *Beatrice the Hip Hop Bee*. New Mexico State University senior research specialist Robert Heyduck will speak about the medicinal benefits of oregano for bees.

In addition, we will hear about the latest beekeeping news from around New Mexico. There will be giveaways, honey samples, vendors, and time to connect with your fellow NM beekeepers. We also invite you to stay for the New Mexico Beekeepers Association Annual Members Meeting on Saturday, February 3, from 3:45–5:00 pm.

The price of admission is a $30 family membership in the NM Beekeepers Association, or a suggested donation.

South Broadway Cultural Center
1025 Broadway Street SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102


Photo: Afiq Nashiron


Photo: Annie Spratt

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO

LOOK AT THE PRETTY FLOWERS

(for Science!)

Volunteers are needed for a New Mexico State University research project taking place during the summer of 2018.

The Integrated Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (iPiPE) is a nationwide program supporting food security and pest management. Here in New Mexico, we are focusing on both pests and beneficial insects in urban landscapes that impact urban agriculture such as backyard and community gardens.

Volunteers will observe and record beneficial insects on patches of flowers in their backyards for 10 minutes at a time, three times per month between May and August. Training and supplies will be provided!

Interested? Please contact Dr. Ashley Bennett at: abb@nmsu.edu

Membership Form

Join us! Members receive perks like free admission to events, website listings and newletters!

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

☐ **FULL YEAR** $30

☐ **HALF-YEAR** $15

NEWSLETTER

☐ **EMAIL** FREE

☐ **PRINT** $5 PER YEAR

CONTACT INFORMATION (PRIVATE)

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL

MAIL COMPLETED FORM AND PAYMENT TO:

NM Beekeepers Association
PO Box 7188, Albuquerque, NM 87194
OR **JOIN ONLINE AT NMBKA.ORG**

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO:

NM Beekeepers Association

Questions? Email: info@nmbeekeepers.org

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Bumble bee on purple prairie clover

How to prepare a site for a pollinator planting

Dr. A.B. Bennett

Site preparation is the most critical step when planting pollinator habitat using a native plant mix. While this article focuses on plantings at larger scales (1/3 acre and larger) that use seed, many of the site preparation techniques covered are also applicable to smaller scales that may choose to use plugs.

The shortgrass prairie community supports a wide diversity of flowers and grasses that can prove wonderful forage for honey bees as well as other native bees. Once established, a pollinator planting that uses native New Mexico flowers and grasses can offer valuable pollen and nectar resources to bees—and be aesthetically beautiful all year round. This article cannot cover all aspects of establishing a shortgrass prairie pollinator planting, but will focus on how to prepare a site for seeding.

Site preparation begins with an inventory of your site to determine what if any native species might exist. The site preparation steps described below are for degraded locations (perhaps resulting from development or overgrazing) dominated by non-native species. When establishing a pollinator planting on degraded land, reducing weed competition prior to seeding will be critical to successful establishment, and this step requires dedication as it usually starts one year before the desired planting date.

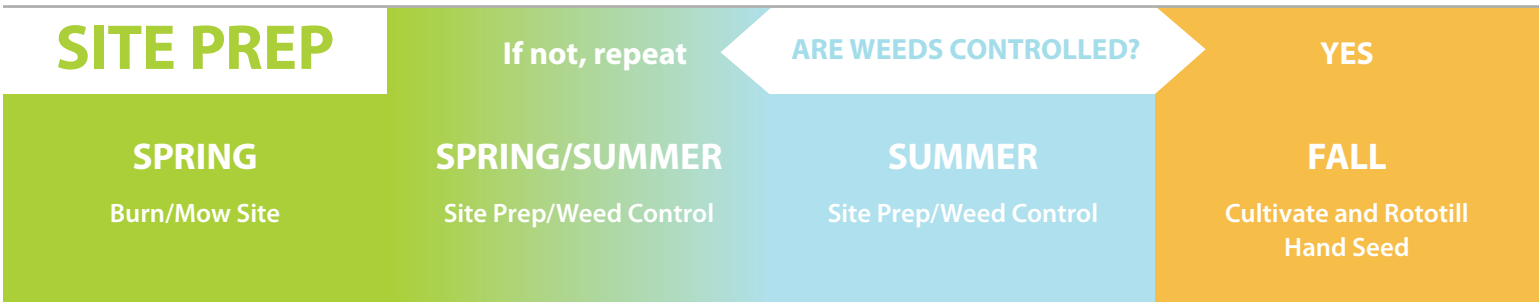
Site preparation for your pollinator habitat will vary depending on whether you are starting from an agricultural field, a corner of your backyard, or an old field/pasture. One of the most difficult-to-tackle sites is an old field or pasture where non-native weed populations are high and soils may be compacted. The site preparation steps outlined below are for an old field or degraded pasture.

WEED CONTROL

Start by removing accumulated litter and seeds on the soil surface in the early spring. Litter may be removed using a burn, or if burning is not possible, then perform a close mow and rake off any remaining litter. Allow weedy species to regrow to about 8" and control with a series of herbicide applications (often a mixture of 2% glyphosate and a broad-leave weed killer). Repeated applications may be needed at 3-4 week intervals if perennial weeds persist. An alternative to chemically controlling weedy species is intensive tillage every few weeks over the course of the growing season. The frequency of tillage will depend on how quickly weeds grow, but target weeds before they reach about 2" in height. Because controlling perennial weeds with tillage can be difficult, this process may take several years before weedy species are controlled.

SOIL PREPARATION

Once weeds are controlled at your site, the next step is preparing the soil. First, cultivate in the fall at a depth of about 6 inches. Cultivating at this depth will help reduce soil compaction, if present, and bring live roots to the surface, exposing them to winter frosts. If seeding in the spring, again cultivate at a depth of about 4 inches to break the soil into finer clods prior to planting. A final shallow disking or rototilling is needed to break the soil into fine



particles, but keep the depth shallow to prevent bringing weed seeds to the surface. An ideal seedbed will consist of soil particles ½" or smaller in the top 1" of the soil bed. After preparing the seedbed, allow the site to sit for a month in the spring to see if any weeds germinate. If weeds return in high densities, consider another herbicide application or continue with your tilling regime until weeds are controlled. If weeds have been successfully controlled, move forward with packing the soil. Using a water-filled roller will slightly pack the soil removing air pockets that can dry out and kill seedlings. Once a firm seedbed is established, move forward with seeding the site.

SEEDING

Pollinator plantings using native seed mixes can be planted using a native-seed drill or by hand broadcasting. Native-seed drills are the most effective at seeding sites because they place seeds at precise depths, provide even coverage across the site, and increase seed-to-soil contact. Many Natural Resources Conservation Service or county agricultural offices have native-seed drills you can borrow or rent. If using a native-seed drill is not possible, hand broadcasting is a good alternative. It is important to remember that different methods for preparing the seed bed are used for different planting methods: If using a native-seed drill for planting, roll the site before seeding. However, if hand broadcasting is used, roll the site after seeding, which helps ensure good seed-to-soil contact. Planting can occur in the fall or spring. One advantage of planting in the fall is that many native seeds require a cold period and/or scarification (weakening of the seed coat to encourage germination) before they will germinate. Planting in the fall naturally creates the conditions that encourage germination. However, as described above, a spring planting can offer additional opportunities to control spring-emerging weeds before seeding. Lack of rain and drought reduces the establishment success of native pollinator plantings in New Mexico. Providing supplemental water or planting to maximize natural rainfall will encourage germination and establishment of native plants.

MAINTENANCE

Once your site is planted, maintenance continues to be very important. After native seeds germinate, manage the site with irrigation if possible. Controlling annual and perennial weeds is also critical in new plantings as these weeds compete for key resources such as water, light, and nutrients. Mowing will be essential to suppressing weeds during the first few years of the planting, especially years 1 and 2. The goal with mowing is to prevent annual weeds and grasses from going to seed. In general, native prairie plants are slow growing, with most of their growth occurring in their below-ground root systems. As a result, mowing at a height above native plants (6–8") will help control annual weeds and grasses. Hand weeding for smaller sites or using spot sprays with a backpack sprayer for larger sites are methods used to control perennial weeds. Once plantings are established, if your site is located in an area that will allow a control burn, fire is an excellent method for controlling perennial weeds, invading woody species, and encouraging native flowers to bloom.

While it is impossible to recreate the diversity and complex interactions that once existed in the shortgrass prairies of New Mexico, implementing these fundamental restoration techniques when establishing a pollinator planting can dramatically increase establishment success. Native New Mexico shortgrass prairie species incorporated into a pollinator planting will create wonderful habitat for honey bees as well as provide conservation habitat for a host of additional New Mexico species. Please consider incorporating native pollinator habitat on your property. While it is hard work, once established, the beauty and ecological benefit will be worth the effort!

Dr. Bennett is the urban integrated pest management specialist at New Mexico State University, where her research focuses on beneficial insect conservation and the provision of arthropod mediated ecosystem services in urban landscapes.

FALL/WINTER	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
Roll SIte		Irrigate	Mow for Weeds

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

NMBKA Seeks New Members for 2018 Board of Directors

Interested in volunteering your time, dedication, and skills to help serve this wonderful and supportive beekeeping community we have here in New Mexico? Then we could use you as a member of the NMBKA Board of Directors in 2018!

The NMBKA board consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Members at Large. We will be voting to fill these positions at our annual meeting in February 2018. All NMBKA members are eligible to nominate, run, and vote.

If you are interested in serving on the board, or if you would like to nominate someone else, or just find out more about what is involved, please contact:

Carolyn Hammack, NMBKA Nominating Committee Chair
littletreesbees@gmail.com

Have an idea for an article or feature that you would like to see in the NM Beekeepers Association vv?

Please get in touch!
editor@nmbeekeepers.org

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