

# Bee friendly

A Newsletter of the New Mexico Beekeepers Association

[www.nmbeekeepers.org](http://www.nmbeekeepers.org)

Summer 2021

## Great Lineup of Speakers for Our Summer Webinar, August 7, 2021!

*Free with your membership. See back page flyer for talk titles and more info*



**Wes Brittenham** as a lifelong gardener has designed and cared for a wide variety of landscapes and gardens. As the Farm and Landscape Manager at Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm, he oversees 25 acres of lush gardens, vegetables, herbs, native grass and wildflower meadows, and three acres of lavender. Wes has worked with beekeepers and bees for over a decade and keeps hives on the farm, both top bar and the AZ Slovenian hive. His passion for pollinators influences the gardens in his care.



**Jennifer Han** is a post-doctoral researcher at Washington State University in Pullman. A former landscape architect, she left that profession to pursue her scientific interests. She earned her PhD in plant biology studying genetics to improve plant breeding. She is currently researching the efficacy of *Metarhizium*, a fungus that kills arthropods, as a biocontrol agent against varroa mites. She hopes to develop fungal strains with minimal negative impacts to honey bees.



**Julia Mahood** is a Georgia Master Beekeeper who has been keeping bees since 2004. She created the citizen science website [MapMyDca.com](http://MapMyDca.com) to gather data on Drone Congregation Areas. Julia was awarded the Georgia Beekeeper of the year in 2018. A graphic artist, she designed the Georgia "Save the Honey Bee" license plate. She is passionate about education and teaches beekeeping in Georgia prisons and is active in her local and state bee organizations.



**Randy Oliver** has kept bees for most of his life, and views beekeeping through the eyes of a biologist, researcher, and nature lover. He makes his living as a commercial beekeeper, and maintains the website [ScientificBeekeeping.com](http://ScientificBeekeeping.com). Randy is a popular writer in the bee journals and an invited speaker worldwide, sharing his knowledge of bee biology, colony health issues, and practical beekeeping management.



**Tina Sebestyen** keeps bees in top bar, Langstroth, and long Langstroth hives. She is the founder of the Four Corners Beekeepers Association and past vice-president of the Colorado State Beekeepers Association. She is currently working to produce the Master Beekeeper Program for the state of Colorado. She writes for the *American Bee Journal* and *Bee Culture* magazines from her farm in SW Colorado, and speaks about bees everywhere she gets the chance.

### ***Pesticides***

A bill fails to pass--and a beekeeper's efforts to save an exposed colony

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Embrace your stings or try some of these remedies

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A step by step guide to come under the state umbrella

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### Summer 2021

*Our newsletter is a quarterly publication of the New Mexico Beekeepers Association (NMBKA).*

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## Message from the President

*By Steve Black, President, Board of Directors, NMBKA*



**I**t's rather hard to believe it's summer but here we are! I hope that NMBKA members have had a great start to their beekeeping season and are busily enjoying their bees.

For myself, I have definitely caught "the beekeeping bug" and have recently added two hives to my apiary (I now have two top bars and three Langstroth hives.) I have now told myself that five is my limit but then again that was what I said last year when I had three.

This season I am interested in learning about, and trying some queen rearing, hoping to raise my first few queens this summer. My experience with hives raising their own queens (such as after a supercedure event) is not so much about whether the bees can successfully raise a new queen, but wondering why they never successfully mate and return to the hive to begin laying eggs. I'm wondering if all the Drone Congregation Areas (DCAs) are closed due to COVID social distancing rules....heh heh! In all cases so far, I have had to purchase a mated queen, which thanks to Craig Noorlander of Papa Bear's Honey is quite easy to do.

While I have done a few cutouts last year, this spring was my first opportunity to pick up a swarm. At the end of a long day in April, I came home from Albuquerque "dog tired" and shortly received a call from a beekeeper here in Santa Fe who had a hive that had swarmed multiple times. She hived the first two and then started calling names on our Santa Fe swarm list, as she had run out of wooden ware to hive the next two.

I suddenly developed a burst of energy and jumped in my car with some gear and raced to the bee yard where there were two tiny "after swarms". As many would probably agree, it was quite magical how easily they dropped into their new homes.

I was reminded by our own Amy Owen that the queens in these after swarms were likely virgins and to watch patiently for them to get mated and return to their hive. I hope to get more calls in the future as catching swarms can be so much quicker and easier than cutouts. Enough about me!!

Your board has been busy integrating our three newest members--Amy Owen, Tom Soltero, and Melanie Kirby--who each have already brought new ideas and energy to the organization.

We have started the planning process for the summer conference, which is scheduled to be virtual again. While our winter conference was focused on scientific and intermediate beekeeping information, we plan to include beginning beekeeping subjects as well. We have great speakers lined up and will send out flyers as soon as they are completed. Attendance will be free to all NMBKA members who have paid their 2021 dues. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the conference itself, we plan to hold another silent auction fundraiser. Donations of beekeeper related items are gladly accepted. If you have some extra equipment that you are no longer using that you would be willing to donate, please contact me at [president@nmbeekeepers.org](mailto:president@nmbeekeepers.org)

## Beekeeping with My "Little Brother"

*By Steve Black, Big Brother*

For the past few years I have volunteered as a Big Brother to boys who self-identify as potentially benefitting from a male mentor in their lives. My current Little Brother, named Francisco (Frankie), just turned 15 and lives nearby in Santa Fe. As we have gotten to know each other and plan events together, he has expressed interest in learning more about the beehives in my yard.

We started in early spring when we painted a new hive that I was adding. Once it warmed up I put Frankie in a bee suit and we jumped right in. He showed no fear and in fact he liked it so much we planned a second inspection a few weeks later and shot some video for him to include in an after-school project.

I am not sure if his interest will continue, but sharing my love of bees and watching his eyes light up as we examined frames and bars was so much fun.... We even found the queen!

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is always looking for new mentors for both girls and boys. If anyone wants to learn more about the program, please contact me directly or check out the BBBS website at <https://www.bbbs.org>



## Beekeeping with a "Hives for Heroes" Veteran

*By Steve Black, Veteran mentor*



Hives for Heroes is a national military veteran non-profit organization focusing on honey bee conservation, suicide prevention, and a healthy transition from service. Through the national network of beekeepers and veterans they provide connection, purpose, and healthy relationships fostering a lifelong hobby in beekeeping.

NewBEE veterans and Mentors enjoy the therapeutic process of beekeeping and build healthy relationships in communities across America. Beekeeping is unique, allowing a beekeeper to suit up, overcome fear, accomplish a goal through process-oriented techniques, and walk away with a sense of accomplishment. This practice can easily translate to their personal and professional lives when dealing with PTSD and other traumas from service.

Beekeepers with 3+ years of successful beekeeping experience can submit a mentor application to be connected with a veteran interested in beekeeping in your local area here in New Mexico! <https://www.hivesforheroes.com/mentor-application>

Check out [@hivesforheroes](https://twitter.com/hivesforheroes) on social media and use the hashtags [#saveBEES](#) [#saveVETS](#) [#BEE](#)



# The Unsexy Topic of Pesticides and Bees

*Ongoing resistance and challenges in protecting pollinators in New Mexico*

*By Anita Amstutz, Think Like a Bee, NMBKA board member*

Recently Burque Bee City, (<https://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/open-space/bee-city-usa>) in collaboration with Xerces Society for Invertebrates (<https://xerces.org/blog/earth-week/bee-city-usa>), organized a meeting with the department heads of the City of Albuquerque. Per our Burque Bee City status, we convened the meeting to discuss pesticides and each department's **Integrated Pest Management system (IPM)**. We learned that all departments were working to increase pollinator habitat. Parks and Recreation in particular was greatly reducing their glyphosate and pesticide usage, leaving clover in neighborhood green spaces rather than trying to eliminate all "weeds". P&R is also converting turf to pollinator habitat and beginning "Weed Warriors", a volunteer program. Solid Waste Department is extending their Wildflower pollinator corridors around the city, and currently manages 39 wildflower areas. Environmental Health offers "**no-spray**" zones which beekeepers and gardeners can request by calling #311. They also work closely with biologists for the safest mosquito remediation.

My colleagues at Xerces/Bee City—the pesticide experts for this meeting—and I were pleasantly delighted that all departments were well aware of the mandate of Burque Bee City, and working to meet goals and mitigate risk to pollinators from pesticides. Some departments more than others. A few departments work closely with biologists and science to manage vast areas of open space. We educated about ground nesting wild bees, of which New Mexico has over 1,000 unique species. This is one of the reasons that no spray zones even in our dirt areas, is so important.

Director of Parks and David Simon stated very clearly that one of the biggest concerns and culprits are not necessarily their departments, but backyard sprayers. Thus, the importance of public education.

All this remediation by the City of Albuquerque is good news in a year where our state legislation **SB103**—*strengthening the state-wide pesticide bill by restricting certain neonicotinoids*—failed. Neonics are one of the most lethal classes of pesticides for all insects. For bees, a keystone species in our food system, ongoing exposure in agricultural and backyards is devastating. Neonics con-

tribute to outright "bee kills" as well as reduction of queen fertility and the vitality of a hive exposed over time. This is devastating for the following reasons.

Bees and other pollinators contribute \$18-27 billion to the U.S. food economy every year and are responsible for an estimated one out of every three bites of food.

New Mexico is home to more than 1,000 ground nesting species of native bees

Bees and other pollinators are critical for crops including alfalfa, potatoes, tomatoes and tomatillos. They are also necessary for the survival of many native plants

Six of New Mexico's 19 species of bumble bees are threatened with extinction.

Honeybees are also suffering high losses. During the winter of 2019/2020, [New Mexico beekeepers reported 47% colony loss](#).

We will work together again in 2022 with Sen. Mimi Stewart and Defenders of Wildlife to implement and strengthen the state commitment to pesticides by reducing and banning neonicotinoids. Next year, it will be imperative to reach out to farmers and the agricultural sector, as well as local pesticide sprayers ahead of time. In extended testimony, based on mis-information and fear, it was these sectors that swayed supportive senators to vote NO on SB 103. In February 2021, SB103 was killed in the Senate Conservation Committee.

Many thanks to the NM Beekeepers Association and community for your strong support of SB103 and we look forward to collaborating again next year!

Meanwhile, here is an excellent article from the newly minted Mid Rio Grande Times, (<https://midriograndetimes.org/2021/6-1-pesticides/#comment-18>). It puts a spotlight on pesticides and alternatives to using neonicotinoids, which are on virtually every big box store garden shelf.

*Anita Amstutz has a popular blog post and non-profit called [Think Like A Bee](#). Thanks to Anita, Albuquerque has been designated a Bee City USA, the first in the Southwest.*

## Exposed to Pesticides--How to Help Save Your Colony

By Amy Owen, owner of [Desert Hives LLC](#) and NMBKA vice-president

**O**n May 19th someone who hosts some of my hives said they saw a large number of dead bees in front of a hive entrance. I went the following day and saw many dead bees with their proboscis out. A few days later, I saw more dead bees in front of a couple other hives in a nearby apiary.

I had a hunch that it was about this same time last year that I had several hives show signs of pesticide exposure: proboscis out and twitching and dying bees outside the entrance. Looking at my notes from the previous year:

*May 12th, 2020*

*Hive 8:*

*The queen fell off of the frame and onto the ground with other bees.*

*Something is wrong, possible contact with pesticides.*

*I did a split as this hive was planning on swarming before this possible contact with pesticides.*

*I placed weeds in all hive entrances with dead bees nearby to encourage them to reorient and forage somewhere else.*

It was only a week earlier the previous year that this exposure was seen in several hives. It makes sense that this may be an agricultural spraying of pesticides, or perhaps someone in the neighborhood who is very timely with application.

I decided to wait and see how the bees did this year, knowing that they were able to pull through the exposure the year prior. I considered moving them, but moving 11 hives is no small task, and thankfully I had a few ideas of how to handle the loss of bees due to this exposure. If a colony perished, or had bees falling off of frames like they did in May of 2020, my plan was to start a GoFundMe to raise the funds (and awareness) for sending

a large sample to a lab in California to run a full panel and determine what pesticide the bees are continuing to be exposed to.

Some of the things I have learned from this experience is that when foraging bees are exposed to pesticides, you lose a large number or nearly all of the foraging force. Bees go through more nectar/honey than we realize, and a heavy exposure can cause the bees to go without food in a short amount of time. When I was inspecting Hive 8 last year, I believe the bees were falling off of the frames because they were starving. Giving all the hives sugar water helped greatly and they were soon thriving again.

I have also realized that a very deadly pesticide may be better than one that is only slightly harmful, as foragers die while out foraging or have trouble reentering the hive. This prevents the pesticide from being spread throughout the colony. This is what I have seen the last two years in my hives. I can't say for certain that the pesticides didn't enter the hive, or at least a considerable amount, but judging by

my inspections the bees in the hive (this year) appeared to be healthy and thriving. As stated above, feeding can be a great help.

Also, the practice of placing weeds, or some other material, in the entrance does seem to encourage them to forage in new areas. After doing this recently, I saw no new dead bees in front of the entrances.

This year the bees pulled through quickly, and I believe that is partly due to me taking action promptly with feeding and encouraging the bees to reorient and find new forage.

If a hive was on its way to collapsing, I was prepared to move it out of the apiary



and/or close it up--as a colony on the verge of collapse due to exposure likely has pesticides inside the hive. When a colony perishes or is greatly weakened, their resources are often robbed out by nearby colonies. This would then expose other colonies to the pesticide.

I am grateful for how things turned out; however, I do hope this is not something I have to contend with each May. I wish I knew where the pesticide was being applied, and by whom, so that I could let them know the consequences of this practice and ask them to please be a better neighbor.

For now, I will continue advocating for pollinator health. I have also decided to give and sell honey to only people committed to not using pesticides. I hope this sends a message and raises awareness. I will also be keeping a close eye on my bees in this area each May.



*Unofficial sign outside Vitamin Cottage*

## Check Out BeeCheck

If you are concerned that your bees could fall victim to pesticides, there's a website that might be able to help.

FieldWatch is a site where you can register your apiary in the BeeCheck program and receive communications about potential issues.

From the website:

BeeCheck™ is operated by FieldWatch, Inc, a non-profit company created by Purdue in collaboration with interested agricultural stakeholder groups. For more information, visit [www.fieldwatch.com](http://www.fieldwatch.com).

BeeCheck is a voluntary communication tool that enables beekeepers and pesticide applicators to work together to protect apiaries through use of the BeeCheck mapping program.

This mapping tool is meant to help pesticide applicators and beekeepers communicate more effectively to promote awareness and stewardship activities to help prevent and manage drift effects.

This site features a [powerful map interface](#) that clearly shows applicators the locations of registered sites so they can use the information in their ongoing stewardship activities before they spray.

To register, go to <http://fieldwatch.com/fieldwatch-state-registries/>

## The Bee Informed Partnership's Sentinel Apiary Program

*By Steve Black, NMBKA president*

As many of you already know, the Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) is a national collaboration of leading research labs and universities in agricultural science to better understand honey bee declines in the United States. As I became increasingly familiar with the mission of the Bee Informed Partnership (as well as the resources they provide to the beekeeping community), I discovered their Sentinel Apiary program.

The Sentinel Apiary Program is a citizen science program designed to become an early warning system to alert beekeepers of potential problems due to increases in Varroa/Nosema. I was surprised to find out that while there are many beekeepers participating on the east coast of our

country, there are few, if any, participants out west (see map below).

After looking into the requirements and potential benefits of the program, I signed up to participate this season. Participation involves sending samples of bees as well as data from four hives in my apiary each month for six months starting in May. The bees will be tested for various diseases such as Nosema and checked for Varroa as well.

I hope to see benefit from my participation, such as potential improved colony health. If all goes well I plan to encourage other New Mexico beekeepers to join, in order to more fully represent beekeeping in our state.

2020 Sentinel Apiary Locations





# 'Tis the Season to Get Stung. Are You Ready?

*Every beekeeper has a story or many stories about the bee stings they have endured. Amy Owen, Frank Gibbons, and Anita Amstutz weigh in to tell us some of theirs.*

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## From Pain to Healing by Amy Owen

My first bee stings were not fun. Just one sting would cause my entire hand and arm to swell, feel warm to the touch, and itch for days. The most bee stings I got to one area during my first few years of beekeeping, 7 stings on my right thigh, caused my leg to become so swollen that I couldn't put on my loose denim jeans. After two years of consistent stings (averaging about one sting every other week during the season), I began to worry that my tolerance for them wasn't building, and that I may even be developing an allergy.

I consulted with an allergist who agreed that some allergy testing would be useful; however, to do this testing a certain number of people also needed to sign up to be tested. This made the cost and efforts worthwhile for the clinic. In the meantime, I was given an EpiPen to keep on hand. Sometimes I'd also take some diphenhydramine (Benadryl) before a day of beekeeping.

A year or so passed and I had never received a call back from my allergist; I had also called a few times during my first few months of waiting. I kind of gave up on the testing, and I ensured that I kept an EpiPen on hand. Thankfully, my body did not seem to be reacting more to stings, it just stayed the same for about three years.

During my fourth year of beekeeping, and now, I've noticed that the local reaction is finally not as severe. Of course reactions can change from sting to sting depending on how long the stinger stays in, and whether or not you are able to avoid squeezing that pulsating venom sac; but overall I could tell that the local itching and swelling were beginning to decrease. This was very exciting after several years of waiting for some change.

Then, something even more appealing started to happen; but first, some context: I was diagnosed with lupus about a year or two before I began beekeeping. It was also just before I became pregnant with our son Teddy (now 6). I was experiencing severe joint pain and weakness. When

I couldn't turn the key to the ignition in our car, I knew I needed to make some appointments. Things were minor for a few years, and I did not need to take any medications. It was monitored by my rheumatologist through blood work. Then, I became pregnant, and as some of us know, pregnancy drastically changes a person's immune system. Your body's immune system must adjust so that your body does not attack the growing fetus. This alteration also caused changes in my body's terrible way of attacking healthy tissue. My joint pain and fatigue worsened. I also started experiencing pericarditis, a condition in which the protective sac (pericardium) around the heart becomes swollen and irritated. This can cause the pericardium to rub against the heart, causing excruciating pain. I can remember a ride to the emergency room because I couldn't tolerate the pain anymore. I was in so much pain that I couldn't even talk.

Flashforward to beekeeping: having lupus was hard, but I started noticing a pattern. My joint pain and swelling, fatigue, and pericarditis were far worse in the months I wasn't beekeeping. In fact, a month or so into the season, and 10 or so bee stings in, I noticed that my pericarditis resolved almost completely.

I told my rheumatologist about my observations, and he said he wasn't sure how it worked, but stated that I should keep doing what I was doing. He said he wasn't surprised that it helped. We also had a short discussion on immunology and how bee stings influence or elicit a response from our immune system.

I'm sometimes hesitant to share how much bee stings have helped me, as I'm not a doctor and I haven't done much research on this subject. What I know of is from my own experience. I never imagined that stings could go from being a big nuisance to an incredible blessing.

I am always grateful when beekeeping season begins again. Many of the symptoms I experience from lupus resolve, and the warmth from the sun and the buzzing of the bees soothes my soul. When the days get shorter I start to



dread the cold months ahead; however, I'm learning to appreciate the rhythms and acknowledge that things are always in motion and changing. The cold months don't last long, and the warm months will come again with a renewed appreciation.

I have a deep gratitude for the bees and this medicine, and for my own perseverance. It took some time before the benefits were realized. Like beekeeping, many things in life take some time, and some failures before the rich benefits and rhythms of the art, or of life, fall into place and become appreciated.

(I still carry around an EpiPen, take medication for my lupus, and will take Benadryl if I've had about five or more stings in one day)

### Venom as Medicine by Anita Amstutz

After over a decade of beekeeping and apprenticing with the girls, I receive less and less stings each season. The sting venom is usually localized at the site of the stinger and I may or may not retain some redness or swelling. The good news is, I've never been allergic owing to a good dose of bee stings running around barefoot in the clover yards of my youth! The other good news at this time of my life, is that mellitin—the active ingredient in the venom used therapeutically in apitherapy—has increased my immune system health and every summer my thyroid gets a good jumpstart. This is all wonderful since my thyroid runs low and my immunohealth is supported for the coming months of Fall/Winter! When I do get stung, my go to is SsssstingStop, a homeopathic topical gel I apply immediately to the site if handy. But if you can't find this—good ole' baking soda in your kitchen comes in handy. Make a good stiff paste and apply. It will suck out the venom and reduce swelling!



### A Prophylaxis for Stings by Frank Gibbons



I recently went to my new primary care physician for an initial visit. He asked me if I had any allergies and I said penicillin and then related an experience I had last summer when bitten (stung) by an anthill of fire ants. I immediately left the area and after a few minutes it felt like there were ants crawling all over me. I

also started to feel dizzy. I thought I was going to faint and managed to grab and swallow a Benadryl tablet as I lay down on the floor. Fortunately, I started feeling better right away and didn't lose consciousness.

I think that over the years, I have become more allergic to the venom in bee stings which is very similar to that found in other stinging insects. The swelling seems to be worse now and the itching lasts longer. I understand that many beekeepers seem to develop immunity or have very mild reactions when stung by their honey bees. My doctor didn't think that my bee venom allergy was bad enough to warrant a prescription for an EpiPen since I didn't have trouble breathing and didn't go into anaphylaxis.

He recommended that I take a non-sedating antihistamine with the active ingredient cetirizine hydrochloride a few hours before working the bees. It is an over-the-counter medication sold under the brand name Zyrtec. It does not make you feel drowsy. I bought a generic one distributed by SDA laboratories for under \$10. The bottle contains 100 10-mg tablets. The recommended dose is not more than one pill every 24 hours. My doctor said that I may still experience some swelling and itching if stung, but much less than before because my system is already "revved up" to counteract the venom.

# Ornamental Alliums -- the Sparkle Effect

By Allison Moore, Landscape Architect and NMBKA board member



Summer is fast approaching and this year there seems to be a general feeling of hopeful anticipation that this summer will be different and therefore better than 2020. I personally feel it and the one plant in my garden that captures that sense of buoyant joy and lightness are the ornamental Alliums. They appear as purple spheres that sway and bounce above most of the perennials that are just waking up from their winter nap, looking like Mother Nature's version of blowing bubbles in the garden.

These tall purple flowers are part of the genus *Allium* which includes the more familiar onions, garlic, scallions, shallots, leeks and chives. *Allium* is actually a generic term and is Latin for garlic. *Allium sativum* is the genus species and translates to "cultivated garlic" and is the term for the culinary garlic that most of us are familiar with in our kitchens. All of these

plants including the more ornamental ones growing in my garden have the classic onion smell when the stems are crushed and share many physical characteristics. These include a bluish green stalk topped with distinctive flower heads in a globe or egg shape which is actually a cluster of multiple individual florets

that come in a wide range of colors from white, pink, purple and blue. Most Alliums grow from bulbs such as garlic and onions and some grow from bulb like rhizomes as in the case of culinary and garlic chives.

Ornamental alliums are the more colorful members of the family and while not edible; are a perfect garden plant for

marking the transition from spring to summer. They often bloom after most of the typical spring bulbs like daffodils are finished but before the first flush of early summer wildflowers, perennials, and shrubs. This timing makes them



Garlic Chives

a valuable food source for pollinators, especially native bees, honey bees and bumble bees. Even after their colors fade, the seed heads of the Alliums create striking textural contrasts with surrounding foliage, adding what I like to call a sparkle effect to the landscape.

They prefer full sun (but will tolerate some shade), well drained soils and thrive in zones 3-8. They are planted in the fall as bulbs after the first frost has passed and the new growth starts to appear in late spring. Like other spring bulbs after flowering they need to keep their foliage intact until it yellows and pulls out easily when tugged.

Ornamental alliums can be easily mixed in with native and drought tolerant perennials, shrubs, and ornamental grasses such as Flowering Catmint, shrub roses, Mullein, and Mexican feather grass and provide textural contrast with flowers and foliage. They also perform well in rock gardens with cacti, succulents and groundcovers providing a taller sculptural accent to the lower growing plants and boulders. If garden space is limited; ornamental alliums will also flourish in containers along with both perennial and annual flowers. Deer, rabbits, squirrels and voles are typically repelled by their onion like taste and will tend to leave them alone in the garden. Personally I like to plant both ornamental alliums as well as chives around the base of fruit trees to attract pollinators to help to fertilize the trees and as to prevent vole or gopher damage to the roots.



Purple Ornamental Allium

ALLIUMS—CONT. NEXT PAGE

ALLIUMS—CONT. FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Three species of ornamental bulb type Alliums to try in the garden that display slightly different colors and dimensions:

*Allium sphaerocephalon* or Drumstick Allium has a drumstick or egg shaped flower head in two colors magenta on top and green on the bottom perched on a slender stalk approximately 2 to 3 feet tall.

*Allium aflatunense* 'Purple Sensation' has a flower head 3 to 4 inches in diameter and stalks are 24 to 20 inches tall.

*Allium giganteum* 'Globemaster' is one of largest with flower heads at 5 to 10 inches in diameter and stalks are 3 to 4 feet tall.

Although not considered ornamental Alliums but worth including in any pollinator garden for both spring and late summer color:

*Allium schoeonoprasum* or Common Chives with pink flowers atop 12 inch stems in spring and early summer

*Allium tuberosum* or Garlic Chives bloom with white flowers in late summer. Please be aware that Garlic chives can be invasive and sometimes that's a good thing!

#### Sources:

Longfield Gardens website

Gardenia website

Indigo Apiary website

*Beth Chatto's Gravel Garden* by Beth Chatto, Viking Studio 2000

## A Bee Package Disaster (and a Heartfelt Thanks)

For many years our friend and former NMBKA President Craig Noorlander has performed a vital service to New Mexico beekeepers travelling to California in spring to transport hundreds of honeybee packages back to New Mexico. He has the experience and specialized vehicles and equipment to ensure the bees arrive safely and in good health.

This year, his truck broke down on the way to California, and because 750 packages of bees were waiting for him, he had to pay the breeder to transport them instead. On package pickup day, it was determined that almost 300 of the 750 packages contained only dead bees. Craig has returned payments he received to those that did not get their bees. He took a tremendous financial hit as much of the payment to the breeder came from his own personal funds.

A Go Fund Me site was set up help Craig with this devastating financial loss. Thanks to the generosity of so many New Mexico beekeepers, that loss has been somewhat mitigated. The site is still accepting donations and can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/manage/help-craig-noorlander-recoup-his-losses>

Craig would like to thank the New Mexico beekeeping community stating, "I have been humbled and moved to tears on more than one occasion by the willingness to sacrifice your hard-earned money on my behalf. The only thing I can say is thank you from the bottom of my heart, although I feel that words simply can't express the feelings I have of gratitude and appreciation for the outpouring of love and support everyone has given us. My wife and I greatly appreciate all the financial help through the GoFundMe and other contributions given to us by the beekeeping community, from new and old friends. The financial help will allow us to bounce back sooner than expected. I am not sure what the future holds for us, but I will always be a part of this great community and this has not slowed me down at all from helping other people wanting to learn more about bees. I am only a phone call away. Again thank you."



# Beekeeping Organizations in New Mexico

By Bob Reneau, NMBKA treasurer and membership manager

New Mexico Beekeepers Association (NMBKA) recognizes the importance of the grassroots organizations throughout the state of New Mexico and continues to adapt our programs to meet the needs of all beekeepers at the local level.

In 2020 the board adopted the *Affiliate Program* to identify, help organize, and support new grassroots organizations across the state by providing organizational guidance, promotion, speakers, and grants. The sister, *Certified Colony Program*, provides a path for an *Affiliate* to become a NMBKA sub-organization.

Local beekeeper organizations present an opportunity for beekeepers to meet and discuss techniques and methods, to promote a standard of excellence in beekeeping, to provide new educational awareness, and to act as a source for mentors for newcomers. They may range from a few members in smaller communities to larger groups in the metropolitan areas. Many new organizations start by attracting local beekeepers with a group page in social media or a web page, or both, and may not meet in person. As the interest increases, they will begin to meet and become a more formal group.

Our biggest challenge is to identify beekeeper organizations throughout the state. After we have identified and determined that their mission and goals are similar, we encourage them to affiliate with NMBKA.

## *Affiliate Program*

Any beekeeper organization in the state of New Mexico may become affiliated with NMBKA. An *Affiliate*, a nucleus colony of beekeepers, is identified as a local beekeeper organization that shares similar mission and goals with NMBKA.

Becoming an *Affiliate* is as simple as requesting to be included with an email to: [nmbka.state.organizations@nmbeekeepers.org](mailto:nmbka.state.organizations@nmbeekeepers.org) or by contacting one of the NMBKA board members. When we receive a request, a representative from the NMBKA Board will be assigned and will determine if your mission and goals are similar to NMBKA. Upon review and approval, the organization will be included on our website ([link](#)) and also in the Report A Swarm ([link](#)) and Bee Removal ([link](#)) sections of the website, if requested. In addition to promoting the *Affiliate* on

the NMBKA website, it will have access to educational material, plus the board member assigned will act as a liaison with NMBKA and provide organizational assistance, speakers, and grants to help the *Affiliate* to become a sustainable organization.

*Affiliate* members are encouraged to become a dues-paying member of NMBKA for support at the state level in legislative matters affecting the honey bee, as well as entry into the mid-annual Summer and annual Winter Conferences. Each of these annual functions provide exposure to industry leading speakers, research, and education.

## *Certified Colony*

Also adopted in 2020, any *Affiliate*, regardless of size, may become a *Certified Colony*, a super colony of beekeepers. This will allow an *Affiliate* to become a sub-organization, have a closer relationship with NMBKA and the opportunity to help govern the state organization with a board position. A *Certified Colony* conducts its own affairs and handles its own finances. To be approved, the organization must complete an application, be sustainable, have frequently scheduled meetings, provide local outreach and education, adopt governing documents similar to NMBKA, have similar missions and goals, comply with IRS 501(c)(3) rules and regulations and comply with the NMBKA Ethics Policy. The application will be reviewed and approved by the NMBKA Board.

The *NMBKA Certified Colony Program* will allow a local affiliate to accept tax free donations under IRS 501(c)(3) rules, provide NMBKA liability insurance for planned meetings and have an appointed member on the NMBKA Board. A qualified and approved organization will be included in the NMBKA annual IRS Group Exemption Letter.

All members of an *NMBKA Certified Colony* will also be a paid member of NMBKA through an annual dues sharing agreement.

## *Certified Swarm Colony Program*

As each local organization grows, the officers and members may decide that they no longer need the supervision

and support of NMBKA and choose to become a 501(c)(3) organization themselves. They may then choose to join the *Certified Swarmed Colony Program*. The organization must be sustainable, adopt governing documents similar to NMBKA, have similar missions and goals, and comply with the NMBKA Ethics Policy. All members of a *Certified Swarmed Colony* will also be a paid member of NMBKA through an annual dues sharing agreement.

### ***Certified Beekeepers Program***

To support the *Affiliate* and *Certified Colony* programs and all beekeepers in the state, the Education Committee is

planning to extend our *Certified Beekeepers Program* ([link](#)) to select sites throughout the state. The initial locations, as there is demand, are Santa Fe, Las Cruces and Roswell. The highly sought after two-year certification program will offer local instructors, local classes and mentors. Classes in Albuquerque will be shared electronically and proctored by local instructors. Each location will also have a dedicated apiary for hands-on experience.

These programs will benefit all beekeepers and develop a united effort throughout New Mexico, a large and diverse state, as well as outreach to the general public.

## **Become a Member of NMBKA**

**J**oin the NMBKA Hive for \$30! Help support NMBKA by becoming a paid member. NMBKA is an all-volunteer not-for-profit organization, so all of your contributions are going toward supporting our programs including the Certified Beekeeper program and this newsletter. Annual dues are only \$30 for the family.

Membership includes admission to the Winter Conference, Summer Technical Conference and any other program. Plus it's the right thing to do to support beekeeping in New Mexico.

You can join or renew on our website [www.nmbeekeepers.org](http://www.nmbeekeepers.org). Or if you prefer to join or renew by mail, please request a membership form on the website, complete, and mail along with \$30 to:

NMBKA  
PO Box 7188  
Albuquerque, NM 87194

Thank you! We can't do it without you!

## **Instagram!!**

NMBKA recently set up an Instagram account. This is a fun way to connect beekeepers and share news, information, and resources. If you click on the 'Link Tree' in Instagram you will see an easy way to access websites belonging to various beekeeping groups across the state, and a direct link to information on NMBKA's beekeeping certification program.

NMBKA wishes to share beekeeping photos from across the state, or even relevant beekeeping information. If you have photos and information you would like to share, please send a photo, caption, and details of when and where the photo was taken to [nmbka\\_social\\_media@nmbeekeepers.org](mailto:nmbka_social_media@nmbeekeepers.org). We will do our best to feature your post on the NMBKA Instagram page.

**We hope you all enjoy!**

# High Drama in the Bee Democracy

By Anita Amstutz, [Think Like a Bee](#), NMBKA board member

It's been a week, bee friends. In May, I left for two weeks to visit my parents in Ohio. I had split two hives before I left. One hive had made a few modest queen cells. The other gorged their hive with the long peanut shapes that housed new virgin queens in the making. I was satisfied that they were well on their way. I would go away and the worker girls would get their new queens reared. The virgin queen would go off to be mated with the drone congregation. I was certain I would find the new royal court in good working order when I returned—laying abundantly for the survival of the hive.

Never. Think. You. Know. More. Than. The Bees.

I came back to hive #1 in my backyard—not only devoid of a queen, but full of the dreaded “[Laying workers](#)”. It so happens that when the virgin queen goes out on her maiden flight and never returns—be it due to rain, hail, being eaten by a bird or all manner of disasters—the worker girls go into high gear survival mode, begin to mature their own ovaries and lay unfertilized eggs. The hive will die eventually without a fertilized queen. It's the fertilized diploid eggs that have the worker bees in them.

The honeybee's evolutionary strategy for survival gives rise to multiple pseudo queens in the absence of a mated queen. Their virgin queen has not returned and they have no fertilized eggs to begin growing a real queen. The workers' ovaries mature, unsuppressed by the queen's pheromones, causing them to lay their unfertilized eggs everywhere. Alas, their abdomens are too short and they can't “place” the egg in the cell. The scattershot eggs in the cells decay and die.

The nightmare begins. All the other field worker bees are lulled into believing that someone is keeping house and preparing for the future on the home front. Though life is uneasy and chaotic in the hive without a single queen, the workers “go with it” and bank on this denial. Depositing the multiple-laying workers would be one step closer

to the very unpleasant reality that they really are queenless and will die. The hive has no other choice. Some unfertilized haploid eggs—otherwise known as *drones* in the bee world—will make it and the hive will fill up with boys.

To complicate matters, the laying workers with their developing ovaries exhibit raging PMS. They become territorial wenches. They will kill any fertilized queen that the beekeeper tries to introduce. The best a beekeeper can hope for is to introduce open brood from queen-right hives—with a very strong pheromone scent from another queen.

I was humbled. Even humiliated. How could I have been so complacent? Leaving my hives for two weeks to their own demise? Another year in a beekeeper's life.



After determining the grim truth of my backyard Hive #1, I went down to check Hives #2 and #3 in the South Valley. When I opened up Hive #2, a strong queen-right hive, ants exploded from the bars like sewer rats exposed to the light. I was horrified. They had laid mounds of white eggs between the bars. As I began to pull the bars up to see the extent of the insurrection, the eggs and the hapless ants fell through the air and landed on the bottom of the hive. True to their

collaborative nature, as I cleaned up this natural disaster for the bees, I noticed the bees beginning, bit by bit, to cart away the ant eggs and dispose of them out the front door.

Hive #3 next door was clearly in trouble. They were either queenless with laying workers OR had a very poorly mated queen. The brood pattern was spotty with pop-up brood—sloppy in design, with many unsealed cells. The worker girls were despondent and dwindling. Were they sick? Parasitic mite disease? Nosema? Did they have laying workers? I toyed with the idea of letting them just die out. I was exhausted from hitting the ground running after my trip. I didn't need another problem in my life. And this was not going to be a one-off. Every beekeeper will tell you

LAYING WORKERS—CONT. NEXT PAGE



that re-queening a laying worker hive or even a hive with a poorly mated queen, is not for the faint of heart. It is dicey at best. And I had TWO hives that needed requeening.

Because the worker girls in Hives #1 and #3 were treacherously loyal to their substandard queen or laying workers, I would need to work with their very strong pheromone instincts. Introducing a foreign queen from outside the hive would be seen as an intruder, most certainly assassinated upon smell. Unless...I put the new queen into the hives with very strong pheromone-scented open brood, taken from one of my strong hives.

So I set about my work, saying a blessing and asking the girls to please PLEASE cooperate for a new queen! I didn't want to "waste" the gift of these fresh eggs from my other hard working girls in the blackberry beeyard.

In the midst of this high drama, a cheerful smiling woman named Rachel jumped the gate and came to watch me doing my swapping of open comb. Rachel was eager to talk with me as I shook the bees off all the disastrous comb from the wretched Hive #3. Poor timing. Sweat poured down inside my bee suit as I shook and pulled comb right and left amidst the smoke and a cloud of angry, bewildered bees. Rachel sweetly said, "I'm so glad to have finally met you. How long have you been a beekeeper? One of these days I will have a hive in my yard up the street! I'd love to learn!"

I could feel my annoyance rise. I yanked my hand back hard and yelped as a well-placed sting seared my third finger. I wanted to tell her that these days, beekeeping is no longer a picnic. Could I warn her off while there was still time? Tell her about endless days of 90+ degree temps inside a bee suit sauna, lifting up to 50 pounds of equipment? And what about the honey harvesting disasters? Those hot summer days with the honeycomb as soft as butter, melting off the bars and drowning my precious bees as I desperately try to scoop and winch out the oozing comb. Should I tell her about the hours and hours of crushing and processing honey? Or what about varroa mite and parasitic mite disease? And then there were all the diseases, and laying workers, unmated queens and Africanized workers that assail beekeeping today. Would she like to know about 44-50% losses annually? I felt like Scrooge.

But how could I take away her eager innocence? I remembered falling in love with the bees over a decade ago. How quickly I could forget.

I was heartened by an odd little event as I was closing up Hive # 3. I had packed up my equipment and taken everything to the car. After an hour of ripping out bar after bar of dismal comb and brood and replacing it with beautiful fresh brood from another beeyard, I sat by the door of my girls, enjoying their buzzing and a sense of accomplishment and unity. I suddenly noticed that, lo and behold, the workers had dragged out a body that had clearly been stung in her



abdomen—the guts of the brave bee who did the deed, trailed out behind the deceased. This pseudo queen's head had been severed. The workers stopped to examine her as they entered and left the hive. I had seen this once before. When a hive needs a new queen, they will kill the old one and leave her crushed head at the entrance—her

pheromone center severed so all know "the queen is dead."

The hive had just shown me they were ready to collaborate for their survival. This worker bee colony had had enough. They had been in bondage to a severely inept queen. By collaborating with them, I had broken the spell. The [honeybee democracy](#) had spoken. In one fell swoop the hive chose to remove her. The fresh brood I had inserted, and subsequently the queen I would install next week, would lead to a future after all.

Though the girls had draconian ways of replacing their queens, they had chosen together how to proceed to a sustainable future. I hoped the girls of my laying worker Hive #1, which I had yet to address, would allow me to requeen them for their best interests.

All in a day of the life of Bee Democracy.

Join Anita's blog [Think Like A Bee](#) for more stories of Anita's adventures in beekeeping.

"Bees are part of our tribe! We need them for food, beauty, poetry, and soul wisdom. We are dedicated to education, advocacy and protecting all things pollinators."

## Summertime--Time to Get Your Pollinator Protection License Plate!

*By Sue George, UNM Wild Friends director*

The first-ever New Mexico pollinator protection license plates are still available, and are a beautiful addition to your vehicle. Proceeds from the sale of the plates go to the NM Department of Transportation for increasing roadside plantings of pollinator-friendly plants across the state.



dent at the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy drew the winning design.

Plates can be purchased online at the link below, or by ordering them at any MVD, MVD Now, or MVD Express office.

<https://www.mvd.newmexico.gov/vehicles/license-plates/organizations-and-causes/>

The plate was the work of Wild Friends students in schools throughout New Mexico in 2018-19, who helped to draft a bill for the specialized plate and then lobbied for it at the NM State Legislature. Jazlyn Smith, a 5th grade stu-

Wild Friends is an award-winning civics and science education program at the UNM School of Law.

<https://wildfriends.unm.edu>

## "All About Bees" featured at the Annual Pollination Festival

Allison Moore and Steve Black, representing NMBKA at the annual Burque Bee City Pollination Festival on June 12, got lots of attention, thanks to live bees at the table. Both Allison and Steve are board members as well as Level 2 candidates in the CBeeks certification program. Allison's table display was a big hit, and Steve gave a lecture and slide show, "All About Bees" in the classroom. The public had lots of questions!



# Report a Swarm

**W**e have provided a list of our beekeepers that are available for collecting bee swarms in different areas of New Mexico. Give a beekeeper a call as soon as possible! This listing is also on the website [nmbeekeepers.org](http://nmbeekeepers.org). Click on Resources and select Report a Swarm. Any beekeeper group or individual beekeeper may ask to be included on the website list by contacting NMBKA at [info@nmbka.org](mailto:info@nmbka.org)

What is a Swarm? A swarm is formed when a queen bee leaves the original colony with a large group of worker bees, usually in the spring and early summer, but can occur through fall. Swarming is a natural form of reproduction for honey bees. The bees can stay in the cluster for a few minutes to a few days, so call a beekeeper quickly.

## Albuquerque Area:

### Albuquerque Beekeepers (ABQ Beeks)

Website: <https://abqbeeks.ning.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1894495293914135>

## Alamogordo & Ruidoso Area:

### Sacramento Mountains Beekeepers

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/483236118374096/>

Point of Contact: Rob Sheplar, (575) 687-2343, [rob@theriver.com](mailto:rob@theriver.com)

## Belen/Valencia County Area:

Raymond Espinosa (505) 861-1693, [antiguasdelnorte@att.net](mailto:antiguasdelnorte@att.net)

## Bosque Farms Area:

Ken Hays (505) 869-2369

## Carlsbad Area:

Efrain Nieto (575) 302-0737

## Clovis Area:

### High Plains Beekeepers

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1670238479881226/>

Point of Contact: Paul Hopkins (575) 799-9642. Email: [ephopkins@plateautel.net](mailto:ephopkins@plateautel.net)

## Cotton City/Hildago County Area:

### Southwest NM Beekeepers

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2299960260060163/>

Point of Contact: Kyle Josefy (575) 496-1037

## Farmington Area:

Jim Marquis (505) 861-2360

## Hobbs and Lovington Area:

Kirk Gilbert (575) 318-9387

## Las Cruces Area:

### Paseo Del Norte Beekeepers Association

Website: <https://pdnbeekeepers.org/reportaswarm/>

Points of Contact: Las Cruces: Tom Soltero (505) 934-2178

### Mesilla Valley Top Bar Beekeepers

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/946568402534332>

Point of Contact: Anita Feil  
Email [anitalfeil@gmail.com](mailto:anitalfeil@gmail.com)

El Paso: Josh Meier (830) 357-8207

Email: [josh@pdnbeekeepers.org](mailto:josh@pdnbeekeepers.org)

## Red Rock/Grants County

## Red Rock Honey Company

Point of Contact: Lynn Whatley (505) 269-8199

## Roswell/Artesia Area:

### Pecos Valley Beekeepers Association

Point of Contact: Hugo Hernandez (505) 410-1781, email: [hhera01@gmail.com](mailto:hhera01@gmail.com)

Kevin Thatcher (575) 973-7422

## Santa Fe Area:

### Sangre De Cristo Beekeepers

Website: <https://sdcbeeks.org/report-swarm/>

Point of Contact: Kate Whealan  
Email: [katewhealen@earthlink.net](mailto:katewhealen@earthlink.net)

## Santa Teresa and El Paso Area:

### Paseo Del Norte Beekeepers Association

Website: <https://pdnbeekeepers.org/reportaswarm/>

Point of Contact: Josh Meier (830) 357-8207

## Silver City/Grant County Area:

### Grant County Beekeepers

Website: <https://www.grantcountynmbeekeepers.org/bee-removal>





Join us for a virtual  
Beekeeper's event!



**NMBKA**  
New Mexico  
Beekeepers  
Association

# Summer Conference 2021

with lectures by:

**Randy Oliver**

- Concepts in Varroa Management
- Reading the Combs

**Tina Sebestyen**

- All About the Queen

**Dr. Jennifer Han**

- Is Varroa Control Possible Without Chemical Miticides?

**Julia Mahood**

- The Game of Drones

**Wes Brittenham**

- Delights of Earthly Gardens

All levels  
welcome!

Questions?  
[info@nmbeekeepers.org](mailto:info@nmbeekeepers.org)

**Saturday,  
August 7th  
9am-4pm**

**NMBKA Members  
attend for FREE**