

Journey School Food Community CSA
Week 11: March 3, 2007

This morning when I picked up our Essential Baking delivery from Café Luna, it was snowing. Now it is raining. And cold. Zoe was reading the other day and asked me what “stoic” meant. I told her it was the opposite of her Mommy.

We’ve dug the last of the over-wintered carrots for your share this week. They are a little beat up from our harshly wet and freezing winter but so sweet and nutritious. Sally Fallon writes in Nourishing Traditions: “A native of Afghanistan and a relative of celery, parsnips, caraway, cilantro, cumin and dill, the carrot is a most useful, versatile, nutritious and popular vegetable, revered not only as an accompaniment to other dishes but as a base ingredient for soups, stocks and stews. In hotels in the town of Vichy, France, carrots are eaten daily as part of a cure for over-loaded digestion; and many cultures have valued them as an aphrodisiac. Research has shown that three raw carrots, eaten daily, lower blood cholesterol; and that a single carrot per day cuts the risk of lung cancer among smokers in half. Carrots are rich sources of carotenoids, B vitamins, phosphorus, calcium and all important iodine.” Watch the space in the Northwest corner of the garden for the new batch of carrots and beets. Hopefully, they’ll be sprouting thick and green at our next CSA pick-up day.

Speaking of our next pick-up day, it is scheduled for March 30th – 31st. We’ll be traveling to NE Oregon for a week during my break from The Harbor School in mid-March. We’ll probably have fresh nettle for you as well as beets and baby mustards to get your Spring sap rising!

Carrots Vichy
from Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon

1 pound carrots
water
4 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons honey
sea salt

Peel carrots and slice into rounds. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Add butter and honey. Boil uncovered, skimming frequently, until liquid is reduced to almost nothing and carrots are well coated. You may want to add a tablespoon or two more of butter at the end. Season to taste.

Bee Vanishing Act Baffles Keepers

Honeybees are vanishing at an alarming rate from 24 US states, threatening the production of numerous crops.

The cause of the losses, which range from 30% to more than 70%, is a mystery, but experts are investigating several theories. American bee colonies have been hit by regional crises before, but keepers say this is the first national crisis.

Bees pollinate more than \$14bn (£7bn) worth of US seeds and crops each year, mostly fruits, vegetables and nuts. The mystery disappearances highlight the important link that honeybees play in the chain that brings fruit and vegetables to supermarkets and dinner tables. The crisis threatens numerous crops, from avocados to kiwis and California almonds - one of the most profitable in the US.

"I have never seen anything like it," California beekeeper David Bradshaw, 50, told the New York Times. "Box after box after box are just empty. There's nobody home."

Under pressure

With an industry increasingly under consolidation, some fear the disorder could prove the breaking point for even large beekeepers. The bee losses range from 30 to 60% on the West Coast, with some beekeepers on the East Coast and in Texas reporting losses of more than 70%. Beekeepers consider a loss of up to 20% in the offseason to be normal.

Researchers say the bees are presumably dying in the fields, perhaps becoming

exhausted or simply disoriented and eventually falling victim to the cold. "The real question is why they leave," Jerry Hayes, a bee expert for the Florida Department of Agriculture told the Orlando Sentinel newspaper. "Bees are highly social insects. They don't leave their babies and the queen."

The investigators are exploring a range of possibilities to explain the losses, which they are calling "colony collapse disorder". These include viruses, a fungus and poor bee nutrition.

They are also studying pesticides banned in some European countries to see if they are affecting the bees' innate ability to navigate their way back to their hives.

In some cases, bees are being raised to survive a shorter offseason, to be ready to pollinate once the almond bloom begins in February. This could have lowered their immunity to viruses. Mites have also damaged bee colonies, and the insecticides used to try to kill them are harming the ability of queen bees to spawn as many workers.

Urban sprawl

Once the domain of hobbyists, beekeeping has become increasingly commercial and consolidated in the US. During the last two decades, the number of beehives has dropped by a quarter, and is now estimated at 2.4 million. The number of beekeepers has fallen by half during the same period.

Pressure has been building on the bee industry. The costs to maintain hives, or colonies, are rising. In addition, urban growth means that the areas where the

insects can forage for nectar to stay healthy and strong during the pollination season are being squeezed.

"There are less beekeepers, less bees, yet more crops to pollinate," said Zac Browning, vice-president of the American Beekeeping Federation. "With so much added loss and expense due to disease, pests and higher equipment costs, profitability is actually falling."

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/science/nature/6400179.stm>

Journey School Honey Bee Hive

We inherited our hive and assorted equipment with the purchase of a 100 year old farmhouse at the base of Mt. Rainier in 1999. We've never medicated or replaced the colony and have been constantly impressed by the bees' hardy nature and friendliness. This time of year in the Pacific NW sees commercial beekeepers supplementing their colonies with sugar water and medicated preparations. Instead, we saved the honey frames from last Fall's harvest to replace frames the bees have emptied over the winter. At the end of March, we'll perform routine cleaning and switch the bottom two hive boxes in order to provide room for the queen to lay her eggs. We'll uncap any remaining honey frames and extract the honey for you dear friends! Jeff, Lisa, Zoe and Rae

Journey School Food Community

Jeff and Lisa Mathias

PO Box 406

Vashon WA 98070

206-498-0986 lisa@luckyfarm.us

THE CASTLE IS BACK!!

by Zoe Mathias

Well, not fully but there is a lone building with half a roof. The building has been dubbed the "New Watchtower" The New Watchtower is facing toward the farmstand and has a bell in it. The bell is really an old artillery shell, but it is the perfect bell for our six inch dolls who live in the castle. Amri Valencia and I are writing a book about the castle and some of our dolls; Allyson and Corin are Amri's dolls, Rae and Tiger are Rae's, Kira is CSA member Malaika Caldwell's character, Sarah is Siona Caldwell's character, Thunder is Gwynne Valencia's doll, Zoe and Drake are mine. Yes, Zoe, Drake, Rae, and Tiger are all named after the real people.

In the book, Corin is the newcomer and right from the start he and Drake seriously annoy each other. Corin falls in love with Alyson. When an army comes to Sunbalm, the Founders (that's what we call the dolls because in the book they founded Sunbalm Castle) think Corin is a spy. When Allyson, Kira, Rae, and Zoe are captured, Drake has to ask Corin (who is now in jail for murder) for help to get them back.

We figure we are in the middle of the story with 107 handwritten pages and are very excited to share it. Stay tuned!

Beekeeping takes serious study, offers great rewards

By Angela Eckhardt

The following appeared as Angela's March 11, 2005 "My Free Country" column in the Capital Press newspaper.

Bees should be thought of as one of the small farmer's best allies. Economics tells us this for the fact that many beekeepers make their bread and butter on renting out colonies, the valuable honey and wax being gravy. If you are thinking seriously about keeping bees, consider today the start of your year-long Bee School. If you study hard you'll be ready to assemble your equipment by next winter and start with bees in early spring of 2006.

The reason to start now is because this is the beginning of the apiary's year and the beginning of the cyclical life of the colony. Start planning your bees' nectar menu by noticing which crops are located near you and when the blooms occur. Begin developing relationships with neighbors and find out who would rent colonies. Try to find a beekeeper in your area that will let you tag along for training. Consider subscribing to a magazine like Bee Culture (www.bee-culture.com) or the American Bee Journal (www.dadant.com). You can find your state and local beekeeping associations by visiting Bee Culture's Who's Who in the North American Beekeeping directory. The Oregon State Beekeeping Association (www.orsba.org) has an extensive website, including a products and services directory, the very helpful "Ask the Beekeeper," and an active message board. Another valuable online resource is the World Bee Directory, www.beehoo.com.

Your studies in apiculture will easily occupy your attention for a year. By next fall you should be properly humbled as to all you still need to learn. You might decide beekeeping is not right for you after all, or you might be wildly impatient to get started. The important thing is that you know what you are getting into and are less likely to be put off by early failure. It may take you an entire year just to decide what approach you will take to the problems of disease and infestation. At issue are foul brood disease, nosema disease, tracheal mites and varroa mites, and there are at least four schools of thought when it comes to dealing with them.

Probably the most common approach is prophylactic treatment of colonies each spring and fall with antibiotics, mite strips for varroa and canola oil-soaked paper towels for tracheal mites. Some beekeepers do not want to use chemicals or medication, so there is the try- your-luck approach. It should be remembered, however, that honey cannot be called organic if the bees are collecting honey from nearby crops that have been treated with pesticides.

Integrated pest management (IPM), an approach explained well by John Jacob at www.oldsolenterprises.com/integrated.html, is a sensible alternative model based on the idea that hives are being over-medicated resulting in diseases and mites that are resistant to treatment. IPM calls for treating hives only when they are symptomatic, in combination with other prevention measures. IPM requires a higher degree of sophistication on the part of the beekeeper, but so do today's mites and diseases.

The fourth and most shocking school of thought is described on OSBA's website in an article by webmaster Thom Trusewicz called, "The Ways of Winter." Trusewicz recommends brushing the bees out of the hive on a cold day in early winter and starting over with new packages of bees each year. He lists the primary drawback to this approach as guilt. On the plus side, medications are likely not needed, mites and disease are unlikely to be a problem, the bees are busier setting up the hive each year and less likely to swarm, hive boxes can be stored out of the elements for the winter, and the beekeeper need not leave reserves of honey in the hive for overwintering.

Trusewicz points out that colonies naturally depopulate themselves in preparation for winter and many overwintered bees die anyway in early spring. His approach might be appropriate for those in extremely cold climates who have very limited resources, or in cases where the bees are sick. But I think the vast majority of beekeepers just wouldn't have the heart to make a practice of early eviction.

The beginning apiarist can easily get a headache learning all the mechanics and pitfalls of beekeeping, but some people are called to the trade regardless. It is something that either appeals to a person or it doesn't. It is fitting that those who have beekeeping in their veins are rewarded with liquid gold, honey. Apiarists provide a great service to farmers, fruit consumers and the environment as a whole.

Bees pollinate crops, which causes plants to fruit. Without bees, many crops cannot be pollinated, farmers cannot produce their own seed, fruit harvests are lean and small farms, especially orchards, are not sustainable. Without any bees at all, starvation would be rampant throughout the animal kingdom and the human race.