

How honey comes to be in early summer

Through the month of July I sold the last of my “spring” nucs and was able to spend more time on other aspects of my beekeeping.

My honey production hives in Hermon and at Bangor International Airport have needed a steady supply of empty supers (boxes) of empty comb so they would have space to store more honey. Through late June and much of July they were filling a super per week with honey from white clover, sweet clover, vetch and a variety of wildflowers.

In these hives, which each contain about 60,000-70,000 bees, the jobs are allotted according to the age of the bee. The eldest bees, age 3 weeks or more, are field bees. These are the bees that go out and forage for protein rich pollen and

sugar rich nectar from the local flora. Once they have found as much as they can carry, they hurry home to unload. Once they arrive at the hive, they will do a waggle dance, which will convey to other field bees what they have found and where they have found it. The more enthusiastically they dance the more bees will follow their directions. Then they will hand the food over to their younger sister house bees, which will take the nectar or pollen and store it in the cells of the comb.

Some of the house bees will be in charge of air conditioning the hive. They will



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be stationed at the entrance and at various points around the hive and will fan their wings, creating a flow of fresh air, stopping the hive from overheating. The air movement will also evaporate water from the sugary nectar solution stored in the cells. This concentrates the sugars until it contains less than 20 percent water. At this point it is now cured honey and the house bees will seal the cell with white beeswax. Once a super full of combs is full of cured honey it's ready to be harvested.

Now that the clover honey flow is finished I am harvesting supers full of very light-colored, mild tasting honey.

In most areas in Maine the weeks between July 20 and Aug. 15 or so can be quite lean. Many plants are in bloom, but few produce

much nectar. Hives can lose a lot of weight during this dearth. That is, unless the beekeeper has the space and foresight to plant nectar producing plants such as buckwheat, to bloom in this period. By mid-August, the goldenrod will start to produce nectar, which will continue till the first heavy frost.

I also have been able to get out to a number of beekeeping clients and students who needed a home beekeeping tutorial. There is nothing like opening a hive with an experienced beekeeper to help a beginner see what's happening in their hive. Some folks just need a refresher on what they are looking at — open brood, capped brood, cells full of pollen, finding the queen, etc. Others may fear their hive is queenless. This usually

turns out to be the result of the hive recently swarming as the new queen takes some days before she mates and starts to lay eggs. In most cases within two weeks there is new brood in the hive.

Sometimes their hive is on the brink of swarming. Then we need to think on our feet, because we need to decide right away if we should cut out the queen cells to stop the swarm leaving, whether to let the hive swarm and hope they catch it or to split the hive to make a second. The option we choose depends on the beekeeper's needs and plans for their apiary.

Others may need help deciding if they can take honey from the hive. Nothing makes new beekeepers happier than harvesting their first honey. They will bring their super full of

honey to my barn, where we will cut the wax capings off the combs and put them in the extractor. They turn the handle and watch the honey flow from the combs down the sides of the extractor and out the gate valve at the bottom. Then we bottle it up before they proudly drive home with boxes of full honey jars.

Peter Cowin, aka The Bee Whisperer, is president of the Penobscot County Beekeepers Association. His activities include honey production, pollination services, beekeeping lessons, sales of bees and bee equipment, and the removal of feral bee hives from homes and other structures. Check out “The Bee Whisperer” on Facebook, email peter-cowin@tds.net or call 299-6948.

Hike

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took Railway bed. Walk north on this multi-use trail 1.28 miles and take the Calvin Wardwell Salmon Brook Lake Trail, which will be on your right and marked with a sign. (GPS coordinates: 46.878142, -68.241125)

You can also hike the trails from the north. This is a shorter hike that does not include any walking along the multi-use Aroostook and Bangor Trail. To get to the north parking lot from the Perham town office, drive 1.2 mile west on High Meadow Road, then turn right onto Tangle Ridge Road. Drive 3.2 miles and the gravel parking area will be on your right. The trail starts by the kiosk in the parking lot, which is gravel and across the road from a large farm house. (GPS coordinates: 46.916606, -68.249272)

Information: The 1,706-acre Salmon Brook Lake Unit is a state-owned reserve in Aroostook County that is home to six rare plants, a variety of wetlands, upland woods and the shallow, 50-acre Salmon Brook Lake. The public can explore this ecologically diverse property on a beautifully constructed multi-use trail, a boardwalk and hiking trails that lead to an observation platform overlooking the fen lawn surrounding the lake.

There are two parking areas for hiking the Salmon Brook Lake trails.

The south parking area is at the Perham town office and Town Park on High Meadow Road. From there, you cross High Meadow Road and walk (or ride an ATV or bike) north 1.28 miles on the Bangor and Aroostook Trail — a wide, gravel multi-use trail that follows the old Bangor and Aroostook Railway bed. This multi-use trail is 61 miles long and is open to ATVs, horseback riders, bicyclists and walkers. In the winter, it is open to cross-country skiers, snowshoers, dog sleds and snowmobilers.

After 1.28 miles on the



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multi-use trail, the Calvin Wardwell Salmon Brook Lake Trail will be on your right. The trail, dedicated in 2008, starts out as a wide wooden boardwalk that stretches several hundred feet through a cedar swamp. The trail then becomes a wide path surfaced with crushed shale. The trail runs over a few small hills for about 0.2 mile to a group shelter, picnic table and outhouse near Salmon Brook. To the right of the shelter is a boat launch for canoes and kayaks; and to the left of the shelter is a hiking trail that heads into the forest on a series of narrow bog bridges. You can ride an ATV or bike all the way to the group shelter, then must continue on foot.

The narrow hiking trail leads through a mixed forest for 0.5 mile to a boardwalk and large observation platform in the fen surrounding Salmon Brook Lake, which only reaches 5 feet at its deepest and has an average depth of around 2 feet. This is a great place for wildlife watching and picnicking. Wooden benches are located along the edges of the platform.

From the observation platform, the hiking trail continues north through the forest for another 0.9 mile, where it reaches a

trail intersection. You'll want to turn left and you'll soon reach the Bangor and Aroostook Trail. There, turn left again and walk a little over 2 miles along the multi-use trail (passing the trailhead to the Calvin Wardwell Salmon Brook Lake Trail along the way) back to the south parking lot at the town office.

If you had turned right at the intersection, you'd head onto the newest section of the trail network, a 0.5-mile trail that leads to the north parking area on Tangle Ridge Road. This parking area and trail were created a few years ago for people who would prefer not to walk along the multi-use Bangor and Aroostook Trail in order to visit Salmon Brook Pond.

(If you decide to hike from the north parking lot, you'll hike about 0.5 mile to the trail intersection, crossing a few scenic, wooden boardwalks along the way. At the intersection, you turn right to hike 0.9 mile to the observation platform. And from there, it's a little less than 0.5 mile to the group picnic shelter and outhouse.)

The Salmon Brook Lake Unit is dominated by what's known as an unpatterned fen ecosystem, and within this ecosystem are several natural communities. For

example, surrounding the lake is a 65-acre sedge-leatherleaf fen lawn, home to leatherleaf, sweet gale and slender sedge. North of the lake is a shrubby cinquefoil-sedge circumneutral fen surrounded by spruce and cedar swamps. And south of the lake is a spruce-larch wooded bog.

Rare plants in the property include small round-leaved orchis, lapland buttercup, showy lady's-slipper, swamp fly-honeysuckle, marsh valerian and Pygmy water-lily, according to the Maine Natural Areas Program.

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands' Off-Road Vehicle Division, BPL's Northern Region Lands Office and the town of Perham all partner to manage the Salmon Brook Pond trails. For information, call BPL's Northern Region Lands Office at 435-7963, ext. 209, or send an email to vern.labbe@maine.gov.

Personal note: Packed into an old SUV, my family and I — along with our dog, Oreo — made the long drive up to Aroostook County last weekend to camp in a rustic cabin on the shore of Echo Lake in Presque Isle. With a cargo carrier strapped to the top of the vehicle and a giant cooler full of food fastened to the back hitch, we were ready for a weekend of

campfires, hiking, swimming and fishing.

On the itinerary was a trip even farther north and a bit west to the town of Perham to hike the Salmon Brook Lake trails. Having read about the trails online, I thought they'd be the perfect day hike for our group, which included my husband, my mother-in-law and her longtime boyfriend. Oreo is game for any type of hike, long or short, so I knew I could please him. But I didn't want to select anything too long or difficult for the rest of the group.

We hiked from the south parking area at the Perham town office, which may have been a poor decision on my part because the hike ended up being a bit longer than my companions anticipated. If we'd hiked from the north, it would have been shorter. Nevertheless, we had a great time, and the trails exceeded our expectations.

Seemingly out in the middle of nowhere, the trails were well constructed and maintained, and the wooden bridges, boardwalks and platforms were impressively built and in good condition. Then there were the many beautiful habitats the trails visited, including the sedge-leatherleaf fen lawn where the observation deck was located.

For more of Aislinn Sarnacki's adventures, visit her blog at actoutwithaislinn.bangordailynews.com. Follow her on Twitter: @1minihikegirl.

Holyoke

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policy, which was formulated with public safety in mind.

“Currently our position is, out of an abundance of caution, any bat found in the dwelling portion of your home — inside your home proper — we recommend it be sent in for testing [for rabies],” Mosby said.

Not all bats taken to the DIF&W, and which are sent away for testing, are dead when they arrive at the Bangor headquarters. The department provides the rabies testing service for free, and has a helpful bat fact sheet on its website. One piece of information it includes: Sometimes, bat bites or scratches aren't readily apparent. Luckily, rabies is rare in bats.

And finally, I'll share this: The original column was not written as a how-to piece. It was not intended to offer a primer on proper bat handling.

Instead, it was offered as a snapshot of life here, in a state where we get used to living near, and among wild animals.

A silver lining to the nasty messages that some felt obliged to share: People are talking about bats.

And that's a good thing.

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Bangor Dental ASSOCIATES
FAMILY DENTISTRY
Michele E. Spekhardt, DMD • Rachel A. Lukas, DMD

Bangor Dental Associates is excited to announce that Dr. Susan Dellaripa, DMD will be joining our practice this summer on August 1, 2016! Dr. Dellaripa practiced as a General Dentist with the United States Air Force for four years. She recently completed a year-long General Practice Residency in Lewiston. Dr. Dellaripa is looking forward to relocating to Bangor and working alongside Dr. Spekhardt and the rest of our team to provide dental care for you and your family.

Bangor Dental Associates would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Rachel Lukas, DMD who will be leaving the practice to return home to Massachusetts at the end of July. Joining our practice in 2014, Dr. Lukas played an integral part in growing Bangor Dental Associates and caring for our patients at it's new location at 62 Corporate Drive. We thank Dr. Lukas and wish her the very best in her future endeavors.


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