

The May 9th meeting of SCBA was held at Christopher Farm and Gardens. There were over 70 people in attendance. The guest speaker was Sue Dompke from Sweet Mountain Farm on Washington Island. Sue's specialty is raising Russian bees and she spent an enjoyable hour sharing the unique aspects of the bees and raising them. Sue has 6 "out-yards" on the island in addition to the home farm. Some of the unique features of Russians: a smaller cluster (softball sized compared to volleyball sized for others), 20% of hives with 2 queens (and they get along), a slower build up in the spring, very hygienic (no tracheal mites, minimal veroa mite issues and they clear their hive of hive beetles themselves).

She uses 8 frame hives and uses white cedar wood which has a higher "R" value than white pine. She believes very strongly in survivor hives and encouraged us to split the surviving hives to increase our numbers. She splits and splits some more!

She has a technique where she removes the queens from the hive to a safe place for a period of ten days at mid-summer. During that time the hygienic trait of the bees causes them to clean the hive and kill the veroa mites. After ten days she puts the queen back and watches for the emerging queen cells; either to eliminate or move into a split.

It was a cool night by the lake but enjoyable for everyone!

No new business was taken up.

Old business: Next meeting is June 13 at Rochester Park, Sheboygan Falls for our annual SBCA picnic. It is a Potluck. Please bring a dish to pass. Meat will be provided unless you want or need something special. Bring BINGO prizes and family members are invited.