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## February 2018 LCBA Newsletter

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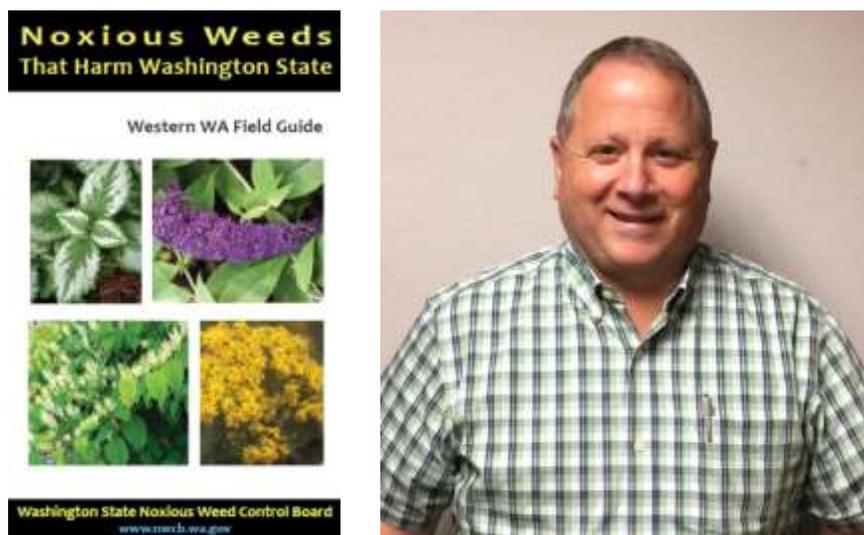
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*Questions? Suggestions? Resources you'd like to share, stories you'd like to tell? Please contact LCBA Secretary Susanne Weil: [secretary@lcba.community](mailto:secretary@lcba.community) or call 360 880 8130.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### **Thursday, February 8: LCBA Monthly Meeting**

#### **Speaker: Bill Wamsley: Noxious Weeds & Bee Forage**

**Where:** Centralia College, Washington Hall 103; 701 W. Walnut, Centralia, WA 98531

**When:** Social Time, 6-6:30 pm; Speaker, 6:30 – 7:30 pm; Business Meeting, 7:30-8:45

**What:** Bill will speak about noxious weeds - what they are, and which are in Lewis County; what you can plant as possible native plant forage; vegetation control by LC Public Works along right of ways and how this affects beekeepers; and how the WA State Noxious Weed Control Board works.

***FYI ~ LCBA 2018 dues are, well, due 😊 The form is on our website (linked under Membership on the homepage), and we'll have hard copies available at our February 8 meeting. To buy bees in March, one must be current on dues.***

#### **2018 WSDA APIARY REGISTRATION**

***[https://agr.wa.gov/FP/Forms/PP/docs/6116-APIaryRegistration\\_2018.pdf](https://agr.wa.gov/FP/Forms/PP/docs/6116-APIaryRegistration_2018.pdf)***

### **Thursday, March 8: LCBA Monthly Meeting**

#### **Main Event: Bee Sales for LCBA Members**

Time TBA – probably about 5 pm

Meeting Topic TBA – Watch for March Newsletter

## 2018 Lewis County Extension Workshops



*WSU Lewis County Extension has a wide array of workshops planned for 2018. Class costs will vary and be announced as class details are finalized. Save the dates to join on any or all of the dates below. The folks at Extension hope to see you there!*

*For details, visit: <http://preservesummer.cahnrs.wsu.edu>. For more information or to register contact Kim Weiland 740-1212 or email [kimberly.weiland@lewiscountywa.gov](mailto:kimberly.weiland@lewiscountywa.gov).*

### Workshop Schedule:

**Feb 3 Spring Grape Care, Borst Demo Garden**

**Feb 7 Worm Composting, Fort Borst Kitchen 1**

**Feb 10 Pruning/Care for Roses, Providence Demo Garden**

**Feb 17 Gardening for Everyone, Centralia College-WA Hall**

**Feb 21 Food Waste Reduction, Fort Borst Kitchen 2**

**Feb 23 Advanced Canning, location TBD**

**March 6 Know Your Soils, Fort Borst Kitchen 1**

**March 10 Grow/Prune/Fertilize Blueberries, Providence Demo Garden**

**Mar 13 Advanced Composting, Chehalis Timberland Library**

**March 23 Fermentation, location TBD**

**April 20 Heritage Cooking, location TBD**



## SATURDAY, MARCH 3: NATIVE PLANT FESTIVAL

**Where:** Thurston Conservation District, 2918 Ferguson St SW, Ste A, Tumwater, WA 98512

**When:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**What:** Thurston Conservation District writes, “Join us for a fun day to welcome spring with affordable native plants, knowledgeable volunteers and staff to give guidance on picking the right plants, vendors and community partner booths, workshops, and live music! You can pre-order your plants now until January 31st here: <https://store.thurstoncd.com/products/> We are also seeking vendors! If you're a community organization, food/beverage or goods/services vendor, we would love to have you join us! The application form can be found here: <https://store.thurstoncd.com/> .”

### Notes from LCBA’s January 11: LCBA Monthly Meeting

Community Outreach Coordinator Dan Maughan led the meeting, as President Kevin Reichert and VP Bob Harris were both out sick. Dan announced that Centralia College policies prohibit minors from being present at the mead tasting that will follow our speaker’s talk; he asked for brief business reports before the main event so that those who need or wish to leave prior to the mead tasting don’t miss out on information.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Treasurer Rick Battin reported that LCBA’s checking account has a balance of \$2,074.01, with expenses since the last meeting primarily reimbursements to Kevin for the meatballs and hams for the potluck, as well as some clerical expenses from the secretary, mainly

brochures for the upcoming beginning beekeeping class. The savings account has \$5000.52, and the Youth Scholarship fund has \$3,091.71 after Rick deposited the \$794 raised at our holiday potluck. Rick reminded members that January is dues month and that membership forms were available to fill out.

**Education Program:** Education Coordinator Peter Glover announced that so far, we have 49 students registered for the beginning beekeeping class starting this Saturday. For those who were not at the potluck, Peter announced our four 2018 Youth in Beekeeping Scholarship students: Cassidy Armstrong is a 7th grade home-school student from Rochester; her mentor is Steve Howard. Carmen Cleveland Barrera is a 10th grader at Onalaska High School; her mentors are Peter and Susanne. Austin Nelson is an 8th grader at Chehalis Middle School; his mentor is Dan. Caleb Smith is a 7th grade home-school student from Winlock; his mentor will be Mel Gregorich. All four are currently taking LCBA's Beginning Beekeeping Class and looking forward to getting bees in April. Caleb and his father Josh were at this meeting and welcomed by the members. 2017 Youth Scholar Adam Claridge was also present; his bees so far are overwintering well, as are our other two 2017 youth scholars, Rylie Powell's and Emily Ecklund's.

**Thoughts on Winter Bee Care:** Dan noted that he would be taking his bees to Corning, California next week. As northern CA gets colder, rainier weather than the almond groves of central California, he anticipates that his bees will experience more precipitation and cold. Dan has been checking his bees for their condition prior to the trip, and he wanted to share with beekeepers at the meeting some of the things he is seeing and things to watch out for at this time of the year. Dan is seeing more dysentery this year in some of his weaker hives and is treating for that. The bees are "making a mess" of the tops of the frames in their hives, and Dan's hoping that when we get some sun this weekend, they can do cleansing flights and improve.

**Winter Feeding Needs and Avoiding "Spring Dwindle":** Dan also noted that he has had a few colonies starve out despite the presence of food stores: the bees may eat up supplies in a corner of a frame, yet leave big chunks of other honey stores untouched. Sometimes they won't move much in the cold snaps. Gottfried Fritz pointed out that what Dan saw with the selective eating presents us with a catch-22: if you move frames, you can chill them, so they die, but if you don't feed them, then they die. Steve Howard noted that it's important to check moisture control boxes: if the burlap and chips are damp, they need to be replaced to keep wicking moisture from the hive. Gottfried Fritz cautioned that if the weather gets very wet, we might have "spring dwindle" –queens may lay a lot as it warms up, but there is not enough nutrition in the environment to support a rapidly growing colony yet, so the colony can die. He encouraged beekeepers to keep feeding hard candy, and then, as the weather warms up, syrup; don't give pollen yet unless you want the queen to lay.

**Sweeping dead bees off bottom boards:** Susanne reminded members about periodically sweeping the bottom board to remove dead bees so that they don't clog the hive entrance. Josh Smith asked if anyone overwinters bees indoors: Dan knows someone overwintering bees in a

potato shed to help encourage them to lay brood earlier. Dan himself has his bees in a large open-air shed: colonies on the edges getting sun seem to be doing better than the ones deeper in. Cody Warren puts his bees in the loft of a five-stall horse barn: they are doing well, getting light through the see-through corrugated plastic of the roof.

### **Jan 11 Speaker: Antony Richfield of Silver Cat Farm ~ Mead-Making**



*Above, Antony Richfield displaying his bottled meads at the tasting that followed the meeting.*

**Introductions:** Antony Richfield and his wife manage Silver Cat Farm in the hills outside Chehalis. They make mead, which means that they work primarily with honey. Antony's father was an agricultural entomologist, but he himself is not a beekeeper. His talk focused on honey as used in the process of home brewing. Antony started out as a home brewer and then became a commercial wine-maker because as he shared his products with co-workers at his day job, people wanted to buy it: he said, "But I'm not licensed, so I can't take your money." But people kept asking to buy his wine, so he felt he was throwing money away and got started on the professional track.

**Origins of Mead:** Antony noted that mead is not mainstream in the U.S., but as a drink, it is truly ancient: it may have been older than fruit wines, though the evidence is dicey. However, mead is one of the most ancient identified handmade articles. If you look at the English language, you will find that "mead" is used strictly to describe the fermented beverage. Our word "honey" comes from the German word "honig." The French word is "miel," and the French word for mead translates as "water and honey." Germans call mead "honigwein." In Russian the word for honey is a root of the word for bear, who is the finder of the honey. In Sanskrit, honey is called "madhu"; but in modern Hindi, madhu has come to mean simply an alcoholic beverage. Thus, honey as the source of recreational beverages is an ancient concept.

**Why Make Mead?** From a practical perspective, Antony noted that it's reasonable to ask why one should go to the trouble of making mead. If you have a surplus of honey, you can cook with

it, bake with it, put it in tea, but if you have a LOT left, you may want to consider fermenting it. If you are interested in vinegar and pickling, that's yet another possible use for honey.

***Mead and the Law:*** Antony has some good news/ bad news about mead making. To make mead, you must be of legal drinking age. In terms of quantity, the law limits an individual to 100 gallons per person per year; if there are two or more adults in same household, then the limit is 200 gallons/year. Antony's large display barrel would hold about 50 gallons: so is that enough? If you are drinking 100 to 200 gallons in the year you might be overdoing it! An individual may brew mead for private use: for drinking, cooking, or to go to a wine show, say, in Walla Walla. All that is legal. You can even enter interstate shows and travel across state lines with home brew if you are a bona fide home brewer going to a show. What you absolutely cannot do is sell it – no legally – nor accept goods or in-kind trade for mead. You can give a holiday gift but cannot barter mead for services or gifts. As Antony noted, Uncle Sam likes his taxes: there is a wine tax, and if Uncle Sam finds out that an individual has evaded that, he gets mad and sends guys in big black Escalades to visit you.



*Above, 3 Silver Cat Farm meads: Honey Lemon; Granny Smith & Honey; Blackberry, Honey, & Raisin*

***Distilling is a Legal No-No:*** One last thing you can't do is distill anything that you have fermented: there is no lawful private distillation of alcohol in the U.S. It is legal in some nations – for example, New Zealand, or South Africa, where Antony is from – but not here. Antony knows people who have gotten “the visit” from regulators. Some have put a barrel outside on a freezing night, hoping to be able to fractionally freeze, then take out water (“gosh, look, it's stronger now!”). That, too, is not legal. Legally, if a batch of your wine develops that ice on top, you must let it melt back in. However, Antony, noted, if you stay within those rules, you are fine.

One member asked whether the state of Washington is more restrictive than the U.S. government: Antony answered that Washington is not stricter, so that is why he is concentrating on federal rules. Washington is a fairly wine-friendly state: if something is ok with the feds, it is generally ok with the state, but Washington does monitor, track, and cooperate with the feds on investigations. When Antony and his wife got their license, they were approached by a regulator who said there was concern about money laundering: wine-selling tends to be a cash business, so they watch your accounts carefully. Also, they are concerned about bootlegging, which sounds like Prohibition: in British Columbia, wine of all sorts is made in rural areas, then smuggled

across the border. That is why federal officials trace where people are getting their wine. It may be that the purpose of your life is to serve as a warning to others, but, Antony suggests that if that is not what you desire, follow the rules!

***Some Definitions and Ingredients:***

- Hard liquor is defined as anything that has been distilled - regardless of method. Also, technically speaking, any substance that is 50 proof or more just through fermentation is classified as “hard.”
- Anything that involves malt is a form of beer (unless it has been distilled, in which case it's hard liquor).
- Sake is a special case, because rather than malting to break complex sugars into something that yeast can consume, it uses a bacterium.
- Pretty much anything else is a form of wine. This includes grape wines, ciders, mead and all their relatives.
- Fortified wine – which mead is not- is a wine that has brandy or another, stronger liquor added, such as port.
- The first ingredient Antony noted is a “must,” which is a sugary substance that you are fermenting and turning into a beverage. That includes the mead family.



*Above, some tools of the trade*

***Necessary Equipment:*** Antony noted that a mead-maker needs not just equipment, but also sanitation to clean that equipment, ingredients, including the yeast, and then, finally, a procedure to follow to make a batch. For equipment, many start with the one gallon carboy: glass is easy to sanitize. A professional mead-maker will need plenty of these gallon jugs for making experimental batches, and even a hobbyist will want more than one for racking – taking the first fermentation out of one and into the next one. They are not that expensive, Antony says, and good to have around. Antony noted that some use five-gallon food grade buckets as fermentation pails: it's important, if you use any plastic, that it be food grade to prevent contamination and odors. Honey is often delivered in five gallon buckets like that. You can put a suitably-sized cork into the carboy with an airlock through the cork's centre: with water inside, pressure builds

up and drives out the bug bits and other impurities that could contaminate your product. If you don't want to spend money on that, you can use non-lubricated condoms or balloons – poke a hole in the tip of condom so that gas can escape, and cap the carboy with the condom. Insects can't get in. Antony was glad to report that when his mother came to visit, she was not shocked to see those condoms topping gallon jugs, since he was saving money.



*Above, Antony displays a gallon carboy as Rick Battin looks on*

The next piece of equipment that Antony highlighted is the “wine thief,” a long plastic rod that you insert into the barrel (thus “stealing” from your barrel) to taste how the flavor is developing. You put your thumb over the top and draw out into the cup, taste, and in the process, you disturb the brew minimally, so there's less chance of contamination. Next, Antony displayed tubing for siphoning. You can buy a tube with a locking valve on the pipe to squeeze the pipe shut when you've finished siphoning. Next, you need bottles in which to bottle your mead: his bottles have a top with metal clips to clamp down the cork for a strong seal, called “flip-top” caps. These can be ordered online. They can be sterilized; also, the rubber can be replaced. If you prefer to use a classic wine bottle, you can: there's great flexibility in bottling style, no strict rules. One member asked whether bottle color matters. Antony said that it does for beer, but not for wine: components of beer can be altered by light traveling through the bottle, not so with mead.

All of this equipment is readily available from home brewing shops. A local one in Centralia is the Heyman Winery.

**Record-Keeping Re: Ingredients:** Next, Antony strongly encouraged prospective mead-makers to keep a lab notebook: “Write down what you did,” he said, “because if you taste it years later and it's fantastic, the best ever, you will not remember what you did unless you kept notes!” He showed one of his note pages, where he had recorded that a particular batch of mead contained 10% John-o-gold apples, 10% Granny Smiths, and then what kind of honey he had used, all dated for reference. There are also various options for yeast: you can buy it from shops in packets, or online; there are different flocculation rates, etc., and all the key features of a given yeast are written up on the packets. You can rely on a specific kind of yeast to do the same thing over and over.

**Sanitation:** Finally, Antony wanted to emphasize the importance of sanitation: that is why he brought his box of Oxi-Clean, a controversial choice, but he has a reason. Antony asked if there were any chemists in the audience: Dan has a Masters' in Geochemistry. Antony noted that there are three approaches to sanitation in wine. One is very old school, using sulfites: you add sulfites to your wine and they cease the action of any microbes. If you were a French wine maker from the 15th century, you'd take a string, set it on fire, and gases, smoke, and sulfur would anoint the barrel with sulfites as part of the combustion product. Nowadays, salt-like tablets of sulfites are used. However, many are not wild about sulfites, and often you will see a sulfite statement: actually it is mandated by law that you have to say if you added sulfites. Some people can have a negative health reaction to sulfites. Another sanitizing agent that people use is chloride bleach: Antony reports that it works great, but one problem is that once you wash down equipment, you must do it so scrupulously that you cannot even smell chlorine on it any more. If you don't do this, you will mess up the taste of your wine. Some California winemakers have had to trash whole batches of wine because of the chlorine. Antony used it as a home brewer and lost a few batches now, as a commercial brewer, he doesn't risk it.



*Antony displays the “wine thief.”*

Antony uses Oxi-Clean, which is baking soda with hydrogen peroxide trapped inside. Hydrogen peroxide is not stable, so it breaks down quickly. As a result, when you dissolve it in water, all the hydrogen peroxide comes out, and it plays rough with micro-organisms, and the baking soda helps it break up anything sticking to your barrel and gets rid of it. Antony fills his vat with water, puts in Oxi-Clean, comes back 24 hours later, and all is fine. There's no residual flavor because peroxide breaks down to water and oxygen, and the baking soda has little flavor anyway. Antony commented that he wouldn't tell us that this is the one way to do it: rather, people should use what works for them.

One member asked how much to rinse: he says just slosh-slosh with a spray nozzle. He can also run Oxi-Clean solution through his siphon tubing. One member asked how much to put in per barrel: Antony said that he eyeballs it at about 2 scoops per barrel. Steve asked whether one

would use city water for wine? Antony said that yes, you can; he uses rain water or well water when he can, though. Yeast consumes sugar and produces ethanol, which itself is a sterilizing agent - yeast's defense against microorganisms – so if you sanitize first, your product will probably be fine. One exception is the vinegar bacterium, which consumes ethanol and converts into acetic acid, the active ingredient of vinegar. The vinegar bacterium does require oxygen, whereas yeast does fine in an anoxic environment, so you can avoid that problem by keeping your brew protected from the open air.

**Ingredients:** First, you must choose your “must” – that is, whatever ingredient you are going to ferment: it could be grape juice; apple juice; pear juice; sugar, water, and ginger, if making ginger ale; or honey and water, if making mead. It helps to have an additive, because honey is not a complete diet for your yeast. Below, Antony gave some recipes that are easy to follow. Instead of using water, he often uses apple juice, resulting in a beverage called a cyser. Apple juice is acidic and has many components that help feed your yeast, plus apple flavor that works nicely with honey. Pasteurised apple juice is fine, but avoid anything containing preservatives.



Next, crush apples, extract juice, and add honey. If you have ever made apple juice, you know what happens if you don't drink it: it turns into hard cider because the flesh of apples contains yeast. This is why bakers can use apples as a leavening agent if they are making bread or cake. You can rely on yeast in wild apples to do the fermentation for you: it is a risk, but he finds it worth the risk because wild yeasts have their own unique flavor profile that no one else will have. Cody noted that he has made his own yeast using apple and/or pear juice with cheesecloth, and it's a roll of dice: you don't know what you will end up with – it could be straight vinegar. Antony agreed that you never know, but said that if you have a large culture and keep selecting the best yeast form it, you can benefit. It's rather like your own sourdough.

**Mead-Making Procedure: Step One, Sanitize!** The first thing you do is sanitize your equipment. Antony urged that even if equipment is new, we should still sanitize it. If you've cleaned it and put it up on the shelf, still sanitize, because sanitizing is the best defense against contamination.

**Next Steps:** The second step is to produce your “must”: to do this, first take nice clean water and dissolve your honey in it (assuming that it's conventional mead that you're making, rather than a cyser or similar beverage). The third step is “the pitch”: you pitch the yeast mix into your barrel. The fourth step is really a stage - the primary fermentation: you cap your mixture, and it sits there and simply ferments. This process is aggressive since the yeast has entered “a sugary wonderland.” Antony and his wife do not climate-control their winery, so if they start a batch now, primary fermentation could take six weeks; however, in summer, it could take just ten 10 days. One member asked about storage temperatures: Antony suggests keeping it where it's convenient, as long as it is under 90 degrees: in general, a basement or shed is fine.

**Siphoning:** Once the fermentation slows down, your next stage is siphoning crud off the primary fermentation: a lot is dead yeast, but also, depending on source of your must, it could be other things. If you are making a classic grape wine, you would find grape husks. You'll get a wad of apple fiber on top and a layer of yeast down at the bottom: it looks gross, but is normal, a sign of healthy fermentation. Then comes the secondary fermentation, a slower process that will take a couple of months. If you bottle then, before secondary fermentation, you will get a sparkling wine. Beware, because the yeast can blast out of the bottle and burst it because of its pressure. If you do bottle conditioning, Antony says please be careful. Do not put more sugar into the bottle when you close it up. The safest way is just to let it ferment.

**How do you know when the fermentation processes are done?** The mix stops bubbling. You can measure a sample, but Antony does not do that: rather, he goes by his gut. Once it's “gone quiet,” he knows it's time for the next stage. Sometimes he doesn't go to the secondary process, but leaves it all to go in one vat to get a more intense flavor.

**Time To Bottle:** Once the secondary fermentation has finished, you can bottle your mead. You might consider putting it through a centrifuge if you are a commercial brewer and want it to look very neat with no solid residues: this isn't necessary, though. Cody asked what Antony thinks about commercial clarifiers like bulls' blood or eggshells: Antony said that he doesn't use them. He has two criteria: first, does the mead make the room spin around, and two, does it taste good? Josh Smith asked whether, for the second fermentation, Antony uses an air lock? Antony said yes, and that if you see bubbles going through, you know it is still working.

**Alcohol Content?** Steve Grega asked about alcohol content in mead: how can we know how much is in it? Antony answered that it varies with the different honeys you use. He doesn't monitor it, but spends more time sniffing and tasting. Steve asked if Antony doesn't like a particular taste, does he ever blend batches? Antony said that no, he doesn't: he gets rid of inadequate products. He includes this in his record-keeping so that he can tell the ATF that he destroyed a batch, with dates and volume. Question: do you need to heat the water to add the honey? Antony said that you can heat it to help it dissolve, but you risk getting a caramelized taste. Also, Antony wants the proteins from the pollen: not only will it enhance taste, but it may even boost the yeast's chances.

**Recipe for Basic Cyser:** Antony cautioned not to be surprised if this recipe yields a mix that's over 30 proof! For this recipe, use 85% apple juice by volume, 15% honey, and a strong, high potency red wine yeast. That is all. How long to age it? Antony answered that he waits a minimum of 18 months for both fermentation processes. Honey is a very complex mixture, not even a compound. By the time his yeast has finished fermenting out the sugar, what is left are the floral notes, and then that harsh bite. How to get rid of that harshness? Aging: leaving the yeast

helps neutralize that harsh bite. It ages like a fine wine. Heavier red wines take longer than whites. Harsh compounds take time to react their way out. If you are really wondering, he suggests just leaving it in the cellar, forgetting it, and then you will be overjoyed when, years later, you find it! Don't drink it too early, or it will be awful. Patience is a virtue in wine-making and in mead-making.



*Mead-tasting after Antony's talk*

**2nd Recipe:** 80% water, 20% honey by volume, add yeast, and then add some fruit - a flavor additive, such as raisins, which have tartaric acid that helps yeast grow. Another popular fruit is juniper berries. Quartered lemons are another: aromatic oils from the rind of the lemon help to moderate and also enhance the notes of the honey. This is Antony's personal favorite, as it gives a citrusy scent and flavor. How much fruit to put in? It is up to you try to experiment and see what you like. For this particular batch, he used 10 gallons of baking honey, topped up with 40 gallons water, and then 5 pounds of the lemons see above. He usually ages it in a second fermentation barrel, but it will continue to develop in the bottle.

**Why so much water, percentage-wise?** It helps thin out your honey. Honey won't go bad, though it may crystallize. It will kill many microorganisms, so while unmodified honey is not yeast-friendly, if thinned out, it will work better. Dan noted that honey can range between 16 and 18 percent moisture: is this an issue? Antony says no, not once it is diluted by a factor of 5. Dan asked whether honey's low pH is a problem: Antony said that it is not. Think of cider apples packed with acid: by the time you dilute your honey, it will be much less acidic.

Antony was asked if he sterilizes the water he puts into his mead: he answered that, no, he just uses a clean water source. If using rainwater, he may add a little Oxi-Clean and gives it 24 hours. Another question: in beer making if iron is in the water, that is bad – but it is not so much an issue here, as in well water.

**For each recipe, how much yeast should one put in?** For a large container, Antony will mix one packet of yeast into the honey or apple. It is 2% of the mixture. One packet will do to inoculate a barrel like the one Antony brought, as long as it gets off to a happy start in its gallon jug.

**Got Honey? Antony is interested in buying it in bulk.** If you are not using all your honey and would like to sell it, Antony is really interested in making mead with local honey – the more

local, the better. The flavor of the land (the terroir) is what he wants: this is a concept from French wine-making. LCBA members are welcome to contact him at silvercatfarm@gmail.com. He asks that if you would like to sell him honey, please don't filter it: he wants the raw product, even with dead bee bits - they are protein and will help make a complete breakfast for yeast. As with farming, you are turning your yeast out into a pasture of honey, so you want that pasture to be as rich as possible. If want to sell honey to a mead-maker, it's helpful to ask what they want in terms of filtering. Different makers have different preferences.

**Preferred Flavors?** Dan noted that Antony had mentioned orange blossom: are some flavors more desirable than others? Antony said that depends on what the purpose is. If a mead is destined for a wedding, he wants a citrus honey. If it's for a winter beverage, buckwheat is fine. He has not tried carrot blossom honey. Blackberry honey makes a summery beverage. The variety of honey truly does matter, and any serious mead-maker will want to know the provenance of the honey.

**Mead Prices:** Antony was asked what he charges per bottle and how he sets the price: he said that it depends on the prices of his supplies, including bottles and labels. There used to be one price per batch in Washington state: now two are allowed, a bulk price and an individual bottle price. Antony sells his current batches for \$15 in individual units, but \$12/bottle for bulk. Silver Cat Farm pays all the taxes. Antony will give a bulk price on a case, though not all would call that "bulk." By law, he must offer everyone the exact same price, whether a retailer or a friend.

Everyone thanked Antony for a fascinating presentation, and we moved on to a break, followed by mead tasting – see photos below.

*(Editor's Note: those who would like to see an illustrated step-by-step mead-making process can visit the American Homebrewers' Association webpage:*

<https://www.homebrewersassociation.org/how-to-brew/mead/making-mead/>).

### After Antony's Talk: Mead-Tasting!

Antony brought along several different kinds of Silver Cat Farm Mead: a lemon and honey blend; a blackberry blend; a blend with raisins as additive; and one more. He had many tasting glasses on hand so that everyone who wished could try each flavor. A good time was had by all!



*Above left, Barb and Steve Grega at our mead tasting; right, one of Antony's tasting glasses.*

## **GOOD FOOD AWARDS FINALISTS**

*By Guest Columnist, Dr. Dewey Caron*

If you look back, you will see I wrote about the 2017 Good Food Award Finalists last February. The awards acknowledge local beekeepers that produce and label local or Artisan honey. Such honey is most likely produced in a “natural”, organic manner; some prefer to label their product raw, others natural. It is a niche market that can be profitable, offering customers the opportunity to experience honey just as produced by the bees from their very own locale. Such recognition helps offset the fact that over 2/3rds of the honey used in the US is imported.

The GOOD FOOD AWARDS program has included a honey category only since 2016; there are 15 total categories including things like beer, chocolate, cheese and pickles. In all 3 years both OR and WA honey were finalists. In 2018, Washington was again represented by Buddy and Meg DePew of Sequim Apiary, Sequim/Port Angeles (<https://www.sequimbeefarm.com/>), one of only 12 winners. In 2016 and 2017 their blackberry honey was the winner but this past year their Snowberry rose was judged as excellent.

For a change, no blackberry honey was among the 2018 finalists, perhaps reflecting the rather poor blackberry nectar flow this past year? Oregon’s Bee Local (now Jacobsen’s salt + Bee Local <http://www.Jacobsensalt.com/>) was a winner with their Sauvie Island Honey, for the 2nd year in a row. If you want to watch their 13 ½ minute YouTube extraction of honey – is it more entertaining? than educational? check out <https://www.jacobsensalt.com/pages/its-alive-bee-local>

## RECIPES OF THE MONTH ~ Starring *HONEY*

### *Slow Cooker Honey Sesame Chicken (from the Chef-in-Training Blog)*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2.5 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts  
(thighs would be fine too)
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup honey
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons diced onion
- 4 tablespoons ketchup
- 2 tablespoon canola oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- 4 teaspoons cornstarch dissolved in 6 Tablespoons water
- Sesame seeds



#### **Directions:**

1. Spray slow cooker with cooking spray.
2. Season both sides of chicken with lightly with salt and pepper, and place in the bottom of slow cooker.
3. In a small bowl, add honey, soy sauce, onion, ketchup, oil, garlic and pepper flakes and stir until well combined. Pour over chicken.
4. Cook on low for 3-4 hours, or just until chicken is cooked through.
5. Remove chicken from crock pot, leave sauce. Dissolve 4 teaspoons of cornstarch in 6 tablespoons of water and pour into crock pot. Stir to combine with sauce.
6. Replace lid and cook sauce on high for ten more minutes or until slightly thickened.
7. Cut chicken into bite size pieces, then return to pot and toss with sauce before serving.
8. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve over rice or noodles.

For the original recipe, visit: <https://www.chef-in-training.com/2012/04/crock-pot-honey-sesame-chicken/>

## BEES IN THE NEWS



**“Accidental Discovery Could Save Bees From Varroa,”** by Ross Pomeroy in *American Bee Journal*, January 19, 2018:

“German scientists primarily based out of the University of Hohenheim have stumbled upon a simple solution that could deal a blow to honeybees' greatest threat. They've found that a tiny dose of the compound lithium chloride kills Varroa destructor mites without harming bees.” To read the entire story, visit: <https://mailchi.mp/americanbeejournal/january-19-2018-accidental-discovery-could-save-bees-from-varroa?e=e9ff21e0bb>

**“Using Medically Important Antimicrobials in Bees – Questions and Answers from the FDA,”** Bee Culture’s Catch the Buzz, January 19, 2018

To read the latest on treatment protocols, visit: [http://www.beeeculture.com/catch-buzz-using-medically-important-antimicrobials-bees-questions-answers-fda/?utm\\_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm\\_campaign=81205c7d0e-Catch\\_The\\_Buzz\\_4\\_29\\_2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0272f190ab-81205c7d0e-256261065](http://www.beeeculture.com/catch-buzz-using-medically-important-antimicrobials-bees-questions-answers-fda/?utm_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm_campaign=81205c7d0e-Catch_The_Buzz_4_29_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0272f190ab-81205c7d0e-256261065) .



**“Beekeepers’ nuisance could offer solution to our plastic problem”**: from *Current Biology*, courtesy of LCBA member Phil Wilson:

“Plastic bags are a bane of modern life. As you read this, nearly two million of them are being used around the world right now. By the time the year is over, this number will probably reach a trillion, ending up in landfills, oceans, streams, and the digestive tracts of marine animals. Over the years, scientists have been coming up with various solutions to tackle this problem, from devising ways to give it a second lease of life to making greener and more sustainable plastics. But nature might have a simpler solution: wax worms.

“For anyone who keeps bees, wax worms, which are actually the larva of the wax moth, are parasites that feed on beeswax, causing damage to beeswax combs and in some cases, destroying weakened hives entirely. By chance, this led research author and amateur beekeeper Federica Bertocchini of the Institute of Biomedicine and Biotechnology of Cantabria in Spain to stumble upon the caterpillars' unexpected ability to chew through and actually digest plastic.”

To read the entire story,, visit: [http://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822\(17\)30231-2](http://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822(17)30231-2) .

**“Bees Like Sugar and Fungicides, or Sugar and Herbicides Better Than Just Sugar. No Wonder We Have Troubles Out There”**: *Bee Culture’s Catch the Buzz*, January 12, 2018.

To read the story, visit: [http://www.beeeculture.com/catch-buzz-bees-like-sugar-fungicides-sugar-herbicides-better-just-sugar-no-wonder-troubles/?utm\\_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm\\_campaign=554edbc4f1-Catch\\_The\\_Buzz\\_4\\_29\\_2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0272f190ab-554edbc4f1-256261065](http://www.beeeculture.com/catch-buzz-bees-like-sugar-fungicides-sugar-herbicides-better-just-sugar-no-wonder-troubles/?utm_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm_campaign=554edbc4f1-Catch_The_Buzz_4_29_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0272f190ab-554edbc4f1-256261065) .

**“The Ancient Art Of Honey Hunting Based On Keeping Bees In Artificially-Made Caverns Placed High In The Trees”:** Bee Culture’s Catch the Buzz, January 26, 2018: [http://www.bee-culture.com/catch-buzz-ancient-art-honey-hunting-based-keeping-bees-artificially-made-caverns-placed-high-trees/?utm\\_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm\\_campaign=ecde895754-Catch The Buzz 4 29 2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0272f190ab-ecde895754-256261065](http://www.bee-culture.com/catch-buzz-ancient-art-honey-hunting-based-keeping-bees-artificially-made-caverns-placed-high-trees/?utm_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm_campaign=ecde895754-Catch+The+Buzz+4+29+2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0272f190ab-ecde895754-256261065)



*The forest beekeeping of Polesie has the status of a historical and cultural value in Belarus. It is an ancient art of honey hunting based on keeping bees in artificially-made caverns placed high in the trees.*

**“Worldwide Importance of Honey Bees for Natural Habitats Honey Bees as World’s Key Pollinator of Non-Crop Plants” – Competing Studies Debate:** Bee Culture’s Catch the Buzz, January 25, 2018: [http://www.bee-culture.com/catch-buzz-worldwide-importance-honey-bees-natural-habitats-honey-bees-worlds-key-pollinator-non-crop-plants-maybe-maybe-not-read/?utm\\_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm\\_campaign=276cefaf4a-Catch The Buzz 4 29 2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0272f190ab-276cefaf4a-256261065](http://www.bee-culture.com/catch-buzz-worldwide-importance-honey-bees-natural-habitats-honey-bees-worlds-key-pollinator-non-crop-plants-maybe-maybe-not-read/?utm_source=Catch+The+Buzz&utm_campaign=276cefaf4a-Catch+The+Buzz+4+29+2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0272f190ab-276cefaf4a-256261065)



*Credit: James Hung/UC San Diego A honey bee pollinates a Carpobrotus edulis plant*

“Wild Sri Lankan Elephants Retreat from the Sound of Disturbed Asian Honey Bees”:  
 American Bee Journal, January 24, 2018: <https://mailchi.mp/americanbeejournal/january-24-2018-wild-sri-lankan-elephants-retreat-from-the-sound-of-disturbed-asian-honey-bees?e=e9ff21e0bb>



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**LCBA Dues:** Members are invited to bring 2018 dues (\$40 per individual) to our February 8 monthly meeting. The form is on our website (<http://lewiscountybeekeepers.org/home/membership>) Hard copies will be available. Please don't forget to fill out the “hold harmless agreement” on the back – thank you!



**MITE BUSTERS** – Dr. Danny Najera & his students at Green River Community College are raising funds for their Apiary & research program. Their “Mite Busters” Patch is ready to sew on your bee suit! To order, visit this URL, make your donation, & - very important! - put "mitebuster" patch in the comments: <https://www.greenrivercollegefoundation.org/honeymoney>. Also, give your mailing address to send it to. It's \$5 for one patch, \$10 for the two patches, etc. If you want to help out GRC Grc Honeybees with their mailing costs, you can donate an extra \$1. Keep MITE BUSTING!

*That's all for now ~ take care, & bee happy!*

~~ Susanne Weil, LCBA Secretary ([Secretary@lcba.community](mailto:Secretary@lcba.community); 360 880 8130)