

**February 15, 2021**  
**TBC Monthly Meeting (ZOOM)**  
**Minutes**  
**6:45 - 8:55 pm**

**In attendance:** Anne Christie, Connor, Helen Williams, Manny, Kit Moore, Robin Sundstrom, Roy England, Amanda, Allan Phillips, Sophie, Nancy Bardecki, Deirdre TW, Alison, Lynne Howarth, Maker N., Bernard Feder, Oliver Couto, Winnie Ross, Humza, Gita Schwartz, Alessandra, Maureen Pay, Audrey, Patricia Torge, June Sabot, Maureen Pay, Susan Wood, Kathleen

1. Welcome – Anne, Robin
2. ABC Bees: Apiaries and Bees for Communities: Tom Seeley – report by Robin

Robin reported on Tom Seeley's presentation to an Alberta-based beekeeper group. Author of *Honey Bee Democracy*, Tom presented ideas from his new book about "Darwinian" beekeeping. Tom says the best beekeepers are bees, and so we should watch them in the wild to copy their practices. He recommends deep and narrow framed beehives similar to the way bees nest in nature.

He stressed that hives are a complex living system and he thinks natural (or "Darwinian") selection is the best way to strengthen hives. He uses no treatments at all. His summer survival rate is 97% and his winter rate is 84% and he is in Pennsylvania, where they are dealing with a few more pests than we are here. He attributes his high survival rate to his mimicking wild bees' behavior. All his hives had mites and the bees dealt with them sans treatment. He keeps a minimum of 2 km between hives to promote bee health. Urban beekeeping doesn't give similar space, and the hives have thin walls, large colony populations, and introduced queens. In nature, hives have thicker walls, smaller colony size, and they have adapted to their environment. Also, they swarm freely, and their walls are covered in propolis, which has amazing anti-fungal properties. Tom says you shouldn't open the hives in the winter at all, and recommends you add more thickness to bee-box walls for insulation. He thinks mites are only a problem if the queen is not strong enough, and you should re-queen if your mite population is a problem.

Robin invited everyone to contact her if they would like to hear more about Tom's presentation.

Discussion; suggestion – use a rake to rough up the inside of our hives so bees will coat it with propolis to increase bee health and

protection; also, we should improve insulation in our bee yards; black hoodies are ok in the winter but not in the spring as they trap too much heat in the hive. If you used silver you could leave it on longer and not worry about excess heat. Robin asked everyone to send any related ideas to her by email.

### 3. Valentine's Day and the honeybee - Oliver

Honeybees were a gift to the earth from Venus, the benevolent bee doesn't do any harm when it interacts with the flowers. Pollination is a natural occurrence when the honey bee interacts with the male and female parts of the flower, which results in giving us fruits and vegetables. Another anecdote is that a human's mouth has both male and female parts; the man is the tongue while the woman is the lips. When the tongue and lips come together they create words. Sufi's have a saying - before you speak -ask yourself 1. Is it kind? 2. Is it necessary? And 3. Is it the truth?

Honey is considered an aesthetic wedding gift, representing longevity (it doesn't spoil) so it represents eternal love. St Valentine was under house arrest and the judge tested him by demanding the saint heal the judges' sightless daughter. The Saint laid hands on her and treated her with honey and cured her blindness. Today many people use blueberry honey diluted in water to bathe irritated eyes (to make your own eyewash, the ratio is 1 spoon of honey to a liter of water).

### 4. Beekeepers' Report (Luc/Alana)

No report

### 5. New yard possibility - Bernie

Bernie had been in touch with a person at Sunnybrook Hospital for investigating putting a new bee yard there. That location didn't work out, however the same person has asked if TBC would review a location at a condo complex where he lives. There is a professionally built green roof / garden area that is off limits to tenants but might suit well for a new bee yard. Bernie will see when Luc has time to review the location.

Novotel did not accept our budget proposal to create a bee yard at their hotel.

UBISOFT's manager has a life-threatening allergy so there will not be a new bee yard at that location. However, their employees (and some of their budget) may join us to create / care for a new yard at

another site. That gives us the possibility of going back to the Novotel site or using that support to start a new bee yard at the Condo complex.

## 6. Committee Reports

Finance - Nancy

We have completed our obligation to the two community gardens starting their own bee yards. We will continue to support them due to our relationship with FOODShare.

We will concentrate on our "friends of the environment" grant.

We have not had any workshops due to COVID.

Equipment - Robin/Maureen

Robin reported that garden boxes are being built and should be ready for April.

Website - Jonathan/Melanie - no report

Social Media (Jessica/Jude)

Please share our social media with Orlando (Food share) so it will get forwarded to their partners as well.

Education - Audrey/Maria

Gita gave the report; the education committee met to brainstorm areas of interest. This would be to share these areas with TBC members and on the website. They request all members offer their ideas and the committee will organize a presentation.

Maria Kastan pointed out that people can go to observe native / wild bees.

Membership - Nicki/Lynne/Christine/Kathleen

No report

Health & Safety - Bernie/Helen/Alana

Wear your mask, wash your hands and stay 6 feet apart

Accessibility (Lynne/Kerry/Maria)

Lynne reported hives are being built, which will be more accessible to people who have physical challenges. The hives will be low to avoid heavy lifting and eliminating the need to access high / hard to reach areas of the hive.

Equipment - Robin

We were out to Black Creek and Downsvew, will feed. Losses higher than usual at Downsvew, sadly. OSC looks ok, but will feed if necessary.

7. Bees in the City substitute (Danae)

Robin reported - we need to brainstorm topics / activities to engage people in beekeeping. She suggested using our Youtube channel to attract interest.

8. Any Other Business -

Currently Foodshare is accepting applications to hire a new beekeeper.

Maria requested seed donations to be sent to her, this is in support of the "Seedy Saturday" event coming up shortly. Maria will forward an email with information and links.

Next Meetings:

March: Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup>

April: Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup>