

Mea culpa!!!

Your Western Apicultural Society Journal editor committed the ultimate offense with the May issue by missing two important advertisements. Truthfully, I set them aside to put on a different page and neglected to pick them up again.

As this is the most critical season for both Pierco and Olympic Wilderness Apiaries, I am attempting to rectify the situation by creating this extra mailing for them. Please help me mitigate this serious oversight by paying close attention to their information.

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WAS Journal Editor
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A brief history...

In 1997, we began capturing wild honeybee swarms from very remote locations on the North Olympic Peninsula of Washington State. Believing they may have developed some natural resistance to varroa destructor, we began our Survivor Bee Breeding Program by:

- continuing to capture wild swarms
- including USDA Primorsky Russian and SMR/VSH breeder queens
- diligently protecting our isolated mating yards
- routinely conducting laboratory testing
- improving nutrition by supplying quality protein and herbal food supplements.
- applying a rigorous sterilization routine
- implementing an improved hive management system based on our observance of survivor colonies in bee trees (see our Modified Bee Tree Hive system at www.wildernessbees.com)
- and remaining firmly committed to a chemical-free natural selection process

The early years of our success, met a devastating blow in the winter of 2007/2008 when a series of environmental stressors converged with the arrival of nosema ceranae in our apiary. Withholding chemicals to pursue natural selection in conditions of extreme exposure to this new fungus, with all of its associated viruses, was a high risk choice for us to make.

Armed with the knowledge that our bees had been thriving in Northwest Washington's fungus-rich environment within the world's largest temperate rainforest, we decided to gamble on the prospect that our bees could develop a tolerance to this new microsporidian as well.

As we held our breath, two successive years of 90% loss passed, followed by 2 additional years of 50% loss.

Though spring is late in coming this year, those heavy winter losses have resulted in hardy unmedicated bees that are now maintaining healthy populations in spite of staggering n. ceranae spore loads.

By carefully selecting our breeder queens from this core group of survivors, we offer regionally unique queen lines that demonstrate a genetic makeup capable of withstanding many of the lethal pathogens that threaten honeybees everywhere.