



News from The Melissa Garden

**April 2011
Newsletter**



Buzzing in the Garden by Lailey

Dear friends,

As always, we send our very best wishes to you and your bees. We hope your bees are strong and thriving in this new season. This newsletter has updates on our classes, honeybee films, a bee photography exhibit in San Francisco, and thoughts on tending your hives from Michael Joshin Thiele. It also has two delightful images from San Francisco artist Lailey Elliot, age five.

Bzzzzzzz,

Barbara, Jacques, Priscilla, Michael, Kate and Juan

From the garden by Barbara Schlumberger

For those of you who haven't seen Queen of the Sun or The Vanishing of the Bees, be sure to do so. Both did some filming at The Melissa Garden and did a wonderful job of depicting the dire issues around CCD and the myriad contributing factors.

Another documentary that shouldn't be missed is I AM. Let us know how you feel about each or any of the above. We would love to hear from you.

Reflections on comb and movable frames by Michael Joshin Thiele

Comb is the extended tissue of the single bee and it is an inner organ of the bee colony understood as a super-organism. The whole gestalt of the bee colony is that of an intricate dance between multiple elements, inside and outside of the physical nest, and comb reflects this inter-relationship. Any manipulation of this medium will have not only effects on the well being of the bees, but also on the extended environment and ecosystem. Because the colony is deeply embedded in its wider environment, it is understood as an indicator organism, reflecting the well being of many life forms and landscapes. The colony represents an important focal point of the life force in general. The colony becomes something like a pulse of life. When we palpate and feel this pulse, we are able to get a sense of the health of Gaia, the earth. E.O. Wilson describes the bees as being the "heart of the biosphere" of the earth.

Since the 19th century invention of movable frames and implants (plastic and wax foundation), the entire inner environment of the bee nest underwent a fundamental and most unfortunate change. This has altered tremendously the bee's life body on many levels. We are at a place where cultural conditioning has resulted in the belief that movable frames belong to bees, almost as comb represents part of their gestalt. There are state regulations in the US which even require the exclusive usage of movable frames and make it into a mandatory practice.

Our vision at the Melissa Garden is to make the natural gestalt of the bees into the fundamental focus of all activity and interaction. Part of this endeavor is our intention to fully support the unfolding of this emanation in its most natural and wholesome way. This changed the

way we interface with frames. Also, we began questioning the practice of using frames and started experimenting with modified hives with top bar frames and frame-less hollow tree trunks. The former consists of top bar hive and Haengekorb, the later was set up on stands and has been moved into trees last winter. To allow the bees to build natural comb or to offer them frame-less hives is not only to their benefit, but also is very gratifying for us who live with them.

Living with bees often feels like having to search for answers in the "unknown", and we would like to encourage fellow apiculturists to do the same: To listen to one's own heart.



**Bee Photos on Exhibit at Flour + Water in San Francisco
May 14th thru June 25th
Flour + Water Restaurant, 2401 Harrison St. (at 20th Street)**

"In Honor of Melissa," photographs by Amanda Lane, transports us into the real lives of bees, revealing their inner treasures and their relevance for human culture, global well being and survival. How can the plight of the honey bees be an impulse for renewal and necessary ecological change? How can we all become part of saving the honey bees? Opening Reception, Saturday May 14th 11:00am to 3:00pm Presentation by Michael Joshin Thiele of Gaia Bees 11:30am & 1:30pm. Meet the Artist Amanda Lane of Camera Locavora. Silent Auction.

Classes and Tours at The Melissa Garden

Saturday, April 30, 2011: 10-4pm

Living with bees: A new holistic approach to Apiculture

with Michael Joshin Thiele

This workshop will reframe the basics of apiculture. We will have the opportunity to approach and study bees in a holistic way. We will examine the life forces of bees on various levels and look at new ways of taking care of bees. Biodynamics and consciousness studies will be part of it. We will investigate our own range of perception and how we can deepen our relationship with the bees. The life of the bees is centered around altruism, love and service. They are a gift given to this world. How can they inspire us to establish a new relationship with them and the world? The following topics will be part of this workshop:

Fundamentals of apiculture & a new paradigm; the bee colony, understood in it's oneness; study of the life forces of the bees; biodynamic standards of apiculture; alternative hive styles; varroa & bees: A new approach; preparations for the coming bee season; bees and their relevance for human culture and survival; new levels of communication; earth stewardship and apiculture;

This course will be an opportunity to prepare for a new approach on various levels for the 2011 bee year. For beginners and those who wish to learn more about a symbiotic strategy. Most of the class will be held outside, weather permitting. Please dress accordingly and bring a bag lunch.

Fee: \$50.00

Sunday, May 15, 2011: 10-4pm

Living with Bees and All Others

With Barbara Schlumberger and Michael Joshin Thiele

Today will be a day of reverence for all the creatures that live, love and abide in The Melissa Garden, as well as the humans that come to venerate life here. The Melissa Garden is a place that reflects the aliveness of the Silence from which all arises. To deeply appreciate this Mystery, we will spend much of the day in quiet reflection, as we move throughout the property in mindfulness. We will approach bees on a soul level and we will offer exercises to venture into new levels of relating.

Feel free to bring your journals, poetry, and art supplies. Or come unadorned with only your awe and curiosity, ready to explore with all

of your senses. Please join us, even if you are not living with bees at the moment.

Bring a lunch. Snacks and tea provided.

Fee: \$50

June 5, 10 AM

Daily Acts Tour of The Melissa Garden

Join us at the Melissa Garden, a honeybee sanctuary founded in 2007 to create a center for holistic beekeeping and honeybee-centric educational and cultural activities for a potluck lunch and to hear distinct perspectives from three local beekeepers.

Register with www.dailyacts.org

Garden Tour Date schedule for 2011:

- May 6, Friday -- *Kate Frey*
- May 14, Saturday -- *Barbara Schlumberger*
- June 3, Friday -- *Kate Frey*
- June 17, Friday -- *Barbara Schlumberger*
- July 8, Friday -- *Barbara Schlumberger*
- July 16, Saturday -- *Barbara Schlumberger*
- August 5, Friday -- *Kate Frey*
- August 13, Saturday -- *Barbara Schlumberger*
- September 9, Friday -- *Kate Frey*
- September 17, Saturday -- *Barbara Schlumberger*
- October 7, Friday -- *Kate Frey*

There is a charge of \$20 per person. We have a group rate of 8 or more. Please ask. Tours begin promptly at 10:30 and end at noon. Plan to arrive 15 minutes early for tea and snacks. There are picnic tables under the oaks so feel free to bring your lunch. Cameras are OK. Be sure to bring a notebook.



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