



News from The Melissa Garden

**February 2011
Newsletter**



Dear friends,

What a long, cold and wet winter the bees here in Northern CA have endured. So we are particularly happy to have had a few warm sunny days recently, and watch the bees in their own enthusiastic version of "spring fever."

Kate and Barbara just returned from the Eco Farm conference where they gave a presentation on The Melissa Garden. We have added a few classes this spring; see details below. Also, this year's Sonoma Bee Symposium has been set for March 19 with a theme of "Medicine from the Hive." We have top national speakers this year and strongly encourage you to buy your tickets early.

We hope you are blessed in your proximity to the bees and that they are thriving now and into the next season,
Barbara, Jacques, Priscilla, Michael, Kate and Juan

From the Garden by Barbara Schlumberger

While we await the awakening of the garden, Kate and I spent 4 days at EcoFarm down the coast at Asilomar. Many of you who are savvy to this 30 year old organization know that it is the one that shapes the conversation towards the goals of just and ecological food and farming systems.

We attended classes on California Water Policy, Organic versus Conventional Dairy Farms and The Heirloom Tomato: From Garden to Table to name a few. Our own class was titled Bee Sustainable: Farming for Pollinators. Jessa Guisse from the Xerces Society also shared our class. She spoke about her work with hundreds of farmers teaching them about planting hedgerows for the pollinators. Fascinating! 1000 acres in California alone have been planted in the past 2 years.

If you want to know the details, come and roam the garden with either Kate or me this spring and summer and discover for yourself the diversity of flowers that attract a profusion of pollinators. We began as a honeybee sanctuary but we have evolved into a sanctuary for insects of all kinds as well as a source of inspiration for all who come.

Won't you join us and learn how to plant your own? Let's continue to spread the word throughout the world, one garden at a time.

2011 Sonoma Bee Symposium

2011 Sonoma Bee Symposium Set for Saturday, March 19th Nationally Known Authorities to Speak on "Medicine from the Hive"

WHAT: 2011 Sonoma Bee Symposium

WHEN: Saturday, March 19th, 2011, 9 AM to 5 PM

WHERE: Sebastopol Veteran's Building, 282 High Street, Sebastopol
www.sonoma-county.org/parks/halls/sebastopol.htm

TICKETS: Tickets are \$30.00 in advance and \$35.00 at the door. They are available online at www.beekind.com

--- Morning Sessions ---

Bee Venom Therapy, Historical Perspective into Modern Applications
(Frederique Keller, L.Ac.,DOM)

The Revolutionary Effects of Honey on Human Metabolism
(Ron Fessenden, MD, MPH)

Socialized Medicine in Honey Bee Colonies
(Dr. Marla Spivak)

--- Afternoon Sessions ---

Medicinal Use of Raw Honey, Pollen, Propolis, Royal Jelly, Bee Bread & Beeswax
(Frederique Keller, L.Ac.,DOM)

How to Sleep Your Way to Better Health with Honey
(Ron Fessenden, MD, MPH)

Bee Health and Breeding
(Dr. Marla Spivak)

Upcoming classes/events:

Register at www.themelissagarden.com

Saturday, February 12, 2011: 10-4pm

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 & and 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. The two dates can be booked individually. Most of the class will be held outside, weather permitting. Please dress accordingly and bring a bag lunch.

Fee: \$50.00 for an individual day, \$90.00 for both Saturdays.

Living with Bees and All Others
With Barbara Schlumberger and Michael Joshin Thiele

Sunday, May 15, 2011, 10-4pm

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: \$50.00

Garden Tour Date schedule for 2011:

Kate Frey's tours: (Fridays) May 6, June 3, July 8, August 5, September 9, October 7

Barbara Schlumberger's tours: (Saturdays) May 14, June 18, July 16, August 13, September 17

Fee: \$20 per person



The song of life by Michael Thiele

The break in the winter rains brings early spring light and warmer temperatures into the life of the bees. Mustard is blooming, and acacia trees are slowly opening their patient yellow blossoms. Fresh pollen is carried into the colonies. The bien (oneness of the colony) is growing again. Winter is waning at the Melissa Garden. In the past 3 years all the hives were located in the center of the Melissa Garden. There were up to 9 colonies within approximately one acre. In our pursuit of supporting the bien for it's health and in it's natural life cycles, we realized that we had to change the bien density throughout TMG. When we observe the natural pattern of swarms, we will find that swarms have a strong preference towards moving away from the home site. Studies of feral populations show that a low density of colonies and natural/feral living conditions increase the health of honey bees. A few days ago, we walked the entire 40 acres of the surrounding land, in preparation of a shift for the apiarium at TMG. In order to decrease hive density, we located several places for future hives in various small micro climates. Ideally there would be 400 yards in between hives. Some locations will only provide nest cavities for swarms. They will be monitored from a distance. Many indigenous cultures of Africa currently live with bees in such an extensive way with healthy colonies. We are looking forward to this shift. If this inspires you, please join us in this effort and share your experience. Then think about commercial bees. Last month I walked into a small area in a vineyard with 50 hives, all sitting next to each other - dropped there for the winter, and to be shipped into the almonds in February. I cried, standing in the midst of these deeply suffering bees. They had all kinds of antibiotics and other pesticides in them (the owner told me about their treatment procedure). Each had a can of corn syrup on top. It is so obvious, that these are not healthy living conditions for this animal. It reflects so clearly our mind set and the way we see the world, and it reveals our limited sense of self and how empty life has become - spirit less. In the end we can see how the suffering of the

bien is our own suffering. Through our limited understanding, an agricultural system evolved which co-created commercial beekeeping. I am monitoring a feral hive in an oak tree, which is 300 yards away from the 50 "commercial" hives. The feral bien felt the strong and almost overwhelming presence of the other hives and it had increased it's level of entrance protection. The bien in the oak tree was very nervous and defensive like in late summer. I wonder whether it could sense the mourning of the other hives. And how about the mustard and the coho salmon in the nearby creek? Do they sense this imbalance, do they feel the suffering? Does the blooming acacia tree sing while providing the bien with her yellow medicine? Can we hear this sound, this voice, this calling from the bees? Can we hear it within our heart? I believe the bien invites us to listen; to listen to the songs of the flowers and to the song of life. Bees have been the messengers from the heavens for millennia, and now again they strike us through their suffering, to wake us up. Let's all wake up!

See: www.gaiabees.com

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Forward email



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