

You're receiving this email because of your relationship with The Melissa Garden.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



## News from [The Melissa Garden](#)

**Issue #4**

**June 2009**

Dear friends,

Warm wishes as we move into summer.

The Santa Rosa Press Democrat recently did a wonderful feature on The Melissa Garden so our phone and email have really been buzzing! [Click here](#) to read this story online.

Our newsletter is sent every two months. Starting with this June issue, we are including an update on the bees from Michael Thiele, and news on What's in Bloom from Kate Frey. Scroll down!

See below for our class and garden tour schedule. We have a class with Kate Frey in late July on Designing a Honeybee Garden. We have also added a class on the principles of Bee Venom Therapy with Anthroposophic physician Dr. Kelly Sutton. We haven't put it on the calendar yet, but we will have Uwe

Bodenschatz back this November. Some of you took Uwe's class last October. He lives in Germany and is an advocate of Biodynamic



beekeeping. Also, Priscilla will be giving an introduction to apitherapy this fall, but we haven't set the date yet. More news!!! For our full day classes, we are adding the option to order a yummy box lunch.

To register for a class, send an email to [queenbee@themelissagarden.com](mailto:queenbee@themelissagarden.com), or leave a voice message at (707) 433-2114. Be sure to include both your email address and phone number when you make your reservation.

Bzzzzzz!

Barbara, Jacques, Michael, Leslie, Priscilla, Kate and Juan

### **"Solstice: A Holistic Look at the Bees" by Michael Thiele**

Bees are sun-beings. Old cultures referred to them as being sent from the heavens. The place where they settle seems to be where the sky and the earth are meeting. With feral bees, we could observe their natural preferences and would find that bees prefer to settle around 6 feet off the ground. They only touch the ground to collect water and to die. The Colony moves with the sun throughout the year. After the darkness of the winter, the longer days are accompanied by the beginning growth of the "Bien" (the wholeness of the colony, as an individual single being). With the "waxing" of the longer days, new, white, virgin wax emerges within the colony and fresh comb is appearing. We are approaching the peak of the expansion and the growth of the "Bien".

White comb is still growing "from the heavens" down towards to the earth. One of our first swarms was moved into the round "Haengekorb" in early April. With a strong force, it penetrated the inner space and grew rapidly - nourished by the sun and many blossoms. Then, in late May, it swarmed! Within barely two months it had reached the strength to move forward and bear another offspring. The swarm ended up staying at the Melissa Garden and got moved into a new hive. During a recent tour, we opened the lower part of the hive and found several



Queen Cells. One can be seen in the picture (upper part, a little bit right of the middle). We are curious to see, whether it will swarm again or stay contained. Below the queen cell is drone brood, typically located closer to the earth and more on the sides. The Solstice



will mark the threshold within the seasons and also for the bees. Comb building will soon start waning, the growth and expansion of the "Bien" will slowly turn around and swing into the opposite direction. The light of the sun can always be seen in the darkness of the hive, as the beautiful, white and translucent comb. The bee hive is often perceived as a miracle, and a reminder of the miracle which life is. Thank you for this gift.

Enjoy the high time of the season.

**What's Blooming in The Melissa Garden? By Kate Frey**

### **The Outgoing Winter/Spring Annuals**

Spring is ebbing and summer is accelerating in the garden. The last spring flowers- the Clarkias, Phacelia tanacetifolia, Echium plantagineum, Shirley poppies Papaver rhoes, Crimson clover, Borage, California poppies and cilantro are declining in the early summer heat and ripening seeds. The colors are fading somewhat from brilliant hues to a more drab appearance as we let the seeds mature on the plants so they will reseed in the garden and orchard areas for next season. These plants all do best germinating in the fall with the first rains, then grow over the

winter and bloom starting about March. They don't like hot, dry weather



and it is a signal to them to set seed while they still have the soil moisture resources. As we remove these plants it opens up space for additional perennials and annuals we discover and want to include in the garden. Some of the annuals are in the "take over" category of garden denizens- so they

should be planted in appropriate places or some plants judiciously weeded out when there are areas where they may take over. They are all bee favorites and gorgeous to look at. In other areas like the orchard, we encourage them to rampage, and will wait until the seed is fully mature, when we will mow the area for fire safety. Most of these species can be purchased from seed catalogs or picked up from Le Ballisters seeds in Santa Rosa, who also do mail order. (707) 526-6733

### **Perennials of Interest and In Bloom**

A number of perennials are in full bloom or coming into bloom, and the garden is already very full of form, texture and color. *Phacelia bolanderi* is in full bloom and a favorite with the native bees as well as honeybees. It is a native plant to about 1 foot high and 1.5 feet wide and is soft blue. *Salvia sonomensis* is in full bloom and is native and a honeybee favorite. It forms a long lived groundcover and is very drought resistant. Another good, very drought resistant native sage is *Salvia mellifera*, or black sage, a major bee favorite. Some of the white sage, *Salvia apiana*, is also blooming. It is an upright plant with striking white foliage and white blooms. A little used but extremely floriferous native coming into bloom

is *Eriophyllum lanatum*, a low chaparral plant that is covered tightly with small yellow daisies. It is almost solid yellow. *Penstemon heterophyllus*, the deep blue native penstemon is blooming right next to it in a very cheerful color combination. The bog sage *Salvia uliginosa*, 4-5 feet tall, lush green and decorated with large blue flowers is just beginning to bloom. It needs regular water but is surprisingly tough. Bees love it all season. *Gaura* is just coming into bloom, and has very few bee visitors compared with later in the season when it is a favorite. *Linaria pupurea* is blooming- wonderful purple blooms on bluish foliage. Various *Nepeta* or catmints are in full bloom or just past full and are honeybee favorites. The spent flowers can be cut way back when they look unsightly, or if you don't have time new growth will emerge and bloom again. They can be cut back in winter. *Bidens* is full of small, brightly colored yellow daisies and is gaining momentum. It is a honeybee, native bee and butterfly favorite and grows to about 2x2 feet. It blooms all summer and requires no maintenance. Thymes are in full bloom and are dotted with feasting honeybees.

### **The Best of the Best**

Blooming around the garden are a couple of native shrubs that honeybees, native bees, hoverflies and many beneficial insects are going crazy for. They are a must in every garden in California. Both are very drought resistant. The first is the coffee berry, *Rhamnus californica*, and the mountain coffeeberry, *Rhamnus tomentella*. They are evergreen shrubs that range from 4-5 to 12 feet tall. The species grow large and are more rangy. Various cultivars are smaller and more compact like 'Mound San Bruno,' 'Leather Leaf,' and 'Eve Case'. The shrubs themselves are not overly showy but are no to almost no maintenance and one of the very best insect plants you can plant. Honeybees prefer it to almost anything. The other native shrub that is filled with life is Yerba Santa or *Eriodictyon californica*. It is one of those plants considered a weed and unappreciated, but has virtues suitable for gardens. It is an upright shrub with dark green leaves shaped like a bay trees, but longer, and has pleasantly aromatic, gummy foliage and has been used medicinally. It has very attractive sprays of white flowers held above the

foliage that bees and many other insects love. It might be hard to find in cultivation but native plant nurseries and botanical garden plant sales should be sources of them.

Annie's Annuals in Richmond, CA is a great source of bee friendly plants and many, many other worthy plants. She does mail order and retail sales at the nursery. 1-888-266-4370  
<http://www.anniesannuals.com>

In the Santa Rosa area, California Flora in Fulton is another great source of appropriate plants for California and a real favorite. They have great plant information with each species. <http://www.calfloranursery.com/index.html>

## Events & Classes

### **Tours of The Melissa Garden with garden designer Kate Frey**

#### **Garden tour date schedule for 2009:**

- Friday, July 3: 10-11:30am
- Friday, August 7: 10-11:30am
- Friday, September 11: 10-11:30am
- Friday, October 2: 10-11:30am

Come experience the buzz and blossoms at our honeybee sanctuary with garden designer Kate Frey. We will have regular tours throughout the year on the first Friday of most months. Learn why we decided to create this special garden as a honeybee habitat, and about some of the honeybee and pollinator plants in our lush garden. One of our beekeepers will be on the tour to give a brief introduction to some of our "alternative hives." Wear comfortable shoes.

Fee \$25

*Kate Frey is an internationally distinguished garden designer who has*

*been awarded two gold medals at London's Chelsea Flower Show. She worked for 18 years at Fetzer's organic garden in Hopland, CA which was used as a test plot for pollinators by Dr. Gordon Frankie at U. C. Berkeley. She now specializes in creating beautiful habitat and pollinator gardens.*

### **Growing a Honeybee Garden with Kate Frey**

Sunday, July 26, 9:30 AM - Noon

Honeybees are attracted to plants with specific flower types and concentrations of nectar. What are these characteristics, and how do you successfully grow the plants that have them? Participants in the class will be given an extensive list of annuals, perennials, and shrubs that bees prefer, and will be able to see and get to know the growing plants and their flowers in The Melissa Garden. The practicalities of site assessment and preparation, weed control, irrigation systems, plant sourcing and cultural techniques will also be addressed in this class. It will take place outdoors at The Melissa Garden, and there will be ample opportunity for questions.

Fee: \$55

### **Overview of Bee Venom Therapy (BVT) with Dr. Kelly Sutton**

Sunday, July 26: 2 - 4:30pm

Bee stings have been used therapeutically throughout history to improve local circulation and reduce pain in cases of arthritis and rheumatism. Today, BVT is being used worldwide to help improve a very wide variety of medical conditions, including difficult illnesses such as MS and cancer. This class will cover the basic principles of bee venom therapy, including the major constituents in bee venom and their actions; how to collect bees in a jar for transport; how to do a test sting; allergic reactions and

what to do; signs that the body has established "bee venom tolerance"; a few basic stinging protocols, noting acupuncture points on the body commonly used in stinging; and an introduction to and experience in using BVT. Note that this class is intended to provide a conceptual understanding of BVT and should not be considered a training in this protocol. Those interested in practicing BVT should complete a comprehensive training with a group such as the American Apitherapy Society, and should also be familiar with the use of an Epi-Pen and possible life-threatening reactions to bee venom.

Fee: \$55

*Kelly Sutton first trained as a M.D. and went on to study Anthroposophical medicine, as introduced by Rudolf Steiner and Dr. Ita Wegman in the 1920's in Europe. She sees patients at her practice in Fair Oaks and regularly visits Sonoma County to see children at Waldorf schools. She was introduced to bee venom therapy through the Anthroposophical medical community and uses bee stings when appropriate with her patients.*

**"The Beehive - A Path Toward Contemplating the Human Soul" with Michael Thiele and Barbara Schlumberger**

Saturday, September 5, 2009: 10am-4pm

Rudolf Steiner described the bee colony as being completely permeated by love. How can we today re-discover that love within us and how can bees become a deep inspiration to our life? For millennia humans included bees in their most sacred places of life. Monastic settings were always complemented by bee hives. Bees have been part of religious ritual and inspirational to culture and arts. This class invites everybody, beekeeper or not, to The Melissa Garden for a day of contemplation as well as a day of unusual exploration of ways in which bees can be a medium of inspiration for the human soul/heart. Participants are welcome to bring something to share, whether it's a poem, art or something else important

to you. Parts of the class will be outside - please dress accordingly and bring a bag lunch.

Fee: \$55.00

*Michael Thiele grew up on a farm in a tiny village in central Germany. He has been deeply influenced by the German biodynamic beekeeping movement. Michael lived with his wife and children at San Francisco Zen Center, where he was the beekeeper and received lay-ordination. Barbara Schlumberger gets to live at The Melissa Garden with her husband Jacques, Luke the Tibetan terrier and Horus the Peacock. She has been practicing "inspired beekeeping" for several years and takes great pleasure in the direct teaching the bees provide. It is a mutually beneficial and cherished relationship.*

### **"Contract & Health" with Michael Thiele**

Saturday, October 24, 2009: 10am-4pm

We live in a challenging time for bees and we will have the health of the bees as a special center point of this class. We will explore different treatment/ management approaches within the organic and biodynamic realm, investigate the meaning of health and provide information to maneuver through the challenges (such as varroa ) posed to bees and "bee-tenders". We will follow the path of the bees into Fall and Winter and examine how to prepare them for the upcoming months during the time of contraction. Early outlook into the next bee season and study of the life forces of the bees will be part of this day. For beginning and seasoned beekeepers. Parts of the class will be outside - please dress accordingly and bring a bag lunch.

Fee: \$55.00

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe**®

This email was sent to queenbee@themelissagarden.com by

[queenbee@themelissagarden.com](mailto:queenbee@themelissagarden.com).

[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe](#)™ | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



The Melissa Garden | 10177 Westside Road | Healdsburg | CA | 95448