

BC-TTP Varroa Project

by Julia Common

From time to time I receive a notice from Facebook that they have created a slide show for me - something like "Your Best Moments in Delta" or albums titled "Suggested Sharing Moments". As annoying or invasive as I find the idea of this, in fact I often love what they have chosen for me.

In another type of "sharing" I thought I would send in a few pictures of the absolutely splendid times I have had in my yard this year, simply because I offered my pollinator colonies to the Tech Transfer Program for monitoring in their 2022 Varroa Project.

I had thought that taking part in the project would add to my labours, complicate my management, slow me down and probably embarrass me if and when disease or ridiculous mite levels were exposed.

In fact the experience of working with the TTP team was quite the contrary - having Nuria and her intern Tim has been a huge lift to my little operation, and I am so happy for my original decision to participate. What a bonus it became to have these two drive into my yards bringing fresh ideas, energy and a few laughs as well.

Mite sampling is a vital part of my operation - as it is for all of us - and having Nuria and Tim help out with the lifting made the entire process just a joy. They arrived punctually, having managed to find each of my yards! All the equipment came out of the trunk in amazing foldable containers, each filled with any and all supplies needed - an orderly and very tidy procedure. They set up shop and we just rolled into it. They virtually did all the work while I had a lovely time inspecting my colonies. Knowing mite levels for all the hives before we left the yard was magic, and being able to discuss and plan my management accordingly with Nuria also very reassuring.



Oh and did I mention the wonderful swag of TTP ball caps?

We always worked quietly and left the apiary and bees in total calmness and order. Nuria, with her extensive background in research and practical inspecting and beekeeping, has been a wonderful sounding board for issues both in the field and for those academic ponderings that come of an evening.

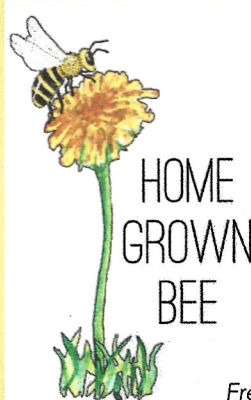


Inspecting and mite rolls in the blueberries.

So all to say, we have many challenges in beekeeping, and the opportunities to have discussions in the yard in the company of a professional when there is no crisis going on are rare, and totally worth seeking. It really adds another important layer to the support I have experienced over the years from our Provincial Apiculturist and from my local Inspector. As for the larger outcome from the new TTP program, that we will be given more practical guidance with our management - bring it on!

And to circle round to Facebook, I have even started following the BC-TTP page, and the postings are timely and interesting and sometimes just give me that extra nudge to go the extra mile for my bees.

It has been a fortunate season for me so far - any EFB was cleared up with a few manipulations, chalkbrood was not ever present and my honey is in someone else's extraction house. Back to keeping the bees and getting ready for winter...a fine rhythm for the plodding beekeeper.



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