

Note: If you would like to **register for Beescape**, please go to our website, Beescape.org  
Also note: For the purposes of this “floating” Newsletter, we have removed the hyper links and have included all links at the end of the document (numbers correspond with superscripts in the text where hyperlinks were).

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Dear Beescape User,

### **Greetings from the Beescape Team!**

This is the fourth of our new monthly updates (December) from us here at Beescape! As always, we will use this email list to share Beescape updates, interesting study results, and other relevant information related to Beescape and associated projects! This month we have three main topics to discuss -- HOWEVER, before we delve into this month’s newsletter, we would like to remind you to **fill out your November (Fall) Survival Survey!** This survey is an important component of our annual survival assessment that we use to improve Beescape maps and develop new tools for beekeepers!

First, **we still need your help** to mold the Beescape platform in a manner that most benefits YOU! **We still need folks to sign up for our Beescape user study to improve the usability of Beescape!** As a ‘thank you’ for participating, we will give each user a \$10 Amazon Gift card - **just in time for your holiday shopping!** Although last month we requested that folks interested in helping visit a link, we had problems with scammers finding the link attempting to exploit the Beescape Project. To avoid this, for those interested, please email Jamie Peeler at peeler@psu.edu and express your interest in participating - we appreciate it very much!!

Second, as winter approaches ever closer, many begin to suffer from cabin fever. One summer-related task that may distract from the winter doldrums is to plan **your 2020 flower gardens!** In the course of your designing, you may wonder to yourself: “**do ornamental flowers in my garden benefit honey bees or wild bees?**”? You might be **tempted to think** that annual ornamentals like sweet alyssum and marigolds provide *no* benefit to wild bees. To the contrary, new research from the Grozinger Lab led by Emily Erickson suggests that many garden flowers provide potentially valuable food resources for a variety of wild bee species, however, **the benefit may vary by cultivar.** When planting your garden with ornamentals like zinnias this year, consider planting cultivars that produce many florets and, perhaps most importantly, have **long bloom times.** Read the full article for free [here](#)<sup>1</sup> or a summary [here](#)<sup>2</sup>. You can use this [tool](#)<sup>3</sup> to help find ornamental plants that are attractive to different pollinators and will thrive in your gardens.

Finally, a comment about honey bee winter mite management. As a reminder to folks managing apiaries, warm fall days are an excellent time to **treat your colonies for Varroa mites,** especially using treatments like **Oxalic acid.** Click [here](#)<sup>4</sup> for an informative seminar from Steve Repasky on oxalic acid use. This natural compound, originally derived from **woodsorrel**<sup>5</sup> (scientific name: *Oxalis* spp.) **like that growing in your garden,** is one of the best methods for treating bees late in the season. The two most common methods of application are ‘dribble’ and “sublimation”. The dribble method involves mixing oxalic acid with sugar water and dribbling the solution over the cluster of honey bees. With this technique, the acid is physically dispersed over the bees and therefore the mites. Sublimation, more commonly called “oxalic acid vaporization” or “OAV” uses heat to change the acid from solid form to gas, when this happens

tiny acid crystals are dispersed throughout the hive. These crystals are **deadly to varroa mites** they come in contact with but **gentle on your bees**. This method is most effective when applied to colonies that have little to no capped brood as oxalic acid **must make physical contact with each mite** to be effective. Eliminating mites late in fall or early in the winter is an excellent strategy to make sure your honey bees are off to a great start in spring. Have you treated your bees for mites this year?



*Kate Anton, Penn State Univ., administering OAV to colonies in one of our Nittany Valley apiaries*

As always, feel free to contact us at [\*\*beescapepsu@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:beescapepsu@gmail.com) with any questions, comments or concerns! We always love hearing from you.

Sincerely,

**The Beescape Team**



*If you prefer to NOT receive emails from Beescape in the future, please just let us know at [beescapepsu@gmail.com](mailto:beescapepsu@gmail.com)!*

**Links:**

1. <https://academic.oup.com/ee/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ee/nvz133/5626468>
2. <https://www.blog.pollinatorgardens.net/2019/11/which-flowers-attract-most-pollinators.html>
3. <https://protectingbees.njaes.rutgers.edu/find-plants/>
4. <https://vimeo.com/189316753>
5. <https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=OXST>