

## Closing Thoughts

The presence of the beautiful Bee Barn reminds us not only that miracles are possible but also that the organization is maturing and manifesting its existence. 10 years since its foundation and 7 years here in the Blue Ridge Mountains have been filled with the hard work of building up the Sanctuary, with joys and pains, learning and discovering, success and failures. Spikenard has grown from newborn infant to pre-teen, and we all know that this stage in life opens us to the world with possibilities but also challenges. The responsibility for the future of the organization is very much present in our hearts, heads, and hands. Our current efforts are geared towards financial sustainability as well as a succession team for the organization.

The Bee Barn will help us greatly with these steps: it will allow us to offer classes and events throughout the year and with it, increase the income through education and product sales. Through the Bee Barn, this coming year will bring growth and expansion, but also a strain in our fundraising capacities. More than ever we need support for Spikenard's operations.

In the 10 years of Spikenard Farm's existence, a growing number of individuals as well as foundations and businesses have become part of our vision and mission through their contributions, their feelings, thoughts and active work. This has let us carry on developing the Sanctuary where people can experience all that can be done to bring back health and vitality to our beloved honeybees, to the land and to the human beings. This is more important than ever before.

Besides the income from our educational and product offerings, we rely heavily on YOUR WARM SUPPORT. Please let us know that you stand for the new paradigm of care and respect rather than the still prevalent one of take and exploit. We will only be able to move into the future if we stand together and become active. The political & social world situation is a reason to enliven our vision and goals more than ever.

With these thoughts, we send our warm greetings, our immense gratitude for your heart-felt and loyal support, along with best wishes for a light-filled and blessed Holiday Season,

*From all of us at Spikenard Farm*

*Nothing of what we have accomplished would have been possible without your financial help, your good thoughts and prayers.*

*Now at this difficult time, once again, we kindly ask you to open your hearts to the plight of the honeybee and the earth by supporting the work at the Sanctuary with a generous gift.*

\*Please visit our website to view the names of our supporters and our educational offerings for 2017.

*A financial report will be available in January 2017.*

# SPIKENARD FARM HONEYBEE SANCTUARY

## 2016 End-of-Year-Letter

*A very little key will open a very heavy door.*  
~ Charles Dickens

*Dear friends of the Honeybee Sanctuary,*

Looking towards the great challenges that humanity must strive to overcome--environmentally, socially, politically--it is easy to feel the weight of our serious time.

But as the quote from Dickens suggests, we should not shrink from this "heavy door" that stands in our path. The trick is for each of us to find a way to unlock the door, no matter how little the key! The bees, little though they may be, provide us such an inspiration to face the challenges ahead. How is that possible?

The bees carry the secret for a good future as they simply answer the need at hand: flowers need to be pollinated, larvae warmed and fed, honey capped for winter stores. From them we learn that a good future is only secured by serving the needs of the present. But the most important thing we learn by living and working with the bees is their tremendous capacity of love, which they radiate into the environment and inspire in us human beings.

This inspiration is the grounds for all the work we do at Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary. And the substance of love is indeed perceived not only by us, but also by visitors and class participants of all ages. It lifts the worries, deepens breathing, ignites joy and fills the soul with hope—hope for the present and for the future.

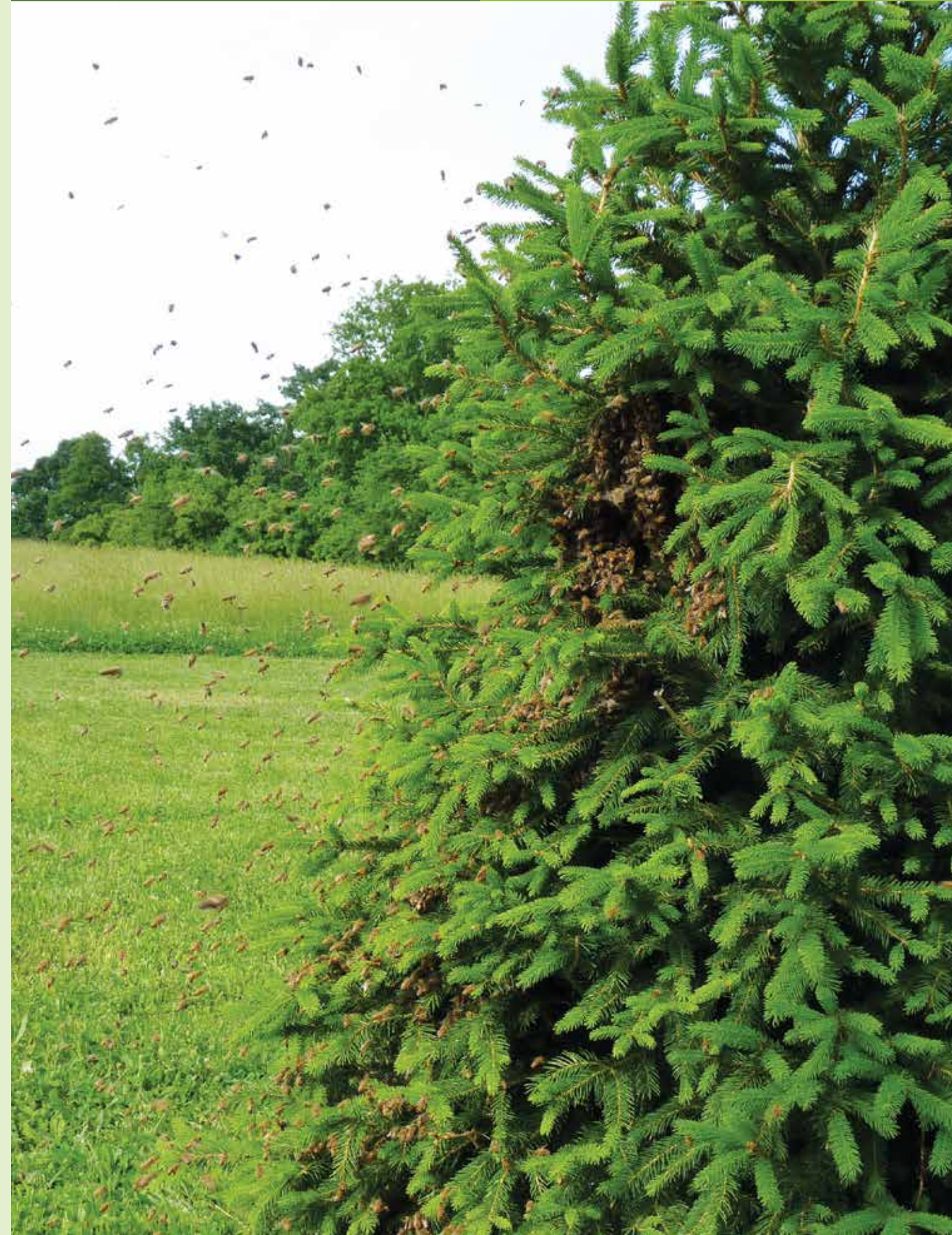
*How incredibly warm I still feel from my experience their at the Sanctuary. Such love. Love is something that is new and alive and being brought me back to my innocent mind, new and alive.* Thank you ~ Sha-Na

Today, more than ever before, we are called to work together and become active for the future life of the Earth. Therefore we reach out to you, as part of an aware, conscious and vibrant community, to be as generous as you can and help us carry on the *work for the earth, the bees and, at a deeper level, for a change of heart and mind. This is the need of the present time.*

Our hearts are filled with deep gratitude for each and every one of you who makes this Honeybee Sanctuary possible, and we humbly...

**Give Thanks**

*Gunther Vivian Alex*





*Your team-teaching approach is seamless, the beauty of the bee sanctuary is awe-inspiring, the rhythm of moving between the lecture & questions in the outdoor classroom, to the fields for the practical application makes for a deeper understanding. I enjoyed being in the presence of a master teacher. Thank you.*  
~ Lisa H.

## Update on the Bees

The 2015/2016 winter was a difficult one for beekeepers in America with the national average loss of 44%. While Spikenard experienced a much milder loss than the professionals, we too learned that the challenges of a changing climate are also affecting the honeybees drastically. The oscillating temperatures are the latest challenge: if the winter brings temperatures above 60 degrees, then the bees may start expanding again, with the queen laying eggs. In order to keep the brood alive they need to maintain temperatures around 95 degrees and if the outer temperatures drop suddenly, they are no longer able to do this. The colony's instinct is to take care of the "babies" by all means, so the possibility that the colony is not able to keep the necessary temperature is high. What beekeepers all over the world are learning is that INSULATION and a well-built hive is the key for the future. Spikenard has always advocated the importance of a well-insulated hive, knowing that warmth and scent in a colony is a crucial factor for a good health...

To read the full Update on the Bees, please visit:

[www.spikenardfarm.org/articles-resources](http://www.spikenardfarm.org/articles-resources)

## Accomplishments in 2016

- It has been an amazing year for the *Sanctuary*, with the new Bee Barn being the biggest impact on the land. (See Capital Campaign section for more details)
- The work in the flower gardens, pond, orchards and pollinator fields continues to add value and diversity to our landscape and our research with **pollinator plant cultivars** has gifted the bees with new sources of pollen and nectar to add to their 'medicine cabinet'.
- Thanks to the hard work in the veggie garden, we were able to share a large amount of our **biodynamic vegetables** with our class participants. Enjoying this healthful and delicious food together is always a blessing for all of us.
- Mary Bartlett joined us this year as a team member gifting the Sanctuary with her expertise and love for the plants. Unfortunately she had to leave at the end of August. We thank her for her work and wish her all the best for the future.
- We were blessed with two wonderful **interns**: Caitlin Dickinson from Michigan and Mary Flanagan from Ireland. Mary's stay with us this season was limited to three months due to visa restrictions. We thank her sincerely for all her help and work. Caitlin has been without a doubt, "the best" - a hard worker, good team member, and fast learner, with initiative and wonderful with the bees. We thank her deeply for being with us.
- Overwhelming gratitude goes to our **volunteer** help this season: JL Fogo, Edward Grimes, Bonnie Isabelle, Emily Mabry, Oscar Monterrosa, Kim O'Donnell, Amie Slate, John Trout, Bonnie Young, John Weller and all those who joined us for the *Volunteer Work Day* in October. Their hard work and loving presence were a gift for the bees and for all of us.

## Education and Outreach

- All of the beekeeping and biodynamic preparation workshops were well attended and well received this season.
- The fourth group participating in the **two-year Biodynamic Beekeeping Training** graduated in July. We wish them all lots of strength, determination and equanimity in their future work with and for the bees.
- We also continued the **One-Week Intensive**, which we started in 2015, and it was certainly a highlight in the season. To meet so many incredible people and to work, study, and laugh together for a full week creates a wonderful community of sharing and learning.
- The number of visitors attending the weekly **Open Day** at the Sanctuary continues to increase. Many come to learn more about the work we do with the bees and others come to enjoy the scenery, flowers and gardens.
- Many **school classes, college students, and special groups** came to visit, experience, and learn with us this season, including: St. Joseph's College, Emerson Waldorf School, Cincinnati Waldorf School, Springhouse Community School, Garden Club of Virginia Tech, Wild Gardeners, Green Thumb Garden Club, Floyd Homeschoolers, etc.
- **Gunther's travels** brought him this year to Vermont and Ann Arbor, both workshops with about 100 participants and his talk at the University of Michigan attracted 190 people. Special thanks to Paul & Annie from the Ann Arbor Community Farm and Andrew Mills from the University of Michigan for organizing these events. At the Biodynamic Conference in Santa Fe, he gave a talk and, together with Alex, a well-received beekeeping workshop.

## Capital Campaign

We are so grateful to Omnibuild, the construction company and crew, for accommodating their work with respect to the bees, our workshops and events. The Bee Barn was quietly popping up day by day like magic and it now feels like it has always been there. It was the smoothest and most harmonious building project we have ever experienced. We want to extend a special thanks for Matt, Noah, Claude, Able, Courtney and all the wonderful workers who are helping to make this dream a reality.

### ***This is what we have achieved:***

- The caretaker's cottage: Completed.
- The Bee Barn – Outer Structure: Completed. (*see website for photos*)

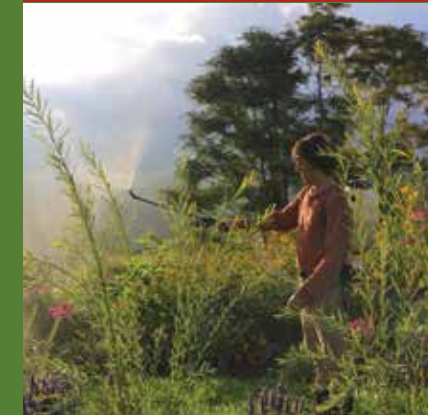
### ***This is what we still have to accomplish:***

- The Bee Barn – Interior: This building will allow us to offer lectures, workshops and events year-round. It will also give us an office for the manager, storage for the bee equipment, a wood-shop, and a room specially equipped for creating value-added products with the bees' gifts.
- Purchase the adjacent acreage: this includes more land for the pollinator fields as well as the land where our current larger greenhouse is located.

***Our deep gratitude and great joy ray out to all donors!!***

*The biodynamic principles used in tending the land and honeybees will have far-reaching impact long into the future. Spikenard is a place where humanity strives to support the good of the earth and of humanity. Our participation is necessary.*

~ Rose L.



*I went to study with Spikenard thinking I would only come away with a better understanding of the honey bees and instead I have grown in my understanding of the needs of the earth, the plants the animals the pollinators and the human being. I will continue to return to deepen my understanding.*

~ Janine H.