

2024 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #7a

This week's notes are a bit out of the ordinary. I have worked around bees my entire life. I have had several episodes that happened which caused me to be somewhat alarmed by the bee's actions. But for the most part honeybees have been gentle to work. But even the gentlest worker bee can sting. I have never seen an anaphylaxis reaction to a bee sting. And I don't want to!

But I learned a lot about insect stings. Thus, this article reviews information Dr. Mureen Peterson, MD. shared with us. I had a chance to share with you an incident that happened in 1994. This was big news, and the resulting court case sent a shiver thru the commercial beekeeping community.

I remember an apprentice beekeeper I took on to help thru the 1996 bee season. His name was Chris. He was taking classes at OSU and wanted to become a commercial beekeeper. He had no experience with bees. There were local beekeepers available to help. He had no experience and wanted to learn. He was sure if he became a beekeeper -- he would made a lot of money, be his own boss, set his own schedule and have all kinds of benefits - he would work for me in exchange for some bees and equipment and a little spending money. I remember asking him if he ever had been stung. His answer was sure!

I then required that he show me that he was not afraid of being stung by agreeing to be stung once a day for a week before going to a bee yard. I also required him to sign a waiver protecting me. It might have been a bit cruel, but he did it. I just wanted to protect myself. Long story short -- he made it thru a year and learned a lot. He also learned that it is hard work, you don't set your own schedule, the pay is poor, and most of all -- if the bees are not taken care of, wax moth can destroy almost everything you planned!