

Back to the Garden

Jug Tavern members enjoying long summer days, at a native plant farm, learning about our bees and breaking bread.



PHOTO BY ADAM, AGE OF FRAMES

An Accidental Beekeeper Tells His Story

When you approach Mark Sarazen and John Hennion's backyard, there is a sign that reads: "I remember when I used to see a bee and go, 'YIKES a bee!' And now I'm all, 'Oh wow, a bee, hi! You OK there? Need anything? Can I get you a drink? A cushion? Wanna borrow a car?'"

Mark Sarazen, a brilliant fine arts printer and photographer, first met bees during the spring of 2020, when they settled in his basement studio uninvited. He took a picture of them, Googled it and discovered they are honeybees, great pollinators. Being a good citizen and knowing how vital bees are for our food supply, Mark reached out to his friend and bee expert Bob Slanzi to help transition them to a bee box. To help move them, Mark drilled holes in his ceiling, but found no bees. He bought a stethoscope to listen for them, no bees. Mark constructed scaffolding and attached a bee box to the front of his house in hopes of luring the important queen bee, mother of the hive, who would lay thousands of eggs a day. He waited through the summer. Still, the bees kept coming to the studio and many died on the carpet. Mark revived dozens of bees by hand feeding them sugar water and let fly them out the window. Still, no bees migrated to the new bee box. Sadly, Mark removed the box and waited until March 2021—still, no bees.

But Mark persisted and decided to move on with his new interest. He

bought a beehive, beekeeping attire, a smoker, hive tools, books, catalogs and boots and connected with other bee aficionados online. Then on a rainy day in August 2021, Bob Slanzi called Mark announcing, "Come and get them." Bob had a hive for him—he had left 40,000 bees in his driveway for Mark to pick up.

So Mark and John jumped into their SUV, loaded up the 40,000 bees and drove home *very slowly*. Bob, the bee mentor, guided Mark via text and phone calls on what to do. In September, Mark learned there was a "dearth." In beekeeping a dearth means there are few resources like nectar or pollen for the bees to make honey or feed their brood, and the results are often devastating to the bee colonies. So Mark mixed up 10-pound bags of white sugar with water to start feeding the bees. This continued for quite some time, and Mark went through 60 pounds of sugar. He then began making fondant for his now, beloved bees. By the end of December 2021, Mark was able to migrate them to a hive in his backyard and now he has more than one hive. 2022 has been a beekeeping success for Mark! The bees made it through the winter producing honey, propolis (a glue that is used to plug up gaps in the hive) and wax.

A long-time Ossining resident, Mark Sarazen is owner of Sarazen Editions, a digital printmaking business. He is an active member of the community, serves on the board of the Sing Sing Prison Museum and is past president of the Ossining Arts Council.



Our Visit to Hilltop Hanover Farm

On June 18th, following an extremely informative online discussion of the plants that are native to our region, Emily Rauch of Hilltop Hanover Farm hosted Jug Tavern members for a tour of the native plant operation set on this absolutely beautiful historic farm.

Emily, Hilltop's Native Plant Program Manager, started up the program several years ago and has specialized in developing a diverse offering of perennials and shrubs that are native to Ecoregion 59, the Northeastern Coastal Zone. Jug Tavern members learned how seeds are

collected from native plants in a way that ensures the genetic diversity that allows them to thrive, then planted at Hilltop Hanover and propagated for those of us who want to plant them in our own yards. Our group appreciated the beauty of the flowers and the opportunity to learn more about the pollinators who use them not only as food sources, but also as host plants for laying eggs - the critical cycle that supports us all. Emily's passion for and commitment to creating a more sustainable future through this work was inspiring, and quite a number of us left Hilltop Hanover with new native plants of our own.



Welcome to the Deluge!

One hour into the annual Sparta Picnic we were both happily and not so happily overwhelmed with much needed rain. We retreated to the small gazebo and our tent to wait it out, bumping into many new neighbors and old friends sharing stories.

Our Sparta picnics are time capsules culturally marked by food.

There was the year of the 10 rice salads or the everything you can eat with humus year. But this was the year of "watermelon." It showed up in various

salad combinations as well as just cut. Holly's watermelon salad with feta was gone before the first drop of rain. Lots of delicious tomato dishes were served, en brochette, petite kabobs with mozzarella and basil and mixed with greens.

Alan and Bill's Ratatouille came served in a caldron and was a big crowd pleaser. As well as Sue's blueberry cake. Please forgive us for not catching everyone's name but applause goes to all for making our get together a delicious delight. Thank you Tony and Gina for your banner. It is now dry and ready to unfurl. Same time next year.

We hope to see you soon. If you are not already a member, please join our mailing list for invitations to events and reminders of what's happening at The Jug. Or better yet, become a member! Find us on Facebook and at www.jugtavern.org.