



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JULY 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Noel Williams

Hi Everyone,

First, the bad news. Despite our best efforts, last weekend we had two swarms occur back to back. The good news is that we were able to capture one of them. The swarm was in a tree branch about 15 feet above the ground. We had no ladder available so we surgically removed the swarm using two pole saws with loppers. After clearing branches around the swarm we used one lopper to hold the branch near the cluster while using the other lopper to separate the branch from the tree. We were then able to carefully lower the cluster to ground level before shaking the bees into a bin.

Unfortunately, the next day another swarm ended up in the same tree 30 feet above the ground. All we could do was wave goodbye. Now we have six colonies, a record for April and myself. This hobby is getting a little crazy.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Kristen Mueller to the NIBA Board of Directors as our incoming club Secretary. She will take over the role when our current Secretary, Cristy Binz, steps down from the Board at the end of July. Cristy and Kristen have been working together to insure that Kristen can hit the ground running on August 1st. Cristy plans to continue her many contributions to the club as well. Thank you to both them for stepping up on behalf of NIBA and our membership!

We are also still looking for a NIBA member willing to take over the publication of the Sweet Stuff newsletter. Marianne Hill will be hanging up her printer's apron after many years of devoted service to the club. If you have been thinking you would like to get more involved with NIBA, this could be your opportunity! Please contact me at 847-902-2684 or nwilliams1250@yahoo.com if you are interested in helping out.

Our mentoring session on July 15th at 10:30 am in the bee yard at MCC will cover honey extraction methods. If you haven't yet stol... uh... pulled honey from your bees, this hands-on demonstration will cover everything you need to know about this interesting and fun process. Please call Bob Hillman at 847-739-6004 for more details.

To help you get your bees ready for the colder months, our August 10th meeting will feature a presentation by Mr. William Werning entitled 'Prepare Your Hives for Winter'. This presentation is a 'don't miss' for anyone hoping to improve the over-winter survival rate of their colonies.

Honey harvest season has started for many. Please consider donating some of your bottled honey to be sold at the McHenry County Fair. Tom Allen will be accepting honey donations. Donations can be brought to the picnic, or dropped off at Tom's house. Contact Tom Allen at tallen122@yahoo.com.

The McHenry County Fair is getting closer. We need a lot of help every year in order to man the club booth and manage other aspects of our participation in the event. Please offer a few hours

of your time to support your fellow club members in this worthwhile project. It is a lot of fun and you get an opportunity to compare notes with other beekeepers while you're at it. You could walk away from the day with a new nugget of knowledge that changes your beekeeping life forever!

See you at the fair! Noel



I hope your hives are abuzz with activity, and you have new bees emerging every day. We still need people to sign up for shifts at the Fair.

Many shifts still need one or two more people to fill them, and a few shifts don't have anyone signed up to be there. Part of what makes our club special is that we educate non-beekeepers about honey bees and that we actively try to get new members. These two things go hand in hand. Often talking to someone about bees piques their interest, and they join the club and get some bees. Some of you might have started just that way.

Working at the Fair booth is a way to talk to the public about bees. I feel like a nagging parent (which, by the way, I was) because I keep asking for help with the Fair. The truth is, if we can't staff the booth, we'll lose the Fair opportunity in the future. Please consider signing up for a shift.



Shifts are as follows:

- Tuesday, August 1, 12pm-2pm 2pm-6pm 6pm-9pm
- Wednesday, August 2 & Thursday, August 3 (each day)
10am-2pm 2pm-6pm 6pm-9pm
- Friday, August 4 & Saturday, August 5 (each day)
10am-2pm 2pm-6pm 6pm-10pm
- Sunday, August 6, 10pm-2pm 2pm-6pm 6pm-8pm

There is a SignUp Genius event specifically for the Fair. Please check your emails. Or you can email me at tallen122@yahoo.com, and include your t-shirt size.

HONEY DONATIONS

We are running low on honey for the fair this year, so now is the time to donate if you have honey available. We are hoping for 1-lb jars (our best seller), and the very sought-after creamed honey, comb honey, Ross rounds, and any other size you're willing to give! Please label donations and be sure to include the city your hive is in, as we receive many inquiries about hive location (if you don't have your own labels, we can apply one for you). Please contact a board member for pickup or delivery. Thank you!



Long Live the Queen: Tips and tricks to catch and keep her royal highness

The Walworth County Beekeepers Association, in partnership with the Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association, the Milwaukee/Waukesha Beekeepers Association, and the Racine/Kenosha Beekeepers Association, are excited to host an evening with Tucka Saville.

In this talk, we will explore simple but effective methods for locating, handling, and caring for your queen. We will also learn how to identify and correct a queenless colony. This is an intermediate talk, but beginners and advanced beekeepers can also benefit.

Tucka runs 300 colonies in upstate New York and south Florida. Her primary mentors are Mike Palmer and Sam Comfort. She produces about 1,000 queens per year.



Tuesday, July 18, 2023

7:00 pm

This event is free to sponsor club members.

The Zoom link will be emailed in advance.

No registration required.

Contact stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com with any questions regarding this event.

CHORES OF THE MONTH - JULY

John Leibinger

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

STILL LOTS TO DO—AND THE HEAT IS ON

What's happening in the hive?

The colony population will have peaked by this month. You should be observing lots of bees and still see plenty of brood at all stages being raised to replace the older bees in the colony. The rate of laying of the queen will typically start to taper off from the rate that has been experienced throughout the spring season.

Temperatures are continuing to be on the hot side, so ventilation and available water sources are 'must haves' for your bees.

The bee population is no longer expanding, but the Varroa mite population likely is. You must monitor their growth by doing regular mite checks (monthly sugar roll or preferably, alcohol wash) and take appropriate action to remediate any problems. The best place to start to make the decision on how to treat is to visit the Honeybee Health Coalition website and use their Varroa Management Decision Tool. [g](#) (See link in General Information section below.) **Beware the high temperatures and the type of treatment you use. FOLLOW THE LABEL!**

The bees should have stored some nectar from May and June and you will likely be finding capped frames of honey in your supers. Unfortunately, many have also found that the bees have been storing a lot of honey in the brood chamber(s). This often leads to a honey bound situation that in turn can lead to overcrowding swarms and based on the word on the street, there has been a **LOT** of that going on. The solution is twofold; 1) Provide space in the brood box for the queen to lay by removing 'honeybound' frames and replacing with new foundation or preferably open drawn comb, 2) Keep providing the bees space to store the honey by adding supers and hope that the bees move some of the nectar/honey up. Don't wait for the bees to cap the existing frames before adding additional supers. Remember, when the bees bring in nectar it is very dilute and takes up lots of space. Over time they remove the moisture and cap the honey, but in the meantime they still require more space for the continuous inflow of new nectar. If you don't provide the space via supers, they find it in the brood chamber.

This may be the month to start harvesting those capped frames in your supers. If you do so early, replace the supers and you may get some more production. The normal late June and early July nectar flows from Catalpa and Linden trees have or will shortly have run their course, but nectar flows continue into July with more herbaceous plants than trees and then taper off as we enter August. When removing honey to harvest, make sure that there is still plenty of honey left for the bees to survive the dearth in August. If you decide to harvest all your supers sometime this month, and if the nectar flow slows down, you will need to feed sugar syrup to help get them through the lean times of mid to late summer. Keep in mind that 'honey' storage at this time will likely be mostly the sugar water you are providing. When a flow restarts for the fall, you will have to decide whether to replace with fresh supers (with drawn comb) to collect a fall harvest or to just let the bees continue storing for their winter needs.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Maintain the space around your hive(s). Your bees work hard at thermo-regulation of the hive. Help them out. Trim weeds and grass to allow maximum air flow as the temperatures rise. Maintaining a clear flight path to the hive also increases their foraging efficiency.

Provide additional ventilation to assist the bees in maintaining proper hive temperatures. This can be in the form of ventilated inner covers or as simple as propping the outer cover to allow more air circulation. The additional ventilation is also helpful in the conversion of nectar to honey. Better ventilation eases the job of moisture removal from the stored nectar.

Make sure the bees have a water source as we move into the heat of summer. Bees collect water (and a fair amount of it) to help cool the hive as part of their thermo-regulation efforts.

Monitor for Varroa Mites monthly and take action if needed. (See General Info section below for references to mite checking procedures).

Know what you have and keep records. Keep varroa growth in check by utilizing a miticide, organic acids, drone comb culling, a combination of IPM methods, and/or a brood break. **Pay attention to labeling instructions (*particularly temperature ranges for safe use*)** when using treatments and be mindful that you cannot leave honey supers on for all methods of treatments. The only treatments currently, that for sure are EPA approved for use while honey supers are on are Hopguard 2 or 3, Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS), and Formic Pro. I am still just a bit foggy on where the approval lies on Oxalic Acid. What I can tell you for sure is that the only Oxalic Acid product that is approved for treating honeybees is API-Bioxal. The other absolute is that **THE LABEL IS THE LAW**. That said, my understanding is that the USDA and the EPA have approved OA(API-Bioxal) and that there is new product that has labeling that indicates that. However, the use of non-API Bioxal Oxalic Acid products (such as OA purchased from Amazon or

Home Depot often labeled wood bleach) or even API-Bioxal that does not have the approval label, is not legal. **THE LABEL IS THE LAW...PERIOD.**

Sometimes regulations make obvious sense; sometimes they seem....hmm....less obvious.

Your specific approach will be influenced by your personal goals, philosophy and ethics, but, if you have a mite problem, **doing nothing is not an acceptable answer if you want your colony to thrive and survive.** You must have healthy hives going into later summer so the colony can raise healthy nurse bees that in turn raise healthy winter bees that will carry them through until next Spring.

Make sure that you keep records. This is a very important element of the learning process...whether you are a first year beekeeper or a forty year beekeeper...you should always be learning something. Record inspection dates, time and temp and weather conditions, quantity of bees, bee behaviors, signs indicating the presence of the queen (eggs, young larvae, actual sighting), number of frames of brood and stores, brood pattern and frame/comb condition, available laying space, observations of signs of swarm preparation, pollen coming in (color, type if possible), drone production, Varroa Mite count, presence of Small Hive Beetle or other pests, and a number of other issues. Record anything else that is outside of 'normal' once you learn what 'normal' is. Take notes in the bee yard. You will be surprised at how easy it is to get confused over what was observed and which hive it was observed in if you wait to record info after the fact.

Monitor the hives for queen signs. Stuff happens...the queen may be failing and the bees need to replace her. She may have died for some reason. You need to know that they have the resources to make a new queen or you will have to provide those resources from another colony. Alternately, you can buy and install a queen. Don't allow your hive to remain queenless. Doing so will likely lead to a 'laying worker' condition. This is a problem that is not easily resolved and oftentimes results in the death of the colony. Stay ahead of problems and take action when needed.

Harvest honey appropriately. Don't overharvest, there are some lean weeks ahead for your bees. Consider feeding if needed.

Return extracted frames to the hives for them to continue to make more honey. If you are calling it a season for your honey crop, place your super of wet combs above your inner cover and below your outer cover. Some beekeepers will put an empty super in between the inner cover and the wet super. Either way, the bees will come up and clean/dry it out and refurbish the comb to 'like new' condition. This makes for much easier winter storing also.

Consider starting to split out some nucs to raise bees for next year if this is part of your goal plan.

Consider raising some queens to go into fall/winter with fresh young queens. Statistically, survival of winter colonies improves and reduction/delay/sometimes elimination of spring swarming is a result. Don't delay though, time is of the essence. There are many ways to go about this that do not require a lot of equipment or experience. At the backyard beekeeper level, you can keep it pretty simple. The bees are very good at this if you create the proper conditions. Do some research.

Start to watch out for robbing later in the month. Reduce entrances or add robbing screens if needed. Don't dawdle around when harvesting honey.

General Info

Download the forms to register your bees with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Documents/beekeep.pdf> (Ctrl+Click link)

[Varroa Management Decision Tool](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Sugar Roll Method: [Sugar Roll Mite Inspection - YouTube](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Alcohol Wash Method: [Alcohol Wash for Mite Control - YouTube](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Pollen identification chart:

[Pollen Color Chart](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Inspection sheets:

[Inspection Checklist \(basic\)](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

[Inspection Checklist \(detailed\)](#) (Ctrl+Click link)



HELP WANTED - NEWSLETTER EDITOR

After many years of great service to NIBA, Marianne Hill will be stepping down as Editor of the the club's *Sweet Stuff* newsletter. Thank you, Marianne, for your time and dedication to publishing this critical information source each month.

We are in need of a volunteer to step up and take over monthly publication of the *Sweet Stuff* newsletter. Marianne estimates that it typically takes her no more than six hours each month to collect material, edit, and produce the publication.

Please consider taking on this very important role as Editor of the *Sweet Stuff*. You can contact Noel Williams at nwilliams1250@yahoo.com if you have questions or, even better, are ready to say "Yes, I want the job!".

2023 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Program Chair – Larry Krengel

Webmaster – Terri Reeves

Newsletter Editor – Marianne Hill

Club Extractor Coordinators – Randy Mead/Al Fullerton

Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

Snack Coordinator – Sally Willer

Website and Newsletter Submissions

www.nibainfo.org – The Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association website. A wealth of information is available.

Contact board members via email, download the membership form, access copies of the newsletter. Terri is asking for your pictures, stories, etc. to have them highlighted on the web page!

reevestherese@att.net

This is YOUR newsletter. Please feel free to contribute. Or let us know if you have any topics you'd like to see covered. mariannehill1213@gmail.com

Manual Honey Extractor

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent a club manual honey extractor? We have two to choose from. Rental is \$10 for a 3-day rental. \$20 (\$10 for rental and \$10 deposit) is due when you pick up the extractor.

Schedule a pick-up time, extract your honey and return the equipment in 3 days. The \$10 deposit will be returned if the extractor is clean and returned on time.

To reserve a date, **contact Randy by text or email at 847-571-1899 or rmeadtoys@gmail.com.**

NIBA Now has an Electric Extractor

It will handle both sides of 9 frames at the same time.

Club members may borrow it for 2 days for \$25.00 plus a security deposit of \$75.00. The deposit will be returned if the extractor and uncapping equipment are returned on time, clean, and undamaged.

The Extractor comes with everything you need to make the uncapping and extraction experience go smoothly, except of course, the honey frames and buckets.

Pick it up in Cary. To reserve, **contact Al Fullerton by phone or text at 815-382-7139 or email adfhoney@gmail.com**, Note: Al's phone doesn't always give a notification ring (He blames it on the phone or the tunnel he lives in), so if you don't get a timely response, just phone rather than text.

**The queen marking color for
2023 is RED.**