



# SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2023

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Noel Williams

Hi Folks,

Just a quick note this month to mention two very important dates coming up rather quickly after this month's club meeting on **March 9th** at MCC.

On **Saturday March 11th**, NIBA will be hosting the first session in our mentoring program for the 2023 season. If you're new to beekeeping, this session is for you! Even if you've been keeping bees for a while, you might pick up some new tips and tricks. Better yet, you might be able to add your own perspective to some of the topics covered during the session. Why not sign up and join in on the fun? Bob Hillman, NIBA Director and organizer for this year's program, has posted an outline of the session further down in

this newsletter. You can find all the details right there.

Also, we are coming down to the wire for placing this season's bee order. To ensure you get your bees, you must be a member in good standing with NIBA and orders must be received by Wednesday, **March 15th**. Please contact Ralph Brindise at [rbrindise@att.net](mailto:rbrindise@att.net) or (847) 970-0669 with any questions you may have about ordering or picking up your bees when they come in. You can download the NIBA 2023 Bee Order form here [Bee package order form](#).

The days are getting warmer, the bees are starting to fly!

All the Best, Noel

## HOT 'N SWEET BROCCOLI AND ASPARAGUS

Recipe on the National Honey Board website

### INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup - honey  
2 T - soy sauce  
1 tsp. - ground ginger  
1/2 to 1 tsp. - crushed red pepper  
1 lb. - broccoli, trimmed  
1/2 lb. - asparagus, trimmed  
2 T - olive or vegetable oil

YIELD: Makes 4 servings

### DIRECTIONS

Combine honey, soy sauce, ginger and red pepper.

Cut up broccoli and slice stem.

Diagonally slice asparagus.

Heat oil in large skillet; add broccoli and asparagus and stir-fry over medium-high heat for 3 minutes. Add 1/2 cup water to pan; cover and steam vegetables for 2 minutes or until tender-crisp. Drain water from pan.

Add honey mixture and cook uncovered until glaze is slightly thickened, about 2 minutes.



## MENTORING SESSIONS FOR BASIC BEEKEEPING PRACTICES

Bob Hillman

NIBA will offer monthly mentoring sessions for basic beekeeping practices this year using the NIBA hives at the McHenry County College (MCC) as demonstration hives. Each session will have a specific theme and objective. The dates for each session will be announced in each month's Sweet Stuff newsletter and at the monthly meeting. There will be a sign-up sheet for attendees at the Meeting preceding the mentoring session and on-line so that we know how many people to expect and can send out an e-mail if the session is to be cancelled for any reason.

The first session will be **Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 10 am to Noon** at the MCC Hive location (directions to be provided to people who sign up). The theme will be: "Bee Prepared".

The objective is to provide basic training in basic beekeeping equipment: protective clothing, components of the hive (incl. proper terminology), and a "dry run" of loading a package into the hive (no live bees).

As there will be no live bees this day (the hives at MCC did not survive the winter) there is no need to bring your bee suits. The hives are at an outside location in a beeyard so dress for fieldwork (wear boots and old clothes and dress for the weather).

The specific activities to be covered are:

- \* The proper protective gear for any beekeeping activity (to minimize the number of stings you may get).
- \* The components of a basic bee hive, what they are called (to communicate with other beekeepers effectively you need to use proper terminology). This is the minimum equipment you need to have in place before you get your bees.
- \* Cleaning out a hive after a dead-out. Observing what it looks like and what may have caused the loss.
- \* Preparing the hive after cleaning to be ready for package installation (install feeders in case there is no pollen sources available).
- \* A demonstration of what the process is to load a package of bees into the hive (dry run – no bees).

There will be a theme and a date for each session, to be included in that month's Sweet Stuff. Future topics may include:

How to inspect a hive – what to look for

How to split a hive

How to do a mite count

How to treat for varroa mites  
How to extract honey and what to do after extraction to prepare for winter

How to feed bees for winter

How to prepare beeswax from comb, cappings etc...

If you have questions or suggestions for future mentor session topics for the NIBA Mentoring Program, please see me at the meeting next Thursday or shoot me an e-mail at: [rthillman77@yahoo.com](mailto:rthillman77@yahoo.com)

## CHORES OF THE MONTH - MARCH

John Leibinger

*Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.*

### **Please Review February Chores List.**

**Most apply to March also, but with an increased sense of urgency.**

#### ***What's happening in the hive?***

The bees have surely started raising brood by now. There won't be much early in the month, but as the month passes and if we get some warm weather, the pace of egg laying will pick up. The bees will need pollen (protein) to feed the brood and honey (carbohydrates) to energize the bees to forage and to produce heat to keep the brood warm. Early pollen sources will become available, but the weather must be favorable for the bees to forage. The bees may well need assistance with supplemental protein for brood raising as well as a source of carbohydrates for themselves.

#### ***For Beekeepers with live overwintering colonies, it is time to:***

**Continue to monitor the food stores available to your colonies.** Checking the weight of hives by lifting/tilting from the rear may give you a sense of stores available. Unlike the super cold weather temperatures the bees have come through, warmer temps allow the cluster to relocate to available stores within the hive... if they are there. If not, supplement with sugar based feed, e.g. dry sugar, sugar bricks, winter patties, fondant, candy board, etc., to help them through the remaining winter. Unless we have unseasonably warm day and night temperatures, it still is a bit early to transition to liquid feed. Providing pollen, pollen substitute, or pollen patties will provide needed protein for brood development.

**Check for activity at the hive on warmer days.** You should start seeing activity on warm days. Bees will be taking cleansing flights and some will even be out foraging. If things are going really well, you may even see some orientation flights by young bees. If you have seen no activity on the warmer days we have recently had, your bees didn't survive and it is time (maybe past time) to get your bees ordered for 2023.



You may see some undertaker bees (they are the stiffer looking bees with dark tophats) dragging dead bees from the hive. Help them out by reaching into the entrance with a tool and scraping out some of the bodies. Try not to be too alarmed by the number of dead bees removed; your colony is still alive. Alternately, be alarmed....but it is too late to do anything about it now. Research, read, and ask others about how you might do things differently to improve your results next year. Keep in mind, though, your colony is still alive...have a cookie and enjoy the moment. Replace reducers and mouse guards afterwards. As the temperature warms up later in the month, remove hive wraps you may have installed last fall.

Order any additional colonies of bees you want for 2023...pronto.....time is running out!

#### ***For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:***

**Continue to Read, Study, and Learn....** Before you know it Bee Arrival Day will be upon us! Books, Periodicals, Classes, Club Meetings, Internet (yes, that also means YouTube videos...they range from poor to great....reading, attending classes, and club meetings and asking questions will help you learn which are good and which are not). Listen to some Podcasts. All of these will help. Bee Arrival Day and the culmination of all the nervous anticipation of having your first colony of bees will be here before you know it!

**Get a Mentor from the Bee Club.** The first step is to ask for help. There will be willing members.

**Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. ...did I already say that? It bears repeating. Get a Mentor from the Bee Club.**

**Order your equipment, tools, and protective clothing.** See February Chores.

**Your Bees should be ordered by now.** If not, you need to scramble. See February Chores for additional details.

**Assemble and paint your equipment.** No time to waste now. Bee Day arrival day is coming. It's fun and you can be creative with your painting...don't be creative on the equipment assembly though, follow instructions. The bees will appreciate it.

**Tip:** Put dates (month/year) on your frames to keep track of their age to help in annual comb replacement.

**Prepare your apiary location.** Determine what you will use as hive stands. Make sure that the platform is reasonably level. Consider your mowing/trimming needs for the summer and position hives accordingly.

***For Beekeepers with dead overwintered colonies, it is time to:***

**Breakdown the dead-outs.** Pick a pleasant day and start the cleanup process...Doing it early, before much warmth and moisture occurs, will make an unpleasant job less unpleasant and much less smelly. Don't just clean things up. See if you can determine what caused the problem. There is a high likelihood of a mite related problem if you did not rigorously pursue mite load reduction in a timely fashion last year. Look for signs. Take some pictures at several different angles. Consider bringing pictures(or the frames themselves) of a frame or two (brood frames) to the club meeting and get some other experienced eyes to take a look.

**Replace old frames or combs that have too many years on them.** Commit to making this an annual effort by replacing at least 20% annually (oldest first). That will keep you from having any combs older than 5 years. Some more progressive beekeepers strive to get on a 3 year rotation of comb. To do that replace a third of the combs each year.

Note: Develop the habit of marking your frames with the month/year that you put them in use. It is a process that will help you maintain the discipline of comb rotation.

***For All Beekeepers, it is time to:***

**Take an inventory.**

***A) Equipment/Supplies inventory***

**Make a list of what your equipment, tools, and supplies.**

-Do you need to replace frames or foundation (a comb replacement program should be part of your annual routine)?

-Is your equipment in good order?

\*Is your wooden-ware due for a paint job?

\*Are your tools in good shape?

\*How about your protective clothing? Have you washed your suit recently?

\*Do you have sufficient (and not expired) supplies, e.g., feed/nutrition supplements, pest/parasite controls, etc.

\*Is your current equipment sufficient to help you achieve your goals for this year (see *B.* below)?

***B) Goals inventory....this is a very important issue for beekeepers though probably not thought about enough.***

What do you want to accomplish this year in beekeeping? You may have multiple goals. What are your priorities of these goals? Here are some thoughts:

-Do better than the state average honey yield per colony. More simply, increase my honey yield over last year.

-Successfully over-winter my bees.

-Move closer to achieving sustainable beekeeping (not having to buy new packages or nucs every year).

-Learn to create and use nucleus colonies to overwinter more colonies and increase the colonies in my apiary.

-Learn to raise my own queens.

-Learn to produce comb honey, e.g., Ross Rounds, cut comb honey, chunk honey, section boxes.

-Learn to produce Creamed Honey.

-Learn to make Mead (like a Viking!...or a Monk for those with a more introspective demeanor)

-Learn how to process and use beeswax. Make candles, lip balms, hand creams, soaps.

-Learn how to collect/process/use propolis.

-Are you interested in encaustic painting? Are you interested in creating wax art?

**Do you need to re-evaluate your equipment to be sure you have what you need to achieve your goals (see *A.* above)?**

**If you have some of these interests, raise the issue at a club meeting and propose having a sub-group session to explore the subject.**

***C. Bee Inventory***

-How many colonies do you want to start this year with? How many do you have that will overwinter? Are you sure?? A live hive in early March is a **hopefully** live hive in April....we still have another tough month to go....don't be caught bee-less in April.

-Order as early as possible to reserve your bees. Packages or Nucs? Decisions, decisions.....

**It is now March. Get ahead of your season.  
Plan, Read, Study, Learn. Now is the time!  
Bee Arrival Day is coming soon!**





**SAVE THE DATE**

Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association  
**SWAP MEET**

**SATURDAY | MAY 6TH | 9 AM - 12 PM**

McHenry County Farm Bureau  
1102 McConnell Rd  
Woodstock, IL 60098

Buy / Sell / Trade / Exchange  
Beekeeping equipment or items

More details to follow



UF FLORIDA, AUBURN UNIVERSITY, E TEXAS A&M, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY, NC STATE UNIVERSITY, LSU, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, USDA, TENNESSEE

**At Home Beekeeping Webinar**

Distance Learning for Beekeepers

We're offering beekeepers the chance to attend virtual meetings from the comfort of one's own home using a computer or mobile device. Speakers include university researchers and extension specialists from across the SE US as well as USDA ARS researchers. Each event will bring participants up to date on timely beekeeping topics with time for Q & A included.

**All are welcome!! Join us for this free event!!**

- Feb. 20: Grafting is a simple technique, but why is it so difficult?, with E. Anis (MSU)
- March 24: BMP's from SIP: The National Loss and Mgt. Survey, with G. Williams (AU)
- April 25: TBD, with E. Bartlett (USA)
- May 30: Water foraging, with S. Webster (ISU)
- June 27: TBD, with E. Walsh (USDA-ARS)

Last Tuesday of the month  
8:30 - 7:30 pm  
Central Time

Watch via Zoom Webinar  
<https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838>

or Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/LawrenceCountyExtension/>

Questions? Email Allyson Shabel [asm0137@aces.edu](mailto:asm0137@aces.edu)

Our institutions are equal opportunity education and employers. Everyone is welcome! Please let us know if you have accessibility needs.



**Bee ordering is coming to a close on March 15th and "expected" delivery is April 15th.**

**The bee order forms are on the website - [Bee package order form](#)**

**They must be mailed in with a check, or you can order at the meeting this week.**

**Members that already ordered can send a second order in if they discover any further winter loss this week.**

## THINKING ON THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW BEE SEASON

Larry Krengel

The arrival of bees in the spring is an exciting time for beekeepers, but it is particularly challenging for the nubee. Perhaps a few suggestions might be helpful.

- **Plan ahead.** Success and preparation go hand in hand. Have the hives assembled. Clean out the deadouts. Have your hive tools at the ready.
- When you get the call that the bees are here, **bee there on time.** We have members **volunteering** their time to pick up hundreds of packages and nucs of bees for our association members. They invest their time to meet you and help you load your bees. But they also want to get home and install their own bees. Please show your appreciation by being on time to pick up your bees.
- **Don't quick release the queen.** One of the biggest problems on the day that packages arrive is the queen taking flight when an impatient beekeeper attempts a quick release. If you are a nubee and don't understand this... ask questions.
- **Keep the bees cool.** Bees can more easily keep themselves warm than they can cool their cluster when they are too warm in your trunk. A package of bees produces an amazing amount of heat.
- **The trunk of your car gets warm quickly.**  
Consider carrying your bees in the back seat. "But I don't want the bees flying around while I am driving!" First, those bees present no stinging danger. Second, if that really bothers you, buy a "bee bag".
  - o [Meyer Bees](#)
  - o [Amazon](#)



Dave Meyer has a great posting on picking up bees. Check it out –

<https://meyerbees.com/bee-nuc-transport-guidelines/>

### A Quick word of encouragement

Don't be bashful. Step up to help that new beekeeper. You need not know all the answers, but two heads are better than one when dealing with an apiary challenge. Together the duo can search for the answer to any perplexing question. Both mentor and mentee benefit from the experience.

We have many kinds-of-new beekeepers that would make excellent mentors for those who are **really** new. Bee one.

### What do you need?

NIBA's beekeeper swap meet on Saturday May 6, 2023. Put it on your calendar.

## 2023 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President - Noel Williams

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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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.**