



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Noel Williams

Hello Everyone,

So now it's November and April's Acres has pretty much wrapped things up as far as our beekeeping activities go for this year. We're done feeding, and about all that's left to do is to insulate the hives and start cleaning up the rest of the equipment in preparation for the spring thaw. I think our girls are in good shape to get through the winter.

Our last general meeting of 2023 will be Thursday, November 9th at McHenry County College in Crystal Lake. There will be a presentation that evening entitled 'Planting Native Gardens for Pollinators'. Join Sarah Michehl from The Land Conservancy of McHenry County for easy tips and info on gardening with native plant communities that will provide beauty and everything a pollinator could need. The presentation will begin promptly at 7:00pm, with club business and other activities following immediately thereafter.

An important part of the club's business that night will be the election of NIBA officers for the coming year. We have put out several calls asking for nominees via the club newsletter feed. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone you know (with their permission, of course) please contact Nomination Committee Chair Jim Haisler at jshaisler@gmail.com.

We are looking for a member to act as coordinator for the 2024 Mentoring program, which is an important part of the work NIBA does to help educate its members in the art and science of beekeeping. If you feel that you could help us with this vital program, please contact me at nwilliams1250@yahoo.com.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow board members for their support and hard work in the past year. Thank you to Vice President Tom Allen, Treasurer Ralph Brindise, Secretary Kristen Mueller and (past) Secretary Cristy Binz. Thank you also to NIBA Directors John Leibinger, Al Fullerton, Ron Willer and (past) Director Bob Hillman for all of their contributions to the success of the organization.

There are so many people who are responsible for the success of NIBA that I'm afraid I'll overlook someone. I would also like to recognize Larry Krengel (Program Chair and Board Counsel), Stephanie Slater (Technology and Honey Expert), Terri Reeves (Webmaster), Sue Pinkawa (Newsletter Editor), Randy Mead (Extractor Coordinator), Al Fullerton (Extractor Coordinator and Mechanical Wizardry), John Leibinger (Raffle Coordinator) and Sally Willer (Snack Coordinator). Many of these folks usually operate behind the scenes but their contributions to NIBA are always out in front of us to see.

This year's mentoring program was a rousing success. Thanks to Bob Hillman for coordinating the activities and thank you to the mentors and mentees for their participation. Everybody learns something when there's a free exchange of ideas.

NIBA's exhibition at the McHenry County Fair was a big success due to the leadership of Tom Allen, Cristy Binz and Stephanie Slater. Thanks to you and all of the members who manned the booth, competed in the honey show and supported the operation.

Thank you also to Jim Haisler, Austin Lechner and Lindi Salvi for their work on this year's Nomination committee.

And finally, a big thank you to all of our members who have contributed to NIBA through their honey donations, participation

at events and otherwise stepped up to ensure the success of this organization.

Have a very Happy Holiday Season!

Noel



NOVEMBER MEETING PRESENTATION

Presented by Sarah Michehl

Learn how to attract monarch butterflies and other butterflies, birds, and bees to your yard. Join Sarah Michehl from The Land Conservancy of McHenry County for easy tips and info on gardening with native plant communities that will provide beauty and everything a pollinator could need.

Sarah's Bio:

Sarah Michehl is the Community Ecologist with The Land Conservancy of McHenry County. She has spent 20+ years working in the environmental field as an educator. Through her current role, she's had the opportunity to consult on hundreds of private and municipal properties while working with people to use native plants in a way that offers beauty and function.



CHORES OF THE MONTH - NOVEMBER

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

John Leibinger

What's happening in the hive?

Whoa...Halloween snow! Unless we get another warm spell, you are not likely to see much activity in your hive(s). Winter is just around the corner and the bees are settling in for the season. The nighttime temps will be running between the 20s to low 40s. Daytime temps may reach very low 50s occasionally. The bees are clustering to save some heat. They will be starting to consume their winter stores and will not be taking in sugar syrup at these temperatures.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Finalize your colony activities for 2023:**

****Note:** These are much the same as October chores, with a few deletions. The deletions are primarily to avoid cracking open the hive bodies and breaking the propolis seals that the bees have created to reduce infiltration of the winter winds. I'll repeat for emphasis.....***This is not the time to be breaking into the hive bodies and disrupting the seals or the winter cluster.*** (Exception: If you are wrapping your hives, the air infiltration by cracking the seals will be mitigated by the wraps.

Also, some of the notes below are specific to ventilation hives. See the October notes for condensing hives.

Consider an Oxalic Acid sublimation or dribble treatment to eliminate any remaining varroa mites that may have been in the colony or brought in by a late season robbing episode. A possible advantage of an OA sublimation this time of year is that you will not need to crack open the hive bodies and ruin the hive's propolis seals that were created to keep out the imminent winter winds. A dribble treatment can also be used without cracking the seals if you utilize a single brood box management process. If you use double brood boxes and all the bees are in the lower box, you will need to crack the seal to apply the treatment. If this is the case, strongly consider wrapping the hive to minimize air infiltration.

Tilt hive forward a little bit to assist moisture drainage.

Rake up leaves and debris from around the hive to lessen the opportunity for mouse and pygmy shrew problems.

Add mouse guards. If you have Pygmy Shrews the openings will need to be reduced to about 5/16". Don't forget...mice can climb, so protect upper entrances also. If you use entrance reducers as your mouse guard, make sure that the egress slot is at the top not the bottom. It seems counter intuitive, but if the slot is at the bottom it is easily plugged up with dead bees thus rendering it useless. When placed 'upside down' it allows the live bees to climb over the dead bodies to exit. A little inconsiderate and heartless of the bees if you are given to anthropomorphism.

Make sure you have an upper entrance/exit. It helps with ventilation and it is an easy egress point for bees to take cleansing flights in the winter. Make sure it is mouse/shrew proofed. Sometimes the lower entrances get plugged with ice or snow and even with dead bees.

Add an appropriate feeding shim and some solid feed in the form of winter patties, a candy board, sugar bricks or cakes, or dry sugar above the top hive body. You may want to add emergency feed in later winter and having a spacer already in place will make that effort possible. Prepare ahead of time.

Make sure there is adequate ventilation to remove moisture from the hive. Bees breathe and metabolize the carbohydrates they consume to produce heat. A by-product of that metabolism is moisture, and it must find its way out of the hive to reduce dripping from condensation. **Cold wet bees are dead bees. It is preventable.**

Consider adding a moisture board or quilt box or some other method of capturing the moisture and preventing it from condensing and dripping on the bees.

Consider (strongly) adding insulation at the top of the hive to further reduce the opportunity for condensation.

Consider wrapping your hive to insulate or at least to eliminate infiltration of cold winter winds. Wraps are often done in black on the theory that there is a little solar heat gain on sunny winter days.

Consider creating a wind block with snow fencing, straw bales, large lawn bags filled with leaves (word of caution: straw bales and to a lesser extent, bags of leaves may be attractive to mice, so use them with that warning in mind), or basically anything that you can position to break the force of the direct wind against your hive.

Consider strapping down your hive for the winter to prevent winter winds from toppling the hive.

If you have been a conscientious beekeeper throughout the 2023 season and have monitored and controlled varroa mites, left the bees with sufficient stores, ended the year with healthy bees and a young queen (less than a year old), you have provided your bees with the chance of thriving in Spring 2024. Still no guarantee, but you have tilted the odds in their favor.

Start preparing for the 2024 season:

Renew your annual Apiary Registration with Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Clean up any dead outs that you have experienced this season.

Continue to increase your knowledge of bees and beekeeping:

- Read and study about bees and beekeeping
- Attend beekeeping meetings
- Increase your knowledge of local plants and trees.
- Form a small group of beekeepers to meet for lunch and talk bees.

Inventory your equipment, tools, and supplies.

Review your 2023 season (and your notes) for successes and opportunities.

Set new goals for 2024.

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)



"He likes to bring them indoors for the winter."

WORKFORCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Community Education—Spring 2024



BEEKEEPING

Beekeeping 101

Keeping honeybees is fascinating. Bees will pollinate your garden and provide a sweet crop of honey. In this class, you will learn where to start as a keeper of bees. We'll cover bee biology, modern beekeeping techniques, construction of hives, and how to acquire bees. Keep bees for the fun of it, as a sideline job, or to help your garden and orchard.

Fee: \$59				Larry Kregel
In person				
# 6950	W	2/7–2/28	7–9:30 p.m.	Shah Center
Remote				
# 6951	W	2/7–2/28	7–9:30 p.m.	Remote

Beekeeping Field Study

This short course will provide practical, hands-on instruction for installing, manipulating, and inspecting colonies of bees. The class will meet in a bee yard, so appropriate clothing and bee equipment will be necessary. Spring is the time to start with bees, and this course will walk you through it step by step. Learn what you need to know to start out right with your bees.

Fee: \$59				Larry Kregel
# 6960	Sa	4/6, 4/13	10 a.m.–Noon	MCC
# 6961	Sa	4/6, 4/13	1–3 p.m.	MCC

7 Ways To Raise A Queen

The number of small-scale beekeepers is increasing, and the demand for locally raised queen bees is growing. Purchased queens are often raised in areas of Africanized honeybees or come from migratory bee operations where dangerous viruses are exchanged. Gain information and learn seven simple methods of raising healthy honeybee queens. With a few insights and a small amount of equipment, the backyard beekeeper can raise locally adapted queens from bee stock with a great record of winter survival, good temperament, and excellent honey production.

Fee: \$25				Larry Kregel
In person				
# 6952	W	3/6	7–9:30 p.m.	Shah Center
Remote				
# 6953	W	3/6	7–9:30 p.m.	Remote

Comb Honey

Comb honey is old fashioned honey harvested in the bees own wax case. A hundred years ago honey was removed from the hive and eaten in the comb. Today, extracted honey (honey in the jar) is the norm. This course is an opportunity to return to the old (and some contend the healthiest) way of harvesting honey. Producing honey in the comb is a beekeeping challenge, an old fashioned challenge explored in this class.

Fee: \$25				Larry Kregel
In person				
# 6958	W	3/13	7–9:30 p.m.	Shah Center
Remote				
# 6959	W	3/13	7–9:30 p.m.	Remote



To register for a class, scan the QR code, visit www.mchenry.edu/personaldevelopment, or call (815) 455-8588.

For more information, please contact personaldevelopment@mchenry.edu

Thank You Randy

Randy Mead has been your point of contact for renting the clubs manual extractors for years and years. He is moving out of the area and has passed the responsibility of the manual extractors to Al.

Thank you, Randy, for your years of dedication to NIBA its members and the art of Beekeeping. We hope your new home will be warm, filled with love and the buzz of bees.



NEWSLETTER EDITOR

If anyone has anything they would like to contribute to the newsletter or if they have any ideas of things they would like to see in the newsletter, please email me at

spinkawa@gmail.com



2023 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Program Chair - Larry Krengel

Webmaster - Terri Reeves

Newsletter Editor - Sue Pinkawa

Club Extractor Coordinator - 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. spinkawa@gmail.com

Honey Extractor

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent one of the clubs 3 honey extractors?

Two of the extractors are manual, a 4 frame a 3 frame. The third is motorized and is capable of extracting both sides of 9 frames at a time.

Rental fee for either of the manual extractor is \$10.00 for 3 days with a \$10.00 security deposit. The electric (motorized) 9 frame extractor costs \$25.00 to rent for 2 days with a \$75.00 security deposit. Deposits will be returned if equipment is returned on time, clean, and undamaged.

The extractors come with most equipment needed to make the uncapping and extraction experiences go smoothly, except of course, the honey frames and buckets.

To reserve a date contact AL Fullerton by phone or text at 815-382-7139 or email adfhoneymail@gmail.com, if you don't get a timely response, just phone. Pick it up in Cary Illinois.



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