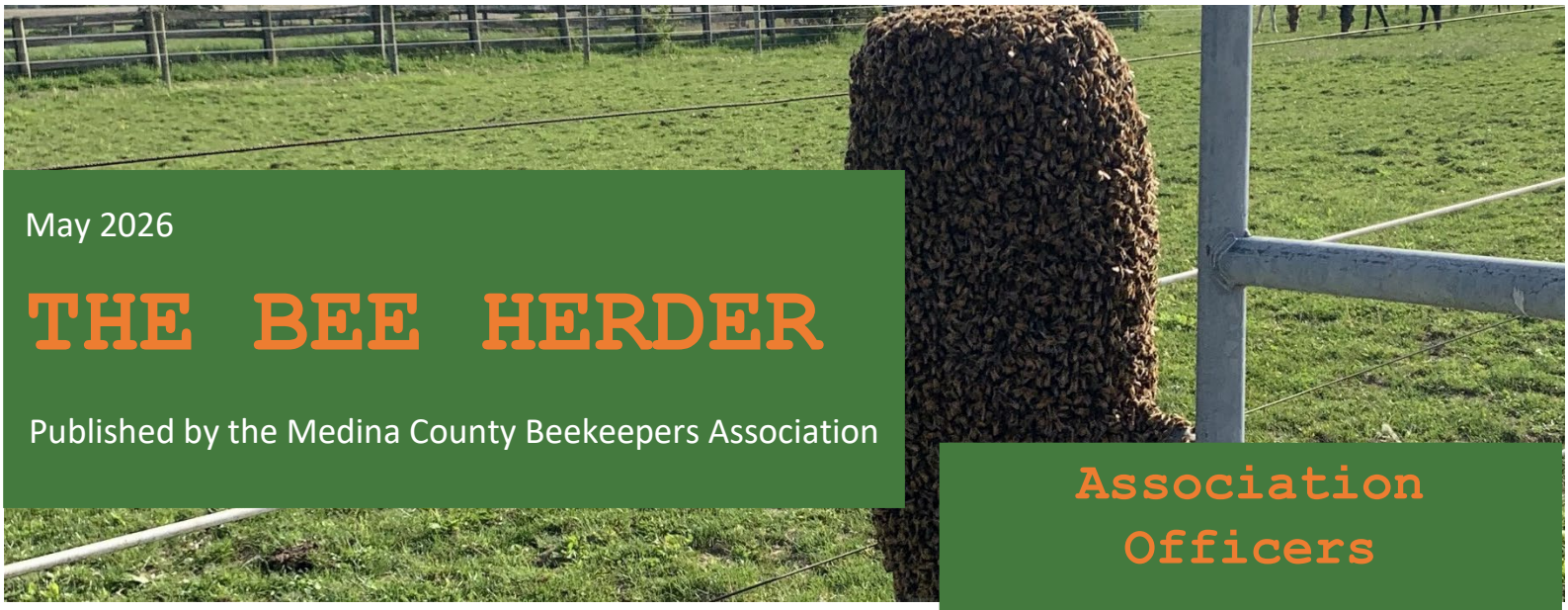

May 2026

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association

MEDINA beekeepers

MCBA Monthly Meeting
May 18th, 2026

Medina County Library
210 S. Broadway, Medina OH 44256
Rooms A and B
Questions & Answers 6:30-7:00 PM
General Meeting 7:00-8:00 PM

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MCBA May Meeting

Monday, May 18th, 2026

Speaker: Dr. Cameron Jack

Topic: Oxalic Acid treatment for Varroa Mite

Dr. Cameron Jack is an Assistant Professor at the University of Florida and a leading expert in honeybee health and beekeeping management. His research focuses on improving colony health through applied studies on pollinator pests and diseases—particularly Varroa mites and small hive beetles—as well as evidence-based management practices for both commercial and hobbyist beekeepers. Actively engaged with the beekeeping community, Dr. Jack regularly shares practical insights through extension programs and recently led a beekeeping club meeting focused on effective Varroa mite treatment strategies, translating current research into actionable guidance for beekeepers. During our May meeting, Dr. Jack will be covering one of the most important topics for beekeepers today, treatment of Varroa mite.

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Upcoming Events

May – Plant Exchange (May Club Meeting)

May 30th-31st - Heartland Apicultural Society Conference

May – Apiary Registration Due

June 22nd-28th – Pollinator week

August 3rd-9th – Medina County Fair

August – Club Picnic (@Krabill Lodge)

September – Ag Day

December – Christmas Party

MCBA June Meeting

Monday, June 15th, 2026

Speaker: Brad Deering, State Apiary Inspector

Topic: State of the honeybees in Ohio

Join us for a data-driven overview of the "state of the honeybees" where the State Inspector combines field inspection results with broader trends affecting beekeeping across the state. We expect to hear how important the honeybees are to Ohio agriculture, while also discussing ongoing challenges such as colony losses, varroa mites, and the spread of diseases like foulbrood. Brad typically presents findings and data from the Ohio Department of Agriculture's inspection program, including common issues observed in apiaries, with an emphasis on best management practices to maintain healthy colonies.

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Questions & Answers 6:30-7:00 PM

General Meeting 7:00-8:00 PM

MCBA Mission Statement

To promote beekeeping, broaden the knowledge and understanding of honeybees (and all pollinators) and the challenges they face in today's world, and educate by teaching best practices and techniques in apiary management.

President's Corner

By Peggy Garnes

Here we go from cold to cook! Crazy spring weather has been too cold and wet for splits to do well if you didn't make them strong. Queens have been slow to mate and lots of folks are questioning if they should buy a queen, but I feel we should wait just a bit longer.

Queen Rearing Class is in the works – so stay turned for emails and signups.

World Bee Day is here, and volunteers have stepped up once again and I thank you! Saturday, public day, was changed out for an extra school day. It's great to see the fascination on over 650 children's faces as beekeepers explain the life of the honeybee.

Earth Day was a success again and thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time and knowledge to answer the public's questions. Thank you to Shari Baker for bringing an observation hive from the club's bee yard. So much interest is generated in the live bee exhibit.

The Root Company had their observation hive installed a bit ago- again, thanks to Shari and her management of the club's bee yard #1. Jerry Hayes, editor of Bee Culture Magazine, and his staff assisted Shari with the install and commented on how gentle and calm the bees were. I love hearing that!

Dr. Cameron Jack is the speaker for this month and it's the plant swap- so be sure to bring one to get one. Last year I picked a pretty red oak that is over 3 feet tall now. Lots of great honeybee plants will be available- I'm going to bring nice borage and lavender plants. What will you bring?

Hug your family, stay healthy, and enjoy your bees!

Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in May

By Paul Kosmos (republished from May 2018)

April continued to be a very difficult and cold spring, much to the detriment of your bees. They have not been able to get out and forage, which means less food and pollen. In addition, the cold nights reduce their ability to raise brood. As a result, some hives are not as strong as normal for this time of year.

Your hives will catch up when it finally warms up. In fact, it may become very busy since they will want to make up for lost time.

Many plants are also behind schedule and have not bloomed in their normal progression. That creates the possibility for a major bloom "spike" when many plants catch up all at once. That is good for bees but can increase swarm conditions as they build rapidly. May is already the month to keep an eye on your bees to prevent swarming.

If you have not done so, temperatures should allow for easy inspection of your hives. For those of you who leave a super on the hive for winter food, the chances are good that you will find the Queen and brood in the super. Once the temps are steady, you will want to find the queen and move her down into the deep box. You may want to put a queen excluder under the super to allow the brood to emerge – and you are all ready for the start of the honey flow.

Many beekeepers reverse their deep boxes in the spring. Why? The bottom box is often empty. The idea is that since bees like to move "up", reversing the deeps puts empty comb above the bottom box and may reduce the urge to swarm. This technique also requires normal warmer temps to prevent chilling the brood. Ask your mentor!

We've heard from many members installing their first packages. It is so much fun to listen to their stories (and be reminded of our first year). For the most part they have found their nerves high (anticipation) but the actual installation is easy.

How Static Charges Help Bees & Flowers Work Together

By Clint Allen

Have you ever rubbed a balloon on your hair and watched it stand up? Or felt a little shock when touching a doorknob after walking across carpet? That is static electricity at work. Something similar happens every day between bees and flowers. It is a hidden force that makes pollination more efficient. This invisible teamwork is especially important for beekeepers in Medina where our honeybees and local plants depend on each other for healthy hives and strong crops.

When a bee flies through the air, its body rubs against air molecules, dust, and water droplets. This rubbing, called the triboelectric effect, knocks electrons away from the bee. The bee ends up with a positive electric charge. Think of it like your hair picking up extra positive charge from the balloon. Flowers, connected to the ground through their stems and roots, usually carry a slight negative charge. The air around them is often positively charged, especially on clear days.

Pollen grains inside the flower also tend to be negatively charged, just like the flower itself. As a positively charged bee gets close to a flower, something amazing happens. The opposite charges pull on each other. Pollen grains can actually leap across a small gap — sometimes several millimeters — and stick right to the bee's fuzzy body, even before the bee touches the flower. This is like a magnet pulling metal filings from a distance. The bee does not have to brush every part of the flower to pick up pollen. The electric force does a lot of the work.

This works both ways. When the bee, now carrying some pollen, visits the next flower, some of that pollen can jump to the negatively charged stigma (the part of the flower that needs pollen for fertilization). The electric attraction helps guide pollen exactly where it needs to go. This improves the chances that the plant will produce seeds and fruit. For beekeepers, it means more successful pollination in our gardens, orchards, and fields around Medina.

Bees do not just pick up pollen by chance. They can sense electric fields with special tiny hairs on their bodies and antennae. These hairs act like little antennas. When a bee flies near a flower, the difference in electric charge makes the hairs bend or vibrate slightly. The bee feels this movement and uses it as a signal. Honeybees seem especially sensitive through their antennae, while bumblebees use their body hairs more. Scientists have measured that these hairs can respond to very weak electric fields — the kinds found naturally around flowers.

Research shows bees can learn to tell flowers apart using these electric signals. In clever lab tests, bumblebees quickly learned which "flowers" had rewards based on their electric fields. They even noticed when a flower had just been visited. When a bee lands, it shares some of its positive charge with the flower. The flower's electric field changes for up to about 100 seconds afterward. Other bees can detect this weaker field and know to skip that flower and look for one with more nectar or pollen. It is like nature's "just visited" sign that saves bees time and energy.

Different flowers have slightly different electric field patterns because of their shape. Pointy petal tips or stamens can have stronger charges. Bees may use these patterns, along with colors, smells, and shapes, to decide where to land. This electric information adds another

layer to the “advertising” that flowers use to attract the right pollinators.

For beekeepers in Medina County, understanding this helps explain why healthy bee populations matter so much. Our local plants — from clover and wildflowers to fruit trees and vegetables — rely on this efficient pollen transfer. Strong electric attraction means more pollen gets moved successfully, leading to better plant reproduction and more food for everyone. It also helps bees collect the pollen they need to feed their larvae back at the hive. Protein-rich pollen is essential for raising healthy new bees.

The charges are not huge. A bee might carry a charge of around 100 to several hundred volts, but because the bee is small, the forces are just right for moving tiny pollen grains without harming anything. Flowers stay safe, and bees stay comfortable. Rain or high humidity can reduce these effects by letting charges leak away, which is one reason bees may forage less in bad weather.

Scientists continue to study this “electric ecology.” Key discoveries came from teams at the University of Bristol, including experiments showing bees detect and learn electric cues, and that pollen really does jump across gaps due to static forces.

As beekeepers, we can support this natural system in simple ways. Planting a variety of flowers that bloom at different times gives bees steady forage. Reducing pesticide use protects the bees that do this important work. Even small gardens in Medina backyards help keep local electric-powered pollination running smoothly. Healthy hives mean stronger colonies that can take full advantage of these natural forces.

Next time you watch bees working your flowers, remember there is more happening than meets the eye. Tiny positive and negative charges are teaming up with fuzzy bodies and clever senses to keep plants and bees thriving together. It is one more reason to celebrate the amazing partnership between our honeybees and the flowering world around us.

May Plant Exchange

Our annual club Plant Exchange is a fun, simple way to grow both your garden and your beekeeping knowledge. Bring a plant, take a plant, and help promote pollinator-friendly gardening throughout our community. Perennials, herbs, native plants, seedlings, or divided plants are all welcome. This exchange encourages members to share what grows well locally, support nectar and pollen sources for bees, and connect gardening with beekeeping. Come ready to swap plants, ideas, and tips, and leave with something new for your yard and your bees.

From Around the Web

5.5M ground nesting bees make home in Ithaca cemetery
https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2026/04/55m-ground-nesting-bees-make-home-ithaca-cemetery

How Many Beehives to Start?

https://carolinahoneybees.com/how-many-hives/?adt_ei=%Email%

California's economic savior might be this annoying insect

https://www.sfgate.com/national-parks/article/joshua-tree-bees-22244872.php

A $1.2 million Rosetta stone for honeybees

https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2024/09/05/12-million-rosetta-stone-honeybees

MCBA & Earth Day

Pictured above are club members teaching community members about honeybees

Ideas & Suggestions

This newsletter is for you, our members. If you have any ideas for content, format, corrections, or anything else, please, don't hesitate to reach out to me, Clint Allen via email.

Citations & References

Clarke, D.; Morley, E. L.; Robert, D. The Bee, the Flower, and the Electric Field: Electric Ecology and Aerial Electroreception. J. Comp. Physiol. A 2017, 203 (9), 737–748. DOI: 10.1007/s00359-017-1176-6.

Clarke, D.; Whitney, H.; Sutton, G.; Robert, D. Detection and Learning of Floral Electric Fields by Bumblebees. Science 2013, 340 (6128), 66–69. DOI: 10.1126/science.1230883.

Sutton, G. P.; Clarke, D.; Morley, E. L.; Robert, D. Mechanosensory Hairs in Bumblebees (Bombus terrestris) Detect Weak Electric Fields. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 2016, 113 (26), 7261–7265.