

December 2025

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



MCBA Monthly Meeting December 9th, 2025

Medina County Career Ctr

1101 W Liberty St, Medina OH 44256

General Meeting 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM



Topic: Annual Christmas Party

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MCBA December Meeting

Tuesday, December 9th, 2025

General Meeting 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Topic: Annual Christmas Party

Come enjoy good company, AMAZING FOOD, festive cheer, and share beekeeping stories with your fellow club members. This is a great opportunity to connect with other members and enjoy each other's company during this holiday season. We will again be having our Christmas Party at the Career Center, where Medina County Students will show off their acquired real world cooking skills by preparing our meal. All members are welcome—bring your holiday spirit! We will also be having a donation drive to help Career Center students. If you are able, please consider bringing an item to donate. A list of needed items can be found [here](#).

Upcoming Events

2026 Beginner Class Dates

Saturday Feb 14th and 21st - 10 am to 5 pm

Tuesday Feb 24th, Mar 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th - 6 pm to 8:30 pm

April: Earth Day

MCBA January Meeting

Monday, January 19th, 2026

Topic: To Be Announced SOON!

Speaker: To Be Announced SOON!

Medina County Library
210 S. Broadway, Medina OH 44256
Rooms A and B

Questions & Answers 6:30-7:00 / General Meeting 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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

As the year ends, I am reflecting on what a busy year our club has had...

From beginner classes to children's events like World Bee Day and OSU Ag Day, and public educating events like Earth Day, Bee Festival, Medina Fair, and Extracting and Make It demos at the Medina Parks and Recreation Krabill Lodge. So many members gave their time and expertise to make these events a success and a HUGE "Thank You" goes out to them. Without their generosity, our club wouldn't be nearly as much fun.



Looking forward to 2026, I see membership increasing as we participate in new events, donate our time and resources to children, and offer to make beekeeping an awesome adventure to those interested in our passion.

Hug your family, stay healthy, and tuck your bees in tight for the cold winter ahead.

Ten Minutes with the Bees — The bee yard in December

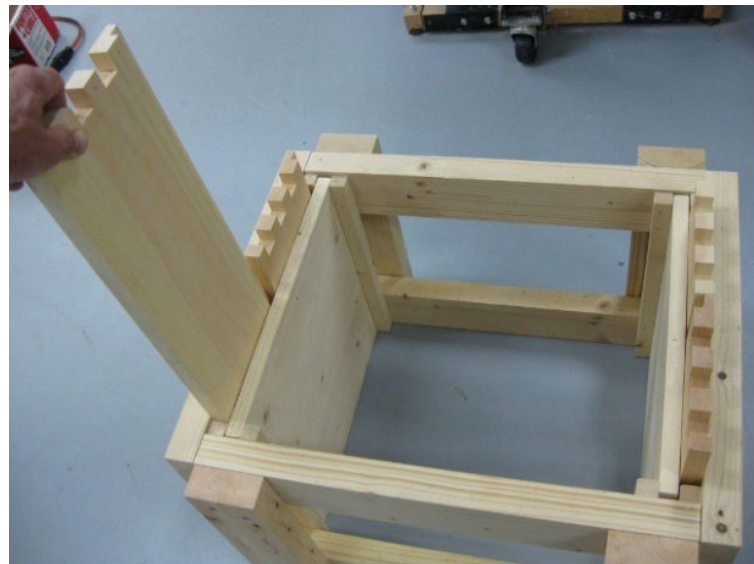
By Paul Kosmos

Republished from the December 2023 Bee herder

December is a Quiet Time for Beekeepers

Not much goes on in the Bee Yard in December. Our friends are basically at the mercy of how well we helped them prepare for winter. Some members are still adding sugar blocks on their hives. Tim Moore spent last weekend making large sugar cakes. Think you have it rough? Tim had to make 107 five-pound blocks! That is a lot of sugar and SO much work!

Winter is a great time to clean up equipment, repair woodenware, and make note of supplies needed for next year. It is also the perfect time for members who wish to save a few dollars by assembling their own boxes. Use of a box jig (Pictured) can help a lot. Perfect indoor projects.



I have spoken with a couple beekeepers who were still planning on using OXA vapor on their hives with the couple nice days this week. Don't think there will be days warm enough going forward. And I imagine most everyone has their hives wrapped to give their hives protection against the weather. Mouse guards too.



One minor but important tip, is to check your hive entrance occasionally in the winter. Peek through the mouse guard. If you see a lot of dead bees you need to remove the mouse guard, get a stick, and carefully scrape them out. After a real cold spell or after a quick change in temperature a pile of dead bees sometimes blocks the entrance. That can be fatal to the hive.

The club is actively working to highlight the Sustainability idea we have talked about. One important way to get started is to make everyone aware of details. For example, a lot of beekeepers could make spring splits to prevent swarms but hesitate since they do not want more hives. We have lots of beginners and members who have lost a hive over the winter who would be tickled to buy a NUC from over wintered hives. We just have to get the word out!

It wouldn't be cool to write at this time in December without wishing everyone a wonderful Holiday Season with friends and family. It's a very special time of the year to make new friends and strengthen ties with old ones.

MCBA Board Change

Bill Hall is the newest member of the MCBA Board following his election at the November meeting. Bill has been involved in many of the club's events and activities and will now serve as Director for a 3-year term. The

Board would like to extend a huge thank you to Bill for volunteering for this critical role.

Beekeeping Winter Work

By Clint Allen

When the first snowflakes settle across Northeast Ohio, many beekeepers breathe a sigh of relief. The rush of summer nectar flows and fall feeding is behind us, and the bees have clustered tightly in their hives. But while the bees enter a state of winter dormancy, the beekeeper's work is far from over. Winter is a season of preparation—a time to strengthen equipment, plan for spring, and safeguard the health of the colony. Two areas deserve special attention: hive maintenance and preparation, and bee health during the cold months.

Hive Maintenance and Preparation

Think of your hives as the homes your bees depend on to survive the harsh Ohio winter. A well-maintained hive is more than a box of frames—it is a carefully engineered microclimate that shields the colony from wind, moisture, and predators. Before the deep freeze sets in, inspect every piece of equipment. Woodenware should be solid, free of rot, and painted or sealed to resist moisture. Cracks or gaps in the hive body can allow cold drafts to penetrate, forcing bees to burn through precious honey stores to maintain warmth. Repair these gaps with weather-resistant caulk or replace damaged components entirely (Dadant, 2025).

Frames deserve equal attention. Old frames coated with dark, brittle comb can harbor pathogens and pesticide residues. Scrape away excess propolis and wax and rotate out frames that show signs of wear. Many beekeepers use the winter months to build new frames and assemble additional hive bodies. This is not just busywork—it is strategic preparation for spring, when

colonies expand rapidly and may require extra space for brood and nectar storage (Better Bee, 2025).

Moisture control is another critical aspect of hive preparation. Bees can withstand extreme cold, but they cannot survive when wet. Condensation forms when warm, humid air from the cluster meets the cold inner cover, creating droplets that drip onto the bees below. To prevent this, consider adding a moisture board or quilt box above the top bars. These absorbent materials wick away humidity before it condenses, keeping the hive interior dry. Pair this with an upper entrance or ventilation notch to allow moist air to escape without creating a chilling draft (Perfect Bee, 2025; Blythewood Bee Co., 2024).

Finally, think about insulation. Wrapping hives with breathable materials or adding foam panels under the outer cover can help stabilize internal temperatures. However, avoid sealing the hive completely—ventilation remains essential to prevent moisture buildup. Striking the right balance between insulation and airflow is the hallmark of successful winterization (Bee Keep Club, 2023).

Bee Health and Winter Care

While the hive structure is important, the real focus of winter care is the colony itself. Bees enter a state called “overwintering,” clustering tightly around the queen and vibrating their wing muscles to generate heat. This living furnace maintains a core temperature near 95°F during brood rearing, even as outside temperatures plunge below zero (Farm stand App, 2025). But this remarkable adaptation comes at a cost: energy. Bees consume honey continuously to fuel heat production, and inadequate food stores are a leading cause of winter losses. [farmstandapp.com]

In Northeast Ohio, a colony typically requires 60 to 80 pounds of honey to survive until spring. If autumn inspections revealed light stores, supplemental feeding may be necessary. Once daytime temperatures drop

below 57°F, liquid syrup is no longer suitable. Instead, provide solid sugar in the form of fondant or candy boards. These not only supply emergency nutrition but also absorb excess moisture inside the hive—a dual benefit for overwintering bees (Lehman's Blog, 2025).

Pest management remains a priority even in winter. Varroa destructor mites, the most destructive parasite of honeybees, can devastate a colony if left unchecked. Winter offers a unique opportunity for treatment because the queen often stops laying, creating a broodless period. Without capped cells to hide in, mites are exposed on adult bees and vulnerable to control measures. Oxalic acid, applied via vaporization or dribble, is highly effective during this window, often eliminating over 95% of phoretic mites in a single treatment. Timing is critical—apply only when brood is absent and always follow safety protocols to protect yourself and your bees (Honest Bee, 2025; Véto-Pharma, 2019).

Beyond mites, monitor for other threats such as mice, which seek the warmth of hives during winter. Install entrance reducers and mouse guards before the first frost. These simple devices prevent rodents from chewing comb and contaminating the hive with waste (Better bee, 2025).

Resist the urge to over-inspect during winter. Every time you crack open a hive, you disrupt the cluster and risk chilling the bees. Limit checks to warm days and only when necessary—for example, to replenish emergency feed or confirm ventilation openings are clear of snow. Observing from the outside—listening for the hum of the cluster or watching for cleansing flights on mild days—can provide reassurance without disturbance (Blythewood Bee Co., 2025).

Being A Good Neighbor While Keeping Bees

By Clint Allen

Keeping bees in a residential area is a rewarding experience, but it comes with responsibilities that extend beyond the hive. Honeybees are fascinating creatures, yet to someone unfamiliar with their gentle nature, the idea of thousands of insects living next door can be unsettling. A good beekeeper understands this and takes steps to ensure harmony between the bees, the beekeeper, and the neighborhood.

The first step toward being a good neighbor is understanding the concerns that others may have. Most worries fall into a few categories: fear of stings, swarming, and bees showing up in unexpected places like swimming pools or birdbaths. These concerns are valid and addressing them proactively builds trust and prevents conflict (Bee Castle, 2025).

Hive placement plays a major role in reducing unwanted interactions. Position hives away from property lines and areas where people frequently gather. If space is limited, use fences or dense hedges to create a visual barrier and encourage bees to fly upward as they leave the hive. This simple adjustment keeps flight paths above head height, reducing the chance of bees crossing a neighbor's yard (Maine State Beekeepers Association, 2020). In addition, avoid placing hives near schools, playgrounds, or heavily trafficked sidewalks. These precautions help ensure that bees remain a quiet presence rather than an unwelcome surprise.

Water is another critical consideration. Bees need water for cooling the hive and diluting honey, and if you do not provide a source, they will find one—often in a neighbor's pool or pet dish. Establish a reliable water source before warm weather arrives so bees learn where to go. A shallow container filled with fresh water and floating materials like corks or pebbles gives bees a safe

landing spot. Adding a pinch of salt or sugar can help train them to use it consistently (Maine State Beekeepers Association, 2020).

Communication is perhaps the most powerful tool for maintaining good relationships. Let neighbors know about your plans before installing hives. Explain the benefits of honeybees, such as pollination for gardens and the production of local honey. Address concerns honestly, especially if someone has allergies. Offering a jar of honey or a beeswax candle can turn apprehension into appreciation. Sharing your enthusiasm and knowledge often transforms skepticism into curiosity (Perfect Bee, 2025).

Managing the temperament of your colonies is equally important. Gentle bees make good neighbors. If a hive becomes defensive, investigate the cause—sometimes pests like skunks' trigger aggression—and requeen with calm stock if necessary. Regular inspections help prevent swarming, which can alarm those unfamiliar with the process. Swarms are usually docile, but to a neighbor, a cloud of bees looks like trouble. Preventing swarms through timely management avoids unnecessary panic (Maine State Beekeepers Association, 2020).

Good timing matters too. When working your hives, choose moments when neighbors are indoors. Avoid mowing or using loud equipment near the hive during inspections, as vibrations can agitate bees. These small courtesies go a long way toward keeping peace in the neighborhood (Bee Castle, 2025).

Ultimately, being a good neighbor while keeping bees means balancing your passion with consideration for others. Through thoughtful hive placement, reliable water sources, open communication, and responsible colony management, you can ensure that your bees are seen as an asset rather than a nuisance. When neighbors feel informed and respected, your apiary becomes part of a thriving community—one where bees, flowers, and friendships flourish together.

Meet a Club Member

Name: Mark Fredrick



1. **Where do you live:** Lafayette Township
2. **What got you interested in beekeeping?** 3 generations: Grandpa had bees for 80 years. He taught my dad, who then had bees for 60 years. (140 years of combined experience. I was dragged to the apiaries at age 8, +/- 70 years ago. Ask me about a swarm at age five - PTSD
3. **How long have you been keeping bees?** LOL - 70 years?
4. **How many hives do you have?** 10 Langstroth
5. **Are you looking to add to your apiary?** NO! I hate honey. Sticky Goopy Mess! Apitherapy (arthritis!!)
6. **Do you share your beekeeping hobby with anybody else?** Yes - Newbies - Mentee
7. **What is your most memorable beekeeping moment?** I was stung 60 times in 1983 - bad evening - one sweat bee set off the attack when she got in my mask and tried going into my ear canal; I panicked!!

8. **What are the best and worst parts of beekeeping?** The best part is watching the spring build up. The worst is finding a dead-out in March.
9. **What is your favorite food to add honey to?** Yeast Raisin Bread, Babka.
10. **Do you have any tips for beginner beekeepers?** Get at least two hives and a mentor
11. **Other than beekeeping, do you have any other hobbies?** OMG. Watch the 2016 Hollywood movie documentary "[Chicken People](#)" - I'm in it. Exhibition poultry for 70 years - AKC German Shepherds to guard the chickens. 12 dogs- rare colors. Have pups in 18 states not and have exported to Quebec
12. **What do/did you do for a living?** I'm a retired Cleveland High School English teacher of 32 years. I've been retired for 18 years. Farm Soybeans, corn, hay, poultry. Taught students firearms/trap, target shooting (Before Columbine). Angus cattle 30 years - sold off years ago and OSU Master Gardener 1980

Vice President Position Open

The Medina County Beekeepers Association currently has an open Vice President position on the Board. This is an important role that helps keep our club active and engaging throughout the year. The Vice President primarily coordinates monthly speakers for our meetings, ensuring we have informative and interesting presentations for members. In addition, this position participates in monthly Board meetings to help guide the direction of the club.

If you enjoy connecting with people, organizing events, and playing a key part in supporting our beekeeping community, this is a great opportunity to get involved. Serving on the Board is a rewarding experience that

allows you to contribute ideas, learn from others, and help shape the future of the club.

If you are interested in filling this position or would like more details about the responsibilities, please reach out to any Board member. We'd love to hear from you and welcome your participation!

From Around the Web

The honey bee secret to staying clean and healthy

<https://fieldreport.caes.uga.edu/news/how-honey-bees-stay-clean/>

The Magic Spells That Herded Medieval Bees

https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/swarm-charms?utm_source=Klaviyo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily%20Fri%2011%2F14&_kx=-zbYQtl2l82ggAaYXUE3GGfvILCMOyEJXaSc4QPZ-Lk.UUnqkC

Beekeeping an act of love for Lima man: Sustaining bee colonies is expensive, complex

https://www.limaohio.com/top-stories/2025/11/28/beekeeping-an-act-of-love-for-lima-man-sustaining-bee-colonies-is-expensive-complex/#google_vignette

New Report Highlights Urgent Need to Support Commercial Beekeeping and U.S. Food Production

<https://www.morningagclips.com/new-report-highlights-urgent-need-to-support-commercial-beekeeping-and-u-s-food-production/>

Beekeepers call for import ban on non-North American bees as deadly mite spreads

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11543441/beekeepers-call-for-import-ban-tropilaelaps-mite/>

North American Bee Strategy Unveiled to Protect Pollinators and Strengthen Honey Market

<https://mailchi.mp/2e4d82c4313c/nabs?e=3e97d46a9e>

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.

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Bee Castle. *Bee a Good Neighbor: A Guide to Keeping Bees Without Annoying Your Neighbors*. <https://www.beecastleltd.com/blogs/continued-learning-and-observation/bee-a-good-neighbor-a-guide-to-keeping-bees-without-annoying-your-neighbors> (accessed Dec 1, 2025).

The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and is not intended to guarantee your success as a beekeeper. While MCBA strives to offer accurate and up-to-date advice, beekeeping involves various factors beyond our control. Therefore, MCBA cannot be held responsible for any outcomes resulting from the application of the information provided. By using the advice and tips shared in this newsletter, you agree to hold harmless the MCBA, authors, publishers, and any affiliated parties from any liability, loss, or damage that may occur.

2026 MCBA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

MCBA offers webinars and lectures, a monthly newsletter, the opportunity to sell honey at the county fair, and email updates. \$20 for emailed or \$25 for a printed, mailed newsletter. Membership includes one family member in activities other than voting.

Renew your membership online [here](#), or complete the form below, make a check payable to **Medina County Beekeepers Association**, and mail to Medina Beekeepers, PO BOX 1353, Medina, Ohio 44258.

Membership Form – Please complete so that we have current roster information for the newsletters!

Member Name: _____

Email Address (Please Print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Optional # of Colonies: _____