

March 2026

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



MCBA Monthly Meeting March 16th, 2026

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

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MCBA March Meeting

Monday, March 16th, 2026

Topic: Deadouts, Splits and Swarm Catching

We are covering multiple topics in this month's meeting. This will be a great meeting where we will cover how to analyze deadouts, making spring splits and catching swarms

Speaker: Michael Mohn, Shari Baker and Walt Wozniak

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Upcoming Events

2026 Beginner Class Dates

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

April 25th: [Earth Day](#) (10 AM to 4 PM)

May 30th-31st - [Heartland Apicultural Society Conference](#)

August 3rd-9th – Medina County Fair

August – Club Picnic

MCBA March Meeting

Monday, April 20th, 2026

Topic: OSBA Apiary Diagnostic Kit (ADK)

The ADK is a comprehensive, portable field kit developed by the Ohio State Beekeepers Association to help beekeepers identify, monitor, and track pests, diseases, and overall hive health. It was created in response to a common challenge among new and experienced beekeepers alike: knowing what to look for during hive

inspections and having the right tools on hand to make accurate assessments.

Speaker: Emily Muller

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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

Warm days are here and hopefully they are going to stay. My bees have been bringing in pollen and definitely are having cleansing flights all over everything...

Swarming prep in the hive will need to be a priority when doing inspections – some hives have quite a bit of brood already. With that said, don't unwrap too soon as the hive still needs that extra protection at night that they are used to.

Tuesday evening Beginner Class is off to a great start with abundant enthusiasm. Welcome to all the new beekeepers from the Saturday and Tuesday Classes. The bee yards will have lots of attendees this year. I would also like to thank our bee supply companies/magazines for their catalogs, magazines, and generous donation of door prizes.

Queen Right Colonies
Mann Lake
Lappe's Bee Supply

Blue Sky Bee Supply
Dadant & Sons
Betterbee

Looking forward to warm days, the hum of honey bees on flowers, and the queen rearing experience again!

So, stay healthy, hug your family, and enjoy your bees!

Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in March

By Paul Kosmos

Republished from March 2019 Bee herder

The calendar says March, but today it's hard to tell. It's sort of same-as in the bee yard. One important point is worth noting. This Sunday the forecast says mid 50's, a great time to check on the bees. But be careful. All of my hives are clustered at the top. That means the bees are attached to the inner cover. If you remove the cover, you will break the cluster. While that might be OK if warm enough, I try not to bother the cluster. So, what to do? I lift the IC just enough to slide a strip of food into the hive. Then use your hive tool to slide it up to the edge of the cluster. Add a couple.

The good news is the Red Wing blackbirds are back in force, and the Turkeys are courting their girlfriends. They know spring is coming soon!



Swarms and Splits

While you are learning more about swarms and splits, give some thought to your equipment on hand. If you plan to increase your number of hives you will need enough hives to house them. Plan on a complete set since splits normally grow much faster than packages. Why? Splits contain a couple frames of capped brood and are more like nucs. You'll have 5-10,000 more bees in 7-10 days, weeks ahead of a package. They also have drawn comb.

If you plan to make splits or gather swarms occasionally you may also want to consider a nuc box. It is the same as a deep setup but only houses 5 frames. A small hive grows fast in a nuc box since they can control the environment better (and the critters). A nuc box can be very handy. I use it sometimes to place a frame of bees while I'm working a hive. Same for removing frames of capped honey to reduce the weight of a super for extracting. It's also great (and light) for catching a swarm.

Using a NUC box to catch swarms



Skunk Cabbage is the FIRST source of pollen in the spring. Comes up under the snow, bees are on them the first warm day in March (about 45 and sunny).



...and we thought beekeeping in Northern Ohio was challenging!

By Andrew Kawac

My wife and I recently engaged on a vacation trip in search of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). Our trip consisted of sailing in the Norwegian Sea, west of the Norway mainland. All scientific data suggested that the geographic location, as well as solar activity, Kp index and weather were congruent – Northern Light sightings were virtually guaranteed.

We sailed into Tromsø Norway, the Gateway to the Arctic Circle. Air temperatures were in the mid-teens (degrees F). Shortly after the 2:15 p.m. sunset, snow covered streets and land masses glistened in the moonlight. The locals were happy that the nearly 24 hours of darkness was surrendering to 4 hours of daylight per day. Day by day progressed, yet no sightings of the Northern Lights. We were pondering the thought – the odds of seeing honeybees would be higher than seeing the Northern lights.

Norway is known for the brown bee (a.k.a. the European dark bee or black bee). The brown bee (*Apis mellifera*

mellifera) has lineage dating back millions of years, originating in the Alps, with 10,000 years or so in the Nordic countries. Compared to European counterparts, they evolved to include a larger body size as well as longer hair, able to survive cold weather conditions and climate changes. Moreover, other adaptations include a slow spring start, where a burst of warm weather followed by a killing frost or lengthy cold spell would mean certain death to early spring foragers and colonies. As a result, procrastination is rewarded handsomely.



European brown bee

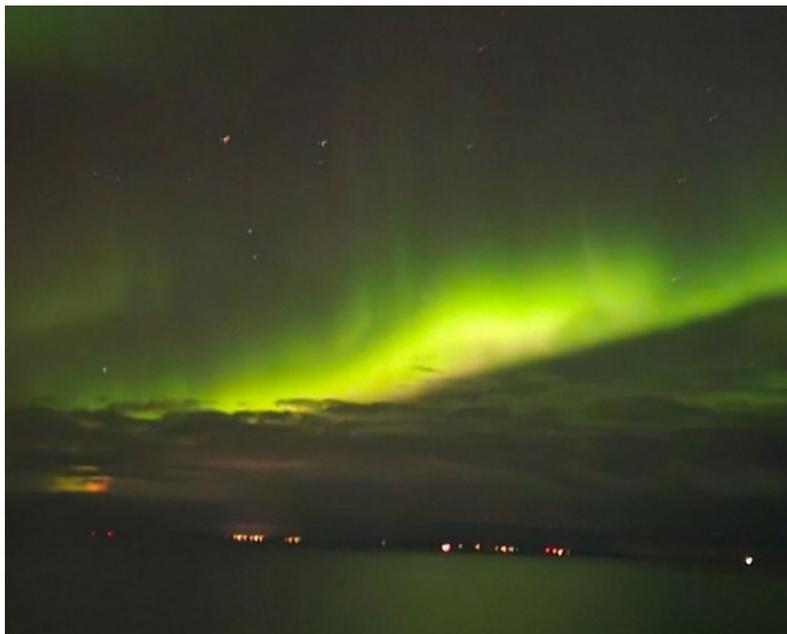
Moreover, when they do emerge, they have a tendency to be able to fly in cold and wet weather, characteristics much like our traditional bumblebees. As agriculture in Norway is limited, the brown bee has compensated with a fondness for mountain heather. The proboscis of brown bees is shorter, limiting access to flora sources. Although this is a challenge for the brown bee, it allows local solitary bees and bumblebees to co-exist and survive with a limited foraging source for all.

As inferred, the foraging season is relatively short. Winter trends in September through the following May. Near full darkness from mid-November through mid-

January, with incremental daylight (twilight) due to late sunrise and early sunset times on both ends of the spectrum. On the other end, nearly 24 hours of daylight in the summer months. For winter survival, beekeepers relocate hives or place hives into indoor “controlled cold temperature” storage. Use of heavy insulation is used in warmer southern latitudes.

Nonetheless, the future of the European brown bee in the Nordic region is severely challenged. Coordination efforts exist on the local, Nordic and international level for conservation of the brown bee. Focus includes efforts to maintain pure strains, conservation of species and genetics as well as maintaining and expanding viable and healthy populations. It is a concerted effort, with emphasis on enlisted local beekeepers as the key and fundamental constituents of the program.

So, one may ask; what’s the final buzz? As usual, I may have erred, again. We didn’t see the brown bees in the frigid Norway winter, but we finally did witness Nature’s outstanding presentation of the Northern Lights.



Northern lights, Tromsø, Norway, 02/06/26, 3:12 a.m.

Meet a Club Member



Name: Greg Johnson and Jessica Winchell

- 1. Where do you live:** less than a mile north of Lodi
- 2. What got you interested in beekeeping?** Jessica has been fascinated with bees for several years. We thought this was an opportunity for us to learn together and have a joint hobby.
- 3. How long have you been keeping bees?** We are just starting our third year.
- 4. How many hives do you have?** Three
- 5. Are you looking to add to your apiary?** Three hives is a good number for us. I’m sure we will have splits this spring and will need to find somewhere for them to go.
- 6. Do you share your beekeeping hobby with anybody else?** Sometimes our daughter Lynnsey will help us out.
- 7. What is your most memorable beekeeping moment?** Over wintering our one and only hive the first year has been our greatest moment.
- 8. What are the best and worst parts of beekeeping?** The best part is overwintering your hives. Knowing that you managed your hives well enough for them to survive despite all of our shortcomings. The worst part is losing a queen and trying to figure out why. Then, waiting for the

hive to requeen so you can wait and wait and wait some more for her to start laying eggs (wet and cold spring last year).

9. What is your favorite food to add honey to? We don't eat a lot of honey, but honey and peanut butter on fresh bread is pretty high on the list.

10. Do you have any tips for beginner beekeepers? Find a mentor and help out in the bee yard as often as you can. Just observing in the bee yard has been very useful for us. Asking questions will likely get you many answers but try to find the overall picture and see if there is one main answer.

11. Other than beekeeping, do you have any other hobbies? When we can we enjoy going on ATV trips and traveling for fun. I play basketball for the Cleveland Wheelchair Cavaliers.

12. What do/did you do for a living? I am unemployed and Jessica is an MRI technologist

To Split or Not to Split, that is the question

By Clint Allen

Every spring, beekeepers across the region face the same annual question: When is it finally safe to split a honeybee hive? And just as importantly, when is it too soon?

It can be a delicate call. Spring in Northeast Ohio (NEO) doesn't move in a straight line. Warm afternoons often give way to freezing nights, and that swing can make or break a new colony. According to research on hive-splitting strategy, early splits struggle when nighttime temperatures fall below freezing, largely because smaller colonies simply can't generate enough heat to protect brood during sudden cold dips.

Those temperature swings aren't the only factor. In the earliest weeks of spring, nectar and pollen remain limited across the region. For a newly formed colony without the workforce or storage reserves of a full-strength hive, that lack of forage can quickly lead to setbacks. Beekeeping sources warn that colonies created too early are at risk of chilled brood, slow population growth, and poor queen development often with no chance to recover before winter returns.

Still, those same sources point out that timing, when done right, is one of the most effective tools beekeepers have to manage growth and keep swarming in check.

Across the United States, the strongest recommendations fall in line with what NEO beekeepers already know by experience: the best time to split a hive is in early to mid-spring, shortly before bees naturally begin preparing to swarm. That guidance is echoed in resources that describe late April through May as the period when colonies expand rapidly, forage increases, and temperatures stabilize enough for young splits to thrive.

In short, it's the moment when bees give beekeepers their best opportunity. Colonies are full, brood patterns are strong, drones are available for mating, and nectar is flowing. Splitting at this point reduces the pressure that usually triggers swarming — the phenomenon where bees leave the hive with their queen in search of a new home — while giving both halves of the split ample time to rebuild strength. Experts emphasize that this timing supports natural colony growth and sets up hives to rebuild population before next winter.

For many in Northeast Ohio, that translates into a practical rule of thumb: watch the weather, watch the bloom, and plan for late April through mid-May.

But the date isn't the only consideration. Nearly every authoritative source on hive management stresses a central point: a hive should be split only if it is strong enough to handle it.

Beekeepers are advised not to split a colony that lacks adequate population, brood, or food stores. Guidelines suggest avoiding a split if the hive has fewer than six frames of bees, only one or two frames of brood, or limited honey reserves. Doing so can weaken both the original colony and the new one, leaving neither strong enough to thrive.

Health matters just as much as population. Colonies showing signs of disease, heavy mite loads, or poor queens are generally considered unsuitable for division. Splitting in those situations can spread pathogens or create conditions where neither colony has the resources to recover. Several beekeeping manuals warn that attempting to fix a weak hive by splitting it usually backfires, reducing the chances of survival for both halves.

Beekeepers are also urged to think twice before attempting a late-season split. While spring offers warmth and forage, late June and beyond often leave too little time for young colonies to grow enough population and store enough food to survive winter. Late splits may succeed under exceptional conditions, but most sources list them as a high-risk strategy.

Reading the Signs in NEO, the pattern that emerges is consistent:

Too early means cold nights and little forage. Too late means too little time to rebuild. Too weak means the colony simply can't support a split. For NEO, where temperature swings are common and bloom times vary year to year, the most reliable indicator isn't the calendar it's the colony itself.

Experts recommend watching for brood congestion, strong population growth, and rising nectar availability as markers that splitting season is approaching. If those conditions align with consistent nighttime warmth, beekeepers can move forward with confidence. If not, the safest choice is patience. It's better to miss an early

split than to jeopardize two colonies during a shaky spring.

In the end, splitting a hive in Northeast Ohio is as much an art as it is a science. The general window from late April to mid-May is well supported, but local weather and hive health should always lead the decision.

Spring can play tricks on even the most seasoned beekeeper, but the bees themselves rarely do. When conditions are right, colonies signal readiness through strength and growth. When conditions aren't, their hesitation is equally telling.

Beginner Classes

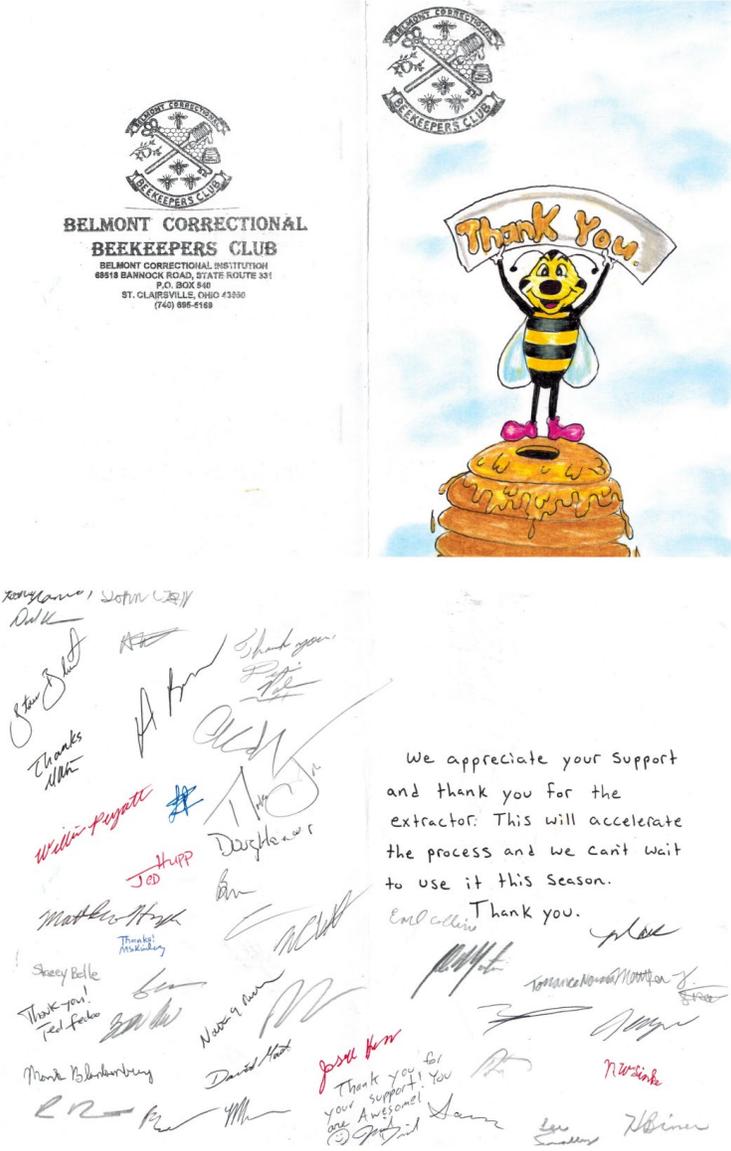


Saturday Class Graduates



Tuesday class is in session!

Club Donates Extractor



1. Our new VP, Greg Johnson, was officially announced and welcomed.
2. Financial report was given.
3. No minutes were read or voted on as the January meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.
4. Club bee yard: All the hives are alive and doing well.
5. The Saturday beginner beekeeping classes started on February 14th. There were approximately 22 students in attendance.
6. The following upcoming events were mentioned, and volunteers were asked to sign up to help via Sign-Up Genius.
 - a. Getting Started in Bee Keeping talk (March 25 at Krabill Lodge from 6-7:30).
 - b. Earth Day (April)
 - c. Honey extraction demonstration (September).
 - d. Bee Festival – date TBD
7. Fair News: Members were reminded that their dues needed to be paid by March 1st in order to be able to sell products at the fair. The only change this year is the size of the creamed honey entrees from 20oz to 8 oz.
8. MCBA has received the Gold Star Award and pins will be purchased for anyone who would like to purchase one. Please contact the President.
9. Interest was shown to have a Field Day for building items such as regular frames, cut comb frames, top bar and long hive equipment. Exact details and items will be discussed later.
10. Members were asked to fill out and submit paperwork if they want to be a mentor and/or if they intend on having bees available for attendees of the beginner's class.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: February 16, 2026

Call to order: The club meeting was held at the Medina Library, and it was called to order at 8:15 p.m. There were approximately 40 people present including five board members.

New Business:

1. After a discussion about the new Bee Park being built near the Medina Square and the recommendation by the board for the club to donate hexagon shaped picnic tables to the park costing approximately \$5,700 a motion was made in support of the donation. The motion was seconded, voted on and approved.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Sharon Carpenter – Secretary
2/17/2026

From Around the Web

UBC Research Reveals Why Honey Bees Overthrow Their Queen

<https://beeculture.com/ubc-research-reveals-why-honey-bees-overthrow-their-queen/>

The Honey Bee Secret to Staying Clean and Healthy

<https://beeculture.com/the-honey-bee-secret-to-staying-clean-and-healthy/>

A beginner's guide to successful beekeeping

<https://fieldreport.caes.uga.edu/news/beginners-guide-to-beekeeping/>

The 2026 Swarming Season

<https://beeculture.com/the-2026-swarming-season/>

Swarm Prevention Checklist

https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0804/4288/4376/files/Swarm_Prevention.pdf?v=1773217955&utm_source=Klaviyo&utm_medium=campaign&utm_campaign=Customers%20-%20Swarm%20Prevention%20%2801KKC1XZ9D2926YZFA6EDKEF15%29&tw_source=Klaviyo&kx=2NgduVRlKjdrE5uWaPcgG08N6nqM16Bj_kMUq65BqgM.W3qWVZ

Greater Cleveland Beekeepers Association, The Honey Bee Times

[Honey Bee Times March 2026.pub](#)

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.

References & Citations

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: _____