

April 2026

# THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



## MCBA Monthly Meeting April 20<sup>th</sup>, 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 April Meeting

Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 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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Rooms A and B

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

## Upcoming Events

**April 18<sup>th</sup> – Club Field Day on Splits (weather permitting)**

**April 25<sup>th</sup>:** [Earth Day](#) (10 AM to 4 PM)

**May – Plant Exchange (May Club Meeting)**

**May 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> – World Bee Day**

**May 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> - [Heartland Apicultural Society Conference](#)**

**May – Apiary [Registration](#) Due**

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> – Pollinator week**

**August 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> – Medina County Fair**

**August – Club Picnic (@Krabill Lodge)**

**September – Ag Day**

**December – Christmas Party**

## MCBA May Meeting

Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Topic: Oxalic Acid treatment for Varroa Mite

Speaker: Dr. Cameron Jack

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.

Q & A 6:30 to 7:00 pm

General Session 7:00 to 8:30 pm

Location: Medina County Library  
210 S. Broadway, Medina OH 44256

Rooms A and B

## 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

It's 80 degrees today as I write this contribution to the newsletter... Sunny, warm, and lots of flowers blooming! A honeybee's delight.

I had my first swarm call of the season and turned out to be mason bees but that's ok – my Columbus mentee called and had his first hive swarm and was looking for a queen. So get ready for swarms, check your hives weekly, adjust space for expanding, and enjoy this exciting time of the beekeeping year.

The club will be looking for some volunteers for Earth Day, April 25, and World Bee Day, May 14-15. Look for the signup links in this newsletter. For the newer beekeepers, this is an awesome opportunity to spend one-on-one time with a seasoned beekeeper and educate yourself and the public. I'm looking forward to time to chat bees with everyone,

Our club's first field day was Sunday, April 12th, at Bee Yard 2, demonstrating installing a nuc and package of honeybees. It was well attended, and we even saw eggs in the nuc! Beautiful weather and some nice side talk on ticks.

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

## Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in April

By Paul Kosmos (republished from April 2019)

### Spring Management

It's the start of the busy season in the bee yard! Extracting honey may be harder work, but spring management of the hives is demanding and important to the success of your hives.

First – Generally, for over wintered hives DO NOT FEED sugar syrup or pollen substitute once they are flying and bringing in food. Unless we have an unusually cold and wet spring.



### Strong early hive

April normally brings some warm days (60-70) that allow you to open the hives (don't linger, 60 is still chilly for brood). How strong is your hive? If really strong, you will want to keep an extra eye on them. By now almost all hives should be in the top box, either the upper deep or the super. If the Queen is laying in the super, you will want to move her down into the deep and put on a queen excluder. At least until the brood in the super emerges.

**Reverse the deeps?** Another decision is whether to reverse the deeps. Many beekeepers move the top deep down to the bottom and then place the bottom deep on top. Why? Bees like to move up and it appears there is more room to expand. Maybe slow the swarm urge. Close the insert as the lower part of the hive will be colder and there is brood.

If you have more than one hive, consider equalizing your hives in the spring. This time of year, you should find a couple frames of brood. By the end of April, 4 frames. If you find one hive with more frames and one a bit weaker, it is OK to move a frame of brood to even up the hives and slow down the swarm urge.

The same applies to those who have a hive and purchase a new package. By early May it is OK to move one frame of capped brood into your package. It will give the package a huge boost.



### Watch for nectar (shiny) in the deeps

The next step is to decide when to put a super on your hive. If you see pollen coming in, they are making babies! Get ready. I believe it is better to put supers on a bit early than too late. If you have supers of drawn comb put two supers on from the start. They will need the room to store the nectar while drying it. If starting with foundation one super is good until 8-9 frames are drawn. Then add the second.

## Varroa Before You See Bees: Why April Treatments Matter

*By Clint Allen*

As April arrives in Medina, Ohio, many beekeepers feel a sense of relief. The snow is gone, maples and dandelions begin to bloom, and on warm afternoons bees can finally be seen flying again. This is often the point when hives are opened for the first real inspection of the year. However, by the time you clearly see strong bee activity, one of the most serious threats to your colonies may already be well established. Varroa mites do not wait for

spring inspections, and April is one of the most important times to think about managing them.

Varroa destructor mites survive the winter inside the cluster with the bees. In Medina's cold winters, colonies spend months tightly packed together. This makes it easy for mites to remain protected and to feed on adult bees throughout winter. Even colonies that appear to have survived winter well can start spring with a damaging mite load. The problem is that mites are almost invisible without testing. You cannot reliably judge mite levels by looking at bees on the frames.

As days get longer in April, queens increase egg laying. Brood production ramps up quickly as colonies prepare for spring nectar flows. This is also exactly what Varroa mites want. Mites reproduce inside capped brood cells, especially drone brood. When brood rearing increases, mite populations can grow rapidly. A colony that seems fine in early April can have a serious mite problem by June if nothing is done early.

One of the biggest mistakes beekeepers make is waiting to see visible signs of trouble. Deformed wings, spotty brood, or dwindling adult bee populations usually show up much later. By the time those signs are obvious, the mites have already caused significant damage. April management is about acting before the problem is easy to see. That is why testing and planning now matters so much.

In northeastern Ohio, April weather can be unpredictable. Warm days may be followed by cold nights and sudden rain. This affects treatment choices. Some Varroa treatments have temperature limits or require consistent flying conditions. Planning ahead allows you to choose treatments that fit Medina's Spring conditions rather than scrambling later when options are limited.

Testing is the foundation of good Varroa control. Alcohol washes or sugar rolls done in April give you a baseline of mite levels before populations explode. Many

beekeepers skip testing in spring because colonies “look strong.” Unfortunately, strength does not equal low mites. A strong-looking colony with high mites is actually at higher risk, because lots of brood gives mites more places to reproduce.

Early intervention can also reduce the need for harsher treatments later in the year. Lowering mite levels in April slows their growth curve. This makes summer management more manageable and improves the odds of healthy winter bees being raised later in the season. Think of April treatment as prevention rather than reaction.

In Medina, local conditions matter. Spring nectar flows often begin with maples and early ornamentals, followed by dandelions and fruit trees. Beekeepers may be hesitant to treat during these flows. However, some spring treatments are designed to be used when honey supers are not yet on. Acting before supers are added avoids honey contamination concerns and makes compliance with labels easier.

Another key reason April matters is virus transmission. Varroa mites spread viruses such as Deformed Wing Virus. Even low mite levels can increase virus loads in colonies. Spring-borne viruses weaken developing bees that are meant to build the population for summer. Colonies may never fully recover if virus pressure is high early in the year.

Treatment choices should be based on both mite counts and conditions. No single product or method works perfectly in every situation. Rotation of treatment types is important to reduce resistance. April is a good time to review what worked and what failed last year. Keeping simple records helps avoid repeating the same mistakes.

It is also important to combine chemical treatments with good management practices. Breaking brood cycles, replacing old comb, maintaining strong queens, and avoiding unnecessary colony stress all support mite control. In Medina, managing moisture and ventilation

after winter can also help colonies regain strength without additional stress.

April can feel busy and overwhelming, especially for newer beekeepers eager to do everything at once. The key message is to put Varroa on the list early. Before adding boxes, before splitting, and before dreaming about honey, know your mite levels and have a plan. Doing this work before you “see” a problem often makes the difference between a struggling season and a successful one.

Varroa mites do their damage quietly and early. By the time bees are flying strongly around your hives, the mites may already be ahead of you. April is your best opportunity to catch up and stay ahead. In Medina’s short but productive beekeeping season, that early attention can pay off all year long.

## Notes From the Bee Yards

### Club Yard #2

3.30.26—It has been a very rapid spring, warm days followed by cold snaps—bees are building up quickly

South Hive: 8 Frame—overwintered with green marked queen—2 deeps one med, one feeder with shavings, not wrapped

- BIAS—good pattern, lots of nectar, bee bread, pollen
- Found queen in middle deep, moved her to nuc with 5 frames
- Left eggs in middle deep for new queen—not too much drone brood yet.

North Hive: 10 frame—overwintered 2 deeps, 1 med, feeder with wood chips, not wrapped

- BIAS—good pattern, up in medium. Middle deep had brood, bottom deep empty. Did not find queen. Moved Medium to bottom, then 2 deeps on top. Let medium hatch out, then split.

## 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.

## Hands-On Learning

Pictured below are club members learning how to install packages of bees and inspect frames at Bee Yard 2 off Ballash Road in Medina.



## From Around the Web

**Bumblebee Queens Breathe Underwater to Survive Drowning, Revealing How They Can Live Submerged for a Week**

[https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/bumblebee-queens-breathe-underwater-to-survive-drowning-revealing-how-they-can-live-submerged-for-a-week-180988330/?utm\\_source=smithsoniandaily&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=editorial&ctg=91662300](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/bumblebee-queens-breathe-underwater-to-survive-drowning-revealing-how-they-can-live-submerged-for-a-week-180988330/?utm_source=smithsoniandaily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=editorial&ctg=91662300)

**Wild honeybees now officially listed as endangered in the EU**

<https://theconversation.com/wild-honeybees-now-officially-listed-as-endangered-in-the-eu-267239>

**Beehive Stands**

[https://carolinahoneybees.com/hive-stands/?adt\\_ei=%25Email%25](https://carolinahoneybees.com/hive-stands/?adt_ei=%25Email%25)

## 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. *small size of their brains.*

*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.*