

October 2026

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association

MEDINA beekeepers

MCBA Monthly Meeting
October 19th, 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

Topic: Ventilated Vs. Condensing Beehives
Speaker: Peggy Desantos

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MCBA October Meeting

Monday, October 19th, 2026

Speaker: Peggy Desantos

Topic: Ventilated vs condensing beehives

Join us in October as experienced beekeeper Peggy DeSantos presents an informative discussion on ventilated versus condensing beehives, a topic that continues to generate interest and debate among beekeepers preparing colonies for winter.

Peggy will explore the science behind moisture management in the hive, compare the advantages and challenges of both approaches, and share practical insights based on real-world beekeeping experience. Whether you favor increased ventilation or are curious about the growing interest in condensing hive concepts, this presentation will provide valuable information to help you make informed decisions for your own apiary.

As temperatures begin to drop, this timely program is sure to spark thoughtful discussion and offer useful takeaways for beekeepers of all experience levels. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from Peggy and connect with fellow beekeepers as we prepare our colonies for the coming winter season.

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Upcoming Events

October – OSBA Fall Conference Registration Here

December 9th – Christmas Party

February 13th & 27th (10AM-5PM) 2027 – Saturday Beginner Classes

February 23rd, March 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 23rd (6PM-8:30PM) 2027 – Tuesday Beginner Classes

MCBA November Meeting

Monday, November 16th, 2026

Speaker: Peggy Garnes

Topic: Getting Ready for Spring

It may seem a little early to be thinking about spring, but November is actually a great time to start getting ready for next year's beekeeping season. At our November meeting, we'll be talking about "Getting Ready for Spring" and some of the things beekeepers can do over the winter to be better prepared when the weather begins to warm up.

We'll discuss preparing and repairing equipment, planning for new colonies or replacement queens, evaluating what worked and what didn't this past season, and getting ready for those first spring inspections. We'll also talk about feeding, early mite monitoring, spring buildup, and how to stay one step ahead of swarm season.

Whether you're heading into your first spring as a beekeeper or your twentieth, come ready to share ideas, lessons learned, and a few things you plan to do differently next year. Spring beekeeping begins long before the first warm day!

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Questions & Answers 6:30-7:00 PM

General Meeting 7:00-8:00 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

Turning leaves, cooler nights, and fighting with the yellow jackets – do not we love fall! Many calls have come in commenting on low hive weight – so many of us did not have a decent fall nectar flow again. For my bee yard – it has been 4 years now with no goldenrod nectar flow. I am feeding now to make weight and hopefully robbing will not start.

Second number of calls are the questions on how to battle the yellow jackets! I have innovative ideas for feeding stations with boric acid and apple cider vinegar – I will share them at the meeting.

Honey breakfast is quickly approaching, and volunteers will visit schools and give short presentations on honeybees and their contributions to the food we eat. The class ages vary so any member will be comfortable talking to these children. Look for an email coming soon with a link to signup genius and volunteer your time.

Elections will be in November, and the bylaws have been updated. At our October meeting we will ask for candidates for the open office seats and will post a link to the updated bylaws in this newsletter so you can look them over before the vote to accept the changes.

The holidays are quickly approaching, and our hives will be tucked in soon for the long winter. Check now for 60-80# stored honey, how you will mitigate the moisture, and wrap your hive at Thanksgiving!

Till the next meeting…

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

Peggy

Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in October

By Paul Kosmos (republished October 2019*)*

October is a lot about what we should have done to get to this point with healthy bees ready for winter's challenges.

You've heard it a dozen times… Now is when you will see varroa due to the decrease in capped brood (CB). Why? Seventy percent of varroa are normally in CB making babies. When the hive goes from six frames of CB to two, any Varroa in those 20-25,000 cells that WERE capped are now free to roam (phoretic). The warm fall seems to have delayed things a little. Varroa should be under control. It is still important to check. Use your favorite treatment if necessary and one last treatment in mid to late November to knock down the last of them (no brood to hide in).



Varroa – After treatment YIKES! Such a hive is in trouble!

Food stores should be in place. 8-12 deep frames of food, preferably honey, to get them to Spring. If light, leave a super or feed 2:1 SS.

Now the finals steps to give the bees a little extra protection. Let's start with mouse guards. Metal ones

with holes or slots, ½ inch mesh folded or stapled, or reducer with 1/3" slot, about 4 inches long.



Metal with 3/8" holes!



Half Inch Metal Wire

Many beekeepers wrap their hives to protect against wind and rain. Bees only heat the cluster area, and dark colors may absorb a little heat on a sunny day. Yes, a degree or two CAN make a difference. Roofing paper works well.



Waxed Cardboard Box or Roofing Paper

Add insulation to keep the inner cover warm (heat rises) to prevent condensation and dripping water.



Pink Foam Insulation is One Method

Most Beekeepers put the insert in, leave a small gap (1/2") for ventilation.

It's 55 Degrees in January and My Bees Are Flying. Now What?

By Clint Allen

If you have kept bees in Northeast Ohio for any length of time, you probably know the feeling. It is the middle of January. Yesterday there was snow on the ground. Today the sun is shining, the thermometer is pushing into the 50s, and suddenly there are honeybees flying all over the bee yard. After weeks of seeing virtually no activity, the place suddenly looks alive again.

For a beekeeper, especially a new beekeeper, that can produce two completely different reactions. The first is excitement: "They're alive!" The second usually follows about thirty seconds later: "Wait a minute. Should they be doing this?"

Most of the time, the answer is yes. And if the current winter outlook is any indication, Northeast Ohio beekeepers may get more opportunities than usual to stand outside in January or February and wonder exactly that.

NOAA's winter outlook for December 2026 through February 2027 favors warmer-than-average temperatures across the Midwest and much of the eastern United States. The reason getting much of the attention is a very strong El Niño. NOAA says that a very strong El Niño tends to shift the jet stream southward and eastward across the contiguous United States.

You may hear people casually refer to an event this strong as a "Super El Niño." Whatever terminology you prefer around the coffee pot at the bee club, the important thing is that warmer than average does not mean warm. This is still Northeast Ohio.

We can have a 55-degree afternoon followed by freezing temperatures. We can have rain, ice, snow, wind and sunshine seemingly taking turns. And a seasonal outlook doesn't tell us what will happen on any particular Tuesday in Medina, Brunswick, Wadsworth, Cleveland or Chardon. NOAA's outlook describes the odds for the season as a whole, not individual weather events.

For our bees, those occasionally warm winter afternoons can provide an important opportunity. So, what Are All Those Bees Doing? Honeybees don't hibernate. They spend the winter clustered together inside the hive, generating and conserve heat while gradually consuming their stored honey.

When conditions permit, though, some bees will leave the colony. One important reason is something politely called a cleansing flight. In other words, they need a bathroom break.

Bees can remain confined inside the hive for extended periods during cold winter weather. When a warm, sunny day finally arrives, they have an opportunity to fly outside and relieve themselves. Common beekeeping calendar's note that bees may leave the winter cluster for cleansing flights on very warm, sunny winter days, roughly around 50°F and above.

That means the sudden cloud of bees outside your hive on an unusually pleasant January afternoon isn't necessarily evidence that something is wrong. It can be completely normal winter behavior.

You may also see bees involved in housekeeping. Dead bees accumulate inside colonies during winter, and on warmer days workers can remove some of them. Many of us have seen dead bees scattered on the snow outside the hive and this can be a good sign, because it can indicate that the living bees inside are doing their housekeeping.

That is one of those strange lessons of beekeeping: a few dead bees in front of the hive can sometimes make you feel better.

Here is where the beekeeper can become the problem. After weeks of not seeing our bees, a warm January afternoon is terribly tempting. The bees are flying, we're comfortable without three coats on, and suddenly opening the hive seems like a wonderful idea. Before you start pulling frames, take a breath. Winter is not spring.

A warm period gives us a terrific opportunity to observe, but it doesn't automatically turn January into April. Experienced beekeepers advise that a hive can be opened when conditions are relatively warm and windless, but specifically caution against pulling frames or breaking apart the cluster below 50°F. So instead of beginning with your hive tool, begin with your eyes.

Watch the entrance. Are bees coming and going? Is the entrance clear? Is there evidence of normal housekeeping? Has snow or ice blocked ventilation? Look around the hive before deciding that you need to look inside it.

And use your ears, too. Many beekeepers recommend= listening at the upper portion of a winter hive and, if

nothing is heard, giving the outside of the hive a tap and listening for the response.

Sometimes the best winter inspection is one where the lid never comes off. A warmer winter doesn't necessarily eliminate the danger of starvation.

Your bees are still consuming their stored honey. Ohio Department of Agriculture guidance recommends going into winter with a colony weighing at least 80 pounds, while also emphasizing protection from wind and moisture and adequate ventilation.

There is another complication. Food being inside the hive does not necessarily mean food is conveniently available to the cluster.

As winter progresses, pay attention to colony weight. Many beekeepers recommend gently hefting the hive to assess stores and identify dry sugar, fondant or candy board as options on a warm day when a colony is light.

Those odd warm days, therefore, shouldn't just make us think, “Great, the bees survived.” They should make us think, “What are the bees telling me?”

A sunny 55-degree day can bring bees out of the hive, but it does not mean that dependable spring forage has arrived. Nor does a warmer seasonal forecast mean Northeast Ohio cannot experience significant cold spells. NOAA's outlook tells us warmer-than-average conditions are favored across our broader region, not that cold weather has been canceled.

So, enjoy those warm winter days without letting them fool you. Walk through the bee yard. Watch the entrances. Listen to the colonies. Check that entrances and ventilation haven't become blocked. Get a feel for the hive's weight. Make some notes about what you observe and what is happening with the weather.

Most importantly, resist the temptation to turn every observation into an intervention. We spend much of the active season doing things for our colonies. We inspect. We add boxes. We remove boxes. We monitor mites. We manage queens. We harvest honey. We feed when necessary. There always seems to be something that needs our attention.

Winter teaches a different skill: restraint. On one of those strange Northeast Ohio winter afternoons when the temperature reaches the 50s, pull up a chair near the bee yard. Have a cup of coffee. Watch the entrance for fifteen minutes.

If bees are flying, don't immediately assume they need your help. They may simply be taking advantage of exactly the same thing as you are: A surprisingly beautiful winter day in Ohio.

Club Meeting Minutes

Call to order: The club meeting was held at the Medina Library and was called to order at 8:20 p.m. Members of the Board in attendance were President Peggy Garnes; Treasurer Kate Reusch, Secretary Sharon Carpenter; and Directors, Steve Moysan, Bill Hall, and Shari Baker. Approximately 40 members were in attendance.

1. The Treasurer’s report was given.
2. Club bee yard: All the hives are doing well, and the number of hives is withing the limits of our contract with the Medina Park District. One nuc is included in the count.
3. Fair News: The Fair week was very successful. A “Thank you” was given to all volunteers for making it a success.
4. The Bee Herder, website and Facebook page are going great. Some discussion on monitoring Facebook correspondences.
5. Speaker/meeting line-up: October – Ventilated vs condensing beehive; November – Getting ready for spring; December – Christmas party on the 9th from 6:00-800 p.m.
6. During the November meeting, we will have a raffle, and all proceeds will go to the Care Closet at the Career Center. AT the October

meeting, members will be encouraged to bring items for the closet to the November meeting if they are unable to attend the party.

7. Our annual picnic that was held at Krabill Lodge in August was a success with many people in attendance
8. World Bee Day volunteers are needed to be speakers in the appointed schools. Please reach out to Peggy or Nicki.
9. The Bee Festival in Medina was well attended
10. The Queen Rearing class went well. One queen returned to the hive mated. There will be another class in the spring.

New Business:

1. We will be having elections this year. The board members that will be up for election will be posted after the bylaws' changes receive final approved by a lawyer. Members must be current with their dues to vote.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Sharon Carpenter – Secretary
9/22/2026

From Around the Web

Prayer for the Pollinators

https://www.sehs.net/about-us/news/2026/10/14/prayer-for-the-pollinators

How to Succeed in Beekeeping

https://beekeeping365.com/2026/10/03/how-to-succeed-in-beekeeping/

AI Meets Apiculture: UC Riverside Uses Machine Learning to Steer Bees Away from Pesticides

https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2026/09/24/machine-learning-helps-identify-chemicals-repel-honey-bees-pesticides

Honeybees deemphasize potential 'misinformation' in their waggle dances

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/honeybees-deemphasize-potential-misinformation-in-their-waggle-dances/

Ivy bees fight back against honeybees that drive other pollinators off flowers

https://phys.org/news/2026-10-ivy-bees-honeybees-pollinators.html#google_vignette

Investigate how honeybees construct combs out of wax to store honey, plant nectar, and bee bread

https://www.britannica.com/video/wax-Honeybees-honeycomb-body-worker-bee-cells/-16538

Honeybee Swarms Have Been Misread for Centuries, Biologists Say

https://www.sci.news/biology/honeybee-colony-15118.html

Honeybee's stinger continues to pump venom once detached from body, new footage shows

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/video/2026/oct/13/honeybees-stinger-continues-to-pump-venom-once-detached-from-body-new-footage-shows-video

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

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