

July 2026

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



MCBA Monthly Meeting July 20th, 2026

Location: Medina County Fairgrounds, 720 W. Smith
Road, Medina OH 44256

General Meeting 6:00-7:30 PM

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MCBA July Meeting

Monday, July 20th, 2026

Speaker: NA

Topic: Fair booth Preparation / Cleanup

Join us to help prepare the Fair Booth for sale at this year's Medina County Fair. There may also be a final meeting to prepare sellers and get everyone on the same page for the sale of their honey during the fair.

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General Meeting 6:00-7:30 PM

Upcoming Events

July 18th – Bee Festival 2026

August 3rd-9th – Medina County Fair

August – Club Picnic (@Krabill Lodge)

September – Ag Day

December 9th – Christmas Party

MCBA August Meeting

Monday, August 17th, 2025

Time: 5:00 to 9:00 pm

Annual Picnic

A fun evening with nothing to do but relax, eat good food, and visit with your fellow Beekeepers! This year the club will be paying for a pig roast. Attendance is limited.

Signup Link [here](#)!

Location: Krabill Lodge 7597 Ballash Rd, Medina, OH 44256

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 a hot July for sure! And it's a super busy month for beekeepers and MCBA!!!

Bee Festival at the Medina Library is July 18th – being a fun time for family and children you don't want to miss it. If you want to drop in and volunteer – please do. The scheduled volunteers can always use extra hands. The time is 11 am to 3 pm.

Monday night is fair booth clean-up and the mandatory sellers meeting. If you are selling your products at the fair you must enter by July 20th, at 4 pm and attend the sellers meeting that evening at the fair booth. Pizza and beverages will be served after cleanup and meeting.

The weather has been extremely hot and muggy, and our bees are letting us know to take a break... Lots of bearding and water collection is going on so please be sure to prop the lid open a bit and make sure there is a close water source. Be sure that you, too, take water breaks – heat exhaustion is never something you want to experience. Honey is being capped quickly with this heat so be sure to add more supers or extract and return the wet boxes for cleaning by your bees.

So take a break, hug your family, and love your bees!

Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in June

By Paul Kosmos (republished from July 2019)

Honeybees respond differently depending on the food resources available, and variables such as the weather. Nectar can dry up after the trees bloom, and the bees wait for the next source to bloom.

Some beekeepers have reported a big slowdown in activity since mid-June. Bees sitting on the front porch, moving forward and back. It almost looks like they are scrubbing the floor. It's called wash boarding (it's normal activity).



When the temperature soars, this activity can cause bearding, when a lot of bees hang out on the front of the hive to help the hive stay cool.



A Quiet time for the bees....

July and August can be fairly quiet for the bees. While there can be days of intense activity mixed in, such activity is very dependent on the weather. Last year (2018) was a good example of how a drought can limit and even weaken the bees. Many beekeepers found their hives too light on honey stores to make it through the winter. A couple years ago the fall flow filled deeps and supers.

Robbing – Honeybees, like most creatures in nature, are opportunistic. If they find a good source of food they will go after it. Sometimes that is a weaker hive, often nucs. The most obvious sign of robbing is increased activity. If you see heavy activity in a small hive.... It's probably robbing. Use of a robbing screen will stop the robbing. Put it on late evening or early am.



Not sure if it's robbing? Put a piece of screen over the entrances late evening. If there are bees piled up early in the am.... It's robbing. Robbing does not hurt the beekeeper, but It can make it almost impossible to do an inspection.

Where did the bees go? Late fall absconding

By Clint Allen

Few discoveries are more discouraging for a beekeeper than opening a hive on a cool autumn morning and finding it nearly empty. Frames that recently held thousands of busy worker bees may suddenly appear abandoned, with only a small cluster remaining or no bees at all. This phenomenon, known as absconding, occurs when an entire honeybee colony deliberately leaves its hive in search of a new home.

While absconding is more commonly associated with tropical climates and periods of environmental stress, beekeepers across Northeast Ohio occasionally report colonies abandoning Langstroth hives during early fall. The timing often catches beekeepers by surprise because colonies are typically preparing for winter rather than relocating.

Unlike swarming, which is a normal reproductive behavior where a queen departs with a portion of the colony, absconding involves nearly the entire population leaving behind brood, stored honey, and sometimes even valuable resources. The decision is generally driven by a combination of stress factors severe enough to convince the bees that their current location is no longer suitable for survival.

One of the most significant contributors to fall absconding in Northeast Ohio is pressure from Varroa destructor mites. These parasitic mites have become the most serious threat facing honeybee colonies in North America. By late summer and early fall, mite populations often reach their annual peak. As the mites feed on developing bees and spread viruses such as Deformed Wing Virus, colony health can begin to decline rapidly.

Beekeepers may mistake mite-related absconding for a sudden disappearance when, in reality, the bees have been under stress for weeks. Colonies, heavily burdened by mites can become disorganized and unhealthy. If mite numbers are left unchecked during August and September, colony behavior may change dramatically. Worker bees may reduce brood rearing, become more defensive, or eventually abandon the hive altogether.

Food availability is another major factor. Northeast Ohio's nectar flow typically slows considerably by late summer. While goldenrod and aster blooms provide an important fall nectar source, weather conditions can greatly influence their productivity. Extended drought, excessive rainfall, or unusually cool temperatures may reduce nectar production and force colonies into a nutritional deficit.

When bees perceive that food resources are insufficient to support winter survival, stress levels increase. Colonies that enter autumn with inadequate honey stores may become vulnerable to robbing by neighboring hives. Continuous attacks from stronger colonies can create an environment where bees view relocation as preferable to remaining in a compromised location.

Robbing pressure tends to intensify during dearth periods when natural forage becomes scarce. In Northeast Ohio, this often occurs from late August to September. Signs of robbing include fighting at the hive entrance, torn wax capping, and increased defensive behavior. A colony subjected to persistent robbing may experience enough disruption to trigger absconding behavior, especially if other stressors are already present.

Pests inside the hive can also contribute to abandonment. Small hive beetles, though traditionally more problematic in southern states, have become increasingly common in portions of Ohio. Heavy infestations can overwhelm weakened colonies. Beetle larvae tunnel through combs and contaminate honey

with waste products, creating conditions that many bees find intolerable.

Wax moths are another concern, though they are often more a symptom of colony weakness than a primary cause. Nevertheless, severe infestations can accelerate colony decline. Once comb damage becomes extensive, bees may determine that maintaining the hive is no longer worth the effort.

Environmental conditions inside the Langstroth hive itself deserve consideration. Ventilation problems can become significant during periods of fluctuating temperatures common in Northeast Ohio's early fall season. Warm afternoons followed by cool nights can create condensation issues. Excess moisture encourages mold growth and can make portions of the hive unsuitable for brood rearing.

Similarly, hive placement can influence colony stability. Colonies located in areas with prolonged shade, poor air circulation, or repeated disturbances from animals may experience elevated stress. Skunks, raccoons, and even bears in some rural areas can repeatedly harass colonies. While a single incident may not drive a colony away, persistent disturbance can make relocation appear advantageous.

Pesticide exposure remains a concern for both commercial and hobbyist beekeepers. Agricultural activity across Northeast Ohio includes row crops, orchards, and landscaping operations that may involve chemical applications. Sublethal pesticide exposure can affect navigation, communication, and foraging behavior. Although direct poisoning typically results in large numbers of dead bees near the hive, chronic exposure may weaken a colony sufficiently to contribute to absconding when combined with other stress factors.

Queen problems can also play a role. A failing queen may produce fewer pheromones, reducing colony cohesion. Worker bees rely on these chemical signals to maintain organization and stability. When queen performance

declines, the colony may attempt superseding by raising a replacement queen. If that process fails or becomes disrupted, colony behavior can become erratic.

In some cases, newly established colonies are particularly susceptible to absconding. Beekeepers who install package bees or captured swarms during the summer months may find that the colony never fully commits to the hive location. If resources become scarce or management practices create excessive disturbance, the bees may leave before winter preparations are complete.

Excessive hive inspections during critical periods can inadvertently contribute to colony stress. Frequent opening of the hive disrupts temperature regulation and brood management. While regular monitoring remains essential, especially for mite control, experienced beekeepers often recommend minimizing intrusive inspections during the transition into fall unless specific concerns require attention.

Weather patterns may also influence absconding events. Northeast Ohio occasionally experiences stretches of hot, dry conditions extending into September. Colonies exposed to prolonged heat without access to sufficient water sources may struggle to regulate internal hive temperatures. Honeybees maintain remarkably precise conditions within the brood nest, and repeated challenges to that balance can increase overall stress.

Absconding is rarely caused by a single issue. More often, it reflects the cumulative impact of multiple stressors occurring simultaneously. A colony facing high mite loads, limited nectar availability, robbing pressure, and queen problems may eventually reach a tipping point. At that stage, abandoning the hive becomes a survival strategy rather than a mystery.

For beekeepers seeking to reduce the likelihood of fall absconding, experts recommend a proactive approach. Regular mite monitoring, timely treatment when thresholds are exceeded, adequate fall feeding when natural stores are insufficient, and maintenance of strong

colony health all remain essential practices. Attention to ventilation, predator control, and appropriate hive placement can further improve colony stability.

As autumn approaches across Northeast Ohio, most healthy honeybee colonies are focused on a different mission entirely. Rather than searching for a new home, they are building food reserves, raising long-lived winter bees, and preparing for months of cold weather ahead. When a colony suddenly abandons its Langstroth hive during this critical season, it is often sending a clear message that something in its environment has gone seriously wrong.

Understanding those warning signs may help beekeepers intervene before a thriving colony becomes another unexplained empty hive.

Club Meeting Minutes

Call to order: The club meeting was held at the Medina Library and was called to order at 8:30 p.m. Members of the Board in attendance were President Peggy Garnes; Vice President Greg Johnson, Directors, Steve Moysan, and Shari Baker, and Treasurer Kate Reusch.

1. The Treasurer's report was given. Donation received from person attending last meeting as a guest.
2. Club bee yard: Three Nucs have been sold to current members.
3. Volunteers are needed for the following: Room set up for club meetings, The Bee Festival on July 18, 2026, and Fair week; OSU Camp on June 18th, Cut-out crew.
4. Fair News: It is time to start working on entries.
5. The Bee Herder, website and Facebook page are going great as usual.
6. Speaker/meeting sign-up: July – Fair set up; August – Club picnic; September – Melanie from Blue Sky, Nutrition; October – Ventilated vs condensing beehive; November

– Getting ready for spring; December – Christmas party on the 9th from 6:00-800 p.m.

7. Our annual picnic is being held at Krabill Lodge and will be a pig roast for 40 people at the cost of \$1,400. A vote was taken to allow this expense; all were in favor.

New Business:

1. There is a cut-out at a condo, must have certificate liability insurance.
2. HB911 – 10 hive rule with 3 mile radius discussion
3. USDA Beltsville Bee Lab is closing on September 30, 2026

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Sharon Carpenter – Secretary
6/16/2026

From Around the Web

Oh honey, where did you go?

<https://www.thenewlede.org/2026/03/oh-honey-where-did-you-go/>

Semitruck Carrying Millions of Bees Crashes in Yellowstone National Park

https://cowboystatedaily.com/2026/06/17/semi-truck-carrying-millions-of-bees-crashes-in-yellowstone-national-park/?_bhlid=5000e3e6b8e58bbacf6155313397afa054acd2a6

Honey Bee Health Coalition Releases Ninth Edition of the Tools for Varroa Management Guide

<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/honey-bee-health-coalition-releases-ninth-edition-of-the-tools-for-varroa-management-guide/>

Found in Translation

<https://beeculture.com/found-in-translation-2/>

How to Clean Beeswax

https://carolinahoneybees.com/processing-beeswax-cappings/?adt_ei=%25Email%25

Rescuing Bees and Helping Homeowners

<https://beeculture.com/rescuing-bees-and-helping-homeowners/>

Different Types of Honey

https://carolinahoneybees.com/types-of-honey/?adt_ei=%25Email%25

Honeybee colony losses stabilize following record highs, yet pressures persist

<https://wire.auburn.edu/content/agriculture/2026/06/honeybeecolony0626.php>

An Update on the Yellow-Legged Hornet In North America

<https://beeculture.com/an-update-on-the-yellow-legged-hornet-in-north-america/>

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

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.