

December 2023

# THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



## MCBA Annual Christmas Party

Monday, December 18, 2023

Santosuossos'

Pizza, Pasta, Vino

3725 Medina Rd Route 18, Medina, OH 44256

TIME 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM



## Association Officers

**President:** Paul Kosmos 330-239-1379  
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**Directors:**  
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2025: Larry Watson  
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2026: Shari Baker  
shari.baker721@gmail.com

**Medina County Bee Inspector:**  
Michael Mohn 330-591-5035  
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**State of Ohio Inspector:**

## Upcoming Events

### February 2024 - Medina Beekeepers Beginner classes

#### Saturday Classes

Saturday, February 17, and 24  
Times: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

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

#### Tuesday Classes

Tuesday, February 27, March 5, 12, 19, 26  
Times: 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm

#### [Medina Beekeepers 2024 Beginner Class Link](https://medinabeekeepers.com/resources)

<https://medinabeekeepers.com/resources>

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

## MCBA January Meeting

Monday, January 15, 2024

*Topic – Show and Tell*

*Bring your best advice, favorite item in your apiary or do you have a "why didn't I think of that" idea or a "I can't live without it."*

Q & A 6:30 to 7:00 pm  
Monday, 7:00 to 8:30 pm

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

Rooms A and B

“Doing something, is always better than the alternative.”



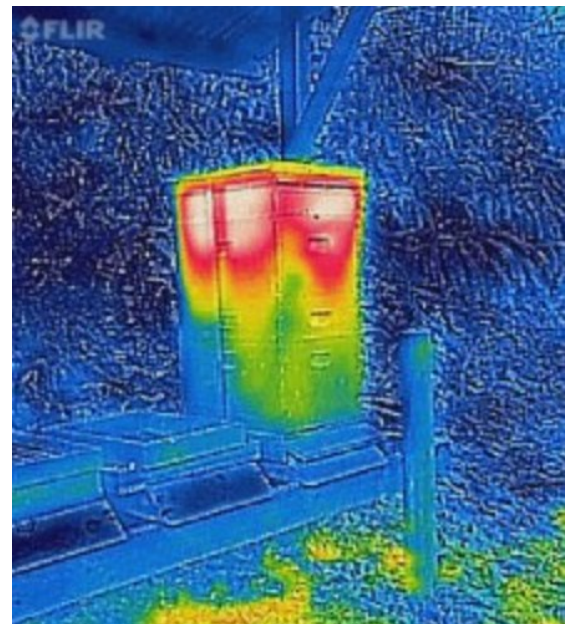
## Winter Inspections

Even though the temperature may be too low to do a full hive inspection, there are a few things that beekeepers can do to check on the health of their colonies. Before the temperature is too cold, one of your jobs is to ensure the hive has adequate ventilation and a way to deal with moisture. Ventilation can come in the form of an upper entrance, while moisture can be addressed in multiple ways. A traditional method of moisture control is the use of quilt box. The quilt box utilizes any number of filler materials to absorb moisture generated by the colony.

Materials could be cedar chips, saw dust, wood shavings or some other absorbent, nontoxic material. The concept behind the quilt box, is the material you place inside it, will absorb the moisture within the hive, preventing it from collecting and dripping down onto the cluster. Another method to control moisture and condensation is through adequate insulation in the top of the hive. If the insulation is adequate the temperature near the cover will be too warm to prevent the water from condensing and water will stay in its vapor form.

One of the most important activities we need to do as beekeepers, is to ensure the colony has enough food stores throughout the winter. As discussed, many times during club meetings, an easy, noninvasive method would be the “lift test”. Placing one hand in the bottom back of the hive and lifting an inch or two will give you an idea as to how heavy the hive is. It would also be a good idea to do this early in the season so you can better monitor for changes. If you feel the weight may be too low, it would be a good idea to consider feed your colony fondant, sugar cakes or granulated sugar as a last resort. Remember, doing something, is always better than the alternative! Also, when you start feeding, you’ll need to continue throughout the remainder of the season. It is also a good idea to inspect the entrance of the colony. On days that are above 50 °F, you may even see bees performing cleansing flights. You may also see dead bees on the landing board of the hive. You should see some dead bees throughout the season, as bees die all the time. If you do not see any, for long periods of time, this may be an indication of a larger problem within the colony.

During those unseasonably warm days throughout the winter, it may be a good time to take a quick look inside the colony. Looking for the cluster. Are they at the bottom of the brood box, indicating they’ve not consumed a lot of their sugar stores or are they eaten their way to the top? If the latter, you’ll need to consider supplemental feeding. Be sure to take in a holistic view the colony, are there bees between frames, how large is the cluster, how many bees are there and do you see any capped honey on any of the frames. Be sure to take notes, recording your observations.



Lastly, we can use technology to help perform a noninvasive inspection. Thermal Cameras are available and with their use, you can see into the hive, showing you where the cluster is during the winter months. Cameras can range in cost from just over one hundred dollars to well over five hundred dollars. Depending on your situation, and number of colonies, this may be a good investment considering the cost of a nucleus hive or package of bees.

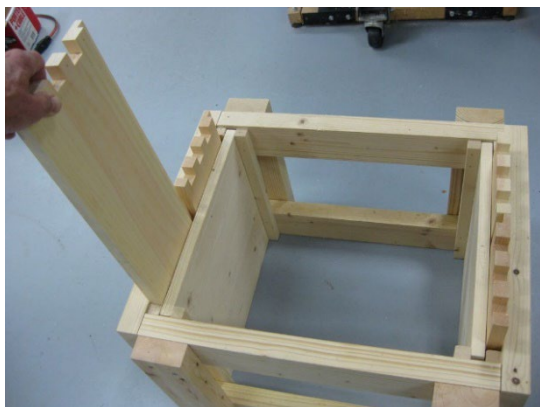
# Ten Minutes with the Bees - The Bee Yard in December

By Paul Kosmos, MCBA President

## 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. Peak 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.

*Happy Holidays!*

## MCBA Board Changes

Shari Baker is the newest member of the MCBA Board following her election at the November meeting. Shari has been involved in many of the club's events and activities since she started beekeeping just two year ago. I'm sure you will welcome Shari and as you get to know her, appreciate her efforts for our club!



## Spring Preparation

During the winter months there can be a lot of downtime for beekeepers. This is a good time for us to evaluate the conditions of our equipment. It is a very good idea to inspect and rebuild damaged equipment. Depending on your situation, you may want to consider repainting the exterior of some of your woodware. If you're like me, I'll be building some new equipment during the winter months in preparation for spring. You'll also want to consider ordering Packaged or N Colonies. Remember, these are typically filled on a first come first serve basis, so the earlier you can order your bees, especially a

nucleus hive, the sooner you'll get them in the spring.

Now more than ever, is a great time to attend club meetings. These are great opportunities to learn tools, tricks, and techniques from your fellow beekeepers. You'll also want to make sure you register your colonies with the State of Ohio. Bees are considered livestock and your fees go towards paying for our county inspectors.

Apiary Registration: Linked [here](#)

Due June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

Cost is \$5.00 per apiary.



As we approach early spring, I find myself monitoring Growing Degree Days ([here](#)), The Ohio State University maintains a Phenology Calendar and you, as a beekeeper, will be able to see what food is available to your colonies.

## Ideas & Suggestions

Moving into 2024 and beyond, 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.

*Did you know; A single worker bee produces about 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey in her lifetime, and to produce one pound of honey, bees collectively visit about 2 million flowers and fly over 55,000 miles?*

## 2024 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## Citations / References

Ruth O'Neil. How to winterize a beehive

<https://www.murdochs.com/the-dirt/beekeeping/how-to-winterize-a-beehive/>

Teledyne Flir Thermal Imaging Camera

<https://www.flir.com/discover/professional-tools/saving-beehives-with-flir-thermal-cameras/>