

March 2024

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



MCBA Monthly Meeting March 18th, 2024

Different Meeting Location

**Medina County Career Center
1101 West Liberty Street (Rt 18)**

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

Topic – Catching Honeybees in the Wild

Association Officers

President: Peggy Garnes 330-723-6265
president@medinabeekeepers.com

Vice President: Kimberly Carey
330-416-3701
vp@medinabeekeepers.com

Secretary: Sharon Carpenter 330-722-0080
secretary@medinabeekeepers.com

Treasurer: Kate Reusch 330-416-0284
treasurer@medinabeekeepers.com

Newsletter Editor: Clint Allen
allencli@zoominternet.net

Webmaster: Paul Kosmos
webmaster@medinabeekeepers.com

Refreshment Coordinators:
Elle Jisa - ejisa@roadrunner.com
Sheila Mauer - spmaurer01@gmail.com

Directors:
2024: John Vrtachnik
jvrtachnik@windstream.net
2025: Larry Watson
mcbalarry@aol.com
2026: Shari Baker
shari.baker721@gmail.com

Medina County Bee Inspector:
Michael Mohn 330-591-5035
mohnandsonsfarm@gmail.com

State of Ohio Inspector:
Brad Deering
<https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>

March Speaker

Walt Wozniak is a member of our club and will talk about catching bees. Walt has been working with bees in some capacity 72 out of his 77 years. Walt learned from his first Mentor, his father. He kept bees long before Walt was born. He enjoyed going to Al Root for Saturday meetings with Jack Happ, Roger Mores, and some of the Root family. He loved talking and listening to the old-time beekeepers swapping stories.

Walt has a simple philosophy about the bees: "I do not claim to be a great beekeeper, I just have a love for them and their wellbeing. I like being around the bees, studying and reading about them, and try to inspire others to consider the art of beekeeping. That should be our goal... to carry on beekeeping to future generations and I pray we will succeed in this task."

Upcoming Events

Medina Beekeepers Beginner Classes

Tuesday Classes

Tuesday, February 27, March 5, 12, 19, 26

Times: 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm

April 8th @ 3:15PM Total Solar Eclipse

April 13th @ 12 noon Celebration of Kim Flottum's life
Medina Community Church, 416 South Broadway Street,
Medina, Ohio

Earth Day - April 22nd, 2024. The Club looking for 3-4
volunteers.

May – Plant Exchange; World Bee Day

June – Pollinator week

July – Bee Festival

August – Club picnic, Medina County Fair

September – Ag Day

December – Christmas Party

MCBA April Meeting

Monday, April Date, 2024

Topic – Beekeeping by the Numbers

Guest Speaker – Dr. Larry Connor

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

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

This beautiful weather has the bees starting to brood early! Please check on their stores of honey left from the winter and feed if needed – beekeepers know that more hives die this time of year!

Tuesday evening beginner classes have begun and have been well attended. Offering the two sessions, one on Saturday and the other on Tuesday evenings, tends to fill just about everyone's schedule.

Earth Day will need a few volunteers for our information table – please contact me if you would like to join some of the seasoned beekeepers for a day filled with sharing bee information with the public.

Stay healthy, hug your family, and get ready for swarm season!!! It's going to be a busy spring!

Ten Minutes with the Bees – Thoughts on your busy hives this season

By Paul Kosmos

We have received several questions about how fast hives are building up due to the warm weather. The questions cover everything, but most are concerned with feeding, swarm questions, and general “What should I be doing now?” questions. Many of us are scrambling at least a little watching our hives build up fast because of the unusually warm temperatures. My Ten Minutes with the Bees for March will focus these issues.



Very heavy activity on both entrances

Note: I removed my Mouse Guards for 2 days (65 degrees) since they were backing up at the entrance.

Let’s start with feeding. You should take advantage of the warm days (temps above 50, 60 even better) to pop the cover and take a peek. No need to disturb the frames unless you sense a problem. You can insert your hive tool



into the frames near the top and if it comes out wet there is still honey available. If you are unsure or just want to add a little

cheap insurance, whip up a small batch of sugar cakes,

place a spacer (shim) on top and put a couple chunks of the cakes on the top bars. I normally chicken out and put some on mine mid to late March but added early for reasons above. A couple of my hives have supers on, so I did not add to those hives. Again, just cheap insurance so you can sleep at night! If it is sunny, your bees PROBABLY will not even acknowledge you are there. They will be too happy gathering nectar and pollen. Another Joy of Spring. Life is good.



Sugar cake or fondant with a shim

Another question was should I be feeding my hives pollen patties or sugar syrup (SS)? Unless you have a definite reason (and the experience to make the decision) most beekeepers never feed SS to a healthy over wintered hive. They don’t need it! The bees will just store it and it may possibly contribute to early swarming. Same goes for Pollen Patties (PP), which leads to early buildup (which is why we are discussing this)! Ignore this if you have special reasons and know why you are feeding PP.

One possible exception: If you have been feeding your bees all winter, especially PP, you may want to reduce that feed but not eliminate it. If we get a cold snap your hive may have built up more than others and could struggle for food while they can’t fly.

The other question we have received is “Is my hive going to swarm?” or “How do I know when they might swarm?”. This one is NOT always easy to answer but this may help.

Honeybees build up their brood production based on daylight hours, temps, and food supplies. Swarm Fever normally begins when the boxes are getting full, and the bees need more space. BUT... hives will not try to swarm until they have raised drones to mate with new queens. They PROBABLY are not doing that yet. When they start it takes 24 days for drones to emerge and 10-16 days to mature. So, you are PROBABLY safe for at least 5-6 weeks. Please take note of the capitalized words above!

The bottom line is this has been a wonderful start to the year for our bees! That's good. The main concern is if the temps stay steady. But no matter what, it is a Happy problem!

For what it is worth, the growing degree days is 61 right now and is soaring. Silver Maples bloomed at 34 and Red Maples will hit full bloom at 75.

So, keep an eye on your bees and enjoy the journey!

Optimizing colony health for a strong spring

By Clint Allen

Spring marks a pivotal period for beekeepers, demanding good planning and preparatory measures to fortify bee colonies for optimal health and productivity. Contained herein, are strategies and steps essential to prime bees and your apiary infrastructure for a strong successful spring season. As hives become stronger, you'll also want to continually monitor for swarm cells during inspections (temperature permitting) and may need to take proactive action to prevent a strong hive from swarming. This may include, but is not limited to, removing swarm cells, splitting hives or requeening a colony.

Understanding the Seasonal Transitions

As winter wanes, strategic awareness of seasonal changes becomes paramount. Bees, emerging from

Facilitating brood expansion is imperative for colony strength.

winter clusters, require a supportive environment to promote brood rearing and foraging activities. It's crucial to align hive management practices with the bees' natural instincts to maximize colony development.

Optimizing Hive Conditions

Pre-spring hive inspections serve as a foundational step in assessing overwintering success and setting the stage for the coming season. Conduct thorough inspections, evaluating stored honey reserves, pollen availability, and the queen's egg-laying patterns. Assess hive weight to gauge food sufficiency and supplement early-season feeding if necessary.

Implement proactive hive maintenance by ensuring adequate ventilation and minimizing moisture buildup. It may be necessary to keep insulation on your hives until temperatures stabilize above 50 °F. This will safeguard against temperature fluctuations and maintain an optimal hive environment.

Stimulus for Colony Expansion

Facilitating brood expansion is imperative for colony strength. Initiate this process by strategically manipulating hive frames to encourage brood nest expansion. Employ techniques such as reversing brood chambers or utilizing checkerboarding methods to stimulate brood production and foster a robust population surge.

Pollen and Nectar Resource Enhancement

Many times, during club meetings, the topic of native plants has arisen. Plant selection and habitat is crucial for pollinator survival. Moreover, a diverse and abundant forage resource is pivotal for sustaining bee colonies during the crucial spring buildup. Optimize forage availability by planting bee-friendly flora around the apiary, promoting an array of pollen and nectar sources. Strategic management of surrounding vegetation ensures a rich, varied diet crucial for bee health and vitality.

Mite and Disease Management

Mitigating the onslaught of pests and diseases is fundamental in ensuring colony strength during spring. Employ integrated pest management strategies, including timely mite treatments using organic compounds such as Oxalic Acid or mechanical controls, such as drone comb to thwart Varroa mite infestations. Implement rigorous disease surveillance protocols, conducting thorough inspections for signs of bacterial infections or fungal diseases.

Nutritional Supplementation and Feeding

Supplemental feeding acts as a safety net, bolstering colony development in lean periods. Employ sugar syrup or protein supplements judiciously to augment deficient food stores and sustain colony strength. Monitor feed consumption closely, adjusting quantities based on colony requirements to prevent overfeeding or scarcity.

Spring preparation for bee colonies demands a meticulous execution of multifaceted strategies encompassing hive assessment, resource optimization, disease mitigation, and nutritional provisioning. A comprehensive understanding of seasonal changes and strategic intervention ensures the thriving vitality of bee colonies during this pivotal phase, paving the way for a productive and thriving beekeeping season.

“BYON” – Build Your Own NUC

By Clint Allen

An aspect of beekeeping that I love, is getting to pretend that I am a woodworker. Last August I decided to try my hand at building a Nuc. With the goal of overwintering a late summer split. Since that time, I've made a few more hives (and modifications) and decided to memorialize my efforts into a 3D model with dimensions.



Finished Nucleus Hive

Making a Nuc was a great way to spend a few hours over the weekend being productive and doesn't cost a lot of money. The 1x12x96 pine board cost around \$16 each. While a box of screws is around \$10 (1 lb. box). The project panel was just under \$15. All in, including glue, the total cost was approximately \$50 plus tax. Buying a Nuc, typically costs around \$50-\$70 and those only come with one deep brood box. So, if you are a little handy and have the tools and time, you can save money and have fun building your own Nuc.

MATERIAL LIST - REQUIRED

- 1 - 1X12X96 Common Pine Board
- 1 - 1/4X48X24 Plywood (PROJECT PANEL)
- Galvanized Brad Nails 1-1/4 18 GA. Or Similar
- Exterior Wood Glue. Tight bond III or similar
- Exterior #8 Screws (1-1/4" in Length)

MATERIAL LIST - OPTIONAL

- Galvanized Metal Panel 26 GA or Aluminum flashing

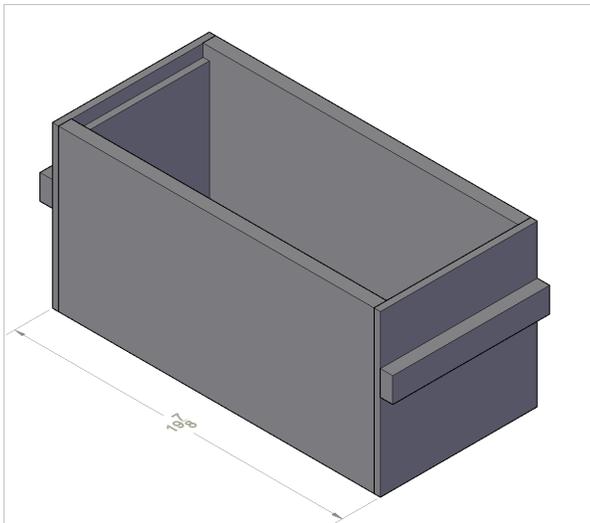
TOOLS REQUIRED

- Safety Glasses & Gloves
- Saw (Circular, Hand or other), Drill with Small Bore Drill Bits (Pilot Holes), Screwdriver

TOOLS OPTIONAL

- Table Saw, Miter Saw, Router, Pneumatic Nailer or Stapler
- Countersink drill bit (I bought one of these and wondered why I held out so long)

BROOD BOX ISOMETRIC VIEW X 2



The Brood box is one of the tougher parts of the project. I cut rabbet joints into the end panels, and this can be a little tricky with out a router. The first Nuc I made I used my table saw and made multiple cuts, removing more

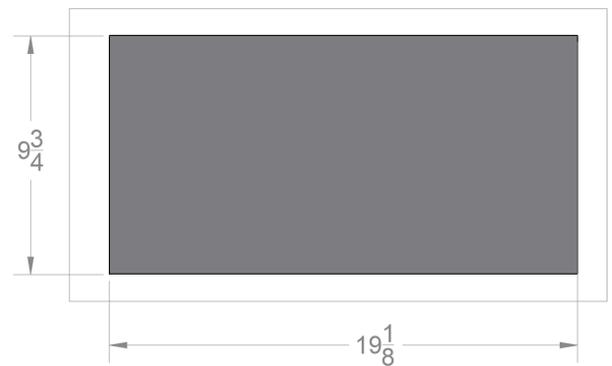
and more material and then cleaning up the remaining



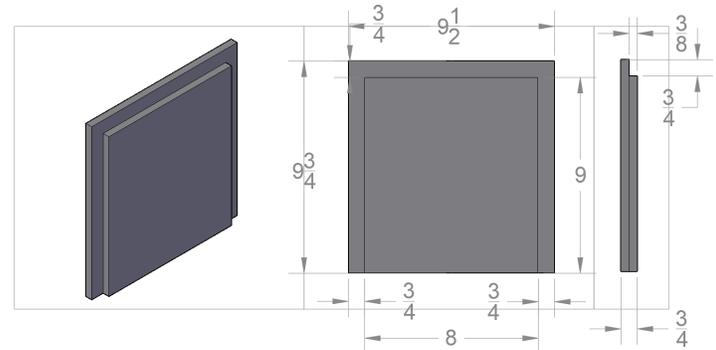
wood with a chisel. This can also be done using a circular saw. This took a lot of extra time but turned out well and the box assembled easily. On subsequent Nucs I used my router table to remove 3/4" wide by 3/8" deep of material and that made short work of the end

panels. If you have a router you can set up guides and cut the same grooves as I did, the router table.

BROOD BOX SIDE PANEL X 4

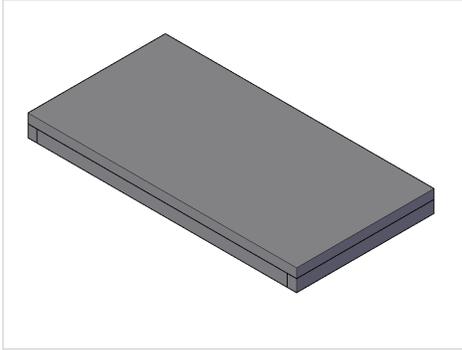


BROOD BOX END PANEL X 4

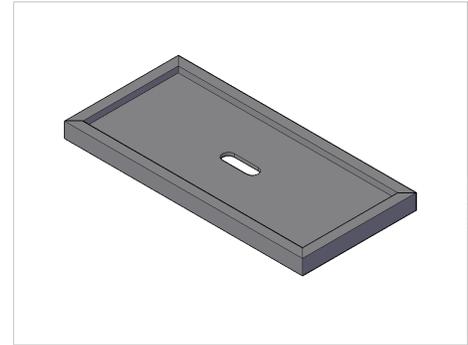


By using nominal 1x12 pine boards you will end up will some cut off material left over from the brood boxes. I was able to reuse these pieces for the outer cover, handles and on the base. I like to be as efficient as I can when spending any money on lumber! If your handy you can use a router to cut slots in the side panels for handles. I built a fixture to make this easier and repeatable.

OUTER COVER ISOMETRIC VIEW X 1

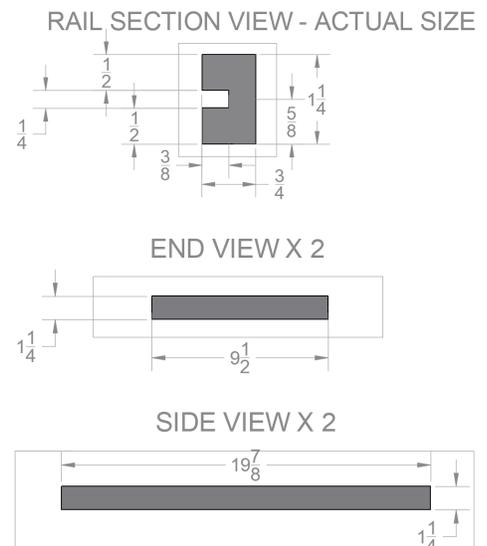
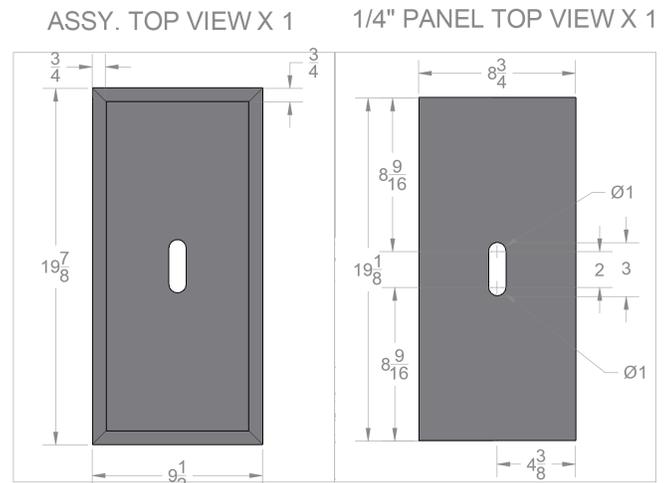
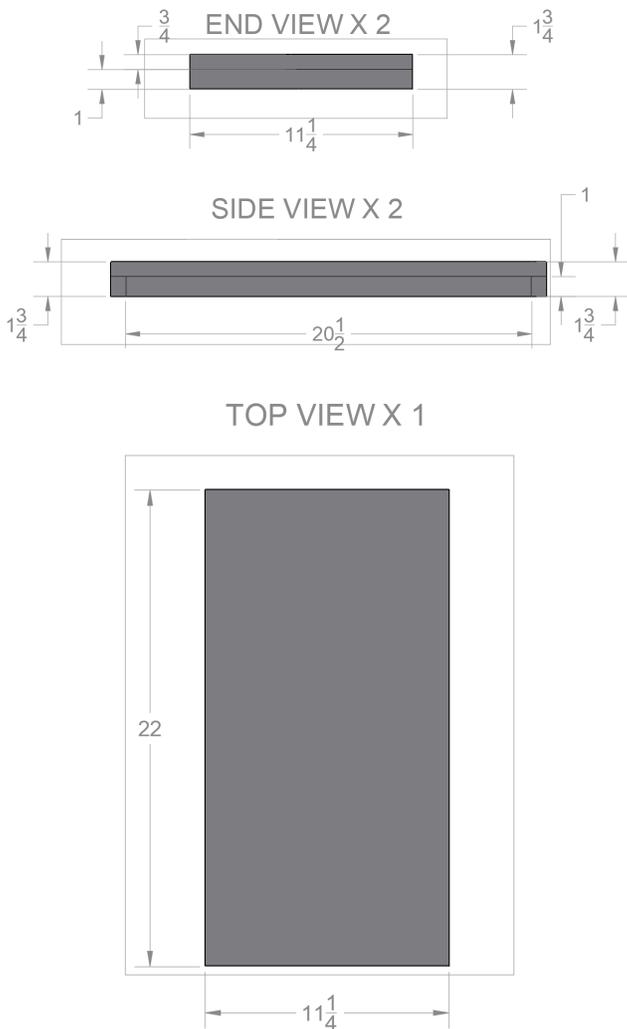


INNER COVER ISOMETRIC VIEW X 1

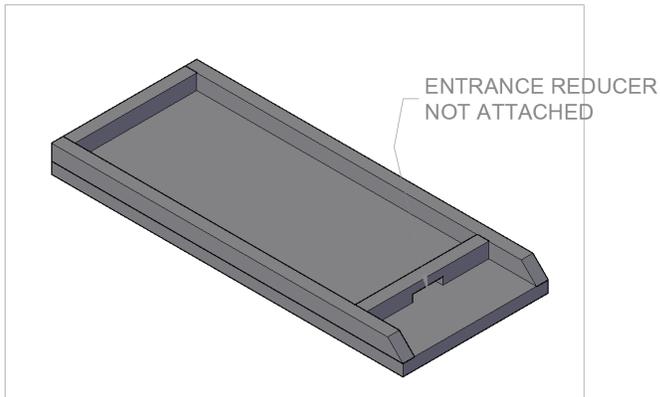


When building the outer cover, I was able to use off cuts from the brood box on the side and end pieces. Make sure to glue and screw all pieces together. If you don't, they'll split apart after exposure to the weather.

The inner cover as shown is probably the most difficult part to build. Having slots cut into the side rails to accept a 1/4" piece of plywood. If this is too difficult, consider using off cut pieces to sandwich the plywood creating rails of similar dimensions.

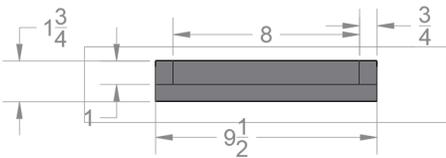


BASE ISOMETRIC VIEW X 1



The first bottom boards I build were solid and not the screened type. Building this from off cuts should be easy. If you are interested in building a screened bottom board shoot me an email and I can send you some details on one. Building screened bottom board was significantly more work, requiring lap joints and cutting of slots to accept a removable pane.

END VIEW X 2



SIDE VIEW X 2



All the pieces were glued and screwed together. I found that if pieces aren't glued, they will separate very quickly when outside in the elements, even when painted. Good luck on trying your hand a building your own Nuc and make sure to wear safety glasses and gloves. If you're unfamiliar with power tools, make sure to read up on any required safety protocols for your equipment.

REMEMBER - SAFETY FIRST!

The Small Hive Beetle; Another Dirty Little Beekeeping Pest

by Kym Lucas

Our poor bees! As if Varroa, Foulbrood, and Wax Moths weren't enough, they also must contend with Small Hive Beetles. This means, beekeepers must contend with them, too.

A sunny apiary can provide some defense; Eleanor Schumacher's article in American Bee Journal (cited below) says, "Most beekeepers proactively manage for SHB by keeping strong, disease-free hives situated in full sun with good queens laying solid patterns." But, according the "Backyard Beekeeping" (also cited below), these tiny beetles can fly several miles, which means there's an infested apiary nearby, yours may also be susceptible.

Our apiary is in the sunniest area of our yard, but because we live in the woods, the sunniest part is not very sunny. So, these ugly little beetles have been a part of our lives since we started beekeeping eight years ago.

Here's what we've learned, SHB love pollen patties. We once put on a bigger portion than usual and were disgusted to later find the patty infested with beetle larvae. Gross! Lesson learned, give bees only as much pollen as they can consume within a few days.

Swiffer cloth don't work, at least not for our bees. We've tried three times, in three different hives, and every time, the bees pulled the fabric down through both deep boxes and out the front entrance. Lesson learned, though other beekeepers have had success with this method, it hasn't work for us.

Certain traps work if baited correctly. When we first started beekeeping, we received an OSBA kit that

included two types of traps — the “Beetle Blaster” and the “Beetle Jail.” We tried both and found the Jail more effective and easier to use. Additionally, it can be reused, and costs less! We bait it using the recipe from the OSBA kit’s book, which the beetles seem to find irresistible. (The recipe can also be found on page 8 of MCBA’s February newsletter.) Lesson learned, buy “Beetle Jails,” put two in each deep box in the corners (diagonally from one another), and bait with the OSBA recipe. Check to see if bees have filled the trap openings with propolis and scrape as needed.



Small hive beetles on drawn comb

Nematodes are another option. SHB larvae must pupate in the soil, and their soft bodies are vulnerable at that stage. Beekeepers can treat the surface around the with hive with diatomaceous earth or nematodes. We usually treat the soil with nematodes from Southeastern Insectaries in the spring. In conjunction with baited traps, this has been quite effective. We know this, because, last year, I forgot to order the nematodes and there was an uptick in the number of beetles caught in our traps. Lesson learned, order nematodes and treat soil after the last frost date.

Clearly, not everyone will want to treat SHB the same way. Each apiary, even each hive, is different. But our location means we’ve acquired some (unwanted) experience with the pest.

Member Spotlight

Neal & Catherine Klabunde



Where do you live? Strongsville

What got you interested in beekeeping? I really don’t remember it’s been so long ago.

How long have you been keeping bees? Off and on for over 40 years.

How many, and what kind of hives do you have? We currently have five standard Langstroth hives that have survived the winter. I’m planning on experimenting with a long Langstroth hive and would like to make a few Slovenian style hives.

Are you looking to add to your apiary? Yes, up to around 20 this spring.

Do you share your beekeeping hobby with anybody else? I currently have three beekeepers that I mentor, one of which is through the Hives for Heroes organization.

What is your most memorable beekeeping moment? Getting our five-year-old granddaughter involved with beekeeping.

What is the best and worst part of beekeeping? The best is being outside and working with the bees and the worst is extracting the honey. It’s hot and sticky.

What is your favorite food to add honey to? Hot sauce to make wings with.

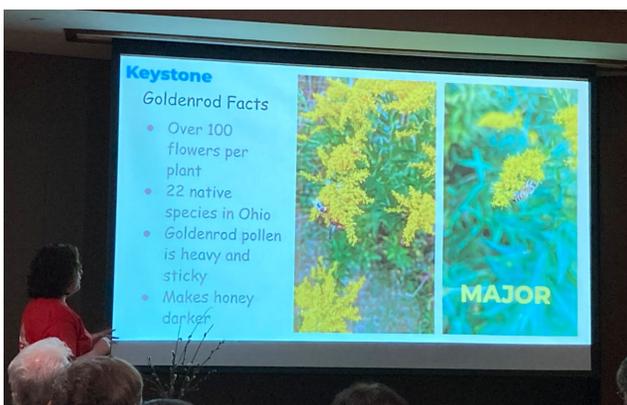
Do you have any tips for beginner beekeepers? If I had it all to do over again, I'd run all medium supers, no deeps or shallows.

Other than beekeeping, do you have any other hobbies? Running a small nursery.

What do/did you do for a living? We are retired, Neal spent most of his working life in the heavy/highway construction business and Catherine worked for the Federal government. Recently, Neal has started helping the club with our Facebook page.

Beginner Class

Classes started in February of this year and the club had a great turnout. There were over 30 people at the class!



MCBA Meeting Minutes

Club Member Meeting

Meeting Date: February 19th, 2024

MCBA monthly meeting was held at the Medina Public Library, two guests and 66 members were present, including six board members.

The club meeting began at 6:30 p.m. with a time for Q & A. Our featured speaker, Ashley Kulhanek, began her presentation at 7:00 p.m. Her topic was "Native Bees and Honeybee Interactions".

Following the presentation, we had a 10-minute snack break and resumed to a formal business meeting facilitated by the club president. The following updates were presented:

1. The minutes from the January meeting were posted in the February newsletter for all members to read. They were voted on for approval – motion carried.
2. Financial report: given by the treasurer.
3. Beginner class: There were 37 students in attendance at the first Saturday class and 5 board members. There are approximately 30 people registered for the Tuesday classes which will begin on February 27th.
4. Medina County Fair: a reminder was made that if any member wants to sell honey at the fair, they must enter products as well.
5. Club bee yard: Volunteers are needed to help demonstrate hive inspections. A sign-up sheet has been posted on "Signupgenius".

New Business:

1. Intermediate class: interest was shown to have a more advanced class that will potentially have a field day to learn how to do hive splits.
2. There was a discussion about purchasing plants from the Medina Soil and Water in bulk and using

them at our annual club plant swap. Much interest was shown.

3. Upcoming events announcement:

1. TCBA Spring Workshop – March 1-2, 2024, in Wooster – OARDC
2. Next member meeting will be held on March 18, 2024, at the Medina Career Center. Walt Wozniak will be giving a presentation about Catching Honeybees in the Wild.
3. Ms. Honeybee's High Tea – March 10, 2024, in Wellington, Ohio

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Sharon Carpenter, MCBA Secretary

From Around the Web

If you find interesting websites or articles and would like to share with the club let the newsletter editor know and we can add them to future publications! This month members have found the following websites to share.

Registering your Apiary

https://agri.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/oda/divisions/plant-health/forms/plnt_4201-002

Ohio Department of Agriculture

<http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/plant/apiary/apiary.aspx>

Growing Degree Days

<https://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/gdd/CalendarView.asp>

The Ohio State University Bee Lab

<https://u.osu.edu/beelab/>

Ohio State Beekeepers Assoc.

<https://ohiostatebeekeepers.org/>

Bees Learning to fight off Invasive Hornets

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20240206-the-bees-learning-to-fight-off-invasive-hornets>

Effects of a Solar Eclipse on Honeybees

<https://strathconabeekeepers.blogspot.com/2017/08/the-effects-of-solar-eclipse-on-honey.html>

Eastern Apicultural Society Annual Conference: Conference will be held on August 5th through the 9th in Turf Valley, Maryland. The conference will have 2 days of short courses and 3 days of conference with many experts presenting.

<https://easternapiculture.org/>

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.

Did you know that according to the ancient Greeks, the honeybee was sometimes identified with Demeter, the goddess of the earth and crops?

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

“How to Be Inhospitable to Unwanted Hive Guests: Small Hive Beetle Management for Any Time of Year,” Eleanor Schumacher, American Bee Journal, January 1, 2024.

“How to Control Small Hive Beetles in Your Apiary,” Rusty Burlew, American Bee Journal, December 1, 2023.

“Small Hive Beetles,” Kristi Cook, Backyard Beekeeping, January 1, 2023.

“Managing Small Hive Beetles,” Bee-Health, Bee-Health Extension.org, August 20, 2019.

“Control of Small Hive Beetle Using Nematodes,” Andrew GS Cuthbertson, PhD; James J Mathers; Lisa F Blackburn; Gay Marris, PhD, National Bee Unit, Bee-Craft.com, February 2014.

Southeastern Insectaries, source for nematodes

<https://ento.psu.edu/outreach/extension/insect-image-gallery/all-images/small-hive-beetle-adult-on-comb-1.jpg>

Jones, Richard. The Beekeepers Bible, 1958