

September 2024

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



MCBA Monthly Meeting September 16th, 2024

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: Preparing Your Hives for Winter
Speaker: Dave "Red Beard" Noble

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September Speaker

Topic: Preparing Your Hives for Winter

Speaker: Dave "Red Beard" Noble

Dave Noble began breeding and keeping honeybees quite by accident just over 28 years ago when he was trying to get some extra credit for a college course while majoring in Plant Pathology at OSU. He ended up working at the Universities' Honeybee Research Lab for almost a decade. There he discovered a true passion for honeybees as well as developed a joy for teaching others how to care for, and appreciate, these magnificent little beasts. He is the owner, operator of Red Beard Bees, a business dedicated to breeding better bees and training better beekeepers.

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

Upcoming Events

September – AG Day

October – OSBA Fall Conference 10/25-26

December – Christmas Party

MCBA October Meeting

Monday, October 21st, 2027

Topic: Question and Answer

Speaker: Panel discussion

This is for the October meeting. We will be doing an Ask a Beekeeper panel. We will have beekeepers on different levels and interests. If you would like to submit a question, use the link, [Ask a beekeeper](#) or QR code.



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

The cooler nights have set the bees into winter prep mode and the yellow jackets seem to have received the same memo. Please close down the entrances and get those mouse guards on as the field mice are looking for a warm winter hideout. I am hoping that the goldenrod will be producing a fall flow for most of our members but here in my area – it's looking bleak. Still not a hint of goldenrod scent in my home bee yard. Looks like I may have to be feeding this fall!

The cutout at the park was a success and knowledge was shared and passed on to the next generation of bee removal folks. Tough time of the year to transition the bees from cutouts but I think that these girls will have a good chance.

The annual picnic was a bit chilly but still well attended and as always, the food was awesome. Our members are great in the kitchen as well as in the bee yards. Great food and conversation were shared by all.

Our September speaker, Dave Noble, will be guiding us into the fall prep with his presentation.

September brings volunteer opportunities for club members – Agriculture Day (Ag Day) and a Bee Festival event will need members to share information with students and the public. Contact me for more information on these two fun-filled days.

I’m looking forward to the next few months as the bees and beekeepers prepare for the winter- it’s been a crazy year so far but I’m hoping that Mother Nature will go easy on Ohio again this year.

Please stay healthy, hug your family, and enjoy your bees!

Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in September

By Paul Kosmos

What are the Bees doing in September?

Last month I talked a bit about the nectar dearth last month and suggested checking food stores before removing all the honey in supers. Why is this important? If they do not have enough honey stored in the deep boxes, they might need some of that honey to make it



through the winter. Many beekeepers leave a super on their hives for insurance.

As beekeepers we sometimes depend heavily on a late supply from the fall blooms. While there are several plants that bloom late, such as Asters, and a few that are still blooming such as Wing Stems, the bulk of a strong fall flow comes from Goldenrod.

It is now September 8 and I’ve heard from a few who say they do not smell anything yet from the Goldenrod flow. Nor have I. What’s more, I see quite a bit of the Goldenrod beginning to wane. So, what to do now? The important next step is to check the honey stores in your hives. Some beekeepers do a quick inspection, some weigh their hives (using a scale or the “lift” method). A winter ready hive should weigh 160 lbs. or more, which requires 9-10 full deep frames. Which means most of us will not be able to lift the hive. If you can’t, that is a happy problem!

So, what to do if the hive is light? You may need to feed your bees Sugar Syrup if your hive is short on food. In the August newsletter Neal Klabunde explained the mixing of sugar to water. In the Spring we preach feeding your bees 1:1 SS. But in the Fall we switch to 2:1 SS. That means 2 lbs. of sugar to 1 lb. of water. Or 16 lbs. of sugar to 1 gallon of water (8 lbs.).

The increase in the sugar for fall feeding is due to the short time your bees must try and reduce the moisture in the SS and cap it.

The next thing to know is when you feed in the spring you feed a light SS to stimulate a nectar flow so the bees can build up their hive. Often with a one-quart jar as an example.

But in the fall, you do not want to stimulate brood production. You want to feed your bees heavy so they can take down as much as possible and store it. Put 3- or 4-quart jars of 2:1 SS at a time. Please them on small wooden shims on top of the inner cover to lift them up a

bit and allow the bees to access the SS more easily. Cover the jars with an empty box to prevent robbing.

When you inspect your hives, make a note of how many frames of honey you had. When you feed the SS, one deep frame will hold about 8 lbs. when full. That way you can figure how much SS to feed them. For example, if you need to fill five frames, you will need to feed them about 5 gallons of 2:1 SS.

There are several other ways to feed your bees emergency food in late fall and winter. You can try googling or ask other beekeepers. But the easiest way is to fill the hive before it gets too late.

Detecting Fake Honey

By Karl Bartz

[Detecting Fake Honey Without Opening the Jar](#)

Wow, great news for pure honey producers. Scientists in the UK have found a way to detect fake honey products without opening the jar. As reported by the BBC, researchers at Cranfield University, Bedfordshire, say they have a new method to authenticate honey quickly and accurately by using a specialist light analysis technique. It proves to be highly accurate in detecting sugar syrups. It's also portable and easy to implement.

When I read about this it reminded me of the HIVE act that was introduced to Congress over a year ago. The "HIVE act" stands for "Honey Identification Verification and Enforcement Act" and requires the FDA to establish a Standard of Identity defining what is honey and subsequently report to Congress on enforcement actions taken with respect to adulterated or misbranded honey. H.R.4764

I don't know if enough has been said or done about this bill, but the Beekeepers of Indiana have put together a petition and an example letter to send to congress. You can find it here:

<https://thebeekeepersofindiana.com/news-you-can-use/>

It would be great if something was put together for the State of Ohio with our representatives to contact for support.

Beekeeping for me, and for many of my fellow beekeepers, is a labor of love. It would have to be since the amount of money and effort that goes into producing one pound of honey leaves very little for profit, if any at all. To make things worse is having to compete with foreign products that are not even real honey! Nearly a half a billion pounds of honey is IMPORTED into the US, with no standards!

There are around 7,000 beekeepers across the state of Ohio who care for more than 50,000 colonies and growing. In the US there are 2.7 million honey producing colonies, which produce 147.6 million pounds of US honey a year worth about \$3.2 million in 2017. Beehives are also an important element of produce due to the pollination services they provide. Honeybees pollinate \$15 billion worth of crops in the United States each year, including more than 130 types of fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

You would think that for all we, as beekeepers, do for agriculture and the economy, that we could get this simple bill pushed into law already. Now with this new method of detecting fake honey, it should be a simple process and as Dr. Anastasiadi from Cranfield University said, "Having this consistent technique in the testing armoury could take the sting out of honey fraud."

Changes in Behavior

By Clint Allen

As autumn approaches in northeast Ohio, beekeepers often notice a shift in their honeybee colonies' behavior. What might have been a calm, manageable hive during the summer months can suddenly become more defensive, or even aggressive, as fall begins to settle in.

While this change in behavior can be alarming, especially for newer beekeepers, it's a natural part of the honeybee's seasonal cycle. Understanding why bees act this way in the fall can help beekeepers manage their hives more effectively and safely during this time.

One of the key reasons for increased aggression in honeybees during the fall is a scarcity of resources. In the warmer months, bees have an abundance of flowers to forage from. The landscape is full of blooming plants, providing plenty of nectar and pollen to sustain the colony. However, as temperatures cool and the days shorten, these food sources begin to dwindle. Bees become acutely aware of this change and instinctively shift their focus toward protecting their hive's stores. By fall, honeybees have spent the summer months building up reserves to get them through the upcoming winter. They need to ensure that they have enough honey and pollen to survive the cold months ahead when they won't be able to forage outside the hive.

The shrinking availability of nectar and pollen outside the hive causes bees to become more defensive over the honey they have worked so hard to store. Any perceived threat to these stores, whether from other bees, animals, or even beekeepers, can trigger a defensive response. Bees are naturally protective of their colony and food stores, but this behavior intensifies as they sense the approach of winter. Beekeepers in northeast Ohio might find that their once-docile bees are more likely to sting or chase them away if they approach the hive at the wrong time.

Robbing is another factor that can contribute to increased aggression among bees in the fall. As resources become scarce, colonies may attempt to rob honey from neighboring hives. Robbing is a natural behavior in which stronger colonies try to steal honey from weaker ones to boost their own reserves. This leads to heightened tension and aggression, as bees will defend their hives from these raids. If a beekeeper inadvertently opens a hive during a time when robbing activity is high, it can

trigger a frenzy as bees from other colonies attempt to steal honey. The chaos of robbing can spread quickly, leading to aggressive behavior not only from the bees being robbed but also from other colonies in the area.

The changing weather in northeast Ohio during the fall also plays a role in how bees behave. As temperatures begin to fluctuate more dramatically, bees become more sensitive to disturbances. Honeybees rely on maintaining a stable temperature inside the hive, especially as they begin preparing for winter. Any disruption, such as the hive being opened on a cooler day, can upset this balance, and cause the bees to respond aggressively. Beekeepers may notice that their bees are more agitated on cooler, windy days or after the first few frosts of the season. On top of this, bees tend to be more irritable on days when there is less sunshine or during rainy weather, which is more common in the fall.

In addition to the environmental factors that influence bee behavior in the fall, there is also a biological shift happening within the colony itself. By autumn, the queen has slowed her egg-laying, and the number of new bees entering the hive begins to decrease. The bees that remain are transitioning to their winter roles, focusing on conserving resources rather than producing more brood. This shift can cause bees to become more focused on protecting the hive's current stores and population, contributing to their heightened defensiveness.

Beekeepers in northeast Ohio also need to be aware of the role that pests play in fall aggression. Varroa mites, one of the most significant threats to honeybee colonies, can weaken bees during this time, making them more irritable and stressed. A colony struggling with a high mite load is more likely to display aggressive behavior, as the bees are already under significant stress from the mites feeding on them. Additionally, small hive beetles, wasps, and other pests are more likely to invade hives in the fall, further increasing the defensive behavior of honeybees as they try to protect their home from these intruders.

For beekeepers experiencing this seasonal aggression, there are ways to manage it while keeping the bees and themselves safe. Timing is crucial when working with hives in the fall. Choosing warmer, sunny days to inspect the hive can reduce the likelihood of agitating the bees. It's also important to avoid leaving the hive open for extended periods, as this can attract robbers and create further stress within the colony. Beekeepers may also consider feeding their bees sugar syrup during this time to help supplement their food stores, which can alleviate some of the resource-based stress that contributes to aggression.

Wearing protective gear, such as a full bee suit and gloves, is always advisable during hive inspections in the fall. Bees are more likely to sting during this time, and it's important for beekeepers to take precautions to prevent harm to themselves and their bees. Additionally, using a smoker can help calm the bees before opening the hive, reducing the likelihood of an aggressive response.

Though the fall season can be challenging for beekeepers in northeast Ohio, understanding the reasons behind their bees' behavior can make this time of year more manageable. By being aware of the environmental, biological, and seasonal factors that influence honeybee aggression, beekeepers can take steps to protect both their bees and themselves as the hive prepares for winter.

OSBA Fall Conference

By Sharon Carpenter

Ready or not, here comes the OSBA Fall Conference. Here are some highlights, but please see their website for all the details and to register: [2024 Fall Conference – Ohio State Beekeepers Association](#)

When: October 25 - 26th

Where: Central State University, Joshua I. Smith Center, US Hwy 42, Wilberforce, OH 45384

They have a great line-up of speakers, a honey swap, honey judging, a hands-on wax lab, and more.

Also, like all clubs that run well, OSBA has a Board. The board members serve their time and move on leaving room for new members to step up and play a more prominent role in their membership. The OSBA website lists the positions that will be opening up, what is expected of a person in that role, and the amount of time a person is expected to serve in that role. Even if you have no interest in serving in this capacity right now, please familiarize yourself with the roles and keep those thoughts in the back of your mind for a time when you may feel you have more confidence, experience, and time to join and serve OSBA, MCBA or any other club that you might belong to in the future.

MCBA Team Cutout

A honeybee cutout is a team effort, as removing bees from a structure is complex and takes time. It involves cutting into walls, safely collecting the bees, and relocating them, all while avoiding harm to the colony. Having several beekeepers allows the work to be done carefully and efficiently. The Club did just that in late



August removing an established colony from a home here in NEO. With more hands, some focus on removing bees, others handle tools, manage hive boxes, or calm the bees

with smoke. This teamwork ensures the safety of both the bees and the beekeepers throughout the process.



Club Bee Yard Update

Sept 1

Hive 1 - (all mediums) Did not look for Queen. Did not see eggs but did not look carefully. Saw milk brood and brood in all stages. Top brood box mostly capped honey, small amount of brood. Middle box at least four full frames of capped brood. Bottom box has some open space. Mite check - one mite per half cup of bees.

Hive 1a - (8 frame) Saw queen, eggs, and brood in all stages. Honey super about half full of capped honey. Top brood box still has approximately four frames undrawn comb. The remaining four frames are filled with honey. Mite check - 0 mites.

Hive 2 - Very calm, although initially appeared queen less. Upper brood box had a small amount of emerging brood and a fair amount of drones walking. Back filling with honey nectar and pollen. In the bottom brood box watched a queen emerge, bees started chasing her and she immediately fly away. Found six or seven open queen cells on the next frame. Saw a second queen emerge, put her in a queen clip. Will attempt to put her in one of the other potentially queen less hives. Saw a third queen walking in the bottom honey super. The bees appear to be accepting her. Check that hive in a week or so for eggs. Did not mite check.

Hive 2a - I thought I heard a queen piping as soon as I opened the hive. Saw a queen, possibly the one that flew from Hive 2, on top of the frames being balled, picked the ball apart and she flew off. Evidence of a laying queen, eggs and larvae in the hive. Mite check - 8 mites per 1/2 cup of bees. Did an OA vaporization.

Hive 3 - evidence of a laying queen, eggs, and larvae. One frame in the upper brood box one side appears to have been drawn out all drone comb. Keep an eye on that. Mite check - 2 mites per half cup of bees.

Hive 3a - Saw green marked Queen, eggs and larvae. Mite check - 5 mites per half cup of bees. Did OA vaporization.

Nuc - Placed virgin queen from hive 2 in a nuc. Hopefully she can get mated. If successful, will hold her in reserve.

Aug 25

Hive 3 and 3a, remove queen cage, queen released. Hive 3a, quick check didn't see eggs but some odd, capped cells. Need to check in 1-2 weeks for laying queens.

Hive 2a—no evidence of a queen, check in 1 week—has been 4 weeks since queen was pulled for fair.

Hive 2 didn't check.

Hive 1—3 deeps, top with honey, good number of bees and brood- pulled formic—is queen right. Good stores, good bees, good for winter

Hive 1a—saw queen, not a strong hive, but saw 2 frames with good laying pattern, will need a boost for winter.

August 21

New queen added to 3a, put in bottom brood with candy plug. Will check that she has been released on 8/25. Also, will check hive 3 to make sure she has been released.

August 18

Confirmed no queens in hive 3 and 3a. Hive 3 was very calm, even though it was raining lightly while we were working the hive. Combined the nuc 2b with the remnant of hive 3. Placed the queen in a cage with a candy plug to protect her from any potential fighting in the hive (none seen). Bees will eat the candy and release her in a couple of days. Pulled some capped honey, leaving two deep brood boxes and a honey super. Will freeze the capped frames until we determine if needed for winter prep or until we can extract.

Hive 3a was flighty and defensive. Kate will place a new queen in hive 3a this week. Pulled 10 deep frames of pollen and open nectar, leaving 2 deep brood boxes on hive 3a. Placed the "extra" pulled frames in a deep box on hive 2a. Will distribute among the hives as needed to

prepare hives for winter. Will do an OA treatment this week since the mite levels were still high immediately after the formic treatment.

MCBA Meeting Minutes

By Sharon Carpenter

MCBA monthly meeting was held at Buckeye Woods Park prior to our annual summer picnic.

Approximately 40 people were present, enjoying great food and conversation.

1. The minutes from the July meeting were posted in the July newsletter for all members to read. They were voted on for approval – motion passed.
1. The Medina County Fair was successful despite high temperatures and rain.
2. The Club Bee Yard report was given, and the honey extraction demo was well attended.
3. Ag Day is on September 27th from 8 am to 3 pm. Presentations will be geared to older students and aimed at teaching about careers in beekeeping. Volunteers are needed—please check the signup genius.
4. It was decided by member vote to change the date and location of the Club's annual Christmas party to December 10th at the Career Center where the culinary students will prepare and serve the meal.
5. Another fantastic month of the Bee Herder was distributed.

A topic for future discussion was mentioned on memorializing MCBA members.

From Around the Web

Honey, not marmalade, is saving the real 'Paddington Bear'

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20240819-how-beekeeping-is-protecting-the-real-life-paddington-bear-in-bolivias-andes>

Why air pollution bamboozles pollinating bees

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/future/article/20240826-why-air-pollution-is-bad-news-for-bees>

Potential Interactions Between Oxalic Acid and Amitraz in Controlling Varroa Mites

<https://www.blog-veto-pharma.com/en/potential-interactions-between-oxalic-acid-and-amitraz-in-controlling-varroa-mites-2/>

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 honeybees use a sophisticated form of communication called "vibration signals" or "shimmering" to warn their hive of danger. When a predator, such as a hornet, approaches, the bees on the surface of the hive perform synchronized, wave-like body movements that create a shimmering effect. This defensive behavior confuses and deters the predator, making it harder for them to target individual bees. This complex form of collective behavior shows just how advanced and adaptive honeybees are in protecting their colony.