

# THE BEE HERDER

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[www.MedinaBeekeepers.com](http://www.MedinaBeekeepers.com)



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Third Monday of each month at Williams on the Lake, 787 Lafayette Road, Medina, OH (west of the fairgrounds).

- 6:30 -7:00 pm question and answer session
- 7:00 - 9:00 pm meeting and speaker

**March 16 – Dr. Jay Evans, USDA Beltsville Lab** – The state of Honey Bees and Viruses. Jay Evans is Research Leader for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Bee Research Laboratory (BRL) in Beltsville, MD. The BRL is focused on developing management strategies to help honey bees thrive in the face of disease, chemical stress, and inadequate forage. Jay's uses genetic techniques and controlled challenge experiments to find new ways to reduce the impacts of parasites and pathogens.

**April 20 – Andrew Connor** – How to Read Frames. What to look for and how to understand what you see when you look at brood, comb patterns, resources, and disease.

**May 9, 2020 – MCBA Intermediate Class.** The agenda and speakers are being determined right now. Details will be posted shortly.

**May 18, 2020 – Dr. Tracey Cook** – Herbs, Honey Bees, and Humans. Among the topics that Tracey will discuss are interactions, dependencies, and benefits.

## Ten Minutes with the Bees

By Paul Kosmos, MCBA President

### The Bee Yard in March

#### March is all about food for the bees

Many hives starve to death in March and April. So close to the spring build up and they run out of food. Several factors come into play. Did they run out of food? Did sudden weather changes trap the bees on the brood?

What can you do to help them? On a warm day, take a peek under the cover. Not an inspection, just a check on their food supplies. The last two days were near 60, perfect for a quick check. **BE QUICK!** Don't chill the brood.

Do you find bees at the top? How large is the cluster? How do you check for food?



*Strong Hive – Mar 8*

Look near the tops of the frames – is there capped honey? If you are not sure, insert your hive tool into the frame just below the top bar. Does it come out with honey? If so, you are probably OK. If not, check a couple other frames. If still no honey, you need to add some food.

Is the honey near the cluster? Especially on smaller clusters (harder for them to move and stay warm). You can remove an outer frame of honey, slide some frames over, and put the

honey frame in next to the cluster. Or turn the frame around if other side is full of honey.



*Honey on Hive Tool*



*Moving Frame of Honey next to Cluster*

Do not dawdle! 60 degrees is still cold for brood!

What else can you do? Before opening the hive watch the entrance for a bit. Are they active? Are they hauling pollen? Lots of pollen means lots of brood. Time to get ready for Spring!



*Hauling Pollen om Mar 8*

## Medina County Beekeepers Association Minutes

Regular monthly membership meeting February 17, 2020 DRAFT

Call to Order: The regular monthly meeting of the Medina County Beekeeper's Association, was held at Williams on the Lake at 787 Lafayette Rd, Medina, Ohio on February 17, 2020. The meeting convened at 7:00 P.M., President, Paul Kosmos presiding, Kim Barkfelt, Secretary.

New Business: Beginner Beekeeping Saturday Classes: February 22nd & 29th 9am - 4:3pm. Beginner Beekeeping Tuesday Classes: March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, & 31st 6 - 8:15 pm. Both class series will be held at the Medina County Library - main branch.

Peggy Garnes announced an Intermediate Class will be offered again this year with all new topics in May. More details to come.

Announcements: March 6-7 Tri-County Beekeepers Association Conference, Wooster. Keynote speaker - Mike Palmer from Vermont.

Jean Knudsen Research Project on Ankle Biters - Looking for interested participants.

Presentation: Denzil St. Clair - Coming Out of Winter. Denzil St. Clair from Queen Right Colonies will discuss what to look for in your hives as they come out of winter and best practices to help your bees prepare for spring build up.

Adjournment: March 16, 2020 at 7:00 P.M and Williams on the Lake at 787 Lafayette Rd, Medina, Ohio were fixed as the time and place of the next regular meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

## MBA Club News

### *Winter Feed Available at the March Meeting*

Peggy will have Winter Feed available at the February meeting this Monday! This is not pollen substitute, but the high sugar low protein Winter Feed from Mann Lake that she brought in last year. Bring cash to the meeting if you are interested in purchasing feed.

### *MCBA Mentor and Swarm Lists*

If you are interested in being added the list of club mentors who are willing to assist other members and those who actively seek swarms, contact Paul Kosmos ([president@medinabeekeepers.com](mailto:president@medinabeekeepers.com)).

Mentors: Experienced beekeepers who provide advice about bee yard management and technique either in their bee yard, online, or on the phone.

Swarms: The MCBA website includes a list of members who are willing to capture swarms. Interest in capturing swarms can wane later in the summer and we want to be sure that there are club members available throughout the summer to help people who call about swarms.

### *Earth Day Volunteers Needed*

MCBA is looking for volunteers to help man a booth at Earth Day on Saturday, April 22, 2020 from 10 am to 4 pm at Buffalo Creek Retreat, 8708 Hubbard Valley Road, Seville. This is a fun event focusing on our youths. We need members who enjoy children and sharing their knowledge about honey bees and

pollinators. You can spend the day, or just come for the morning or afternoon. Please contact Peggy Garnes if you can help. Hundreds of kids are waiting on your response!

### 2020 MCBA Beginner Class

The 2020 Beginner Class was (and is) a big success. Both the Saturday and the Tuesday classes were full, with a total of nearly 40 new members and beekeepers and 80 attendees!

The excitement and enthusiasm of the participants makes it so much fun to be a part of this class.

We look forward to getting to know our newest members and helping them with their many questions.



### The Northeast Ohio Bee Yard – March

Spring is around the corner? Pussy willows and early blooming trees have started to bud and the days are noticeable longer. Bees were bringing in pollen these last few warm days – likely there is brood in the hive. What a great time of the year!

Welcome to the new beekeepers who have completed or are currently participating in the Introduction to Beekeeping Workshop! We're looking forward to seeing you at MCBA meetings and hearing about your beekeeping adventures.

Here are a few tasks to consider for March:

- Paul mentioned creating sugar blocks for emergency feeding during the February meeting. He posted the [recipe on the MBA website](#). This recipe makes a large batch - 4 regular size cookie sheets, 5 pie pans, and a serving tray. Paul makes his blocks about 1/2" thick so the shim and inner cover fit and cut the blocks into about 50 small "cakes", about 3-4" squares!!!
- On a warm day, go out to look for signs of life in your hives. If you need, place an order for bees.
- When the bees start flying, you can set out feeders with pollen substitute.
- Once you see pollen coming in, you can stop feeding and remove mouse guards to ease congestion at the hive entrance.



## MCBA Survivor Project

### I am not buying any more bees!!!

I sugar shaked, oxalic acid vaped, pollen pattied and fed and fed and watched in fascination as the colony grew, then in horror as my bees went to heaven despite my very best efforts. And then it happened again....and again. I admit, I purchased package bees from California, queens from Canada and nucs from Georgia. They still died. Can it really truly make that much difference where they come from? As it turns out the answer is a very loud and emphatic **YES!!!!!!** (A lesson learned the hard way).

A group of MCBA members under the guidance of Paul Kosmos and Peggy Garnes are determined to make a difference in colony winter survival. We are working on a program to identify mites in Medina apiaries with "Chewing Behavior", as demonstrated by Dwight Wells from Purdue University during his program last November. These bees are also called Ankle Biters, Mite Maulers etc. These bees kill mites by chewing off bits and pieces, so they desiccate and die.



Feral colonies of honey bees (yes, they do exist) have developed the ability to live with Varroa Destructor, and have learned to survive Ohio winters without treatments. Our group is developing a plan to translate what wild bees already know to our own beekeeping practices. Rearing queens, encouraging drone development from survivor colonies, and reducing development of drones from colonies that cannot tolerate Varroa are the foundation practices that drive our group. We hope to develop an action plan that includes all MCBA members and others over time. It is possible to have bees that survive the winter. It's happening bit by bit, but it's going to take everyone in the club and beyond to make it happen.

Look for a workshop on creating nucleus colonies this summer in advance of winter losses. Every beekeeper should have this skill or have a good friend or local supplier that does! And... I don't have to buy any bees this year. In fact, I have some to give away.

If you are interested in participating in the nucleus colony workshop, please contact Jean Knudsen, [jknudsen113@gmail.com](mailto:jknudsen113@gmail.com)

## Local and Regional Events

### *Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers Association (SEMBA) Conference, Bellville, MI, March 14, 2020*

Save the date for the 82nd Annual SEMBA Conference on March 14, 2020 at the Wayne County Community College District Ted Scott Campus in Belleville, MI. Watch this space for more information: <https://www.sembabees.org/conference>

### *West Virginia Beekeeping Association Spring Conference, March 20-21, 2020*

The WVBA Spring Conference “Bee Sustainable” will be held March 20-21, 2020 at the Randolph County Armory in Elkins, WV. The conference will focus on sustainable beehive management and help participants learn to rear their own queens, create value-added products, and encourage bee health. The conference will feature four reputable presenters on beekeeping topics, a beekeeping-related marketplace, a mead tasting with Healthberry Farm, and many breakout sessions focused on helping new and established beekeepers.

Advance registration is required for a guarantee of lunch, but walk-ups are welcome. There are opportunities for attendees to be involved, including a photography contest, hive-painting contest, hands-on workshops and networking.

Online registration will begin January 15<sup>th</sup>. Pre-Registration by mail must be postmarked by March 9th, 2020 to receive the reduced ticketed price of \$40. The walk-up registration fee is \$45. Lunch for walk-up registrants may be limited. To register or learn more, visit [www.wvbeekeepers.org](http://www.wvbeekeepers.org).

## Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District Seedling Sale

The District is offering some new selections as well as many varieties that we offer each year. Deadline for ordering is April 1, 2020, but order early as they are sold on a first come-first served basis and many seedlings will be sold out before that date. Pickup dates for seedlings are Friday, April 24, 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 25-8:00 a.m. -Noon at Geig’s Orchard, 8468 Wooster Pike (State Route 3), Seville. Most seedlings will easily fit in a grocery sack. Details and order form is at: <https://medinaswcd.org/seedlings/>

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## Podcast series for new beekeepers

The [Beekeeping Today podcast](#) is a great resource for beekeepers. The hosts, Kim Flottum and Jeff Ott have interesting discussions with a variety of guests. In a great “what a small world” experience, I had the chance to meet Jeff Ott this summer, who, coincidentally was the first editor the Bee Herder. And of course, Kim is the former editor of Bee Culture.

The podcast has a four-episode series for new beekeepers. If you are starting beekeeping this year, you’ll want to listen to the episodes. If you’ve been keeping bees for a while, you might hear an interesting tidbit or two.



## 2020 Tri County Spring Workshop

Our very own Tim Moore was a presenter at the 2020 Tri-County spring workshop, talking about the commercial side of beekeeping. What an honor for Tim!

The event was excellent, as usual, with Mike Palmer as the main speaker. Mike shared details about how he manages his apiaries for sustainable beekeeping. The huge number of hives, bees, queens, and work involved is absolutely overwhelming!

Nearly 900 beekeepers attended the workshop.



## 2020 MCBA Membership Application / Renewal

If you have not yet paid your 2020 annual dues, now is the time. Take care of this task before beekeeping season really gets going. You know you won't have a lot of free time then.

Annual MCBA membership has two options for members, \$20 if newsletters will be emailed or \$25 for a printed newsletter mailed to your postal address. Membership provides one vote in MCBA club matters and includes one family member in club activities other than voting.

You may renew your membership either [online here](#) or complete the form below, make a check payable to Medina County Beekeepers Association, and

- Mail both to MCBA Treasurer, PO Box 1353, Medina, Ohio 44258 OR
- **Bring a check and completed membership form to the club treasure at a club meeting.**

**Membership Form** - Please complete so that we have current roster information for the newsletters!

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (Optional) # of colonies: \_\_\_\_\_

## Partnership with the Medina County Park District

We are so excited to bring a new feature to the MCBA newsletter. Our friends at the Medina County Park District have agreed to share an article and a list of upcoming events. In this month's newsletter, Shelley shared an article about Mining Bees.

## Meet the Mining Bees!

Written by:  
Shelley Tender  
Interpretive Services Manager  
Medina County Park District



# Medina County Park District

Over 20,000 species of bees have been documented worldwide. Of those, 4,000 are found in North America, and over 400 in Ohio. The diversity of bees, beyond just our well-loved and familiar honey bee, is a fascinating topic to explore.

Bees are grouped into families, seven different families to be exact. One such family is Andrenidae, a family of bees commonly referred to as mining bees. In the eastern US and Canada, there are 120 different species of mining bees. They are small, ranging in size from 5mm to 18 mm and often have striped coloration. Unlike social, hive-forming honey bees, the *Andrena* species are solitary. This means that each female excavates her own nest and lays her eggs in brood cells that she has provisioned with food in the form of pollen. Nests are excavated in the ground, a practice that gives this family its common name. Entrances look a lot like the entrance to ant colonies but with bigger holes. Although each female bee has her own nest, mining bees sometimes excavate their nests in close proximity to each other where soil conditions are favorable. This is known as a large aggregation of bees.

Mining bees can be seen flying throughout most of the growing season, but spring is when adult species are most abundant. Males and females mate within a short window of time and the resulting larvae hatch from their tiny eggs to consume pollen throughout the rest of spring through the early summer. Late in summer, pupa form and development is completed by the time winter approaches. Adults spend the winter inside the brood chambers, waiting for spring to come again so that they can fly freely and begin the cycle of life once more.

The emergence of many species of mining bees coincides with the emergence of specific species of spring ephemerals. These bees, known as specialist bees, forage for food on a single plant species, or a few closely related species of plants. Two examples in our area are: Spring Beauty Miner (*Andrena erigeniae*), which relies almost exclusively on the pollen of Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*); and Trout Lily Miner (*Andrena erythroni*), which relies almost exclusively on Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*). But not all are specialists, and many *Andrena* species commonly visit agricultural crops, making them important pollinators of spring-flowering fruit trees and berry crops as well.



Figure 1. Spring Beauty Miner Bee

Our tiny mining bees can easily go unnoticed. As you enjoy time outdoors this spring, pay close attention to who's visiting the flowers. You just may encounter a mining bee!