

THE BEE HERDER

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www.MedinaBeekeepers.com



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MCBA Virtual June Meeting – Zoom Meeting with Jay Evans! Varroa Mites and Viruses, July 27, 7pm

Come learn from the expert! Jay Evans is Research Leader for the (USDA) Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, MD. This is the lab where we send our bee samples when we need them tested.

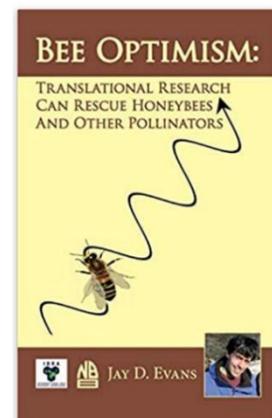
Jay's research uses genetic techniques and controlled challenge experiments to find new ways to reduce the impacts of parasites and pathogens. Current projects involve honey bee immunity; interactions among stress factors; and the development of novel, safe, controls for mites and viruses.

Jay received his AB in Biology from Princeton University in 1988 and PhD in Biology from the University of Utah in 1995.

Jay has a newly-published book [Bee Optimism: Translational Research Can Rescue Honeybees and Other Pollinators](#).

Each of the 34 chapters discusses a research finding, including how bees' fat bodies may hold clues to mite control strategies, why bees drink dirty water, and why winter bees are the third worker form.

The link to join the meeting will be sent out on Monday afternoon.



Ten Minutes with the Bees

By Paul Kosmos, MCBA President

The Bee Yard in July

July can be pretty quiet for the bees.

The dearth has arrived. Most hives are fairly quiet, lots of bearding, not a lot of activity. Honey bees beard to help the hive stay cool. They don't have a good source of nectar so they just hang out at the hive.

So, what should a beekeeper look out for in July? As always, keep an eye on the mites. We are moving into the time of year when mites, if present, become most visible. You'll recall that 70-80% of mites are in the capped brood. Right now, you can have six to eight frames of brood. But once we get into mid-august that number of brood frames will drop as the bees prepare for winter. All of the mites that were in eight frames of CB then have only two or three frames to hide in. If a high number they have nowhere to hide and the drops and samples can skyrocket. Check now, as soon the **"Bees will start to raise the bees that raise the bees that raise the winter bees"**. You want those bees to be at their best!

I mentioned the summer dearth (no nectar) is here. Besides the bearding, how can you tell? Yesterday, July 13, I inspected a hive. Only in the hive for about 30 minutes. I set the super off to one side while I inspected the deeps. After about ten minutes I heard a bit of a buzz. It kept getting a little louder as the minutes passed. Then I started to see the cloud of bees gathering all around the super. Not bad, but it's early.

Robbing is a nuisance, and can be serious if a strong hive finds a weak hive. Robbers have never bothered me directly, even when heavy. They don't care about you; they just want food. The problem comes when the numbers increase to the point where you can't think straight! Sometimes it gets so bad you have to close up the hive and come back later. I've had robbers

on every surface, making it very difficult to even pick up a tool or box.



Serious Robbing and Use of a Robbing Screen



Robbers - 20 Minutes After I Moved this Box

A few signs that robbers are bothering one of your hives. Lots of activity, especially a nuc or small (weak) hive. Early in the morning, lots of bee activity? Other hives are quiet!

Robbing screens are cheap and easy to use, and they work. Your bees will figure out how to exit the hive and return through a top entrance in the screen. Robbers go to where the entrance is and are blocked by the screen.

Borrow the Bee Club Extractor

July is the month for pulling full capped honey frames from hives. Beekeepers with just a few frames of honey to extract often use the [crush and strain method](#) - scrape the comb into a strainer, crush it, and strain the honey through a sieve or cheesecloth. The left-over wax can be cleaned and stored for other purposes. This method is simple, inexpensive, and efficient for a small honey crop. The only drawback is that the bees will need to rebuild the comb structure on the harvested frames.

For more than a few frames of honey, using an extractor is more efficient. There is less damage to the comb, which means that bees can go right back to storing honey in the built-out comb.

Don't have an extractor? Don't worry! One of the benefits of MCBA membership is the opportunity to borrow the extractor. Usually, members can rent the club's extractor and new filtering equipment for three days for a deposit of \$20 of which \$10 is refunded upon the return of the cleaned extractor and equipment. During this year of Covid, the club is waiving the rental fee. Please leave a \$20 deposit, which you will receive back when the extractor is returned cleaned and unharmed. Call Peggy at 330-723-6265 to reserve your spot today.



Looking to sell your extractor?

One of our club members is looking to buy a used extractor. Contact Paul (president@medinabeekeepers.com, 330-239-1379) or Peggy (vp@medinabeekeepers.com, 330-723-6265) if you have an extractor that you are interested in selling.

Medina County Fair

Although the fair is back on, there will be no honey sales, observation hive, or candle rolling. The club will prepare a static exhibit for the agricultural building with posters, sign-up sheets, and general information. If you attend the fair, visit, keeping a safe 6-foot distance, of course.

Learning Opportunities

OSBA Live Webinar Training

The Ohio State Beekeeper's Association holds live Zoom conference calls on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. Dr. Jim Tew will lead the next free OSBA Live Webinar Training - Reality Beekeeping During Summer Months. July 26 @ 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM. Register at <https://www.facebook.com/OhioStateBeekeepers/> or watch recordings on the club's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOFVaRx00YMUvbVtTR2RxsQ>.

2020 MCBA Membership Application / Renewal

Join us - pay your 2020 annual dues. Annual MCBA membership has two options for members, \$20 for emailed newsletters 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 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: _____

e-mail: (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ (Optional) # of colonies: _____

The Northeast Ohio Bee Yard – July

Tasks for northeast Ohio beekeepers in July include harvesting honey, managing nectar dearth, treating for varroa, and starting to plan for winter.

Extract honey. If all or most frames in a super are capped, remove the entire super, cover the top and bottom, and take it to a bee-proof room. If only a few frames are capped, remove just those frames. When you have enough frames to extract, call Peggy to reserve the extractor.

After extracting, place the super with the emptied frames above the inner cover of the hive from which you removed it. The bees will clean the remaining honey. After a day or two, take the super off to store for the winter.

Prevent robbing. Take the following precautions to minimize robbing during this time of dearth:

- Close cracks in hive bodies.
- Reduce hive manipulations. During inspections, have all equipment ready, work quickly, and open only one hive at a time. Cover the top of open hive bodies with a damp towel or sheet.
- Add a robbing screen late at night or early in the morning.

Monitor, and if needed, treat for varroa. As the bee population decreases in the dearth, the mite population continues to increase and a higher percentage of bees carry mites and can be infected with viruses. Conduct an alcohol wash or sugar roll and treat if the count is more than 1 mite per 100 bees.

Create summer splits. As we heard in the May virtual club meetings from Meghan Milbrath, splits help with varroa control, protect against winter loss, and result in spring colonies with young queens. Make splits soon to allow for several brood-rearing cycles before the fall nectar flow or the first frost. A worksheet follows to help with making nucs.

MAKING SUMMER SPLITS

Dividing a colony with a large population into two or more complete smaller bee families is a great way to prepare for winter and bring colonies with young queens into the spring. If you make the splits in the next few weeks, there will be time to recombine any failed splits before the winter.

Pick a large colony for your split. The donor hive and the new hive will need to have honey, pollen, brood, enough bees to guard the hive and carry on hive tasks for several weeks until the population starts to grow. Each hive will need a queen or the resources to make a queen.

A QUEEN FOR YOUR SPLIT

Queen cell – Take a frame with a queen cells into a split. Find the queen or freshly laid eggs in the donor colony so the hive has a queen or resources to make a new queen.

Frames with eggs - The bees will use eggs that look like small single grains of rice standing on end to create a queen. The process can take 3-4 weeks to see capped and emerging brood. (See June 2020 MCBA 10 Minutes)

Purchased queen – Introduce a new queen into the split after several hours or the next day. Call the supplier before you begin to be sure that a queen will be available when you need it.

PROTECT THE ENTRANCE

This is the time of the year that robbing happens. Put entrance reducers or robbing screens on the colonies that you've split and the nucs that you've created.

FEED

You may need to feed with sugar syrup and pollen patties. But watch so that the hive doesn't become honey bound. With too little space for the queen to lay, the colony can swarm.

DOOLITTLE METHOD - NO NEED TO FIND QUEEN

Materials: Hive body, queen excluder, five frames (honey, pollen, drawn comb), hive stand, bottom board, inner cover, top cover, sugar syrup and feeders if low stores of honey

- Set an empty hive body next to the donor hive.
- Place five frames - combination of open brood, capped brood, eggs - into the center of the empty box. Brush all bees from the frames back into the donor hive.
- Fill the rest of the box with frames of honey and pollen. Keep food stores next to the brood.
- In the donor box, slide frames with brood to the center and fill the empty places with frames of honey, pollen, and foundation. Place a queen excluder on top of the donor hive.
- Put the split box on top of the excluder and close the hive. Over the next few hours, nurse bees will move up and cover the brood. The queen should stay below the excluder.
- The next day, place the top box on a hive stand. Shake in more nurse bees if the population seems low. Add a feeder if there isn't much honey. Put on an entrance reducer. Add a mated queen to the split or, if there are eggs of the correct age, add a protein patty and wait for the bees to raise a queen.

WALK AWAY SPLIT - NO NEED TO FIND QUEEN

Materials: hive stand, bottom board, inner cover, top cover, sugar syrup and feeders if your colony has low stores of honey

- Set up a hive stand and bottom board.
- If you want the bees to raise a queen make sure that each box has a frame of newly-laid eggs. If you will be adding a mated queen to the split, you can skip this step.
- Take the top brood box off of your donor hive and place it on the new stand. Equalize the two brood boxes so that there is a somewhat equal amount of bees, brood, and food. Put on feeders if there is not much honey in a box. Cover both boxes with inner and outer covers.
- Walk away.
- By the next day, one of the colonies will be more agitated than the other. This is likely the queenless colony – check to make sure if you are adding a mated queen. If you are allowing the bees to raise a queen, shake in more nurse bees to cover the brood if needed. Avoid shaking in the queen.

NUC SPLIT - REMOVE FRAMES OF EGGS AND BROOD TO A NEW LOCATION

Materials: hive stand, nuc box, five frames of honey/pollen/foundation

- Set up a hive stand with a bottom board for the nuc box.
- Find the queen. Put her in another box with a lid or in the bottom box with a queen excluder so that you do not put her into the split by accident.
- Place 2 or 3 frames of brood, along with the nurse bees, from the donor hive, into the nuc body. If you want the bees to raise a queen, include a frame with fresh eggs. If there are not enough bees to cover the brood, shake in additional nurse bees from other brood frames. Fill the remaining slots with frames of honey/pollen and a frame of foundation.
- Place the nuc on the new hive stand, cover, and put on an entrance reducer.
- Check back in a few hours or the next day. Field bees that came to the new location will have flown back to the original hive. If there are not enough nurse bees to cover the frames, shake some more bees into the nuc. If you will be adding a mated queen, add the queen.

LEARN MORE

Bush Farms: <http://www.bushfarms.com/beessplits.htm>

Meghan Milbrath: <http://www.sandhillbees.com/education>

Pacific NW Extension. Overwintered Honey Bee Nucleus Colonies

https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/pnw682_2.pdf

University of Florida, Using Nucs in Beekeeping Operations <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in869>