

THE BEE HERDER

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Join the MCBA to hear a great lineup of virtual speakers. Start or renew your membership [online here](#) or by sending in the membership form included later in this newsletter.

April 19, 7:00pm, Jennifer Berry, Oxalic Acid: Go with what we know works!

Parasitism by Varroa destructor is the number one reason our bees die. To be successful, we must manage these pests appropriately or else our bees are doomed. But how when there are so many options/choices/opinions? For several years we've been studying various application methods using oxalic acid. Results of our studies will be discussed along with a best course of action.

For over 20 years, Jennifer Berry has been the Apicultural Research Professional and Lab Manager for the University of Georgia Honey Bee Program. Her research objectives have focused on queen breeding, improving honey bee health, IPM techniques for varroa and small hive beetle control, sub-lethal effects of pesticides on beneficial insects, weeds for bees, and what best to plant in non-traditional horticultural landscapes to enhance pollinator populations and diversity.

May 17, Neil Hunt, All About Swarms

Details to follow

June 21, Laurene Keil, Safety in the Bee Yard

Details to follow

Ten Minutes with the Bees

By Paul Kosmos, MCBA President

The Bee Yard in April

Our Bee Yards seem a bit out of whack and we can't blame it on Covid. The unusually nice weather in March appears to have given some of our bees an unexpected early boost. We are receiving calls from beekeepers who have already found early queen cells in their hives.

Sheila St. Clair out at QRC noted on her Facebook page that the Saskatraz bees were already preparing to swarm. I called Denzil to ask if this was normal behavior for the Saskatraz or due to the early blooms. Denzil said this is the genetics for Saskatraz and they build up way early, and very strong every year. He added that they were actually making splits last year in March and had sealed queen cells on March 28!

Denzil also stated that managing these bees can be difficult for backyard beekeepers due to this tendency to explode in the spring. The offset is that they are also excellent honey producers. [Click here to read more about these bees.](#)



Saskatraz Honey Bees

There are other early signs to watch for this time of year, even with other types of bees. Large strips of burr comb under the inner cover mean the bees are bringing in nectar. It's OK to scrape it off, but you need to inspect your hive first chance the weather permits.



Burr Comb Under the Inner Cover = Nectar

What to look for in an inspection early April?

1. Does the queen have room to lay?
2. Do you see shiny stuff (nectar) being stored in the cells in the brood boxes?
3. Nectar in the cells is called backfilling. Filled cells take away room for the queen to lay.
4. Do you see queen cells? Do you see larva? Or royal jelly (white liquid) in the bottom?
5. Do you see drone cells? Hives normally won't swarm until there are drones "walking". Need them to mate with new queens.

Backfilling requires immediate attention as swarm prep is not far off. Either make room by adding drawn comb or adding supers. Adding foundation does not work well once swarm fever hits. Some Beeks reverse their deeps to put more open comb above the hive.

Queen cells require IMMEDIATE attention as bees often swarm the first nice day after the cells are sealed. **NEVER** remove all of the cells until you have located the queen! She might have left yesterday!

Once you see swarm cells you will likely have to split the hive to prevent a swarm. Bees are tenacious that way. If you split, move the original queen to the split (makes them think they swarmed). **REMOVE** all but the two biggest, nicest looking cells to prevent after-swarms. Hives can swarm multiple times!

Handle frames with cells **VERY** carefully to prevent damaging the cells. Hold them upright only.

The Northeast Ohio Bee Yard – April

- Think about your beekeeping goals for the year – honey production, queen rearing, building your apiary, etc. Make a plan for how you will manage your bees to reach those goals.
- Plan for integrated pest management - put reminders in your calendar to keep on track. Conduct a mite check and treat if the mite load is over 2-3 mites per 100 bees, or 6 - 9 mites per ½ cup bees.
- Hang a few yellow jacket traps to catch queens as they emerge.
- For overwintered colonies:
 - Overwintered colonies may swarm, experience queen failure, or supersede the queen. Start thinking about swarm management techniques. Toward the end of the month, set out traps to catch swarms.
 - DO NOT FEED Sugar Syrup or pollen substitute once bees are flying and bringing in food
- New beekeepers, get your equipment ready! Feed new colonies 1:1 sugar syrup and pollen patties to build comb.
- April normally brings some warm days (60-70 degrees) that allow you to open the hives (don't linger, 60 is still chilly for brood). How strong is your hive? If real strong you will want to keep an extra eye on them. By now almost all hives should be in the top box, either the upper deep or the super. If the queen is laying in the super, move her down into the deep and put on a queen excluder at least until the brood in the super emerges.
- If you have more than one hive, consider equalizing your hives. This time of year, you should find several frames of brood and by the end of April, you should see 4 -6 frames. If one hive has more frames and one a bit weaker, move a frame of brood to even up the hives and slow down the swarm urge. The same applies to those who have a hive and purchase a new package. By early May it is OK to move one frame of capped brood into your package. It will give the package a huge boost
- Pollen coming into the hive is a good sign that brood is being reared. Get ready to put on supers – better to do that a bit early than too late. If you have supers of drawn comb put two supers on from the start. They will need the room to store the nectar while drying it. If starting with foundation one super is good until 8-9 frames are drawn. Then add the second.

Apiary Registration

Any person keeping one or more colonies of bees must register their apiary with the State of Ohio Department of Agriculture. The licensing period is June 1 through May 31 annually. The annual fee is \$5.00 per apiary (yard with one or more bee hives).

If you registered your apiary last year, you should have already received your renewal form. If this is your first year, [take a look at this website for more information.](#)

2020-2021 Loss and Management Survey is Live!

The 2020-2021 Bee Informed Partnership annual Colony Loss and Management Survey is now live. New in 2021 are a shortened management section focused on queens and new colonies and both small-scale and commercially-minded survey versions. The survey is available to take throughout the month of April. Access the survey here: <https://beeinformed.org/take-survey/>.

Learning Opportunities

Ohio State Beekeeping Association (OSBA) Live Webinar Training

The Ohio State Beekeeper's Association holds free, live Zoom conference calls on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month from 7:00-8:30 pm. [More information at this link](#). Upcoming speakers include

- **Apr 25** – Mr. Jamie Walters - Backyard Queen Rearing
- **May 23** - Mr. Geoffrey Westerfield - Bears, Pests, & Wildlife

2021 MCBA Membership Application / Renewal

MCBA offers webinars and lectures by local and national beekeeping experts organized by the MCBA and other bee clubs, a monthly newsletter, and email updates with timely information. Membership is \$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 Medina County Earth Day Festival - Every Day is Earth Day this April!

In lieu of the April event held every year at Buffalo Creek Retreat in Seville, the Medina County Earth Day Festival Committee is offering a COVID-friendly alternative to celebrating our beautiful earth and learning how we can all become better stewards of our environment.

Our "Every Day is Earth Day" calendar for the month of April has daily activities in the form of educational webinars, informational videos, links to resources, guided hikes, take-and-makes, and citizen stewardship opportunities. The calendar (with links to the resources and registration) can be found online at any of the partnering agency websites and is also attached to this email for your convenience.

Follow the Earth Day Committee on social media for corresponding daily posts highlighting each of the activities and our valued vendors.

Facebook @MedinaCountyEarthDayFestival and Instagram @earth_day_medina_county

Medina County Earth Day Festival Committee

Medina County Park District, Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District, Medina County District Library, Medina County Solid Waste District, Medina County Health Department, Akron Regional Air Quality Management District, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, OSU Extension, Medina County



Western Reserve Land Conservancy
land • people • community

SUNDAY



EARTH SAVER ACTION!

Pick up trash around your home or neighborhood.

Get Outside! Visit the StoryWalk @ [Muegrage Park](#)

EARTH SAVER ACTION!

Post earth-friendly reminders in your home like "turn off the lights."

Get Outside! [Hike and Seek: Avian Evidence](#)

EARTH SAVER ACTION!

Find one way to reduce water use at home.

Get outside! Visit the paved play trail @ [Allardale Park](#)

EARTH SAVER ACTION!

Build a bird feeder.

Garlic Mustard Pull at Buckeye Woods Park; 11am [register**](#)

Get Outside! [Hike and Seek: Animal Homes](#)

MONDAY

Join us in celebrating **Every Day is Earth Day** in April! Show your love and support for the earth by participating in these daily activities throughout the month. Most activities are self-guided but some require pre-registration**. Click on the **underlined words** to follow the direct links to each activity, video or registration details.

5

Take-n-Make project from the library!

Pick-up at any MCDL location; while supplies last!



12

Take-n-Make Stem Kit from OSU; Green Roof

Pick-up at any MCDL location; while supplies last!

19

Pick up a **free** pack of mosquito larvicide treatment tablets @ Medina County Health Dept.; while supplies last [details here](#)

26

Take-n-Make Stem Kit from OSU; Kites

Pick-up at any MCDL location; while supplies last!

TUESDAY

6

Take a Hike with MCPD at Plum Creek Park; 10am or 1pm [register**](#)

Learn about water pollution: [SWCD Down the Drain](#)

13

Garlic Mustard Pull at Hubbard Valley Park; 9:30-noon [register**](#)

Send *kind Earth Day messages to your friends & family*

20

OSU Live webinar at 12pm: [Ohio's Trees](#)

Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt: [WRLC Fall Leftovers](#)

27

MCPD Live webinar at 12pm: DIY Homegrown Habitat [register**](#)

Mow down pollution with ARAQMD [Lawnmower Exchange](#) program

WEDNESDAY

7

Write a poem about *Earth Day* and share it on our [Facebook](#) page

Learn about wildflowers: [MCPD Wildflower Report](#)

14

Story Time with MCDL [register**](#)

Learn how to plant a tree: [WRLC Tree Canopy Tree](#)

21

Garlic Mustard Pull at Hubbard Valley Park; 9:30-noon [register**](#)

Learn with OSU: [Importance of Dead Wood for Wildlife](#)

28

Story Time with MCDL [register**](#)

Read a story about the Earth and share the title on our [Facebook](#) page. Tell us why it's great!

THURSDAY

1 Learn more about the Earth Day Festival Committee and our **Earth Day is Every Day** celebration on our Facebook page!



8

OSU Live webinar at 12pm: [Weird Things Bugs Do](#)

Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt: [WRLC New Leaves](#)

15

OSU Live webinar at 12pm: [Invasive Plants of Ohio](#)

Learn about our county recycling program: [SWD Recycle Medina](#)

22

EARTH DAY ~ Make an Earth Day pledge and share it on our [Facebook](#) page

Tree Planting at Blue Heron; 11am [register**](#) or call 330-722-9321

29

SWCD gardens tour [register**](#) or call 330-722-9321

Invasive Pest Alert with OSU Ext.: [Spotted Lanternfly](#)

FRIDAY

2 **DIY CONSERVATION**
[Make your own reusable produce bags](#)



9

DIY CONSERVATION
[Install a Rain Barrel](#)
(Buy a rain barrel at our local [SWCD](#))



16

DIY CONSERVATION
[Create a Chemical Free Lifestyle](#)

Take a Hike with MCPD @ Schleman Preserve; 10am or 1 pm [register**](#)

23

DIY CONSERVATION
[Create Your Own Compost](#)

Take Hike with WRLC [register here**](#)

30

DIY CONSERVATION
[Design a Wildlife Garden](#)

Arbor Day Tree Planting with SWCD; 11am [register**](#)

SATURDAY

3 Celebrate **Ohio Native Plant** month! Learn how to promote biodiversity in your yard. [Creative Feature](#) with MCPD: Trumpeter Swan

10

Garlic Mustard Pull at Buckeye Woods Park; 11am [register**](#)

[Creative Feature](#) with MCPD: American Beaver

17

Garlic Mustard Pull at Hubbard Valley Park; 9:30-noon [register**](#)

Sponsor a raptor and learn more about the [Medina Raptor Center](#)

24

Learn about ticks with OSU Ext.: [Tick News You Can Use!](#)

[Creative Feature](#) with MCPD: Tucker the Turtle

Did you enjoy these activities? Click on the Earth to take a brief survey and enter for a chance to win a free tree!

