

May 2025

# THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



## MCBA Monthly Meeting May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**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 - Extended-Release Formic Acid Treatments using  
VarroXSan  
Speaker – David Westervelt

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## MCBA May Meeting

Topic: Extended-Release Formic Acid Treatments using VarroXSan. VarroXSan is a highly effective varroa control treatment, based on oxalic acid dihydrate in slow-release strips, ensuring correct dosage that covers at least three live cycles of the varroa mite.

Speaker: David Westervelt

David has worked for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services ever since, first becoming a Bee Inspector and then as an Environmental Specialist I and Researcher, Chief Apiarist for FDACS, and Retired after 28 years with FDACS. He graduated from Florida State University as a Certified Public Manager. He has worked on numerous research projects with United States Department Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, State Universities, and other Countries; Germany, England, Canada, Africa, and Australia on *Varroa* mites, Tracheal mites, American Foulbrood disease, Small Hive beetles, Nosema, and more recently, Colony Collapse Disorder. He received several awards for research work on honeybees from the United State Department Agriculture, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Apiary Inspectors of America, Florida State Beekeepers Association, National Honey Producers, American Beekeeper Association, and more recently the Davis Productivity award. "

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

**May** – Plant Exchange (bring a plant / take a plant)

**May 15-17** – World Bee Day 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM at the Cuyahoga County Fair Grounds, signup [here](#).

**May** – Apiary [Registration](#) Due

**June** – Pollinator week

**July** – Bee Festival

**July** – Fair Booth Cleanup

**August** – Club picnic, Medina County Fair

**September** – Ag Day

**December** – Christmas Party

## MCBA June Meeting

Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Topic: Extracting honey from your hives

Speaker: Tim Moore

During our April meeting we'll be diving into the sweet art of honey extraction! Whether you're a seasoned beekeeper or just getting started, this session is perfect for anyone eager to learn how to harvest honey from their hives efficiently and responsibly. We'll cover everything from the best tools for the job to tips on keeping both you and your bees stress-free during the process. Expect plenty of hands-on advice, friendly discussion, and maybe even a little taste-testing! Come share your experiences, ask questions, and connect with fellow bee enthusiasts—you won't want to miss it!

## 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

Happy Spring! It's finally warm enough to be checking our hives regularly and adding honey supers. The sweet smell of nectar greets when you open the hives... Black locust and Linden trees are blooming or ready to start blooming so get your honey supers and cut comb boxes ready. I usually add 2 boxes at a time, so I don't miss a drop of the goodness. Flower fragrance is in the air.

I can't decide if I'm getting more swarm calls and questions ...

Or the tick issue this year!!!! Be careful checking yourself and any other help you have in the bee yard for ticks! Six has been the record for a one-day count – crazy numbers.

World Bee Day is May 15, 16, and 17 this year. Lots of children during the week, over 1100 this time. Public day is Saturday so head out for food trucks, bee talk, and demonstrations/lectures.

Earth Day was a success and many club members



volunteered their time to talk with folks wanting to expand their knowledge of honeybees. It's good to see that the public folks want to help us save our honeybees.

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

## Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in May

By Paul Kosmos

Here we are in the middle of May, waiting for it to warm up, and we've already heard about several swarms. Two, at least, were in late April. That means that you must be very diligent in checking your hives for overcrowding or swarm cells. Of course, most of you know that. There are several excellent methods to prevent your hive from swarming, including making a split and the recently popular Demaree Method.

What I'd like to share with you are a couple of misconceptions about swarming that are still very much in vogue and believed by many beekeepers. One has to do with the actual swarm process and the other concerns what happens to your remaining hive following a swarm.



*What we want to avoid!*

The first issue is how often to inspect your hive during swarm season. Everything I have ever read suggests checking your hive every ten days to look for queen cells.

Waiting that long will result in your hive swarming before you know it!

Why? Queen cells are normally capped after 8 to 9 days. So ten days sounds logical. But that ignores the fact that the bees start with a newly hatched larva, which is on the 4th day! That means they will cap new cells in as little as 4 to 5 days! I've seen this happen to me several times.

The bottom line is during the weeks of swarm season you need to take a quick peak every five days!

The second issue is the belief that when a hive swarms it helps control Varroa in the remaining hive. Why? Because there is a brood break so they can not produce more mites until there is more brood ready to be capped.

It is true about the brood break. But that leads newer beekeepers to think that a swarm helps the hive control Varroa and is a good thing. It can be... If you only have a few mites in your hive. But what if your hive is like so many that have medium to high mite counts in their hives?

Think about this. If your hive swarms and 40 percent of your bees take flight, what happens to the mites in your hive? Remember that 70-80 percent are in the capped brood cells.

So, when the capped brood emerges, you now have only 60 percent of your bees but almost 100 percent of the mites. If this happens (and it does all the time), your hive will soon be in trouble.

This is not really a swarm problem... it's a mite problem. Which is one more good reason to stay on top of your mite loads by which ever method you use!

## Earth Day 2026

*By Sharon Carpenter*

May is here already, and beekeeping activities are revving up. Earth Day has already come and gone and our club members who volunteered to help at the park

had a great time talking to the public about bees. Thank you to all of you who gave your time to represent our club at the parks: Kym and Dave Lucas, Andy Kawac, Bill Hall, Bob Gomel, Peggy Garnes, Kate Drdek, and Shari Baker.

Did you miss out on helping this year because your day was already booked? The Park District is on its toes and already has plans for next year. Get out your 2026 calendar and reserve April 25th. There is a flyer attached to print and remind you if you need it.

We will have plenty more opportunities for you to help, please consider helping, just a little and make MCBA different than all other clubs where 20% of the people do 80% of the work. Many volunteers make the load easier on all.

See you at the next meeting. Be sure to introduce yourself to someone you haven't met yet and remind someone of your name who you already met, most of us have trouble remembering names don't we?

## Recognizing Early Signs of Swarming in Your Bee Colony

*By Clint Allen*

If you've spent any time tending to a beehive, you know that honeybees have a way of keeping us on our toes. One of the most fascinating and sometimes frustrating natural behaviors they exhibit is swarming. Swarming occurs when a colony decides it's time to split and create a new home elsewhere, leaving us scrambling to manage the process. But luckily, bees leave plenty of clues before they take off, and understanding these signs can help you act before your hive suddenly empties out.

One of the biggest red flags that a swarm is brewing is an overcrowded hive. Bees love their space, and when the colony starts feeling cramped, they may begin preparations to move out. If you notice that your frames

are jam-packed with bees and the brood pattern is pushing against the edges, it might be time to give them some breathing room.

Another key indicator is the presence of swarm cells. These are special queen cells built along the bottom of the frame, often larger and more noticeable than regular queen cups. When worker bees begin feeding larvae inside these cells, it's a sure sign that a new queen is on the way and that the old one may soon leave with half the colony in tow. If you start seeing developed swarm cells, your hive is likely preparing for departure.

Bee behavior can also change dramatically in the lead-up to a swarm. You might see an uptick in fanning activity at the hive entrance or notice a group of worker bees clustering near the entrance for extended periods. Some beekeepers even report that the colony becomes noticeably more active, as if buzzing with excitement about their upcoming move. Paying close attention to these shifts in energy can help you anticipate a swarm before it happens.

While swarming is a natural and healthy part of a honeybee colony's lifecycle, preventing it or at least managing it effectively is key to keeping your apiary thriving. Regular hive inspections, ensuring ample space, and carefully managing queen cells can all help keep your colony settled and productive. The more you tune in to their signals, the better you'll become at predicting what your bees might do next.

## MCBA Meeting Minutes

MCBA monthly meeting was held at the Medina County District Library. The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. Many members were present including six board members.

1. Treasurer report: given by Kate Reusch.
2. Club Bee Yard: We now have a signed 10-year contract with Medina Parks and Recreation. We will maintain two bee yards. The contracts states

that as a club, we will need to take part in three events per year to educate the public about beekeeping. The hives are doing so well that they will be split the next nice day. Two of the splits will be placed in the new bee yard. The remainder of the splits will be sold to members for. Members with the most "bee yard volunteer hours" will be given the first choice to buy.

3. Volunteer Opportunities: There are still volunteers needed to work this weekend (Earth Day) at Buffalo Creek. Ag Day is still in need of volunteers as well. Members were reminded to sign up on-line at Sign-Up-Genius.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

## From Around the Web

### Medina County Soil & Water Conservation Notes

<https://medinaswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/April-Spring-2025-newsletter.pdf>

### The Best Way You Can Save the Bees and Butterflies

<https://www.aol.com/best-way-save-bees-butterflies-170000613.html>

### Reexamination of honey bee Africanization in Mexico and other regions of the New World

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-025-00989-1>

## Club Bee Yard Notes

### May 2

*Hive 1* - Lots of activity at entrance. Removed the lower queen excluder. Located the queen and moved her to the bottom box. Moved all shallow frames above the queen excluder. Replace once all brood has hatched.

*Hive 1a* - lots entrance activity. Did not inspect.

*Hive 2 and 2a* - very defensive and aggressive. Far too aggressive for a teaching yard. Pinched the queen and all queen cells. Gave a frame with eggs from the Hive 3 queen in each hive. The frames with eggs are marked with a blue X. In the right hand side it is in the top deep box, left hand hive it is in the bottom deep box. Check back in a week and to make sure they are pulling cells on those frames and squash anything else that may have developed.

*Hive 3* - tons of entrance activity.

Eight frame - not a lot of entrance activity, good activity under the inner cover. Saw queen and brood in all stages. Pulled two frames with eggs for hive 2 and 2a, replaced with frames of mixed open and capped brood from hive 2.

White nuc - very little entrance activity lots of bees under the inner cover accessing the syrup. Topped off syrup

Tan Nuc - lots of entrance activity good activity under the inner cover. Topped off syrup.

## **April 27, 2025**

*Hive 1* - Lots of activity at entrance. Bringing in lots of pollen. Separated all 5 boxes hoping to find queen and perform a Demaree split. Found numerous queen/swarm cells. Plans for Demaree abandoned. It is too late for a Demaree since the hive is preparing to swarm. Found the queen, marked green, and performed a traditional split moving the queen to the new 10-frame hive. Bees had drawn out the cut comb box and the queen had filled it with eggs. Moved the shallow frames with the queen into a medium box to create the new hive. Gave one medium box of mixed brood and resource frames and one box of 5 undrawn foundation 5 mixed frames. Placed a queen excluder above and below the brood box to keep the queen from swarming.

*Hive 1a* - Left all queen cells, several were damaged moving frames, lots of eggs and larvae in the original hive.

Three medium boxes. Check back in a few days to make sure there are viable queen cells and reduce to the 2 best if necessary. Then leave to produce a new queen. Recheck about May 20 for eggs.

*Hive 2* - 2 deeps with brood, then undrawn medium, 3rd top deep is nectar. Queen was marked and release into bottom deep last week. Didn't find queen, found queen cells on bottom of middle deep. Moved queen cells and nectar deep next to hive. Not sure what hive queen is in, check in a few days for eggs. They are cranky and flighty. Might need to requeen.

*Hive 3* - Green marked queen—3 deeps one super. 3 deeps with brood and good resources. Found queen cells at bottom of frames, accidentally destroyed numerous cells pulling frames up. Found one good cell, put it in the tan/cream colored nuc (Paul's). Added frames of brood, resources, feed to the nuc.

Moved queen to 8 frame with brood, resources, undrawn frames. May need to add foragers to this hive.

Moved eggs, brood to white nuc, resources and feed.


Hive 3 is now queen-less with eggs and plenty of bees and resources. Let requeen, check in 30 days.

## **Looking for Volunteers!**

With the expansion of the bee yard to a second location, the club is requesting an experienced (2<sup>nd</sup> year or more) beekeeper to inspect the hives and show beginners what they are seeing. The allotted time commitment is 2 hours, but it usually doesn't take that long. If you are interested in helping the club sign up [here](#).

## **Club Donations**

With the expansion of the club bee yard to a second location, we are looking for anyone willing to donate a



hive stand. If you are willing to donate a stand, please reach out to Kate Reusch or Shari Baker.

## 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.

*The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and is not intended to guarantee your success as a beekeeper. While MCBA strives to offer accurate and up-to-date advice, beekeeping involves various factors beyond our control. Therefore, MCBA cannot be held responsible for any outcomes resulting from the application of the information provided. By using the advice and tips shared in this newsletter, you agree to hold harmless the MCBA, authors, publishers, and any affiliated parties from any liability, loss, or damage that may occur.*

## 2025 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, 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: \_\_\_\_\_