

February 2026

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



MCBA Monthly Meeting February 16th, 2026

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

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MCBA February Meeting

Monday, February 16th, 2026

Topic: Acute Honeybee Paralysis Virus Detection

Speaker: Denzil St. Clair from Queen Right Colonies

Join us for an important discussion on **Acute Honeybee Paralysis Virus (ABPV) detection**, a critical topic for every beekeeper. ABPV is one of the most serious viral threats to honeybee health, often linked to colony collapse and weakened hives. Early detection can make the difference between saving a colony and losing it.

At this meeting, we'll cover:

- How ABPV spreads and its impact on hive health
- Practical methods for identifying symptoms and testing for the virus
- Strategies to protect your bees and prevent outbreaks

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Upcoming Events

2026 Beginner Class Dates

Saturday Feb 14th and 21st - 10 am to 5 pm

Tuesday Feb 24th, Mar 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th - 6 pm to 8:30 pm

April 25th: [Earth Day](#) (10 AM to 4 PM)

March 6th – 7th – [Tri-County Beekeepers Spring Workshop](#)

August 3rd-9th – Medina County Fair

August – Club Picnic

MCBA March Meeting

Monday, March 16th, 2026

Topic: To Be Announced SOON!

Speaker: To Be Announced SOON!

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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

What a wild start to this year! The brutal, cold weather will be quite a factor in the winter survival rates so I'm hoping everyone left a good bit of honey stores on their hives. The hives here have been flying and completing housekeeping chores.

Beginner classes are starting soon, and all the preparations are complete. We have added some new instructors to the lineup and I'm looking forward to passing on the hive tool to the next generation. This is such a great way to give back to our club and start the new beekeepers with a good background of information.

The March meeting will be a member presentation that will fill the community rooms... come early and bring a snack to share. You won't want to miss this one. Check out the website calendar – there's a lot happening this year. Think about volunteering.

Stay warm, hug your family, and enjoy your bees!



Ten Minutes with the Bees – The bee yard in February

By Paul Kosmos

Republished from February 2024 Bee herder

Strange Things are Happening!



Thanks to the Skunk Cabbage!

Like having several beautiful days in early February with temps in the mid 60's! I like winter, but it sure isn't hard to take these nice days. Or maybe it's just nice to see the Sun!

Like seeing several Red-wing Blackbirds this morning! It always makes me think about Spring.

Like our bees hauling a bunch of pollen on February 8th! This is almost an exact repeat of last year when February and March were so mild.

I've heard from several Beekeepers who used the warm temps to do their early Mite treatment. I did the same with Oxalic Acid and a vaporizer. It sure is quick and inexpensive. I will take a quick peak at the inserts every couple days to see if there was a mite drop.

When we get this type of warm weather I am always interested to see if it continues into spring. Sometimes we pay for it with a miserable stretch in April.

The type of Spring weather can make quite a difference in the bees' daily activity and how we manage our bees. I recall a Spring about 5 or 6 years ago when we had days in the mid 80's in March. Hives built up extremely fast since there was a huge early bloom of almost everything. That kept us on our toes to monitor swarm season.

The excitement of that spring then created a challenge for beekeepers since so many food sources bloomed so early that we then experienced a tough summer.

I have also heard from a number of our members that their hives seem to be doing well for the most part. No idea why but there have been so many decent days with sunshine, and the bees have been out and active.

It is worth mentioning that when you have a nice day it might be wise to pop the lid and take a quick look regarding their food supply. If in doubt, a couple of candy bricks are cheap insurance. We need 34 on the growing



Bees flying on February 4th, 2024

degree days for the Silver Maples to bloom (16th this morning)!

Winter's Toll on Honeybee Colonies Across Northeast Ohio

By Clint Allen

As Northeast Ohio continues to endure one of its colder stretches of the season, many of us are beginning to discover that not all of their colonies have survived the winter. This year's temperature patterns have produced a particularly harsh environment for honeybees, with below-normal temperatures favored across portions of the Great Lakes region during the December–February period. Combined with the region's naturally cold, snowy winters, the season has tested hive resilience in ways familiar to experienced beekeepers and surprising to newer ones.

Across the region, winter colony losses are becoming an unwelcome reality. While honeybees have evolved

impressive strategies to endure freezing weather, even these adaptations have limits. Inside the hive, bees cluster tightly together—often forming a basketball-sized sphere—to conserve heat and maintain internal temperatures above 50°F. When external temperatures drop sharply or remain low for long periods, bees tighten their cluster, reducing their ability to move to new honey reserves. Under such conditions, starvation can occur even when food remains nearby. The extended cold also restricts foraging, forcing colonies to depend entirely on stores accumulated during warmer months.

Despite these challenges, winter losses offer lessons that beekeepers can carry forward into spring and the next seasonal cycle. Foremost among these is the importance of entering winter with a strong colony. Experts recommend that a hive contains between 30,000 and 40,000 bees to sustain sufficient heat production throughout winter's coldest periods. Colonies that enter winter with low population numbers often lack the critical mass needed to survive weeks of freezing temperatures.

Food stores remain another decisive factor. In Northeast Ohio, beekeepers are advised to ensure their colonies have 60 to 80 pounds of honey going into the winter months. Several dead-out hives reveal predictable patterns: minimal honey remaining, bees clustered far from existing stores, or signs that the cluster was unable to move upward in time. Beekeepers note that moisture inside the hive can be just as dangerous as cold. Condensation forming inside a poorly ventilated hive may drip onto the winter cluster, chilling bees and accelerating losses. The region's weather conditions, cold nights, occasional thaws, and high humidity—make moisture management a critical aspect of winter preparation.

Several colonies that perished this winter may also have been weakened months earlier by high Varroa mite loads. While winter treatments are not generally recommended, colonies that begin the season already

stressed or diseased often lack the physiological strength to endure prolonged cold. Many beekeepers now view winter losses as reflections of decisions made in summer and fall rather than winter alone.

Recovery from winter losses is possible and, in many cases, straightforward. Empty hives can often be cleaned and reused unless clear signs of disease are present. Mold on frames can be dried out, while abnormalities such as sour odors, ropey brood, or unusual discoloration warrant discarding contaminated equipment. Local bee suppliers are already reporting increased demand for spring packages and nucs, a trend driven in part by losses during this year's cold spells. Beekeepers are advised to secure replacements early.

As spring approaches, hive inspections should begin once temperatures reach 50°F or higher—typically late March or early April in Northeast Ohio. These early evaluations allow beekeepers to assess colony strength, food stores, brood patterns, and queen health. For those rebuilding from scratch, spring serves as a clean slate and an opportunity to reinforce practices that support long-term colony resilience.

Unpredictability appears to be an emerging theme in modern winters. Mild days may trigger brood rearing, only for a sudden cold snap to force colonies back into tight clustering, creating stress and increasing food consumption. This variability complicates management but also underscores the importance of flexibility and vigilance.

Though winter losses can be emotionally and financially discouraging, they are a familiar part of beekeeping in cold climates. Each loss offers valuable insight into what worked, what didn't, and what can be improved next year. As the region warms and the first signs of spring begin to emerge, beekeepers across Northeast Ohio can look forward to rebuilding their apiaries with renewed focus and hard-earned experience.

With thoughtful management, consistent monitoring, and a willingness to adapt to changing seasonal patterns, local beekeepers remain well-positioned to restore their colonies and greet the coming spring with optimism.

From Around the Web

Pollinator Stewardship Council

<https://www.pollinatorstewardship.org/>

BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT EXHIBITION

https://registrazione.piacenzaexpo.it/admin/app/tracking.jsp?id_news=25075&email=president@medinabeekeepers.com&codice=a04dh816rz21&url=https%3A%2F%2FWWW.APIMELL.IT

What can honey bee brain chemistry teach us about human learning?

<https://news.vt.edu/articles/2026/02/research-fralinbiomed-montaguebees.html>

Cultivating the next generation of beekeepers

<https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2026/01/28/from-fear-to-fascination-inside-uncs-carolina-beekeeping-club/>

More vulnerable honey bees buffer the hive against heat stress

<https://www.advancedsciencenews.com/heat-sensitive-honey-bees-initiate-fanning-to-cool-the-hive/>

Temperature shifts alter honeybee behavior but leave native bees unchanged

<https://phys.org/news/2026-01-temperature-shifts-honeybee-behavior-native.html>

Lorain County Beekeepers Association to host annual Ms. Honey Bee's High Tea

<https://www.morningjournal.com/2026/01/18/lorain-county-beekeepers-association-to-host-annual-ms-honey-bees-high-tea/>

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.

References & Citations

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U.S. Department of Commerce.

<https://www.weather.gov/media/abr/sitreport/2025-2026WinterOutlook.pdf> (accessed 2026-02-12).

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<https://beekeepercorner.com/what-happens-to-honey-bees-in-the-winter-preparation-and-survival-strategies/> (accessed 2026-02-12).

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[healthy-beehive/inspecting-your-hive/what-should-you-expect-as-winter-progresses](https://www.perfectbee.com/a-healthy-beehive/inspecting-your-hive/what-should-you-expect-as-winter-progresses) (accessed 2026-02-12).

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2026 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 [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: _____

Email Address (Please Print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Optional # of Colonies: _____