

November 2025

THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



MCBA Monthly Meeting November 17th, 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: Hives for Heros
Speaker: Neil Klabunde

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MCBA November Meeting

Monday, November 17th, 2025

Questions & Answers 6:30-7:00 / General Meeting 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Topic: Hives for Heroes is a national nonprofit organization that empowers Veterans and First Responders through the healing practice of beekeeping. By connecting new beekeepers with experienced mentors, the program fosters purpose, community, and environmental stewardship. Through hands-on training and support, Hives for Heroes helps Heroes transition from service to civilian life while promoting honeybee conservation and sustainable practices. Every hive nurtured is a step toward healing, connection, and a healthier planet. Learn more at hivesforheroes.org.

Speaker: Neil Klabunde

Upcoming Events

December 9th, 2025 – Christmas Party

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: Earth Day

MCBA December Meeting

Monday, December 9th, 2025

Topic: Annual Christmas Party

Attendance is capped at 50 members. Invite coming soon!

Come enjoy good company, AMAZING FOOD, festive cheer, and share beekeeping stories with your fellow club members. This is a great opportunity to connect with other members and enjoy each other's company during this holiday season. We will again, be having our Christmas Party at the Career Center, where Medina County Students will show off their acquired real world cooking skills by preparing our meal. All members are welcome—bring your holiday spirit!

Time: 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Location: Medina County Career Ctr
1101 W Liberty St, Medina OH 44256

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

It's been tough in the bee yards this fall... some hives have absconded, some have gone queen less, and some just didn't set up for the winter ahead. Still, a bit of time to get sugar bricks on or feed Pro-Sweet in hive, maybe.

Rough fall here in my bee yard – no fall nectar flow to speak of, 3 inches snow and cold nights, and lost a dear friend and beekeeping colleague. Looking forward to some wintertime reflection.

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

Ten Minutes with the Bees — The bee yard in November

By Paul Kosmos

We were all shocked and sadden by Paul's sudden passing late last month. I struggled with what to do, or how to honor him, and his contributions to our club. I decided that I wanted to share, again, his 10 minutes article with you from November of 2024. Paul, you will be missed, you were an amazing person, and leader in our club.

CA

Now that most of you have your hives prepped for winter, the question becomes what to do now (other than enjoy the beautiful weather)? There are still a few things you can do to keep an eye on your bees as we go through the winter.



Hive ready for winter!

Assuming you have varroa under control, you can give some thought to what type of supplemental feeding you might use, if necessary. Candy bricks (sugar cakes), fondant, and dry sugar on a mat on the top frames are a few of the most popular. Avoid feeding pollen patties in the winter. There are very good instructions and videos on the net to help.

Use of a $\frac{3}{4}$ " shim under the inner cover makes it much easier and faster to apply food.



Shim Provides Room for Added Food

Remember to place the inner cover with the upper entrance facing down. That way the bees have a way to get out if snowbound or if insulation is on top the inner cover.

One other thing is worth mentioning. After a period of very cold weather or after a heavy snow, occasionally the entrance can get blocked by dead bees since the bees can't get out to remove them. Occasionally take a peek in the entrance to make sure it is clear. If it is blocked, remove the mouse guard and take a long stick to carefully pull the dead bees out of the hive.



Occasionally Dead Bees Can Block Entrances

The remainder of winter gives you an excellent time to learn more about your bees. Good time to read some books, talk to other beekeepers.

It is also a great time to plan for next year. How many hives do you want? First year beekeepers will find swarms and splits make it easy to expand your bee yard. If you plan to add hives, winter is the perfect time to purchase supplies, assemble your equipment, paint the woodenware, and make hive stands.

Director Position Open

Larry Watson has completed his three-year term as Director for the Medina County Beekeepers Association. At the November Board Meeting, Bill Hall was nominated to fill this position (up for membership vote and approval). A vote will be held during the November meeting. If any member is interested in running against Bill Hall, please make your intentions known so your name can be included in the vote. This position is open to any member, so, if you are interested in being more involved in the club, speak up!

Moisture Control in your Hives

By Clint Allen

Controlling moisture in a beehive during the cold winter months is one of the most important tasks for a beekeeper. It's easy to think that cold temperatures are the biggest threat to your bees, but in reality, excess moisture can be even more dangerous. When condensation builds up inside the hive, it can drip down onto the cluster and chill the bees, leading to colony loss. So, what can you do to keep your hives dry and your bees healthy through winter? Let's go through all the options.

First, let's talk about ventilation. Good airflow is key to preventing moisture buildup. Bees produce heat and water vapor as they consume honey and cluster together. If that moisture has nowhere to go, it condenses on the inner cover and drips back down. One simple solution is to make sure your upper entrance or ventilation notch is open. This gives moist air a way to escape without creating a draft that chills the bees. Some beekeepers drill a small hole in the upper box or use a shim under the inner cover to create a gap. Just remember, you want gentle airflow, not a wind tunnel.

Next up is insulation. Insulating the hive can help reduce condensation because it keeps the inner surfaces closer to the temperature of the cluster. When the inside of the hive is warm and the outer walls are cold, that's when condensation forms. Wrapping your hive with a breathable material or using insulated panels can help. Some members use foam boards or commercial hive wraps designed for winter. The key is to keep the hive warm enough without sealing it so tight that air can't move.

Another popular method is using moisture-absorbing materials inside the hive. This is where things like quilt boxes or moisture boards come in. A quilt box is basically a shallow box filled with wood shavings or other absorbent material placed above the inner cover. It soaks up excess moisture and allows it to evaporate slowly. Moisture boards work similarly and are often made of fiberboard that can absorb water vapor. These solutions are great because they don't interfere with ventilation, and they help keep condensation from dripping onto the bees.

Candy boards and dry sugar feeding can also help with moisture control. When you place dry sugar or a candy board above the cluster, it not only provides emergency food but also absorbs some of the moisture in the hive. Bees will eat the sugar as needed, and the dry surface helps reduce dripping. It's a simple, dual-purpose solution that many beekeepers swear by.

Let's not forget about the location of your hive. If your hive is sitting in a low, damp area, it's going to have more moisture problems. Elevating the hive off the ground and making sure it's in a spot with good drainage can make a big difference. Wet ground leads to damp air, and damp air leads to condensation inside the hive.

Finally, check your equipment. Make sure your outer cover is in good shape and doesn't leak. Water getting in from rain or melting snow will only make things worse. A well-fitting telescoping cover with a weatherproof top is essential. Some beekeepers even tilt the hive slightly forward so any condensation or rainwater runs out instead of pooling inside.

In the end, controlling moisture in winter is all about balance. You want enough ventilation to let water vapor escape, enough insulation to prevent condensation, and maybe a little help from absorbent materials or dry sugar. Every beekeeper has their favorite method, and sometimes it takes a bit of trial and error to find what works best in your climate. The important thing is to keep an eye on your hives and adjust as needed. Your bees will thank you when spring arrives and they're strong and healthy.

Club Bylaws Review – Help is NEEDED!

Per the club's Bylaws, we are required to assemble a committee to review and approve any changes as required. We are looking for an additional 1 or 2 active members to be added to the committee and help complete this very important task. The board is also seeking to adjust the terms of the leadership position so that the only 2 positions are termed out at a time vs. the current 4 to help maintain continuity. If you are interested in helping, please reach out to any board member before or after the November meeting.

Vice President Position Open

The Medina County Beekeepers Association currently has an open Vice President position on the Board. This is an important role that helps keep our club active and engaging throughout the year. The Vice President primarily coordinates monthly speakers for our meetings, ensuring we have informative and interesting presentations for members. In addition, this position participates in monthly Board meetings to help guide the direction of the club.

If you enjoy connecting with people, organizing events, and playing a key part in supporting our beekeeping community, this is a great opportunity to get involved. Serving on the Board is a rewarding experience that allows you to contribute ideas, learn from others, and help shape the future of the club.

If you are interested in filling this position or would like more details about the responsibilities, please reach out to any Board member. We'd love to hear from you and welcome your participation!

Candy Board Recipe

Ingredients & Equipment Needed:

- Large container (16 quarts or more)
- Strong stirring device
- High-BTU heat source (twice the BTUs of a standard stove burner)
- 1 quart water
- ¼ cup white vinegar
- 15 lbs. white sugar (three 5-lb bags)
- 1 cup honey (plus an additional cup later)
- 1 oz Honey-B-Healthy

- Optional: 1 lb. dry powdered HFCS (allows up to 10 more lbs. sugar)
- Optional: Protein supplement (Mega Bee or similar)

Directions:

Bring 1 quart of water to a full boil.

Add ¼ cup white vinegar.

Slowly add 15 lbs. of sugar, stirring constantly.

Boil until mixture reaches 242°F and has a soft, fudge-like consistency (about 20–25 minutes).

Optional: Add 1 lb. dry powdered HFCS, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and add 1 cup honey, stirring until mixture resembles thick drywall plaster.

Turn off heat and add another cup of honey, stirring constantly.

Whip in 1 oz Honey-B-Healthy.

Stir in as much sugar as possible without making it runny. Moisture and cluster heat will soften candy later.

Pour mixture into candy board or mold lined with wax paper. Let cool completely.

Scrape cooled candy from container sides.

Optional Protein Additions:

- For Mega Bee: Pour 2 cups dry Mega Bee powder in center of tray, then cover with candy.
- Or cut a 1 lb. protein patty in half and place on both sides of center support.

Tip: Bees should reach the protein supplement around mid-February after consuming some candy.

Winter Bee Behavior

By Clint Allen

When winter sets in, bees inside the hive go through incredible changes to survive the cold. They aren't just sitting still waiting for spring. They're actively working to keep the colony alive and understanding what's happening can help you make better decisions as a beekeeper.

Bees form a tight cluster inside the hive to maintain warmth. The queen stays at the center while workers surround her in layers. The outer bees act like insulation, and the inner bees generate heat by vibrating their flight muscles. They're not flying, just shivering those muscles to create warmth. This cluster can keep the temperature near the queen around 90 degrees Fahrenheit even when it's freezing outside. That's an incredible feat for such small creatures.

Honey is the fuel that makes this possible. Bees consume honey and convert it into energy to keep those muscles moving. As winter progresses, the cluster slowly moves through the hive to reach more honey stores. If they run out of food or can't move because of extreme cold, the colony is in danger. This is why checking food stores before winter and sometimes adding emergency feed is so important.

Moisture and air management inside the hive is another challenge. When bees metabolize honey, they produce water vapor and carbon dioxide. Too much moisture can lead to condensation, which can drip onto the cluster and chill them. Bees instinctively ventilate the hive by fanning their wings when needed, even in winter. They position themselves to keep the cluster tight and minimize drafts. It's a delicate balance between staying warm and avoiding damp conditions.

Roles inside the hive shift during winter. There's no brood rearing for most of the cold season, so the queen takes a break from laying eggs. Workers focus on survival

instead of foraging. Drones are gone by late fall because they're not needed and would only consume resources. The colony becomes a streamlined survival unit.

Communication continues even in the cold months. Bees use pheromones to maintain organization. The queen's pheromones help keep the colony cohesive, and workers share food through trophallaxis, which also spreads chemical signals. This keeps the colony functioning smoothly even in the dark of winter.

Temperature sensing is another fascinating aspect. Bees have specialized receptors that detect slight changes in temperature. If the cluster gets too cold, they tighten up and increase muscle activity. If it gets too warm, they loosen the cluster. They constantly adjust to maintain the ideal conditions for survival.

For beekeepers, this means respecting the cluster and avoiding unnecessary disruptions. Opening the hive in winter can break the thermal bubble they've worked so hard to maintain. It also means paying attention to ventilation, food stores, and protection from wind and moisture. Bees have the instincts, but we can give them the best chance by creating the right conditions.

Winter bee behavior is a remarkable example of nature's design. These insects have evolved a system that lets them survive months of cold without leaving the hive. When you walk past your hives in January, remember there's a living, breathing organism inside, working together to make it through to spring. That's something worth admiring.

Looking for Contributors

Each month the club spends a lot of time putting together this newsletter. If there is any topic you would like to share or an article that you find interesting, please don't hesitate to reach out. This newsletter is for you, our members and the more we can add (in terms of content)

the more valuable it will be to our club. Thank you in advance for your help!

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: October 20, 2025

Call to order: The club meeting was held at the Medina Library and was called to order at 8:00 p.m. There were approximately 45 people present including 5 board members and one visitor.

- Financial report was read by Kate Reusch.
- Sherri Baker will accept the Club's award at the OSBA meeting occurring this weekend.
- The OSBA youth scholarship winner is doing a great job with her hive this year, it is looking great.
- Club bee yard: All the hives are doing well. The hive that was having difficulty with mite count and bald brood is now doing well after an OA vaporization treatment following by Formic Pro. Mite count went down to "0" and the hive looks healthy.
 - The house on the club bee yard is not down yet but will hopefully be down in the spring.
- We currently have three family and one single sign-up for the 2026 beginner beekeeping classes.
- The following upcoming events were mentioned:
 - Christmas Party will be at the Career Center again this year– December 9th at 5:00
 - A couple of volunteer presenters are still needed for the honey breakfast
- Fair Update: A discussion was had about updating the barn. The plan is to update the electrical. There is a hope that a large exhaust fan will be placed at one end of the barn and louvers at the other. A request was made to change all our pricing to be whole dollar amounts.
- Finances: Three people will be needed from the club and a couple of board members to review

our financial situation and budget to plan for the upcoming year.

- Bylaws: We will need to review our bylaws and revise the length of each board members service and stagger the rotation of the board. A November Board meeting will be set up to have longer discussions on this issue.
- The newsletter (Clint Allen), Facebook page (Neil Klabunde), and website maintenance (Clint Allen) are looking great. There were a couple of errors in the newsletter that were mentioned by members. There is a need for a volunteer to help proof the newsletter before publishing it.

New Business:

- A motion was made to create a questionnaire to pass to the Mentors and Mentees of this current year to get input on what worked and didn't work with the program in an effort to make improvements. Motion carried.
- Research was done to make an effort to changing the club bee yard to a "community yard". A club in Colorado shared their knowledge with us. Many conversations will be had with the park district to collaborate with them and get input.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Sharon Carpenter – Secretary
10/21/25

From Around the Web

Ohio State researchers ranked among world's most influential scientists

<https://cfaes.osu.edu/news/articles/ohio-state-researchers-ranked-among-world%E2%80%99s-most-influential-scientists>

Hope & Honey In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene

<https://www.ourstate.com/hope-honey/?brid= TOzXiTgQwCBt4eQUrjWbg&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAYnJpZBExalpQVXJSQjFxdWFWtUs5THNydGMGYXBwX2lkDzUxNDc3MTU2OTIyODA2MQABHiN7adep-yIWpd4tAss7zRdnl6wxa X2TO HK5egGqQGKJAvwzQpTaoBcvww aem -2ftl UUK3FYn4TfQX8x1A>

How to Store Honey Supers with Drawn Comb

<https://carolinahoneybees.com/storing-honey-supers/>

Most feral honeybee colonies in U.S. said to be Africanized

<https://www.farmprogress.com/commentary/most-feral-honeybee-colonies-in-u-s-said-to-be-africanized>

UBC research reveals why honey bees overthrow their queen

<https://www.med.ubc.ca/news/ubc-research-reveals-why-honey-bees-overthrow-their-queen/>

Can honey bee-inspired research make electric grids more resilient?

<https://www.psu.edu/news/engineering/story/ga-can-honey-bee-inspired-research-make-electric-grids-more-resilient>

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. *Fun Fact, the honeybee picture on the very first page was taken in Arizona, during the month of November.*

References & Citations

Slabaugh, D. (n.d.). Candy recipe. Medina County Beekeepers Association. Retrieved from <https://www.mdasplitter.com/docs/candy.pdf>

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.

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: _____