

February 2025

# THE BEE HERDER

Published by the Medina County Beekeepers Association



## MCBA Monthly Meeting February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Medina County Library**  
210 S. Broadway, Medina OH 44256  
Rooms A and B

**TWO MEETINGS THIS MONTH!**  
General Meeting 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Topic: Cooking with Honey by Chef Charles Heaton CEC,  
CRC AND Demaree Swarm Control by Robert Najjar

## Association Officers

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**State of Ohio Inspector:**  
Brad Deering  
<https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>

## February Speakers

**Chef Charles Heaton** is a lifelong experienced culinarian.

With a résumé that spans much of Europe with two- and three-star Michelin houses as well as hotels and restaurants across the United States, he also has significant food manufacturing and product development experience with numerous hotels and resorts, as well as Nestle, USA and Canada.

He currently runs his own independent, product development service, Peaberry Culinary Inc. in North Olmsted Ohio.

He has been a successful Beekeeper beginning his fourth season.

**Robert Najjar** lives in Richfield, Ohio. He has been keeping bees since 2018 and President of Summit County Beekeepers Association for more than 5 years. His passion and interest in learning more about these fascinating insects had led him to study for 3 years and become a Master Beekeeper. Robert has 60 colonies in various apiaries and enjoys an overwintering success of 86% for the past 5 years.

Robert learned about the Demaree method a few years back in an attempt to increase the production of honey and quickly discovered that it can also be a way to double the size of his apiary.

## Upcoming Events

### February 2025

Beginner Class - Tuesday Class

Tuesday Evenings - February 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>. Time 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Beginner Class - Saturday Class

To learn more or to register, Click [Here](#). Cost is \$85 for an individual and \$100 for a family. In addition to the

class tuition, students receive a textbook, a one-year membership in the Medina County Beekeepers Association and a variety of magazines and catalogs from the beekeeping industry. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged so we know how to prepare, but late registration will be available at the door if space is available. (Current MCBA members who have paid for and taken the class before may retake the class for free.)

Location: Medina County Library, 210 S. Broadway, Medina OH 4425

### Tri-County Beekeepers Association Inc. Spring Workshop February 28 – March 1, 2025

## MCBA March Meeting

Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Topic: Queen Rearing

Speaker: Greg Burns, Natures Image Farm

Join us for an engaging session on queen rearing, a crucial aspect of successful beekeeping. We'll explore the methods and techniques for raising healthy, productive queens, including grafting, using queen cells, and managing mating nucs. Whether you're a seasoned beekeeper or just starting out, this meeting will provide valuable insights and practical tips to enhance your apiary's health and productivity. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about this important beekeeping subject!

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

## 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*

Medina is off to a cold start with the January meeting being cancelled due to frigid temps and being moved to before the February speaker – so get ready for a double header meeting this month. Chef Charles will lead off at 6 pm with cooking with honey and Robert Najjar will present at 7 pm discussing the Demaree Method. Don't miss this information packed meeting!

Some members have shared with me that hives have been lost – so please check you hives for adequate food storage the next opportunity you have and make appropriate plans. Dry feed like fondant, candy bricks, or winter patty would be good choices at this time of year. MCBA is going to send out a survey on this winter hive loss to gather data in our county – watch for the survey – and hopefully we can share the collected information at the February meeting.



Enjoy this cold weather break, watch the ice melt off your hives, and attend the TCBA Spring Workshop... spring chores will be here before you know it.

Stay healthy, hug your family, and

enjoy your bees!

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

*By Paul Kosmos*

It is very quiet in the bee yard right now. Yes, I put my ear to the hives and checked the front porch and they are still hanging in there.



*Someone's in there cleaning up!*

Since it has been so cold, I have not opened my hives to check on their food. But I know they had enough food to get them through the winter. That said, later this month or early March I will pop the cover on a warmer day (low 40's +) and add some sugar cakes for cheap insurance. Fondant works as well.

Remember to add a shim under the inner cover to make space for the extra food. That makes it even easier if you need to add more later. Just lift the inner cover a little and slip in the food. And remember to be quick as 45 degrees is pleasant to us but freezing to the bees!



The big interest right now is our 2025 Beginner Class. It started with a bang (and a full coating of ice on everything) this past Saturday. I know I always say this but the excitement and enthusiasm of the participants is totally contagious! They make it one of the highlights of the year, every year.

So, what tasks concerning the bees are out there for us right now? This is a good time to check equipment needs for the new year. Do you expect to need new boxes? Great time to get them and get them painted. There are always boxes to clean or paint. Frames that need cleaning, scraping or replaced. If scraping wax and propolis, do it on a cold morning before things warm up. It is SO much easier when the wax and propolis are cold and brittle. They chip

right off. Once they warm up, they get soft and gooey and make a royal mess.

I am looking forward to the February meeting to learn more about the Demaree Method for Swarm control and possible colony increase. This should be an interesting presentation.



*George Demaree*

The second part of the meeting the Chef will teach us how to make good food so we can party while reading more about the bees!

It will be interesting to see if this Spring is a more “normal” Spring season. The last couple years were challenging since it was so warm so early. Everything bloomed early and we all had to rethink what we thought we knew about keeping bees!

## Survey Says!?

Last month we told you that we were developing a survey for our members to better understand our clubs winter losses. To that end, linked [here](#), is that survey. If you know if you’ve lost any hives and are comfortable doing so, please let us know! We plan on sharing the results in an upcoming newsletter.

## Sustainability Goals

*By Sharon Carpenter*

As many of you may know, it is our Club's goal to become a sustainable beekeeping club. We want to be a club that works together being good stewards of our bees and equipment. By working together we can raise healthy bees that are Ohio winter hardy. We will then be able to purchase queens, nucs, and packages from each other, right here in Ohio. Working together goes beyond just attending meetings to glean from a speaker. We have to take that knowledge, use it, and share it with others. That's where mentoring comes in.

Almost all of you who are receiving this newsletter have already had at least one hive to take care of and know that as a beginning beekeeper, your first step in sustainability was simply keeping your bees alive. That isn't always an easy task. Obtaining healthy, Ohio-raised bees, and having a good mentor will go a long way toward helping new beekeepers succeed.

With all that in mind, we are compiling the following lists:

1. Members with available resources such as queens and nucs.
2. Members who are willing to mentor another member.

### 3. Members who would like to have a mentor.

The resource list will be given to the beginners taking the beekeeping classes and will also be published on the club's website. The mentor/mentee information will be compiled, and the participants will be notified privately. If you have resources and would like to be included on this list, please complete the attached Member Resource application form. Your contact information, club membership status, and State Apiary Queen certification status will be verified.

If you are willing to mentor someone or would like to have a mentor, those forms are on the last pages of this newsletter as well. Each of the forms is to be returned to Shari Baker either at her email address or mailed to our P.O. box. The addresses are on the forms.

Thank you in advance for participating in our sustainability efforts. Even if you don't fill out any of the forms, you are still participating by actively learning and keeping your hive healthy.

## The Beekeepers Calendar – February

Below is a list of tasks, all weather dependent, that you should consider doing to ensure your colonies are prepared for spring.

- **Hive Inspections:** On warmer days, briefly inspect hives to check for any signs of disease or pests.
- **Feeding Bees:** Provide supplemental feeding if honey stores are low. Use sugar syrup or fondant.
- **Cleaning Equipment:** Clean and repair beekeeping equipment to prepare for the upcoming season.
- **Planning for Spring:** Plan for new hive installations or expansions. Order new bees and equipment if needed.
- **Attending Beekeeping Classes:** Participate in local beekeeping classes or workshops to learn new techniques.

- **Monitoring Hive Weight:** Regularly check the weight of hives to ensure bees have enough food.
- **Reading Beekeeping Literature:** Read books or articles on beekeeping to stay informed about best practices.
- **Networking with Other Beekeepers:** Join local beekeeping associations and attend meetings to share knowledge and experiences.
- **Preparing Frames and Foundation:** Assemble and prepare frames and foundation for the upcoming season.
- **Checking for Dead Bees:** Remove any dead bees from the hive entrance to ensure proper ventilation.

## Member Spotlight

### Steve Clutter



1. Where do you live? Medina, OH, near Chippewa Lake
2. What got you interested in beekeeping? I've always seen this as a very interesting hobby but also agriculture. Worked on a dairy farm as a teenager and saw the importance of agriculture. Dairy farming is much harder, but this is a way to participate.
3. How long have you been keeping bees? Only 3 years now but have not had a lot of success yet.

4. How many hives do you have? One as of now. Hoping to split this one come spring.
5. Are you looking to add to your apiary? Yes, overall, I'd like to have 6-10.
6. Do you share your beekeeping hobby with anybody else? Not at this time.
7. What is your most memorable beekeeping moment? Yes, overall, I'd like to have 6-10.
8. What is the best and worst part of beekeeping? The best part is seeing the hive grow. Like to see the daily orientation flights. Worst part, knowing this is an agriculture business and can't control the outcome. A lot of variables to deal with.
9. What is your favorite food to add honey to? Oatmeal.
10. Do you have any tips for beginner beekeepers? Be diligent and intentional on observance and maintenance of the hive.
11. Other than beekeeping, do you have any other hobbies? Martial arts, been training for 20 years or so. Another hobby that you don't get good at fast, takes time. Adventure motorcycle riding and camping.
12. What do/did you do for a living? I am a Professional Land Surveyor. This is what has partly drawn me to compile the fly zone map for the club. If anyone would like to add their location, please let me know.

## Preparing for swarm season

*By Clint Allen*

As the weather warms up and flowers begin to bloom, beekeepers know that swarm season is just around the corner. Swarming is a natural process where a single colony splits into two or more distinct colonies. While it can be an exciting time, it also requires careful preparation and management. Here are some essential tasks to help you get ready for swarm season.

Building swarm traps is an effective way to catch swarming bees before they leave your property. According to Thomas D. Seeley, an expert in honeybee behavior, the ideal swarm trap should have a volume of about 40 liters (approximately 10 gallons) and an entrance size of about 2 square inches<sup>1</sup>. You can build your own traps using simple materials like wooden boxes or old hive bodies. Place these traps in strategic locations around your apiary, such as near trees or other elevated spots. Make sure to bait the traps with a swarm lure or a few drops of lemongrass oil to attract the bees.

Regular hive inspections are crucial during swarm season. Look for signs of swarming, such as queen cells or an overcrowded hive. If you notice these signs, it might be time to split the hive. Splitting involves dividing a strong colony into two or more smaller colonies. This can help prevent swarming and increase your overall hive count. Make sure each split has enough bees, brood, and resources to thrive.

Bees need plenty of space to expand their colony. Ensure that your hives have enough room by adding extra supers or brood boxes as needed. This will give the bees more space to store honey and raise brood, reducing the likelihood of swarming. Keep an eye on the hive's population and add more space as necessary.

A healthy queen is essential for a thriving colony. During your inspections, check the queen's health and productivity. Look for a solid brood pattern and ensure she is laying eggs consistently. If you notice any issues, consider replacing the queen with a new one. A strong, healthy queen can help keep the colony stable and less prone to swarming.

Drones, or male bees, play a role in swarming behavior. Too many drones can increase the likelihood of swarming. Monitor the drone population in your hives and consider using drone comb to manage their

numbers. Removing excess drones can help maintain a balanced hive and reduce swarming tendencies.

Maintaining detailed records of your hive inspections and management practices is essential. Note any signs of swarming, queen health, and hive splits. This information can help you track patterns and make informed decisions in the future. Good record-keeping can also help you identify which hives are more prone to swarming and require extra attention.

Swarm season requires constant vigilance. Regularly check your hives and swarm traps to ensure everything is in order. Be prepared to act quickly if you notice signs of swarming. The more proactive you are, the better you can manage your bees and prevent unwanted swarms.

## From Around the Web

### Club Winter Losses Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/878RGZS>

### Penn State researchers equip thousands of honeybees with tiny QR codes for science

<https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/penn-state-bee-research-study-qr-codes/#:~:text=Scientists%20glued%20teeny%20tiny%20QR,track%20the%20bees'%20travel%20habits.>

### LEARN SEASONAL STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE VARROA MITE MANAGEMENT

<https://www.veto-pharma.com/>

### OSBA Decal Contest

OSBA has had decals made in the past like the “SAVE THE HONEY BEE.” This year, we will be holding a design contest that will be promoted through this year on our website and social media. The deadline to enter is Saturday, March 15th, 2025.

The winner will receive an OSBA shirt, a handful of their custom decals to give-away, and their photo on the OSBA

website ~ <https://ohiostatebeekeepers.org/> and our Facebook page. The 2” diameter decals will be available to members for a donation to OSBA.

<https://ohiostatebeekeepers.org/decal-design-contest/>

### Severe and Sudden Losses of Managed Honey Bees Across the Nation

<https://www.beeculture.com/severe-and-sudden-losses-of-managed-honey-bees-across-the-nation/>

## Looking for help!

The club is looking to have a member assist or back up our current webmaster. If you are interested in helping, please let one of the Board Members or Directors know.

## 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. Did you know that the picture at the top of this newsletter is from the club bee yard? It was taken at dusk on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## References & Citations

<sup>1</sup>Seeley, T. D. (2010). *Honeybee Democracy (First)*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

*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 [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: \_\_\_\_\_



### MCBA member bee resource application

If you would like to be included on a list of available resources for our beginner class, and to be posted on the MCBA website, please complete the following form and return to:

[Shari.Baker.MCBA@gmail.com](mailto:Shari.Baker.MCBA@gmail.com) or mail to  
Medina Beekeepers Attn: Resource List  
PO Box 1353  
Medina, OH 44258

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Apiary Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: (general geographic area - Medina, Lodi, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like members to contact you: \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_ Text \_\_\_\_\_ Email

Please provide contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is your apiary registered with the state: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

What is your state apiary number: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your queen certificate number: \_\_\_\_\_ Please supply a copy of your current Queen

Certificate with this application.

What resources do you have available? Check all that apply

\_\_\_\_\_ Queens \_\_\_\_\_ Packages \_\_\_\_\_ Nucs on deep frames \_\_\_\_\_ Nucs on medium frames

Were these bees produced in Ohio? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, where were they produced? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to mentor new beekeepers that purchase your resources? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, and you have not done so, please complete a Mentoring Application form. Mentoring is NOT a requirement. (Link to mentoring application)

## Medina County Beekeepers Association

### Mentee Information

The purpose of the Mentor-Mentee program is to connect experienced beekeepers with those new to beekeeping for the purpose of teaching and learning. To be eligible, mentees must be in good standing with MCBA and regularly attend association meetings. Please complete the following form and return to: [Shari.Baker.MCBA@gmail.com](mailto:Shari.Baker.MCBA@gmail.com) or mail to

Medina Beekeepers Attn: Mentoring  
PO Box 1353  
Medina, OH 44258

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Contact Information: Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you prefer to communicate with your mentor? Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Text \_\_\_\_\_

When can you meet with your mentor? Weekdays \_\_\_\_\_ Weekends \_\_\_\_\_ AM \_\_\_\_\_ PM \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to meet with your mentor at your mentor's apiary? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

What is your immediate beekeeping learning goal? Basic Beekeeping \_\_\_\_\_ Queen Rearing \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

If other, what do you wish to learn? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you currently own your own bees? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_. If not, when do you plan to acquire bees? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you reviewed and agree with the MCBA's Mentor-Mentees expectations? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_.

### **If you don't currently have bees, stop here.**

If you have bees, please supply a copy of your state apiary registration and registration number: \_\_\_\_\_.

Is your apiary located at the above address? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_. If no, please either give the address of your apiary below, or give the closest road intersection and the city/township name:

Address of apiary: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Township: \_\_\_\_\_

OR Intersection of \_\_\_\_\_ road, and \_\_\_\_\_ road in the City/Township of: \_\_\_\_\_.

How many hives do you currently have? \_\_\_\_\_ Nucs? \_\_\_\_\_.

Please describe the varroa management plan that you currently have in place: \_\_\_\_\_

If there is any other information that you would like to add, please add it here. Feel free to use the backside if you need more room. \_\_\_\_\_

## Medina County Beekeepers Association

### Mentor Application

The purpose of the Mentor-Mentee program is to connect experienced beekeepers with those new to beekeeping for the purpose of teaching and learning. To be eligible, mentors must be in good standing with MCBA and regularly attend association meetings. Please complete the following form and return to: [Shari.Baker.MCBA@gmail.com](mailto:Shari.Baker.MCBA@gmail.com) or mail to

Medina Beekeepers Attn: Mentoring

PO Box 1353

Medina, OH 44258

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Contact Information: Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you prefer to communicate with your mentee? Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Text \_\_\_\_\_

When can you schedule to meet with your mentee? Weekdays \_\_\_\_\_ Weekends \_\_\_\_\_ AM \_\_\_\_\_ PM \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to meet with your mentee at the mentee's apiary? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

How many mentees are you willing to mentor? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your apiary located at the above address? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no. If no, please either give the address of your apiary below, or give the closest road intersection and the city/township name:

Address of apiary: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Township: \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Intersection of \_\_\_\_\_ road, and \_\_\_\_\_ road in the City/Township of:

\_\_\_\_\_.

Please provide a copy of your state apiary registration and number: \_\_\_\_\_.

How many years have you been an active beekeeper, keeping your own bees? \_\_\_\_\_.

How many hives do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ Nucs? \_\_\_\_\_.

Please describe the varroa management plan that you currently have in place: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you reviewed and agreed with the MCBA's Mentor/Mentee Expectations? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_.

If there's any other information that you'd like to add, please add it here: