



IBA Mentor Group Guidelines- 2023

Purpose

- To provide more focused, individualized, and practical training to current/future beekeepers.
- To provide returning mentees with opportunities to hone their acquired knowledge and skills with new beekeepers while working on advanced topics and skills with program leaders.
- To develop the future leadership of the mentor program and the club.
- This program is not designed for sideline or commercial beekeeping, it is designed to help you learn to raise healthy bees.

Roles and Responsibilities

Program Leaders

- Reminder - our program leaders are giving their time freely.
 - Our program leaders are committed to your development and the local beekeeping community.
 - Our program leaders are volunteers and not compensated in any way.
 - Our program leaders also have jobs, families, bees, and other responsibilities that supersede commitments to the club.
- Role
 - To provide direction and structure for the Mentorship Program that supports both the Mentors as well as the Mentees.
 - To promote consistency throughout the program.
 - Selection of program Mentors and Mentees.
- Responsibilities
 - Provide support for individual mentors.
 - Teach advanced skills and techniques through home yard mentoring or organized workshops.
 - Provide peer support for mentors to help them better assist their mentees.
 - Provide advanced workshop opportunities for mentors.
 - Develop hands-on curriculum to provide guidance for mentors and ensure consistency in skill development for both mentors and mentees.
 - Provide defined skills checklists for Mentors to evaluate Mentees consistently.

Mentors

- Reminder - our mentors are giving their time freely.
 - Our mentors are committed to your development and the local beekeeping community.
 - Our mentors are volunteers and not compensated in any way.
 - Our mentors also have jobs, families, bees, and other responsibilities that supersede commitments to the club.
- Role
 - To provide individual support for the Mentee, assess comprehension and skill, and function as a first point of contact within the Mentor Program.
- Responsibilities
 - Provide timely feedback.
 - Return calls and texts as soon as individual schedules allow but should be within 24-48 hours.
 - Review FB posts 2-3 times per week and provide feedback.
 - Provide in-hive training for assigned Mentee, to be at mentor's apiary or mentor's choice.
 - Complete evaluations of assigned Mentee, as defined by the program leaders.



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Mentees

- Pre-requisites
 - Must be current member and in good standing.
 - Must pass online test for basic identification.
 - Must attend IBA Bee School (not optional)
 - Must submit a request to be in the mentor group to golBA@yahoo.com by the Friday after the April meeting.
 - Request must include:
 - Name
 - Phone number
 - Home location, (city, state)
 - Hive location(s), (city, state)
 - # Of colonies (2 minimum)
 - Facebook ID
- Role
 - To actively participate in the education and mentorship opportunities provided, applying the education and skills attained to become a better beekeeper.
 - To promote the sustainability of the mentor program by actively applying the club motto.
- Responsibilities
 - Must use Langstroth 8-10 frame equipment.
 - **Recommendation:** use standard wood equipment, others can be problematic with interchangeability and availability. This is what we know and what we can help you with.
 - Must start the season with two colonies.
 - **Recommendation:** get two nucs from the same provider of the same type. Different bees can do different things at the same time and make it harder to understand if there is an issue. This is what we know and what we can help you with.
 - Having more than one colony of the same type promotes sustainable beekeeping:
 - It provided a comparative colony for assessment.
 - It provides an additional queen, brood, stores, etc. within your own apiary.
 - Must utilize our Facebook platform for Mentor group communications (this is not optional)
 - Must perform weekly inspections for your two colonies (to be complete and submitted every 7-10 days)
 - Submit completed inspection sheets to your mentor for review and support within 24 hours of inspection.
 - Mentors are only required to provide feedback for two colonies.
 - If inspections are not posted in a timely manner, timely advice cannot be provided.
 - Three submittals per month are required.
 - If inspections are repeatedly late, this can be grounds for dismissal from the program.
 - **Recommendation:** finding a “Bee buddy” in the club can help make apiary tasks more effective, efficient, and fun!
 - Must perform Varroa Mite monitoring every 3-4 weeks (alcohol wash)
- Study Material (required reading for the mentor group)
 - [*The Backyard Beekeeper, 4th Edition: An Absolute Beginner's Guide to Keeping Bees in Your Yard and Garden*](#) by Kim Flottum
 - There will be regular reading assignments and online testing. These are open book, as we care more about if you know where to find crucial information than we do about memorization.
- Free Download – also located in the IBA Facebook page “Files” section



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- [Tools for Varroa Management](#) by the Honey Bee Health Coalition
- Questions
 - Submit all questions via the mentor group Facebook page to help everyone in the group learn from it. If you have the question, someone else does as well.
 - Text or phone your mentor for emergencies, a follow up post describing the situation can help others learn to be proactive vs reactive to prevent it from becoming an emergency for others in the future.
 - **Queen events are emergencies**, if you have queen cells you should be having a conversation with your mentor as soon as possible.
- Hands-on learning
 - Work with your individual mentor in their apiary to learn how to apply the information learned.
 - **Recommendation:** Try to collaborate with your mentor at least once a month to help see different perspectives and management techniques throughout the season. Find a bee buddy for regular inspections.
 - Knowing what to do and how to do it can be two vastly different things.
- At Meetings
 - Participate in club meetings and/or committees, help us go in a direction that helps you and the club.
 - Attend at least six monthly IBA meetings.
 - Watch videos for any/all meetings you are unable to attend in person.
 - Slides will be available to download after the meetings to review.
 - Participate in polls and surveys to help us make sure we are meeting your needs.
 - Present short form topics at general membership meetings as requested.

Schedule

- Mentors to be announce by: **04/12/2023**
- Online request and test to be submitted by: **04/14/2023**
- Mentees to be selected by: **04/22/2023**

Goals for Successful Beekeeping

- Read, read, read.
- Consider your sources when reading and watching online content, there is a significant amount of bad advice circulating Facebook, YouTube, and various blogs.
- Attend meetings.
- Attend schools and workshops.
- Ask questions.
 - This works best when you research the topic first, then discuss findings and ask for clarifications.
- Each participant should find a “Bee Buddy” within the group
 - This peer support enhances evaluation and critical thinking skills necessary to be successful.



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Proficiency goals/expectations for the first year:

Identification

- Reading frames
 - Biology
 - Worker, drone, and queen
 - Eggs, larva, pupa (worker, drone, and queen)
 - **Must be able to see eggs** (no exceptions), using any tool needed to do so.
 - Queen cups vs queen cells
 - Emergency vs swarm cells
 - Orientation flights vs. swarming
 - Congestion vs crowding
 - Comb and stores
 - Nectar vs honey
 - Pollen vs bee bread
 - Comb replacement, when do I need to do it?

Hive management

- Feeding
 - What, why, when, and how.
- Comb rotation for drawing foundation, brood expansion, and honey production.
- Brood breaks/splits.
 - What, why, when, and how.
- Queen introduction, replacement, and marking.

IPM

- Identification
 - Varroa monitoring.
 - How to identify other pests and pathogens.
- Understanding economic thresholds.
- Brood Breaks.
- Drone Frames.
- Queen replacement (post-solstice).
- Treatment hierarchy, understand how to stay as low as possible.
 - Cultural.
 - Mechanical.
 - Organic Treatments.
 - Synthetic treatments.

Harvesting techniques

- Honey
- Pollen
- Propolis

Winterization strategy pros and cons

- Top hat vs stove pipe methods



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Advanced Goals/Expectations beyond year one

Increase

- Understanding pro/cons of different split methods.
- Resource hive optimization, managing as an apiary vs. individual colonies.
- Grafting.
- Queen evaluation, selection, and replacement.

IPM

- Advanced strategies.
- Microscopy for Nosema and tracheal mite identification.

Mentoring

- Supporting new beekeepers.
- Presenting at general meetings.
- Presenting at bee school.
- Hosting a mentor group event.

Disclaimer

- Participation in the mentor program is based on annual application and is solely at the discretion of the mentor(s) and program leader(s). Failure to meet defined expectations, helping to further the purpose of the program, or conflict with the mentor(s) or program leader(s) can be grounds for dismissal at any time. This is an at will program for all participants.