



# IBA Mentor Group Guidelines

## Purpose

- To provide more focused, individualized, and practical training to current/future beekeepers.
- This is not intended to serve as a commercial beekeeper's training program.
- To develop the future leadership of the IBA.

## Prerequisites

- Pass online test for basic identification
- Attendance at IBA Bee School for new mentees (not optional)
- Current member and in good standing
- Submit a request to be in the mentor group to [goIBA@yahoo.com](mailto:goIBA@yahoo.com) by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in April
  - Request must include:
    - Name
    - Phone number
    - Hive location (city,state)
    - Facebook ID
  - New mentor lists will be posted on the club Facebook page by the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday

## Participant Expectations

- Weekly hive log submissions to Mentor(s)
  - Minimum 3x per month
- Varroa Mite testing every 3-4 weeks (alcohol wash)
- Attend at least 6 monthly IBA meetings
  - Watch video for any/all meetings unable to attend in person
- Study Material (this is required reading for the mentor group)
  - Required purchase or checkout
    - [Storey's Guide to Keeping Honey Bees, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition](#) by Malcom Sanford and Richard Bonney
    - Free Download – also located in the IBA Facebook page "Files" section
      - [Tools for Varroa Management](#) by the Honey Bee Health Coalition
- Must have at least two colonies before June 1<sup>st</sup> (see Jerry or Greg if this is an issue), the second can be just a resource hive.
  - This promotes sustainable beekeeping:
    - Provide comparative colony for assessment
    - Provide additional queen, brood, stores, etc. within your own apiary
- Must utilize our Facebook platform for Mentor group communications (this is not optional)
- Questions
  - All questions should be submitted via the mentor group Facebook page to help everyone in the group learn from it. If you have the question, someone else likely does as well.
  - Text or phone your mentor for emergencies.
- Online testing over reading and practical material
- Active participation in the club
  - Participation in club meetings and/or committees
    - Set up/tear down
  - "Bee buddy" for club members not in the mentor program
  - Quarterly presentations of short form topics at general membership meetings.



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## Mentor Expectations

- Please keep in mind that our mentors are giving their time freely
  - Our mentors are committed to your development
  - They are not compensated in any way
  - This is not their job
- Timely feedback
  - Calls and texts will be responded to as soon as possible
  - Posts will be reviewed 2-3 times per week
- Mentors will coordinate group meetings at a single apiary for live examples, demos, and hands-on
  - Target frequency: 3-4 per season, topics are typically based on seasonal needs
  - Location will be mentor's apiary or mentor's choice

## Goals for Successful Beekeeping

- Read, read, read
- Consider your sources when reading and watching online content, there is just as much bad advice being communicated as good advice.
- 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

## Proficiency goals/expectations for the first year:

- Identification
  - Bee Anatomy
    - Worker, drone, and queen
    - Eggs, larva, pupa (worker, drone, and queen)
    - Queen cups vs queen cells
      - Emergency vs swarm cells
    - Orientation flights vs. swarming
  - Frames
    - Nectar vs honey
    - Pollen vs bee bread
    - Congestion vs crowding
- Hive management
  - Feeding
    - Carbohydrates
      - Different syrup mixtures
    - Protein
      - Pollen and substitutes
  - Comb rotation for drawing foundation, brood expansion, and honey production
  - Brood breaks/splits
    - Why, when, and how
    - Queen re-introduction/replacement



# IBA Mentor Group Guidelines

## Pest and disease evaluation and treatment

- Understanding economic thresholds
- Indicators
- Usual suspects
  - Varroa Mites
  - SHB
  - Nosema
  - Chalkbrood
  - Tracheal mites
- IPM Control Methods, conditional requirements, and frequencies
  - Brood Breaks
  - Drone Frames
  - Queen replacement (post-solstice)
  - Organic Treatments
  - Synthetic treatments
- Harvesting techniques
  - Honey
  - Pollen
  - Propolis
- Winterization strategies
  - Top hat vs stove pipe methods
  - Winter feeding

## Advanced Goals/Expectations beyond year one

- Increase
  - Understanding pro/cons of different split methods
  - Resource hive optimization, managing as an apiary vs a hive
  - Grafting
  - Queen selection and replacement
- IPM
  - Advanced strategies
  - Microscopy
  - Dissection
- 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. Failure to meet defined expectations or helping to further the purpose of the program can be grounds for dismissal.