



The Honey Bee Times

March 2025



Approximately 70 were in attendance at the first class this year. Included in that number were over 40 new class registrations along with folks that attended the one day class in the fall.

The March meeting will be on the 11th in building 25 at the Fairgrounds. There will be examinations of dead-outs, so if your interested, bring your hive that didn't make it through the winter for analysis.



Upcoming Events

World bee Day will be two days during the week (no Saturday event for the general public) from May 14-15 this year. Volunteers are always needed and it's great fun seeing the kids' eyes light up as they learn about bees.

The Cuyahoga County Fair will be held August 11-16 this year. Have some really nice honey that you extracted this year? Set it aside to enter in the fair.

Watch this newsletter for more information as these events get closer.

This month in the bee yard

We finally broke out of the deep freeze in the middle of February and the bees were out doing cleansing flights (happiness is seeing yellow spots on the snow and windows.) The Maples are usually one of the first big pollen producers and they should start around the 15th of March. Watch the weather and be ready to do a quick check for stores by hefting the hive to see how much it weighs. Have some fondant ready or a candy board to place on top of the hive, this is a critical time of the year and we lose more hives now than any other time of year. 50 degree plus days will be OK to pop the top off to do a quick inspection, and but it's still too early to be pulling any frames for inspection, but if we get some 65-70 degree days, then check for brood and move any frames of honey to the edges of the brood, If your bees didn't make it, bring the empty hives in and see if you can determine why, but at least clean the hive out, removing any dead bees so that they don't start getting moldy. If you treat with Oxalic acid, do three treatments 7-10 days apart using vapor or a dribble.

GCBA Merchandise is available

Check out the GCBA Store at the link below for cool threads that will have you looking great and supporting the GCBA. You can find it on our website under the "More" tab or just click on the link in this article. Several styles are available to compliment your individual look from tees to hoodies.

<https://rycosportslw.com/businesses/greater-cleveland-bee-keepers-association/>



March '26 Honey Recipe

Brown Butter Honey Cake

Recipe by Chef Charles Heaton

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1 cup honey
3 large eggs
1/4 tsp. almond extract
1/2 cup sour cream
Powdered sugar, for serving
.

Procedure:

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Line a 9" round cake pan with parchment, spray with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and baking soda.

Heat a small, sauté pan, add butter and heat to caramelize milk solids until nutty and fragrant. Pour brown butter into a heatproof container to stop cooking and allow to cool.

(Editors note– Milk solids are the part of butter that don't liquify when melted.)

In a bowl, using a hand mixer, beat honey, adding eggs, one at a time, beating well after each, then add almond extract. Add browned butter and all milk solids.

Add dry ingredients and mix until just combined.

Add sour cream and blend until just combined.

Pour batter into prepared cake pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean, 30-35 minutes. Let cool.

Serve with a dusting of powdered sugar and a dollop of whipped cream.

Enjoy!



Hospitality Corner

Speaking of tasty treats, our meetings are a great way to meet other beekeepers and for socializing. Members are encouraged to bring treats to share. Thanks to Jan Petrek for the coffee at every meeting and those who bring in the treats for our meetings.

New Varroa Treatments

Varroxxsan

Varroxxsan strips are a slow-release oxalic acid treatment designed to control Varroa destructor mites in honeybee colonies. They come as flexible fiberboard strips impregnated with oxalic acid dihydrate, a naturally occurring organic compound that's toxic to varroa mites on contact.

Oxalic acid dihydrate is the active component. It kills varroa mites by direct contact with the mite. Strips are folded and placed between brood frames where bees frequently walk. As bees move around and contact the strip, oxalic acid is slowly released into the hive environment. Mites get killed when they come into contact with treated bees or strip surfaces.

The fiberboard slowly releases oxalic acid over 42–56 days (about 6–8 weeks), covering several mite life cycles and increasing kill impact. Because this method relies on bee movement and contact, it primarily hits phoretic mites (those riding on adult bees) rather than mites hidden under capped brood. Unlike some treatments such as Formic Acid, Varroxxsan does not require specific temperature ranges – it works across diverse climates and during honey flows (supers in place), according to labels. Studies and product info report no detectable residues in honey or wax and no impact on pH or nutrient content of honey when used correctly.

Independent and manufacturer-reported studies show average efficacy around ~96–98% when used according to instructions. Some guidance notes 92–98% range depending on conditions and bee activity. This high efficacy makes Varroxxsan a strong option for ongoing varroa management, especially when used as part of an integrated pest management (IPM) plan (e.g., mite monitoring, brood breaks, other treatments).

In use, the strips folded over brood frames so bees contact them easily. Typically, one strip per 2.5 brood frames is recommended; adjust number based on hive size. The strips are left in the hive 42–56 days and remove promptly to avoid overexposure. They can be removed at that time, but you may find that the bees have been doing that for you. Varroxxsan can be used **year-round**, but optimal mite control aligns with periods of bee activity. Some beekeepers focus spring/fall or summer when mite pressure peaks. In most cases the product label allows use even with honey supers installed, but best practice is to follow local guidelines and market requirements.

Actual field use by beekeepers report significant mite drops soon after installation and lower mite counts at follow-up checks. Because the strips rely on contact, results may vary if bees chew up strips or if mite levels are very high – some beekeepers use fast-acting treatments first, then Varroxxsan for maintenance. Occasional comb disruption under strips is also reported with comb not built or removed under the strips, but the bees rebuild around treated surfaces.

Varroxxsan is best used as part of an overall mite management strategy, including regular mite monitoring (sticky boards/alcohol washes.) and rotating treatment classes to prevent resistance,

Because oxalic acid only contacts phoretic mites, in heavy infestations you *might* combine with other methods for more rapid knockdown.

(Continued from page 4)

Norroa

Norroa is a new product with a novel mode of operation. Until now, most varroa treatments relied on chemical agents to kill and control varroa. Some of these were relatively safe to use, such as the Oxalic acid contained in the Varroxxsan strips and commonly used by beekeepers as vapor or as a sugar syrup dribble. Varroa has started to show resistance to some of the other treatments as well.

Norroa has a completely different way of working. It uses RNAi technology. It works specifically on varroa by stopping the production of offspring. To accomplish this, it is delivered in the hive as part of a sugar syrup that is dispensed from pre-made plastic pouches that are placed directly on the brood frames. The bees take the syrup and use it to make brood food that is fed to the developing larvae. Norroa targets a specific varroa mite protein that stops the production of mite offspring. This allows the pupa to develop normally into a healthy adult bee.

Like any of the other mite treatments, timing is important. While there is no danger to others, it's best to place the treatments when there are no supers so that the treatment is kept in the brood nest where it does the most good. Early spring before any significant nectar flow is the best time and the bees will usually empty the pouches quickly and store it in the brood area. Once the Pouches are empty, they can be removed and regular hive supering can be used.

The product remains effective for around eighteen weeks. It doesn't lose effectiveness, rather it just gets used up. There are no temperature restriction limits on its use either. It can be used with other mite treatments such as formic acid and oxalic acid, generally with Norroa being used in the spring and the others used in the fall. Manufacturers' tests have shown increased winter survival with this regimen.

Both products are new to the market and are usually more expensive than plain oxalic acid vapor or dribble, but the pricing should eventually come down. The Varroxxsan strips are a new way of delivering the chemical while the Norroa product represents a new and novel approach to controlling varroa.

Here is a quick cost analysis for these two products plus Formic Pro.

- ◆ Norroa- \$18 to \$22 per deep super treated
- ◆ Varroxxsan- \$6 to \$8 per deep super treated
- ◆ Formic Pro- \$7 to \$10 per hive treated

Note- These costs are based upon one suppliers retail prices. Regular oxalic treatments were not analyzed due to a wide variety of pricing and application methods (vapor vs. dribble). Also there are many other products used for varroa control, but these would be the ones mostly available and used by hobbyist beekeepers.

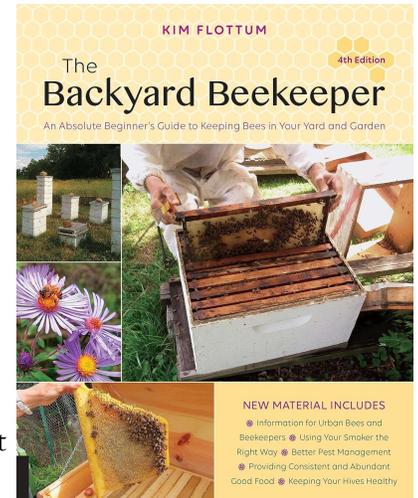
Another factor not included was the need for protective and application equipment. Also the time necessary to perform some of the treatments per manufacturers recommendations.

Like any other facet of beekeeping, there are bound to be strong opinions formed on what is best for the bees and individuals need to decide which is best for them. This article simply puts forward options, new and old for everyone to consider.

Beekeepers Bookshelf

"The Backyard Beekeeper, 4th Edition" by Kim Flottum is a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the world of beekeeping. The book covers everything from setting up a hive and understanding bee biology to practical tips for managing colonies and harvesting honey. Flottum's writing is clear and engaging, making even complex topics easy to understand for beginners.

One of the standout features of this edition is its updated content, which addresses recent developments in bee health, equipment innovations, and sustainable practices. The author provides detailed photographs and step-by-step instructions, ensuring readers feel confident as they embark on their beekeeping journey. The book also includes troubleshooting advice for common issues, making it a valuable resource for both new and experienced beekeepers.



Overall, "The Backyard Beekeeper, 4th Edition" is a must-have for anyone interested in backyard beekeeping. It strikes a perfect balance between practical guidance and in-depth information, making it suitable for hobbyists and enthusiasts alike. Whether you are just starting out or looking to improve your skills, this book offers reliable wisdom and inspiration.

Beekeeping Podcasts

Here's a list of **beekeeping-related podcasts** – great for hobbyists, commercial beekeepers, pollinator lovers, and anyone curious about bees and beekeeping practice:

Two Bees in a Podcast – Educational series by the University of Florida Honey Bee Research & Extension Lab (science-based, practical, and research-oriented).

Honey Bee Obscura Podcast – Short, plain-talk conversations about honey bees and beekeeping with host Jim Tew.

Beekeeping Today Podcast – Weekly show with news, insights, and interviews for both beginners and experienced beekeepers.

Bee Love Beekeeping... presented by Mann Lake – Fun, informative podcast with stories, interviews, tips, and bee-yard experiences.

Beekeeping For Newbees® – Aimed at new and aspiring beekeepers with practical guidance and real-world hive advice.

Beekeeping - Short and Sweet – Bite-sized episodes for the inquisitive beekeeper with a shorter attention span.

Beekeeping at FiveApple – Sustainable beekeeping talk and tips from the Appalachian mountains.

The Hive Jive – Beekeeping conversation, education, training, and entertainment.

Hive Mind (the podcast for Beekeepers by a Beekeeper) – Older but focused series offering beekeeping insights.

New Apiary Registration Process

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) transitioned to a fully online registration system, with accommodation for those without internet access.

To register your apiaries online, please open the [registration form here](#)

If you would like a paper registration mailed to you, please contact us at apiary@agri.ohio.gov or call 614-728-6373. If your apiary was registered last year, you should receive an email with the link to the registration portal.

Recent law Changes-

The previous state budget bill, HB 96, made several changes to the Apiary Program, effective during the 2026 renewal process.

Apiary Registration:

- The \$5 registration fee has been removed.
- Beekeepers are still required by Ohio law to register their apiary locations with ODA.
- ODA will transition to an online registration system, while making accommodations for individuals that lack online connectivity.

Queen Rearing/Packaged Bee Sales:

- Queen rearing operations will be required to pay a \$50.00 queen rearing apiary certification fee. This fee will cover all queen rearing locations under the individual's control.
- HB 96 also has created a compliance agreement option for queen rearing apiaries who agree to implement best management practices within their operation to reduce the risk of spreading serious bee disease.

ODA will continue to maintain oversight of the apiary inspection program, registrations, and queen certification, in collaboration with county inspectors to enforce registration requirements.

This is an excerpt from the most recent annual Apiary Inspection Report from the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

2025 OHIO APIARY SUMMARY										
COUNTY	INSPECTOR	APIARIES	APIARIES INSPECTED	COLONIES INSPECTED	AFB	EFB	CB	NOS	VAR	SHB
CUYAHOGA	BARTOSH	299	128	405	0	0	0	1	92	94

WORLD BEE DAY

Field trip



Celebrating the bees and other pollinators!

May 14-15, 2026
Thursday - Friday
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Cuyahoga County
Fairgrounds Bee Barn
19201 E Bagley Road
Middleburg Heights
Ohio 44130
Honey Bee
Passport
 Get your Honey Bee Passport stamped when you visit the Bee Observation Room and the Educational Stations.

Honey Bee Educational Day for Students

World Bee Day celebration raises awareness on the essential role bees and other pollinators play in keeping people and the planet healthy, and on the many challenges they face today. The United Nations designated May 20 as World Bee Day thanks to the efforts of the Government of Slovenia with the support of Apimondia.

-  Teaching Future Generation Importance of Honey Bees
-  Career in Beekeeping through Research and Science
-  Learn How Honey Bees Improve Our Agricultural/Food
-  Educational Stations; Fruits, Vegetables, and Honey
-  Honey Bee Observation Room

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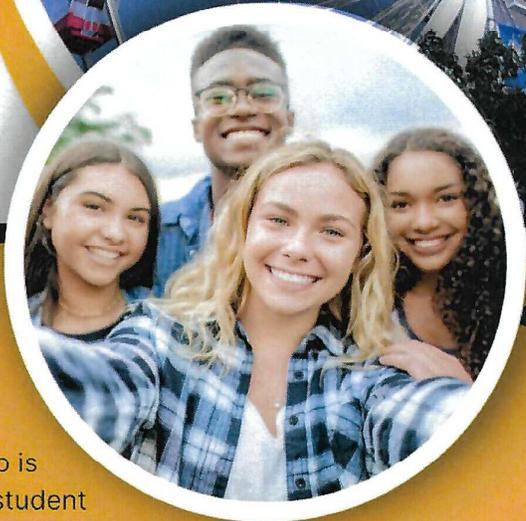
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We pay \$100/ bus of 25 students or more. Contact Nicky Sulandari at collaborativechambers@gmail.com or call (440) 502-9506.



Scholarship Program 2026



Cuyahoga County Agricultural Society Scholarship

The Cuyahoga County Agricultural Society Scholarship is available to any high school senior or current college student applying for the first time, with a preference for residents of Cuyahoga County. Applicants must be enrolling in a post-secondary, two- or four-year accredited program or technical school. Candidates should have participated in the Cuyahoga County Fair as an exhibitor or in a county fair youth program for at least one year prior to applying. These scholarships are a one-time award and cannot be reapplied for if previously received. Applications must be submitted online AT WWW.CUYFAIR.COM. Deadline for applications is 3:00 PM on July 1, 2026.

Jim Mikesina Law Enforcement Scholarship

A \$1,000 scholarship is available for residents of Cuyahoga County who are seeking a career in any first responder field. This encompasses professions in law enforcement, firefighting, paramedicine, and emergency medicine. Applications can be submitted online at WWW.CUYFAIR.COM. Please note that the deadline for applications is 3:00 PM on July 1, 2026.

Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau/Cuyahoga County Fair Partnership Scholarship

The Cuyahoga County Fair is offering a \$1,000 scholarship for the 2025-2026 school year. Applicants must have participated in the Cuyahoga County Fair as an exhibitor or in a youth program for at least one year. This one-time scholarship, in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau, is not available to previous recipients. Applications can be submitted online at WWW.CUYAHOGA.OFBF.ORG, with a deadline of July 1, 2026.



Applications can be made online.
Deadline July 1, 2026 @ 3pm

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Director: Charles Heaton, charlesheaton@mac.com

Hospitality Coordinator: Jan Petrek, jpetrek@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Neal Klabunde, beesnplants@dirty-fingernails.com

Fair Committee Chair: Rolly Platten

Mission Statement

GCBA Goal: The Greater Cleveland Beekeepers Association supports, educates, and connects both beekeepers and aspiring beekeepers alike through monthly meetings and classes.