



The Honey Bee Times

November 2025



October's meeting featured our own Dave Borling talking about winter preparation for your bees. While there are many ways to prepare your hives (insulation, number of supers, etc.,) the main points to consider are stores, ventilation, low varroa counts, and moisture control.

Starting at the bottom board, if you're using screened bottom boards, the insert should be in place. Next a mouse guard over the entrance to keep the critters out. If you want to use an entrance reducer, the opening should face up to prevent the entrance from being clogged with dead bees. The brood box should be next, and the frames should be arranged with honey frames on the outside and any brood and some empty frames in the middle to allow the bees space to cluster. Any boxes above the brood box should have frames of honey directly above the cluster area since the bees will naturally move up to access food and not so much move side to side.

It never hurts to prepare for emergency feeding later in the winter. This can take the form of fondant or sugar in the form of candy boards. If you want to use fondant, placing a 1/2 to 3/4 inch shim next will help. Candy boards go next and they don't necessarily need this shim, but it doesn't hurt. Next up is a "quilt box," not really a quilt, but it can act as one, insulating the top of the hive as well as absorbing and venting out excess moisture generated by the bees. The box for the quilt box is generally the size of a shallow super and has window screen on the bottom and holes on the side for ventilation. The quilt box can contain rags or wood shavings for the insulation, just be sure not to cover the vent holes. Weller Bee supply has a nice video on making candy boards on their website- <https://wellerbeesupply.com/> that shows how to do them.

The November meeting will be held on the 12th and will feature Wes Stein. Wes is a second generation commercial beekeeper from near Wakeman, Ohio. They are running close to 1,200 hives now and he will give us some insight into the world of commercial beekeeping.

Association Elections

Any organization is only as strong as it's leadership, and it's leadership is only as strong as it's membership.

Members in good standing are encouraged to submit their names in November for any of the offices that will be available.

It seems like only yesterday that we were installing package, bringing our hives out of winter, and other spring-time beekeeping chores. Time marches on and December 17th will be our "official" annual meeting. As in the past, this will also be our Christmas party.

After the business part of the meeting, we will have our party with the club providing main dishes. Members are encouraged to bring side dishes and desserts. We will also have some fun games, so make sure plan to attend.

Here is an excerpt from the bylaws of the Greater Cleveland Beekeepers Association (GCBA) A complete version of the bylaws is available on the Association's website under "About."

Article 3: Meetings, Section 3: Annual Meeting

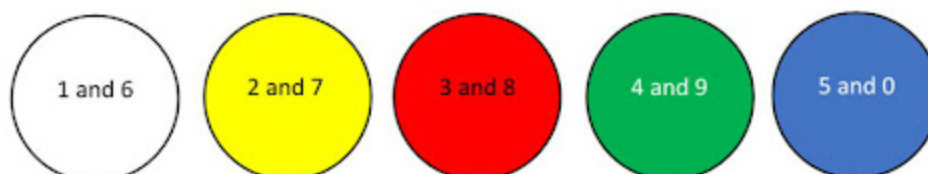
An Annual Meeting of the Membership will be held in December of each year. The purpose of the annual meeting is to:

- *Elect Board Members*
- *Provide members with a state of the organization and financial review*
- *Discuss goals for the coming year*
- *Conduct other necessary GCBA business as appropriate*

What color is your queen?



Years ending in-



Roasted Root Vegetables With A Hint of Honey

Ingredients:

3 pounds Root Vegetables,
12 oz. each Carrots, Parsnips, Sweet Potatoes, Yukon Gold Potatoes
1 small Red Onion
2 oz. Olive Oil
2 oz. Butter, melted
1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 bunch Fresh Parsley, coarsely chopped
2 Tbsp. Fresh Rosemary Leaves coarsely chopped
1-1/2 oz. Honey



Procedure:

1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F.
2. Peel 3 pounds root vegetables, cut into rough 1-inch chunks.
3. Cut red onion into 1-inch chunks. Place the root vegetables and red onion on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and butter, sprinkle with kosher salt and ground black pepper, and toss to evenly coat. Spread out in an even layer.
4. Roast for 30 minutes.
5. Remove the baking sheet from the oven, sprinkle the vegetables with the rosemary, parsley and honey. Toss to combine. Spread back out in an even layer. Continue to roast until the vegetables are tender and caramelized, 10 to 15 minutes more.

Enjoy!

Hospitality Corner

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 brought in the treats for the September meeting.

Tropilaelaps Mites: What Beekeepers Should Know

Tropilaelaps Mites have been an area of concern to European beekeepers for quite a while now. There was a swarm of honeybees discovered on a container ship bound for the USA recently. Thanks to the attention of the crew, and the cooperation of the USDA, NJDA, and Coast Guard, these bees were destroyed. They were found to be infested with the mites. **See the next page for a statement from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.**

If you keep bees or just love learning about nature, you've probably heard about pests that can cause trouble for honey bee colonies. One of the biggest problems—especially in Asia—are Tropilaelaps mites. These tiny bugs are getting a lot of attention lately because they're showing up in more places as people move bees and bee products all over the world.

Tropilaelaps mites are small creatures, similar to the more familiar Varroa, but about one-third the width of Varroa. There are a few species, but the main ones to watch out for are Tropilaelaps clareae and Tropilaelaps mercedesae. They started out bothering Asian honey bees like Apis cerana and Apis dorsata, but now they've learned to live off the Western honey bee (Apis mellifera) too—the type most people keep for honey and pollination.

These mites are reddish-brown, hard to spot, and move really fast. They grow their numbers quickly, going from egg to adult in about a week. The female mites lay their eggs in baby bee cells, and the larvae become their snack. When the bees grow up, the mites look for new places to lay eggs and keep the cycle going. Because Tropilaelaps mites can't hang out on adult bees for long, they need a steady supply of brood (baby bee cells) to survive.

A Tropilaelaps infestation is bad news for any hive. The mites eat the developing bees, which leads to deformed or weak adults who get sick more easily. If there are lots of mites, a colony might shrink or even die off, which is a disaster for honey production and pollination. Some signs you might have a mite problem include patchy brood patterns, holes in the cell covers, and lots of weird-looking bees.

Catching Tropilaelaps mites early helps a lot. Beekeepers should check their hives regularly for mites or any damage. You can use sticky boards under the hive to count mites, or send samples to a lab to figure out which species you've got. These mites are smaller and harder to spot than some other pests, like Varroa mites, so keep your eyes peeled.

Keeping Tropilaelaps mites under control calls for a mix of strategies. Since they can't survive long without brood, removing brood from your colony for a while can help break their life cycle. Some miticides work against Tropilaelaps, but you have to use them carefully to avoid resistance and protect your bees. The best defense is staying alert, monitoring your hives often, and keeping your colonies strong and healthy.

Right now, Tropilaelaps mites are mostly found in Asia, but they could pop up anywhere if biosecurity isn't tight. Quarantining imported bees and gear is a smart move to keep them out. Beekeepers, scientists, and regulators all need to stay informed and act quickly if these mites show up somewhere new.



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PO Box 330
TRENTON NJ 08625-0330

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October 23, 2025

New Jersey Department of Agriculture Collaborates with the United State Department of Agriculture to Mitigate Honey Bee Risk from Container Ship

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA), in partnership with the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA), helped to successfully mitigate the risk of parasitic honey bee mites arriving at the Port of Newark, New Jersey in a swarm of bees on board a container ship.

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) was notified by Customs Border Protection (CBP) Chief Agriculture Specialist of live bees on board a container ship. Prior to arrival at Port Newark-Elizabeth the container ship port call included the ports of Salalah in Oman and India (Mundra and Jawaharlal). The USDA and NJDA State Apiarist provided guidance to the Master Captain of the container ship through communications with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) on procedures to comply with USDA regulations. The vessel was ordered by Coast Guard to remain offshore until remedial safeguarding measures were performed to remove the swarm.

While the container ship was 3,600 miles off the coast of the United States, the swarm of bees were removed and safeguarded in a freezer while onboard the vessel. No brood or comb was present. The container ship provided a report, including pictures, to confirm this. The removal, containment and freezing of the bees prevented new insects from escaping into the environment.

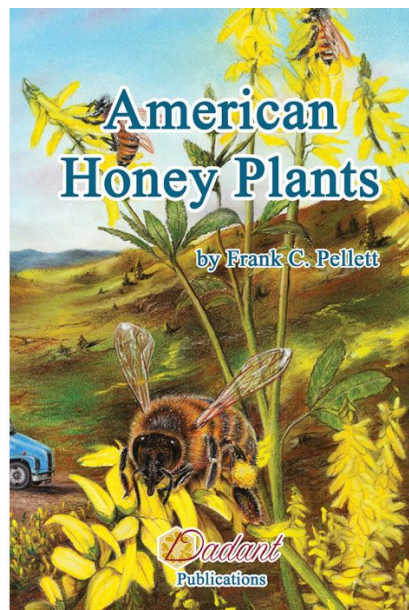
The collected bees were sent to USDA APHIS National Identification Services for official identification. The swarm of bees was confirmed to be *Apis dorsata* Fabricius (Apidae), the giant honey bee. Two types of mites were found on the bees: *Tropilaelaps mercedesae* Delfinado & Baker (Laelapidae) mite and *Kuzinia morsei* (El-Banhawy & Abou-Awad) (Acaridae) mites.

The actions taken by the container ship were in compliance with USDA regulations. The NJDA thanks the USDA, CBP, USCG, and the container ship for their rapid communication and collaboration efforts which quickly mitigated the risk to the honey bee industry.

Beekeepers Book Shelf

If you're into beekeeping or just curious about where honey really comes from, *American Honey Plants* by Frank C. Pellett is a book you'll want to check out. It's been around since the early 1900s and, honestly, people are still talking about it. Whether you're tending hives or just love learning about plants, this book has a lot to offer.

Pellett did his homework—he lists hundreds of different plants that bees love, breaking down their names, where you'll find them, when they bloom, and how good they are for making honey. You don't have to be a scientist to get something out of it, though. Pellett mixes solid facts with real-world tips from his own experience, so it's easy to follow along.



Why It's Great-

Huge Variety: The book is packed with info about tons of plants all across the United States and Canada. That makes it super helpful if you're trying to figure out what's blooming near you and how it might help your bees.

Easy to Read: Despite all the facts and figures, Pellett keeps things pretty straightforward. Whether you're new to beekeeping or have been at it for years, you'll find it useful.

Helpful Pictures: Most editions come with black-and-white photos and drawings so you can actually see what these plants look like. Not the fanciest, but they get the job done.

History Lesson: Flipping through the book is like stepping back in time. You get a feel for what American plants—and beekeeping—looked like a hundred years ago.

Where It Falls Short-

Old Plant Names: Some of the names and scientific terms are a little outdated, so you might need to double-check with modern sources.

Mostly for North America: If you're reading this outside the U.S. or Canada, some of the info won't match your local plants.

Black-and-White Only: The pictures are useful, but sometimes you'll wish they were in color to make identification easier.

American Honey Plants really made its mark. Beekeepers still use it, and you'll see it mentioned in modern books and articles. If you want to understand how bees and plants work together, it's a classic you can't skip.

If you care about bees or want to know more about the plants that make your honey taste amazing, Frank C. Pellett's book is worth a read. Sure, you'll want to pair it with some newer guides, but its practical advice and old-school charm make it a keeper—even after all these years.

This book has been reprinted in it's entirety and is available on the Dadant website.

This Month in the Bee Yard

Looking towards winter, this is the time to take stock of your colonies health and strength, checking stores and feeding if necessary while the temperatures are still relatively mild. Treatment with a microbial product such as Super DFM will help the bees go into winter healthier. Varroa treatments should continue as well.

Feeding with entrance feeders should be avoided instead use an internal frame feeder or place the entrance feeder on top of the inner cover and place an empty super over it.

To insulate or wrap? That's the \$64,000 question and everyone has their own opinions based on experience. First year beekeepers would probably do well to use some form of insulation whether it's a commercially available hive wrap, or insulation board affixed to the outside of the hive. In any case, applying insulation now will help the bees reduce honey consumption on colder nights.

Mouse guards should be in place as the mice start looking for warm places to spend the winter.

Treat for mites!

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/>



Honey Refractometers

A honey refractometer allows you to check three important parameters—moisture content, brix, and baume. With a measuring range of water content from 12-27%, the moisture content scale is the one that's most important to beekeepers.

Honey's ideal moisture content is between 15.5% and 18.6% to prevent fermentation and ensure quality. For the best quality, especially for competitions, moisture should ideally be between 15.5% and 17%. Moisture content above 19% can lead to fermentation, while levels below 16% may cause honey to crystallize faster .





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Mission Statement

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