GREATER CLEVELAND
BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

The Honeybee Times

November 2026

The speaker at the October meeting was Doug Morse, owner of Lil' Morsels Honey Company in Painesville www.morsebees.com sharing his method of prepping hives for winter. He uses tape to seal the joints between the boxes, Styrofoam pieces to insulate the sides and insulation above the brood boxes to insulate the top. He eschews the use of an upper entrance claiming that this will just create a "chimney effect" ventilating warmth from the hive.

The November meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 11th at 7:00 in Building 25 at the fairgrounds and the speaker will be our own Dave Borling talking about mead making.







This Month in the Bee Yard

Your winter prep should be well underway. Most of us haven't had a killing frost yet, but you know it's on it's way. Hive insulation (sides and top) should be in place. There are many choices for the style of insulation that you chose to use as well as opinions on how to do it. Styrofoam board, duct wrap, or commercially available hive wraps are all choices that are available.

Monthly oxalic acid vaporization should start. Choose days that are above 50 degrees when possible.

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Winter Feeding

It's always hard to predict the winter weather in our area. Leaving enough honey in the hive to get our bees through the winter is always good policy, but variations in the daily temperatures can cause their supply to run low. Supplemental or emergency feeding is something the prudent beekeeper should be prepared for. As with everything else associated with beekeeping, there are different ways to do this. Sugar candy cakes, fondant, and dry sugar are some of the choices available.

There are many recipes for making sugar candy cakes and they all involve making sugar syrup by heating with water and then pouring it into molds to cool.

Making your own fondant can be involved also, involving heating and working with the mixture to create the fondant.

The pros of using these two methods is that once it's done, it's easy to pop into your hive if needed. Cons are you will be working with very hot processes so you should be very careful. Commercially made fondant is also available. Be careful not to use fondant that is made for cake frosting, but buy it from beekeeping suppliers.

There is the so-called "mountain camp" method of feeding sugar. This involves placing a sheet of newspaper across the frames and just pouring dry sugar on it. While it seems easy, it can be very messy.

Making candy board is a convenient way of feeding your bees. Candy boards are easy to make and can be used year to year. They are simply a frame made with 3" wood and covered on the bottom with 1/2 inch hardware cloth. You mix the sugar with a little water and pack it onto the mesh. You can leave a space for an upper entrance by drilling a 3/4 inch hole in one end of the frame. The sugar will set up overnight and will not be messy. Weller Bee Supply has an excellent video that goes step by step to create these at https://youtu.be/kIDJNYBzxtc?si=3Ff7JljOvLVEol7q.

A candy board similar to the one in the video.



GCBA Elections

It's time for the club to elect the officers for next year. Don't worry, you won't be inundated with campaign ads like we were for the last year. Nominations for the offices will be accepted at this month's meeting and elections will be held at the December meeting.

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Hospitality Corner

Our meetings are for socializing and a great way to meet other beekeepers. Members are encouraged to bring treats to share. Thanks to Jan (and Joe) Petrek for setting up for the meetings and to everyone who brings snacks or treats!

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Top 10 choices for a Northeast Ohio honeybee planting

If you plan on establishing a dedicated honeybee forage area, these should be your priorities-

Plant	Main benefit
Black locust	Heavy spring nectar
American basswood	Excellent honey tree
Alsike clover	Nectar and pollen
White clover	Repeated blooming
Anise hyssop	Extended summer bloom
Wild bergamot	Summer forage
Mountain mint	Excellent bee attraction
Alfalfa	Summer nectar
Goldenrod	Fall nectar
New England aster	Fall nectar and pollen

Tips to get the most out of your planting

1. Plant in groups. Rather than one plant of each variety, plant groups of 5–10 or more where possible.
2. Prioritize trees. A mature basswood or black locust can provide considerably more forage than a small flower bed.
3. Don't mow all the clover. Allow portions of your lawn to flower.
4. Leave some dandelions in spring. They provide useful early forage.
5. Avoid insecticides. Especially products containing neonicotinoids and insecticides applied to blooming plants.
6. Plant successive bloom periods. You want something flowering throughout the entire season.

OSU Extension has an especially useful publication: Ohio Nectar and Pollen Plants for Honeybees. It includes bloom periods and identifies important Ohio honey plants. Also see the Ohio State Bee Lab native plant resources.

PREPARE FOR SPRING.

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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.