

Illinois Valley
Beekeepers' Association

IVBA

April 2026 Meeting

Friday, April 10, 2026 · 7:00 PM

La Salle County Extension Office · Ottawa, IL



ilvalleybeekeepers.com

Est. 2010

Tonight's Agenda — April 2026

I



Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance · Officers · 50/50 · Guests · Minutes · Treasurer

II



Old Business

Club wear · Lending library · Waterway update · Beekeeping classes

III



New Business

Q&A · Spring topics: Swarms & Splits

IV



Announcements

50/50 drawing

V



Adjournment



I. Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance · Officers · Raffle · Guests · Minutes · Treasurer



PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE



I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE
TO THE FLAG OF THE
UNITED STATES OF

AMERICA

AND TO THE REPUBLIC
FOR WHICH IT STANDS
ONE NATION UNDER **GOD**

INDIVISIBLE
WITH LIBERTY
AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

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IVBA Officers - 2026



President

Warren Norris

815-228-3330



Vice President

Mike Lawyer

779-435-9941



Treasurer

Sheri Stumreiter

815-503-2863



Secretary

Stephanie Nelson

815-488-3763

50/50 Raffle



1 ticket / \$2.00

6 tickets / \$10.00

Winner takes half the pot!
Drawing at end of meeting

Welcome, Guests! 🙌

We're glad you're here!

1 Please introduce yourself — name and where you're from

2 Tell us: are you a new beekeeper, curious beginner, or thinking about starting?

3 Membership is \$20/year (includes ISBA registration)

4 Meetings every 2nd Friday — 7:00 to 9:00 PM



Secretary's Minutes — March 2026

Presented by:
Stephanie Nelson, Secretary

[Minutes summary or key highlights from last month's meeting]



Motion to approve minutes · Seconded · Vote

Treasurer's Report

Presented by:
Sheri Stumreiter, Treasurer



Beginning Balance	\$ #####
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Income / Deposits	\$ #####
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Expenses	\$ #####
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Ending Balance	\$ #####
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Motion to accept Treasurer's Report · Seconded · Vote

Old Business



Club Wear

IVBA club wear available to order — see Sheri Strumreiter



Lending Library

Resources available to borrow — see Warren Norris



IL Waterway Update

Illinois Waterway Visitor's Center — Bill Cunico



Beekeeping Classes



How Well Do You Know the Bees?

Interactive quiz — let's see what the hive knows!



Questions · Discussion



Spring Topic: Splitting Overwintered Hives

Six split methods we'll discuss:

Walk-Away Split (Simple Split)

Artificial Swarm Split

Nuc (Nucleus) Split

Queen-Right Split

Brood-Only (Queenless) Split

Double Screen Board Split



Walk-Away Split (Simple Split)

How it works:

Divide brood and bees into two boxes.
One half keeps the old queen; the other raises a new queen from young larvae.

✓ Pros

- ✓ Very simple
- ✓ No need to buy a queen
- ✓ Natural queen rearing

⚠ Cons

- 3–4 week brood break
- Risk of queen failure
- Slower buildup



Best for: Hobbyists, swarm prevention, natural management

Artificial Swarm Split

How it works:

Move the queen and flying bees to a new hive in the original location. The original colony (with brood) is moved aside and raises a new queen.

Pros

- ✓ Strong swarm prevention
- ✓ Keeps honey production stable
- ✓ Very effective management tool

Cons

- Requires timing and planning
- Slightly more complex



Best for: Managing strong spring colonies

Nuc (Nucleus) Split

How it works:

A small 3–5 frame colony created from a larger hive.

✓ Pros

- ✓ Easy to manage
- ✓ Good for overwintering in mild climates
- ✓ Great for backup queens

⚠ Cons

- Weak for winter in cold climates
- Needs feeding support



Best for: Selling nucs, queen rearing, small-scale increase

Queen-Right Split

How it works: Move the existing queen into the new split along with brood and bees.

Pros

- ✓ Split builds up quickly
- ✓ Reliable egg-laying
- ✓ Good swarm control

Cons

- Must locate the queen
- Parent colony must raise new queen



Best for: Controlled increase and swarm prevention

Brood-Only (Queenless) Split

How it works: Remove only brood frames (no queen) to form a new colony.

Pros

- ✓ Strong brood break for Varroa control
- ✓ Good way to reduce congestion

Cons

- Must ensure eggs/young larvae present
- Slower development



Best for: Integrated pest management (IPM)

Double Screen Board Split

How it works:

Two colonies share the same stack separated by a double screen board.

Pros

- ✓ Heat sharing
- ✓ Easier early-season splits
- ✓ Good for cool climates

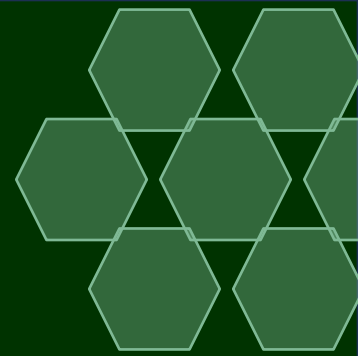
Cons

- Requires special equipment
- Slightly more management



Best for: Early spring splits in colder areas

Feeding Honeybees



Supplemental nutrition for your hive

A practical guide for Illinois beekeepers

Why Do We Feed Bees?



Low winter stores signal the need for supplemental feeding

Bees are remarkably self-sufficient — but sometimes they need a boost.



Nectar Dearth

Extended rainy or dry periods halt foraging. Colonies can starve in days without reserves.



Winter Preparation

Bees need 60–80 lbs of honey stores to survive an Illinois winter. Top off low hives in fall.



Spring Build-Up

Queens start laying in late January. Feed early to support brood rearing before nectar flows.




New Packages & Nucs

New colonies have no stores. Feed immediately to help them draw comb and raise brood.

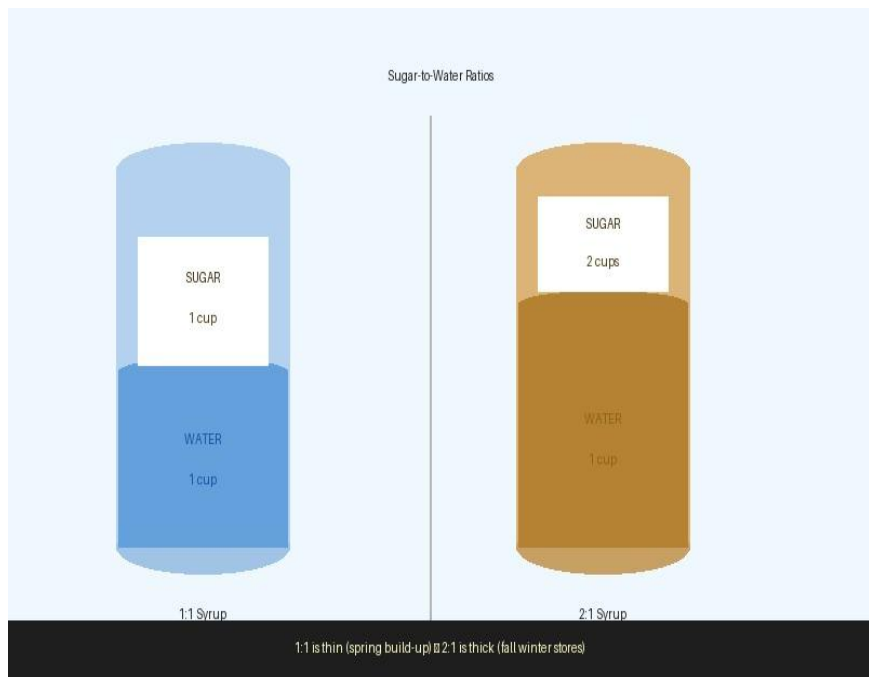


After Heavy Mite Treatment

Some treatments interrupt brood cycles. Feeding helps colonies recover quickly.

 **Tip:** Never feed honey from unknown sources — it can spread American Foulbrood. Use only white granulated cane sugar for syrup.

Sugar-to-Water Ratios



1:1 Ratio — Thin Syrup

- 1 part sugar + 1 part water by volume
- Use in **SPRING** and for new packages/nucs
- Stimulates brood rearing and comb building
- Mimics thin, watery nectar flow

2:1 Ratio — Thick Syrup

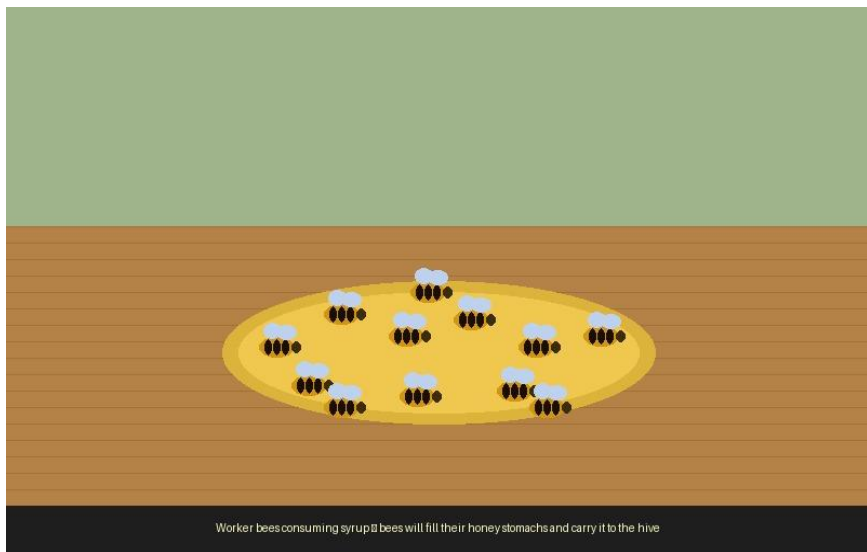
- 2 parts sugar + 1 part water by volume
- Use in **FALL** for winter stores (Aug–Oct in IL)
- Higher sugar content = less evaporation needed
- Bees can cap it faster for winter storage

⚠ Stop feeding syrup by late October in Illinois — bees need time to cure and cap it before winter sets in.



Use only plain white cane sugar — avoid brown sugar, corn syrup, honey, or sugar substitutes, which can harm bees.

How to Mix Sugar Water



Worker bees consuming syrup — bees will fill their honey stomachs and carry it to the hive

Worker bees loading up on syrup to carry back to the hive

1

Measure your water

Warm (not boiling) water dissolves sugar faster. Use clean, potable water.

2

Add white cane sugar

Stir thoroughly until completely dissolved. Do NOT cook or boil.

3

Cool before filling feeders

Hot syrup can harm bees. Wait until room temperature or below.

4

Optional: add Honey-B-Healthy

A feeding stimulant with lemongrass & spearmint oils. Encourages uptake — use sparingly.

5

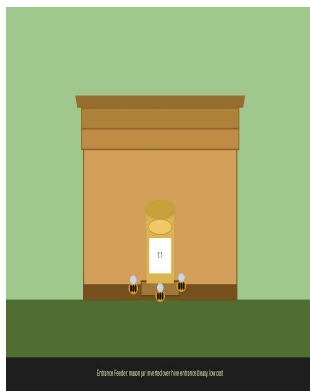
Fill feeder & place on hive

Check every 2–3 days in warm weather; weekly in cool weather.



Never use boiling water — it creates HMF (hydroxymethylfurfural), a compound that is toxic to bees at high levels.

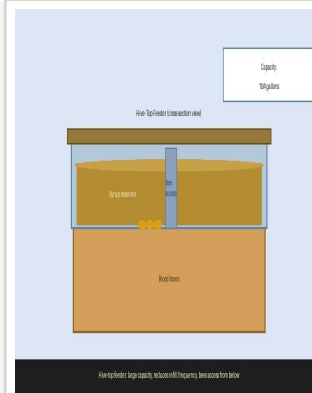
Types of Bee Feeders



Entrance Feeder

- ✓ Cheap, easy to monitor, no hive opening
- ✗ Small capacity, may trigger robbing

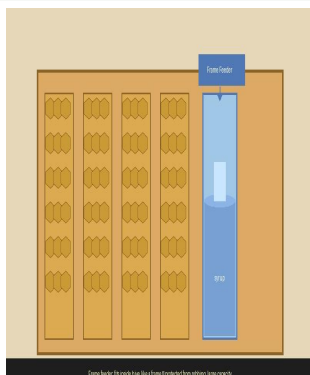
Best for: Beginners, small hives



Hive-Top Feeder

- ✓ Large capacity (1–4 gal), minimal disturbance
- ✗ More expensive, bees can drown

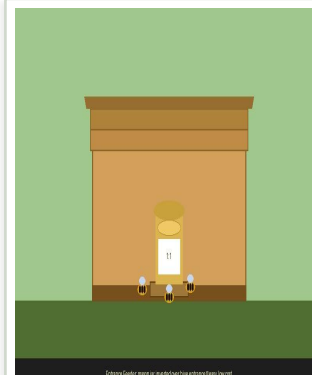
Best for: Established colonies



Frame Feeder

- ✓ Large capacity, inside hive, reduces robbing
- ✗ Must open hive to refill


Best for: All seasons, winter prep



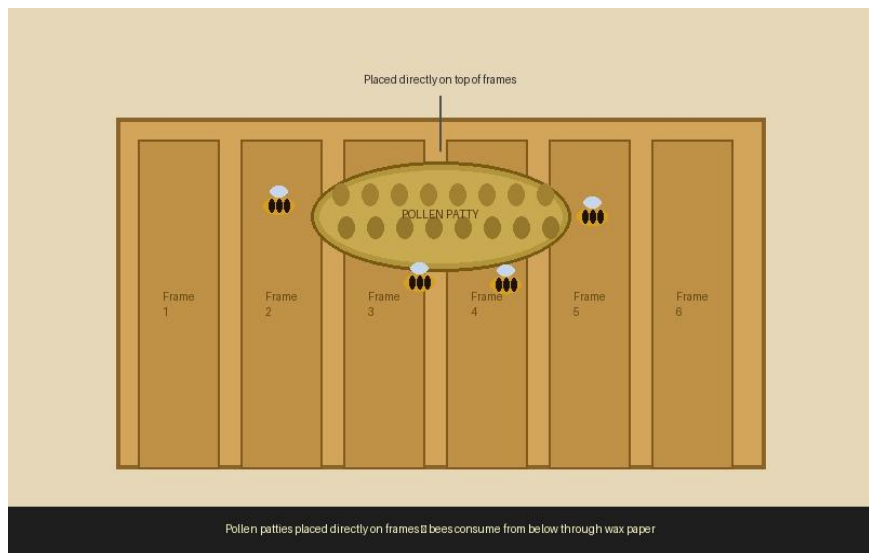
Boardman / Jar

- ✓ Very low cost, visual monitoring
- ✗ Tiny capacity, robbing risk in dearth

Best for: Spring/new hives only

 **Tip:** In a robbing situation (dearth), switch to an internal feeder — entrance feeders can attract robber bees from neighboring hives.

Feeding Pollen Patties



Pollen patty placed directly on top of frames — bees access from below

What are pollen patties?

Pollen patties are compressed cakes of pollen substitute (or real pollen) mixed with sugar syrup. They supply the protein, amino acids, fats, and vitamins that bees get from natural pollen — critical for raising healthy brood.

When to Feed Patties

- Late winter / early spring (Jan–Mar in IL): stimulate brood rearing before pollen is available
- Late summer (Aug–Sep): help colonies rear fall bees before winter
- Any time pollen is scarce or unavailable outdoors

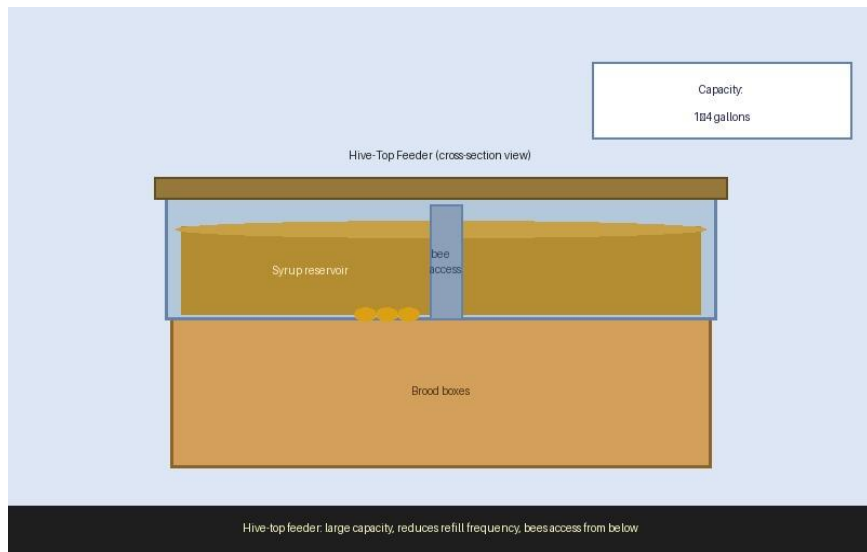
How to Use Patties

- Remove bottom wax paper; leave top paper on
- Place directly on top bars over the cluster
- Use ½ lb per week — replace when consumed
- Remove any uneaten patty in warm weather (SHB risk)



Popular brands: Global Patties, Mann Lake Ultra Bee, ApiPro. You can also make your own with soy flour, brewer's yeast & sugar syrup.

How to Feed Bees Safely



Hive-top feeder with syrup reservoir — large capacity, minimal hive disruption

Safe Feeding Technique

✓ DO

- Feed in the evening to reduce robbing activity
- Never spill syrup near hives — clean up immediately
- Use the smallest quantity bees will take in 2–3 days
- Stop feeding when hive is heavy with stores or nectar flowing
- Provide fresh clean water near the apiary year-round

✗ DON'T

- Don't feed open dish or plate feeders — this causes robbing wars
- Don't feed during strong nectar flows — bees will ignore syrup
- Don't leave syrup out overnight in cold weather (ferments fast)
- Don't use honey, brown sugar, or any sweetener other than cane sugar



Watch for robbing: if bees are fighting at the entrance or clustered around the feeder opening, reduce the entrance and switch to an internal feeder.

Spring vs. Fall Feeding Schedule



Illinois feeding calendar — adjust ±2 weeks based on your location (southern IL warms earlier; northern IL may stay cold later)

Spring Feeding (Feb – May)

- 1:1 syrup when temps stay above 50°F (daytime)
- Pollen patties Feb–Apr to stimulate brood
- Stop syrup once strong nectar flow begins (~May)

Fall Feeding (Aug – Oct)

- 2:1 syrup Aug–Oct to build winter stores fast
- Pollen patties late Aug–Sep for fall bee quality
- Stop all liquid feeding by late October — too cold

* Winter note: Once temps drop below 50°F, bees can't take syrup. Switch to candy boards or fondant to prevent starvation — they generate no moisture.

Important Feeding Tips

Temperature Matters



Bees cannot break cluster to reach syrup in cold. Below 50°F, use fondant or candy boards placed directly above the cluster. Liquid feeding in cold weather is ineffective and wastes syrup.

Keep Records



Note when you fed, how much, and how fast it was consumed. Fast uptake signals a hungry colony. Logging this over seasons helps you anticipate needs the following year.

Avoid Robbing Situations



Feed in the evening. Reduce your entrance to 2–3 inches. Use internal feeders during dearths. Robbing can devastate a weak hive within hours — act fast if you see frenetic activity at the entrance.

Hygiene & Mold Prevention



Clean feeders between each refill. Syrup left >3–5 days in warm weather can ferment and grow mold. Add a tiny pinch of citric acid (1/4 tsp per gallon) to slow spoilage without harming bees.

Know When NOT to Feed



During a strong nectar flow, bees will ignore syrup and may use feeder space for honey instead. Heft test: if the hive feels heavy (>60 lbs), hold off. Over-feeding in spring can crowd the queen's laying space.



Always heft your hives monthly in winter — a light hive in January needs emergency candy/fondant immediately.

Common Feeding Mistakes

01

Feeding the Wrong Syrup Ratio at the Wrong Time

Using 2:1 in spring crowds the brood nest with thick syrup. Using 1:1 in fall doesn't build enough winter stores — bees must evaporate too much water. Match the ratio to the season.

03

Using Open Feeders or Plates

Plate or open dish feeding seems easy, but it creates robbing frenzies that can destroy weak colonies. It also attracts wasps, yellow jackets, and raccoons. Always use hive-mounted feeders.

05

Using Honey, Agave, or Corn Syrup

Honey from unknown sources can introduce American Foulbrood spores. Corn syrup has high fructose content bees can't digest well. Agave and other syrups cause GI problems. White cane sugar only.

02

Feeding Too Late in Fall

Illinois colonies need stores capped before November. Syrup fed after October often can't be fully processed. Bees winter on uncapped syrup and can develop dysentery from high water content.

04

Feeding During a Nectar Flow

During strong flows (dandelion in April, clover in June in IL), bees are bringing in plenty on their own. Adding syrup wastes your time and may crowd brood space with unneeded stores.

06

Forgetting to Check and Refill

A feeder that runs dry during a dearth is the same as no feeder at all. Check every 2–3 days in summer heat. A colony can consume a full entrance feeder jar (1 qt) in 24 hours when hungry.



Most feeding mistakes come down to timing and ratios. When in doubt: 1:1 in spring, 2:1 in fall, nothing in winter liquid form.

Feeding at a Glance

Illinois Beekeepers Quick Reference

Situation	Feed Type	Ratio / Form	IL Timing	Goal
Spring build-up	Thin sugar syrup	1:1	Feb – May	Stimulate brood rearing
New package / nuc	Thin sugar syrup	1:1	At installation	Draw comb, establish stores
Summer dearth	Thin or thick syrup	1:1 or 2:1	Jun – Jul	Prevent starvation
Fall winter prep	Thick sugar syrup	2:1	Aug – Oct	Build winter stores fast
Late winter emergency	Candy board / fondant	Dry sugar form	Nov – Jan	Prevent starvation, no moisture
Protein supplement	Pollen patty	½ lb patty	Feb–Apr, Aug–Sep	Brood nutrition & bee quality

Healthy bees start with healthy nutrition — feed with purpose, not just habit!



Questions & Answers

Open floor for discussion
Ask anything — no question is too simple!

Announcements

UPDATE MONTHLY

50/50 Raffle Drawing

Winner announced — good luck everyone!

Additional Announcements:


*[Add any upcoming events, reminders,
or member news here]*



Meeting Adjourned!

Thank you all for attending.

 July 17 Next meeting: May 8, 2026

 7:00 PM

 La Salle County Extension Office, Ottawa

 ilvalleybeekeepers.com

