



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Happy April to all of you! In just a couple of weeks the bee packages will be delivered, which, for first year beekeepers, can be exciting and scary at the same time. For those of you that have taken a beekeeping course, you have an idea of what you should do to install your package of bees into a hive. For those that haven't taken a course, you might have watched videos of package installations on YouTube. When relying on YouTube sites, you should try to watch beekeepers that have reliable videos and are from our general area. Watching videos of beekeepers in a different region of the country won't be a good representation of how we do things in Northern Illinois. **Larry Kregel** is a long-time NIBA member. He teaches beekeeping at MCC. He is our area's Illinois State Beekeepers Association representative, and he has high-quality beekeeping videos on his YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC221NLIwmSyU5KBmpjOyS3Q/videos>). I have a YouTube channel under the name Tomthebeekeeper (no spaces between the words) that has a video of how to do a package installation along with other videos. (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtsSKtmM9SjzwHKWUdVE6aA>) Some of my videos show mistakes that I made and how not to do something. My

Bee ordering for 2022 has ended. Anyone who ordered will receive pick up instructions by email soon.

If you still need bees please contact Sue Dietz at Harvard Eggs, Feed, & Produce, 17205 McGuire Rd, Harvard, 815-943-4837.

videos have jokingly been called Son of a Nutcracker Productions because that's what I say when I get stung, and I do get stung. I have a whopping 41 subscribers and 33 videos, so I apologize for my shameless plug, but I can tell you that if you watch some of my videos you'll get a good laugh and hopefully learn something too!

We usually receive lots of questions about the weather during package installations because the weather can be a little sketchy around the time we get our bees. If it's raining or snowing when you get your bees home, you can wait until the weather gets nicer to install them in your hive. It's ok to keep them in a garage or a basement for a day or two until the weather

GARDENFEST

Saturday, April 9, 7:30am – 4pm
McHenry County College, Leucht Auditorium

4-6 volunteers needed to help staff our booth.

Please contact **Tom Allen** at **(815) 861-1237** if available.

improves. Sunny, not too windy, and 40 degrees or warmer are all signs that you can install your bees. We should have our April meeting before the bees are delivered. We answer newbie questions during the 6:30 PM portion of the meeting. We'll meet in person but a zoom link will be sent out for those of you that can't make it there.

Our speaker, Randy Oliver will begin his presentation on nucs and how to

make sure they're healthy going into winter shortly after 7:00 PM. Randy Oliver is a well-known beekeeper, researcher and has the ScientificBeekeeping.com website. Everyone will learn something from Randy!

When we know what day the package delivery will take place, information will be emailed to those who ordered.

Tom

ASK CARL

Carl Christensen

What do you do to your colonies in April? How is management different between over wintered colonies and newly installed bees?

With over wintered colonies, I start as early as weather permits. Adding protein patties, and stimulative feeding about the middle of March. I also clean the bottom board. When opening a hive, I assess colony strength by looking at the bees welling up between the frames and if there are more than 5 or 6 seams it is a candidate for spitting toward the end of April (starting around the 15th to the 20th) or at the time of dandelion bloom. Queens should be available then, but if you want the bees to rear their own queen, you have to wait until drones are flying.

Clean the dead outs so they are ready when the packages arrive. Put 5 frames with some honey in the middle of the box flanked by a honey and pollen frame. The rest with of the spaces fill in with what is available (drawn comb or foundation). Just keep in mind that the bees don't draw comb by the outside wall very well. Now the box is ready for installation. Make sure to check the queen in the cage before installing. I do inspections from the middle of April until the start of June every week. That way I'm on top of what goes on in the hive. Over wintered colonies might have to be supered in late April or early May. A package installed by the middle of April should have built up and might be ready for supers late May early June. You can apply Oxalic acid on packages 5, 6, or 7 days after installing. If done later when brood is being capped, the mites are already under the capping.

Read this [ARTICLE](#) about mite treatment. It covers it all: when to treat, how to treat, and what to treat with. It should be mandatory reading for all beekeepers.

When using reversal of hive bodies and if it is done at the right time; I've had the bees up in the supers depositing the honey within a couple of hours after it was done. I do it mid to late May to get rid of the honey dome, at the same time supers are put on.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Heartland Apiculture Society (HAS) – 2022 Conference – June 2022 in Indiana
<https://www.heartlandbees.org/has-2022-evansville-in/>

American Beekeeping Federation (ABF) – On-demand beekeeping classes
<https://www.abfnet.org/page/education>

Michigan State University Webinars
<https://pollinators.msu.edu/resources/beekeepers/webinars/past-webinars/>

University of Minnesota Bee Lab Classes and Mentoring Apiary
<https://beelab.umn.edu/beekeeping-classes>

Western Apicultural Society (WAS) – Monthly mini conference recordings
<https://www.westernapiculturalsociety.org/events-1>

Kansas Honey Producers Association – Extracting More \$\$\$ From Your Hives speaker series recordings
<http://www.kansashoneyproducers.org/archives.html>

University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre - <https://honeybee.uoguelph.ca/videos/video-list/>

We're buzzing with excitement about the WHPA Summer Meeting on June 11, 2022!

Where: O'so Brewing Company in Plover, WI

Registration Fee including lunch: \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members

There will be a Friday evening social for \$15 per person that includes pizza and appetizers.

The agenda is packed full of good information including updates from the honey queen, the bear committee, the state fair committee, and the WI apiary program coordinator in addition to great speakers like Brooke Nikkila, the University of Minnesota Bee Lab Program Manager.

For hotel and agenda details and to register, visit:
<https://wihoney.org/meetings-and-events/whpa-summer-meeting/>

We can't wait to see you in June!



[See Adrian Quiney's Presentation in April](#)

The Racine/Kenosha Beekeepers Association will be hosting Adrian Quiney in April. He will be presenting "*Biotechnical Beekeeping and Lore Breaking: Mite control methods that don't involve chemicals*". The Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association is proud to be a co-sponsor of this April 6th event.

Adrian is a hobby beekeeper in Hudson, Wisconsin. He has developed his beekeeping method based on both the biology of the honeybee and the biology of the varroa mite. He keeps 60-80 colonies and has very good overwintering success (as of early March, he still had 90% of his bees alive and well).

We encourage NIBA members to join in-person, but there will be a Zoom option. This event is free for all NIBA members.

Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Kenosha County Building - 19600 75th Street, Bristol **or**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81805583339?pwd=dDJZCtVZnNUUVJYV2YwaWZxdzU0UT09>

Meeting ID: 818 0558 3339

Passcode: 409542

Please do not share this Zoom information anywhere on the internet or social media. Thanks.

[See Meghan Milbrath's Presentation in April](#)

The Cook-DuPage Beekeepers Association is inviting NIBA members to a virtual presentation by Dr. Meghan Milbrath on Saturday, April 9 at 6:30 pm. Her presentation will be about beekeeping and bee research in Sweden. The Zoom link will be emailed closer to the presentation date.

Meghan Milbrath is a beekeeper and the coordinator of the Michigan Pollinator Initiative at Michigan State University. She performs pollinator related research and extension work, and works with beekeepers and stakeholders around the country. She started keeping bees over 20 years ago, and currently owns and manages The Sand Hill apiaries, where she manages 150-200 colonies for queen rearing and nuc production.

[Win Some Bees](#)

We will be holding a raffle for one 3-pound package of bees during our April 8th meeting. New NIBA members, Dave & Cathy Meyer of [Meyer Bees](#), have generously donated a 3-pound package of bees (Italian, Russian, Carniolan, or Saskatraz—winner's choice) to us to raffle off. The winner could pick from whatever Sunday package pickup day works (they have pickup days every Sunday mid-March to the end of May). Or, it is possible you could coordinate the pickup with Marcin.

We will be selling raffle tickets from now through April 8th. Tickets are \$5 each. Tickets will be available for sale in-person during our April meeting. If you are unable to attend the April meeting in-person, you can purchase tickets by mailing a check to Ralph. **However, your payment must be received by Wednesday, April 6.**

ISBA SUMMER MEETING-**TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

Registration for the Illinois State Beekeepers Association (ISBA) 2022 Summer Meeting is now open. There are some amazing speakers on the agenda, including Dewey Caron, Jerry Hayes, and Ben Sallmann. Join your fellow Illinois Beekeepers on June 3 & 4 at McHenry County College (nice and close!). There is a nice lunch option, and there will be vendors to visit.

For more information... <https://www.ilsba.com/summary-of-events.html>

To register... <https://www.eventbee.com/v/isba-2022-summer-meeting#/tickets>

For those which do not have the means to electronically purchase the tickets, there is a paper registration form to fill out and mail in with your payment to the ISBA PO Box in Springfield.

[Registration Form](#)

ODDS AND ENDS

Marcin Matelski

Inside the [Hive.TV](#)

NIBA is a Patreon supporter of Dr. Humberto Boncristiani and his Inside the [Hive.TV](#) channel. He posts a lot of interesting videos on his YouTube channel. You can find it at <https://www.youtube.com/c/InsideTheHiveTV/videos>. By being Patreon supporters we have access to "behind-the-scenes", which includes private videos, longer interviews and links to articles and research projects that are not posted on the public channel. We will share those with you either through the newsletter, email list or by having a special meeting to watch the videos that may be of interest to the club.

NIBA Book Club

Read an interesting beekeeping book lately? Learned something new from it? The club wants to hear about. That's why we started the NIBA Book Club. Any member can participate and contribute to it. If you're willing to write an article, do a presentation or somehow share what you've learned with the rest of the members, the club will reimburse you for the cost of the book. Please reach out to any of the club board members for more details. Board approval is necessary to be eligible for reimbursement.

Share what you do and know

Do you process wax and turn it into candles, lotions and salves? Or maybe you collect pollen? How about propolis?

The club is looking for members who use, collect and process all of the products their bees produce to either give a short presentation at a meeting or write an article for the newsletter. This is a great opportunity to get involved with the club and share your knowledge and experience with the rest of the members. Get in touch with any of the board members if you're interested in presenting or writing an article.

We would also welcome any presentations by club members about how they manage their hives.

Let's Bee on Board

Want to take a more active role in the club? Have ideas and projects you'd like the club to explore? Then join the NIBA Board. If you're interested in becoming an elected board member or would like to volunteer for one of the director positions, reach out to any current board member about it. You don't have to be an experienced beekeeper in order to serve on the board.

CHORES OF THE MONTH - APRIL

John Leibinger

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

And so it begins

What's happening in the hive?

Overwintered colonies should be well into raising brood for the coming year. On warm days the bees will be out foraging pollen from some early flowering plants and trees. About mid-month the dandelions will start blooming and you will see a lot of their tell-tale tangerine-orange pollen being brought in. Though temperatures may be a bit low to do a prolonged deep dive inspection early in the month, the influx of pollen is a good sign that the colony is raising brood. Brood rearing requires significant protein which is sourced from the incoming pollen. If weather conditions are preventing foraging, use pollen patties and/or pollen substitutes as supplemental feed. The brood will require warmth so the bees will be consuming more carbohydrates (honey, or sugar syrup) for the energy they will require to produce the heat needed to raise their brood. You may well see bee poop or signs of dysentery at the exit points for bees. Don't panic and jump to the conclusion that your bees have Nosema. This is more likely an accumulation of feces the bees are finally getting to void. It could be dysentery, but dysentery is not Nosema. Nosema can only be determined by inspection of bee guts via microscopy. If it is dysentery, it will likely clear up fairly quickly as the bees get foraging and consuming fresh nectar. If it is Nosema, the only approved product on the market right now is Fumidil-B (Fumagillin) but its efficacy on the most prevalent type of Nosema (*N. Ceranae*) is marginal.

For Beekeepers with live overwintering colonies, it is time to:

Feed. Sugar syrup at 1:1 ratio (2 lbs sugar/1 qt water) is conventional this time of year. A small amount of heat will dissolve the sugar quickly. Allow to cool before feeding to bees.

Pollen, pollen substitute, pollen patties. These supplemental protein sources may help the colony raise brood until natural pollen sources become more abundant.

Rotate Hive Bodies. If your bees have moved into the top box consider rotating the top box to the bottom. The upside to this is that it provides space for the colony to expand upwards and may reduce or delay the swarming urge. The downside is that you may be dividing the brood nest if it spans both boxes. If this situation exists, addition of a third box (with frames) above or simply the addition of super(s) may be a better alternative.

Frame Rotation. As temps warm up, consider removing some old frames (w/o brood) and replace with new foundation as part of an annual comb renewal program. Place new foundation frames at the outer positions in the hive.

Remove Winter Wrappings as the weather warms.

For Beekeepers with dead overwintered colonies, it is time to:

Breakdown and clean out the dead-outs. It can be a dirty job as well as a disheartening one. Don't procrastinate. Depending on the cause of death of your colony, you may want/need to replace all your frames/combs. Viruses die with your colony. Mites do also, so you don't have a worry that either of these will carry forward. *If you had a bacterial foulbrood disease that killed your colony, the problem could carry forward.* This would not be typical so don't rush to this conclusion. Seek an experienced beekeeper or apiary inspector for some advice.

Frame Rotation. Consider removing some older and/or 'condition challenged' frames and replace with new foundation as part of an annual comb renewal program.

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

Bees will be arriving soon so make sure all equipment is ready to go.

Finish assembling and painting your equipment. If you have not done this already, **Get On It!** Don't procrastinate, the bees will not wait! 😊

Set up your Equipment in your Apiary. Have everything in place except maybe the frames and foundation. To minimize the possibility of damage, you may want to keep them inside until the day that you get your bees. Put them in place just before going to pick up the bees. Mix your sugar syrup before picking up your bees. Try to minimize your last minute scrambling. The process will go smoother.

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. Ask for help and guidance. Hands-on assistance might still be a little difficult to come by right now with the 'social distancing' still on many minds, but verbal or written communication will be available.

Ready or not here it comes! No worries. Chill. You have done your homework. You have Read, Studied, and Learned. A little nervous anticipation is all part of the excitement of becoming a beekeeper and right about now it is reaching an apex. Take a breath. A few more seasons under your belt and you will look back on this time with a

knowing smile. Since in person meetings are still touch and go for some and you may not have received hands on instruction on package installation, review several YouTube videos on package installation. Have a checklist for your package or nuc installation. It helps keep you organized and focused. **Again, No worries, coaching and virtual help is available.**

Download the forms to register your bees with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Documents/beekeep.pdf> (CTRL Click link)

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Review package installation procedures if you are getting new bee packages.

Prepare your feed.

Review your Beekeeping Goals for 2022 and act accordingly. See earlier month's chores list.

Wash your beekeeping suit or jacket to remove general dirt and specifically to remove lingering essence of alarm pheromone from previous 'suit stings'. Tip: Use an unscented laundry detergent.

General Info:

Note: Not trying to toss in a 'buzz' kill, but we have had snow in April the last several years.

A couple of ways to install packages:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZknUirgbQk> Randy Oliver

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ft7BWolTbw> Penn State

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9qu-zMhtQ0>

Are you seeing pollen coming in?

[Nice Seasonal Pollen Color Chart](#) (CTRL Click link)

It is April. Welcome to the 2022 Beekeeping Season!



ROBBERS IN THE BEEYARD

Larry Kregel

There are honeybee thieves – two kinds. Human thieves have been reported recently in the fields of California where millions of honeybee colonies gather for the annual passion for pollination. With fields of colonies from thousands of beekeepers across the country, the pickings are ripe for the less than honest. Large groups of colonies have been spirited away. Here in Illinois, there are few apiaries with enough colonies to attract the bee criminal. I feel pretty safe.



There is another kind of apicultural thief – honeybees. Bees don't steal hives but will steal honey from another colony if the opportunity exists. Beekeepers have long dealt with robber bees, especially in the fall when some colonies are finishing the season strong and others are weakening.



Mother Nature favors the strong who show no mercy in stealing the stores of the weak.

A single successful robber bee will return to her home hive and recruit more robbers. The robbing frenzy around a victim colony reaches a crescendo quickly. It becomes a wild scene.

Traditionally beekeepers have discouraged robber bees by reducing the size of the hive entrance. Sometimes it works.

“Robber Screens” have been designed and are recommended by some in an attempt to discourage robber bees. Ten years ago, each keeper desiring to use robber screens needed to build their own. Today robber screens can be bought from major bee suppliers.

<https://www.dadant.com/catalog/ultimate-universal-ipm-robbing-screen-m01607>

<https://www.mannlakeltd.com/beekeeping/extraction-bottling/honey-extraction/10-frame-moving-robbing-screen/>

<https://www.betterbee.com/wooden-hive-kits-10-frame/rs10-robbing-screen-wooden.asp>

Googling “robber screen plans” will find a number of possible DIY designs.

For years I have considered robber screens to be of limited importance and usually used by beekeepers who needed something to do. After watching last week's talk by Dr. Peck

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4Alfqq3GT8&t=156s>), my thinking has changed. I will give robber screens a try.

In his talk he said we are not aware of the amount of robbing that goes on when it is not robbing season – when robbing attacks would not be obvious - and this out-of-season robbing provides **varroa mites** the opportunity to move between hives on robber bees. I am not greatly concerned about the small amount of honey removed by these few robbers, but limiting the migration of varroa seems important.

Robber screens move the entrance point for the resident bees to a position distant from the landing board where the honey and pheromone smells are strongest. The locals will learn this route. Robber bees are not drawn to this entrance. The robber is fooled. The point closest to the landing board where the smells are most attractive to the robbers is screened. The arriving robber hangs on the screen but is not allowed entry to the hive. The potential thief will not be successful and therefore will not return to her home hive and dance to recruit her sisters.



I will be producing enough screens for all the hives in one of my beeyards. Design to be determined. Time will tell.

2022 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Club Extractor Coordinator – Randy Mead
Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger
Snack Coordinators – Cathy Davis & Phil Webb

Website and Newsletter Submissions

www.nibainfo.org – The Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association website. A wealth of information is available. Contact board members via email, download the membership form, access copies of the newsletter. Terri is asking for your pictures, stories, etc. to have them highlighted on the web page!
reevestherese@att.net

This is YOUR newsletter. Please feel free to contribute. Or let us know if you have any topics you'd like to see covered. newsletter@nibainfo.org

Membership Has Its Benefits!

- By Randy Mead

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent a club manual honey extractor? We have two to choose from. Rental is \$10 for a 3-day rental. \$20 (\$10 for rental and \$10 deposit) is due when you pick up the extractor.

Schedule a pick-up time, extract your honey and return the equipment in 3 days. The \$10 deposit will be returned if the extractor is clean and returned on time.

To reserve a date, contact Randy by text or email at 847-571-1899 or rmeadtoys@gmail.com.

Are you on Facebook? So are we!

Search for Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association. It's a closed group, so you need to request to join—but we're happy to approve your request.

We're an active and knowledgeable group. Lots of questions and answers about the Fall season and preparing for winter, robbing, etc. And LOTS of pictures!

Join the fun today!

**The queen marking color for
2022 is YELLOW.**