



# SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2021

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Here we are in August, it seems like the summer has flown by for me. I've heard from many members on the conditions of their hives, and the reports are varied. Some are doing very well while others are not doing well. Some have already extracted honey while others aren't building out comb. It's another year of unsure results to remind us that there aren't any hard and fast rules in beekeeping. Two of the hives at McHenry County College are pretty aggressive making it difficult to do a complete inspection. A couple of the other ones are weak possibly because they swarmed, and one has killed 2 queens. Just another year of beekeeping--learning as we go, trying to figure out more about the bee's behavior.

I apologize for the cancellation of the picnic. We had lower than expected attendance responses then the weather was supposed to be bad. The Board thought it would be better to cancel it before we incurred any costs. There is the possibility of holding a group function of some sort later in the year.

**I'm excited about our in-person meeting at MCC (Room A211) on Friday August 13<sup>th</sup>. Wearing a mask will be a requirement, but it's a small inconvenience to meet in person.** We will not be serving snacks and drinks, but there are snack and drink

vending machines down the hallway from the meeting room. Talking to members during the week while in the booth at the McHenry County Fair, each person seemed excited to meet in person. Some were new members that hadn't been to an in-person meeting yet and others were people that were looking forward to going back to meetings again. An email with the location of the college and where to park to enter the building will be sent out this week.

McHenry County Fair update. We had a great group of volunteers working the booth again this year. There were first-year beekeepers and beekeepers with lots of experience to talk to Fair attendees about bees and beekeeping. It was really fun to meet new members in person whom I've only spoken with on Zoom or on the phone. We had lots of interest at the NIBA booth. Kids always want to try to find the queen in the observation hive, and this year was no different. We spoke with lots of people that wanted to learn how to help the honeybees and a few that wanted to become beekeepers. We sold 1- and 2-pound jars, 12-ounce bears and 6-ounce jars of honey along with regular and flavored honey sticks. We sold out of many of the items. Thank you to Ralph Brindise, John Leibinger, Ron Zimmerman, Dale Morton and Bob Hillman for your honey donations. We might have run out completely without

them. Our stock of honey is very low right now, so if you can spare a donation, it would be greatly appreciated.

Some reminders. Marcin will soon be sending out an email with how to vote for the 2021 NIBA Member of the Year. Please be thinking of who you would like to see win this award.

We will be holding elections at the November meeting. If you're interested in being a director or in a Board position please reach out to a current Board member. Nominations from the floor for Board Officer positions are accepted, but only if the nominee has agreed to run.

We have gray Fair volunteer T-shirts for sale in various sizes. Please contact Tom Allen if you want to purchase one.



August 13 2021, 7pm  
McHenry County College, Room A211  
Meeting Agenda

630 PM newbie Question and Answer

700 PM Pledge of Allegiance

702 PM Old business

710 PM New business

715 PM We're going to get reacquainted with each other and have a general discussion with club members

830 PM Raffle drawing

## THANK YOU!!! TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS OF MCHENRY COUNTY FAIR.

Those who worked the booth, talking to the public, selling honey & raffle tickets, provided the observation hive, collected the money each day, stepped in as needed, set up, took down, and all other jobs that make the NIBA booth a success.

Congratulations to all who entered and those who won ribbons in the Honey Show. (Results will be announced next newsletter – we couldn't get them in time for this issue.)



## ASK CARL

**What are the differences between running a hive with only one deep brood box versus two deep brood boxes? Why and when would I choose to do one method over the other?**

1. Single deep provides easier hive inspection and no or little lifting. The only lifting in the spring is to clean the bottom board.
2. Single deep also provides faster inspection and mite checks. When doing spring-cleaning of the bottom board and scraping the frames, you have half an inch or more space so frame removal is easier when doing subsequent visits. And remember to squeeze the frames tight together after each visit.
3. A two-story needs less attention but more lifting. And are being used by a lot of commercial beekeepers. However, some do single story hives too. For me, it was an easy choice. I didn't have the strength any longer, so I do singles and 6 5/8 boxes in two stories. Pay attention when fall feeding and make sure they get enough food. Maybe use candy boards.

The University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Center YouTube channel has some good videos with single story hives.

Check out the YouTube video by Devan Rawn on Why Managing Bee Hives as Single Brood Chambers Works - <https://youtu.be/YjyNcyVvbEI>

Transitioning over to single story hives in mid-July, around the end of the honey flow, can reduce mite load and increase your apiary. You can also make divides in mid-April or later, when the colony is strong enough, as a means of swarm prevention and increasing your apiary. If the colony has six frames or more of brood, it is a candidate for splitting.

Check out this document on Simple Methods of Making Increases: <https://www.wbka.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Simple-methods-of-making-Increase-Final-reduced1.pdf>

## JUNE PHOTO CONTEST WINNER



Where's Waldo?  
Photo by Noel Williams.

## ADVENTURES IN THE KITCHEN

Larry Krengel (Graduate of the Cornfield School of Culinary Arts)

Honey is coming in. I have a line waiting for the new crop. But I do get first dibs. The fresh honey straight from the comb is indeed special.

I am happy to take mine straight. Some of the honey always hides in the bottom of the bottling tank, and it is hard to get into a bottle. Wanting not to waist any of the bees' product, I manage to grab a few spoonfuls from the corners... licking the spoon clean. I feel a bit like the medieval lord demanding a tithing from the crop.

Somehow it is difficult to get the last jar appropriately full leaving me with an unsaleable jar that invites me to put it to use. I can always find a use. I just like eating honey.



The "in vegetable" (or is it a fruit) today is rhubarb. Ever since I was a kid picking rhubarb in my grandfather's backyard, I have enjoyed the taste of rhubarb. I particularly long for rhubarb custard pie, but that is beyond my culinary skills. However, I can make honey rhubarb sauce in just a short visit to the kitchen. I am sure there are dozens of recipes online, but here is my

system. All measurements are flexible. Try this. Start with:

- About six cups of rhubarb cut into one-inch pieces (I like thin stalks best)
- 1/4 cup of sugar
- 1/4 cup of water
- A bit of orange juice and orange zest

I cook this down for five or ten minutes... I want the rhubarb to be soft.

After the mixture cools, I add honey to taste (I like it sweet) ... and a teaspoon of vanilla extract. Adding the honey cool protects its healthful nature.

I love it on ice cream. I mix it in yogurt, and it is great on top of tapioca pudding. Heck, I can just sit down to a bowl of the sauce by itself.

As long as we are on the subject of rhubarb, we should mention that the leaves are not edible. The poisonous substance in the leaves is oxalic acid. Yes, the same oxalic acid some beekeepers use in their hives for mite control. Knowing that, some beekeepers (not me) shred the leaves and place them in their hives hoping it will control the varroa mites. It seems to make sense. A clever idea... well??? Like with much of beekeeping, it depends on who you ask.



Back to honey rhubarb sauce... how about freezing it in an ice cube tray and floating it in your favorite summer drink?



The Michigan Pollinator Initiative has resumed its monthly webinars.

**MICHIGAN BEEKEEPING WEBINARS ([REGISTER](#)):**

*Michigan Beekeeping Webinar August 2021 - Monday, August 16th at 6:00pm CDT*

*Michigan Beekeeping Webinar September 2021 - Monday, September 13th at 6:00pm CDT*

The Alabama Extension beekeeping team presents the *At Home Beekeeping Series*. This online series promotes educational information for beekeepers. This gives beekeepers the chance to attend meetings from the comfort of one's own home using a computer or mobile device. Each session includes updates on timely beekeeping topics as well as a Q and A session.

This series will be offered the last Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. CDT.

- August 31 – **Recognizing and Mitigating Queen Events**
  - Jamie Ellis, University of Florida
- September 28 – **Varroa**
  - Dan Aurell, Auburn University
- October 26 – **Pollinating Partnerships Among Bee Species**
  - Keith Delaplane, University of Georgia
- November 30 – **TBA**
  - Alexandria Payne, Texas A&M University

**How to participate:** <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/bees-pollinators/at-home-beekeeping-series/>

## NIBA HIVE STRENGTH PROJECT

NIBA is looking to establish a database of the strength of members' hives during the season. We need your input to make it happen. As you inspect your hives, please make a note of how many frames are covered with bees. These two links will help you with estimating how many total frames of bees are in your hive.

<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/beesest.html>

<http://cestanislus.ucanr.edu/files/141096.pdf>

In order to keep track of the growth of the colonies, we need to identify them. You can use whatever form of identification you want, as long as it stays the same for the each hive's data. You can use your name, your email, last four digits of your phone number, or whatever works for you. (Try not to use general identification, such as Myhive1 or Woodstock1). You can submit data for one hive or for multiple hives, but each one would require a unique identification. For example, if we were to use the mentor hives at McHenry County College, we might identify them as NIBAMCC1, NIBAMCC2, and so on. You can enter your notes at

<https://forms.gle/6j2nB3ATHK152JYy6>

each time you inspect your hives. The survey will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. We will send out the link monthly as a reminder. We hope that everyone will contribute to this club project and we look forward to sharing the results with you in the future!

Thank you for your participation!

## CHORES OF THE MONTH - AUGUST

John Leibinger

*Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.*

### **What's happening in the hive?**

The colony population will have reached its peak and will likely start to decline slightly later in the month. Nonetheless, you should be observing lots of bees and still see brood at all stages being raised to replace the older bees in the colony. The rate of laying of the queen will be tapering off significantly from the rate that has been experienced in the spring and early summer. The rate of change is typically a factor of the race of bees that you have. It is typically a function of declining resources for bees as plant growth tapers off in the heat of summer. This is all part of the annual cycle and is an element of 'normal'.

You will likely see a lot of 'bearding' occurring on hot August evenings. I am sure most of you saw some of this in the last half of July during our heat wave. If you are a new beekeeper, don't panic, this is all part of the bees thermo-regulation process and is another element of 'normal'.

You may start to find your bees have developed some 'attitude' as we get into the month. Reduced resources often lead to robbing behaviors and if your colonies are on the wrong side of the thief-victim equation, they can start to be a bit defensive. The same behavior can be true when **you** are the 'thief' during harvesting.

Temperatures are heating up so ventilation and available water sources are 'must haves' for your bees.

The bee population is no longer expanding, but the Varroa mite population likely is. You must monitor their growth by doing regular mite checks (monthly sugar roll or alcohol wash, see below in General Info).

### **For All Beekeepers, it is time to:**

**Maintain the space around your hive(s)**. Your bees work hard at thermoregulation of the hive. Help them out. Trim weeds and grass to allow maximum air flow as the temperatures rise. Maintaining a clear flight path to the hive also helps with their foraging efficiency.

**Provide additional ventilation** to assist the bees in maintaining proper hive temperatures. This can be in the form of ventilated inner covers or as simple as propping the outer cover to allow more air circulation. The additional ventilation is also helpful in the conversion of nectar to honey. Better ventilation eases the job of moisture removal from the stored nectar.

**Make sure the bees have a water source** as we move started using into the heat of summer. Bees collect water to help cool the hive as part of their thermoregulation efforts. There are numerous ways to provide water. A quick internet search will provide some alternatives. I have been using Boardman feeders for providing water and I am amazed at how much water they utilize. (I am using the feeders in an attempt to mitigate the bees encroaching on neighbors and it seems to be working).

**Monitor for Varroa Mites monthly and take action if needed** (See General Info section below for references to mite checking procedures).

It is very important to get the mite loads under control now. The brood that will be raised as winter bees will be coming just around the corner. To maximize the strength of these winter bees, you need great nurse bees to raise them.

These are the bees we are trying to protect now. Protect the bees that raise the winter bees. Come out of winter with healthy hives raring to go for 2022. This is a great step towards sustainable beekeeping.

Know what you have and keep records. Keep mite growth in check by utilizing a miticide, organic acids, drone comb culling, a combination of IPM methods, or a brood break. Pay attention to labeling instructions when using treatments and be mindful that you cannot leave honey supers on for all methods of treatments. The only treatments currently approved for use while honey supers are on are Hopguard 3, Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS), and Formic Pro. Read the label for instructions on their use. Specifically be aware of temperature ranges for use. If you have already harvested your honey for the year, there are several other alternatives that have wider temperature ranges for use. Your specific approach will be influenced by your personal goals and philosophy, but, if you have a mite problem, doing nothing is not an acceptable answer if you want your colony to thrive and survive the winter.

**Harvest honey appropriately**. Don't overharvest, there are some lean weeks ahead for your bees. Be wary that the bees might be getting a bit defensive so dress accordingly. Do not be careless in your harvesting habits. Don't be sloppy with burr comb that you scrape from the frames. Pick up those wax scraps which are often laden with honey. In lean times the bees, being the opportunists that they are, will jump at the chance to start robbing unprotected honey and sweet scrapes laying around. **You do not want to incite a robbing frenzy**. Do not leave frames of honey open in the bee yard or wherever you store them while awaiting extraction (extraction should occur as soon as you can arrange the time after removal from the hive). I have seen beekeepers lose many, many pounds (potentially all) of their honey by storing it in a garage that they thought was 'bee tight'. It happens remarkable fast. Prepare ahead.

Return freshly extracted frames or supers late in the day to reduce stimulating the robbing urge among your colonies. If you are not returning them to the hive for refilling, but rather storing for the winter, you should consider putting the super of wet frames back on the hive above the inner cover (regular inner cover, not a ventilated inner cover) and

below the outer cover. Some beekeepers add an empty super box (no frames) between the inner cover and the wet super. The benefit will be twofold. First, the bees will come up and remove all the remaining honey and store it in frames below the inner cover. Second, the bees will 'refurbish' the comb and leave it dry for storage. When you do go to store them, some sort of action to prevent wax moth infiltration may be appropriate. Though I have not experienced much of an issue with wax moth in supers that have never had brood in them, the general recommendations are that you store frames with paradichlorobenzene (PDB) crystals, or freeze the frames to kill any moth eggs/larva and secure in an airtight (moth tight) container. There has been some research to indicate that PDB may get absorbed a bit by the wax, so do your homework and decide on your path. Before reusing these supers next year, you will need to air them out for several days to a week to dissipate the PDB odor.

**Be very aware of robbing.** It happens quickly and can be devastating. Reduce entrance openings to the smallest size on your entrance reducers, or alternately, install robbing screens. If you do not use screened bottom boards, it may be advantageous to use the robbing screens instead of the significant reduction in reducer opening during the extreme heat so that you can maintain maximum ventilation. There are many types of robbing screens, some very simple and some a bit more 'inventive'. Check the internet for robbing screens and you will get an abundance of ideas. You will have to use your judgement on the direction you take.

**Make sure that you keep records.** This is a very important element of the learning process...whether you are a first year beekeeper or a forty year beekeeper...you should always be learning something. Record inspection dates, time and temp and weather conditions, quantity of bees, bee behaviors, signs indicating the presence of the queen (eggs, young larvae, actual sighting), number of frames of brood and stores, brood pattern and frame/comb condition, available laying space, observations of signs of swarm preparation, pollen coming in (color, type if possible), drone production, Varroa Mite count, presence of Small Hive Beetle or other pests, and a number of other issues. Record anything else that is outside of 'normal' once you learn what 'normal' is. Take notes in the bee yard. You will be surprised at how easy it is to get confused over what was observed and which hive it was observed in if you wait to record info after the fact.

**Monitor the hives for queen signs.** Stuff happens...the queen may be failing and the bees need to replace her. She may have died for some reason. Don't allow your hive to remain queen-less. Doing so will likely lead to a 'laying worker' condition. This is a problem that is not easily resolved and oftentimes results in the death of the colony. You need to know that they have the resources to make a new queen or you will have to provide those resources from another colony. Alternately, you can buy and install a queen though as you get late in the season, queen availability may be reduced.. Going into fall/winter with a healthy hive and a young queen are key elements to successful overwintering and sustainable beekeeping. Stay ahead of problems and take action when needed.

**Return extracted frames to the hives** for them to continue to make more honey if you want. There is still a potential fall flow from goldenrod, asters, and other late blooming plants. If you are not interested in harvesting the fall flow, consider starting your winter feeding now (once you have removed your honey crop from spring/summer). Feed 2:1 sugar to water. This has the dual benefit of allowing additional time for winter stores buildup and reducing your bee's propensity to go on a robbing spree since they have resources readily available.

**Consider making splits or nucs** to raise additional bees for next year if this is part of your goal plan. Regardless of your goal plan, this is a great step towards sustainable beekeeping. There are different thoughts on the timing of this, but in any case do not delay or you can pass for 2021 and plan better in 2022.

**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)

**Sugar Roll Method:** [varroa mite monitoring - The Sand Hill](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

**Alcohol Wash Method:** [Alcohol Wash for Mite Control - YouTube](#) (Ctrl+Click link)



Extreme Robbing



Simple Robbing Screen



Another Robbing Screen





## 2021 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Tom Allen  
tallen122@yahoo.com  
Vice President – John Leibinger  
jleibinger@aol.com  
Treasurer – Ralph Brindise  
rbrindise@att.net  
Secretary – David Murillo  
dmurillo3@aol.com  
Director – Al Fullerton  
adfhoney@gmail.com  
Director – Marcin Matelski  
marcin@chicagobees.com  
Director – Stephanie Slater  
stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com

Program Chair – Larry Krengel  
Webmaster – Terri Reeves  
Newsletter Editor – Marianne Hill  
Club Extractor Coordinator – Randy Mead  
Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger  
Snack Coordinators – Cathy Davis & Phil Webb

## Website and Newsletter Submissions

[www.nibainfo.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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 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.

To reserve a date, contact Randy at 847-571-1899 or [rmeadtoys@gmail.com](mailto: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 preparing for each season, robbing, etc. And LOTS of pictures!

Join the fun today!

The queen marking  
color for 2021 is  
**WHITE.**

