



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JULY 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Hello all,

The month of July is kind of busy even though we don't have a monthly meeting.

Saturday June 29th we will have a mentor day beginning at noon. That's the same day that we will put the 3rd and final antibiotic treatment on the hive with European Foul Brood. We are asking everyone who attends this to wear disposable gloves and to not use any personal hive tools. We will not be going into that hive but we want to be sure we don't spread this any further.

We will have our summer picnic July 13th in the park in Lakemoor. We will have the smoker contest and a contest for the best dessert that has honey as an ingredient. Everyone gets to sample the desserts which is sweet! We will provide drinks, sandwiches from Jersey Mike's this year and chips. There is a band playing music too. The best part of the picnic is the time to connect with other club members and talk about bees. We've all experienced a family member or friend who asks you how are your bees doing? It seems that a mere 10 minutes later their eyes glaze over and they have that 1,000 mile stare. That doesn't happen when you're talking to other beekeepers! The cost for attending the picnic is \$10 per person and there's still time to sign up. I know July can be a busy month but even if you can't stay for the entire picnic but you have a little open time please stop by.

We have 2 volunteer opportunities on July 14th. One is in Woodstock for Planet Palooza and the other one is at the Historical Society Museum. More details will be emailed out in the coming days. If you can't volunteer your time for these events please consider stopping by to support other groups. I've been to the Historical Society event in previous years (my mother-in-law has won the pie baking contest) and there are a lot of things to do.

Enjoy July, take care of your bees.

I hope you and your bees are doing well!

Tom



The July NIBA picnic will be hosting a Smoker Competition and a Honey Dessert Competition. All attendees are welcome to join!

Smoker Competition - Rules and Guidelines:

Contestants must bring their own beekeeping smoker and approved smoker fuel - see smoker fuel guidelines below. Contestants are given 3 minutes to light their smokers. After 3 minutes have passed, the smokers are left untouched until the Judge determines that all smokers have gone out. The smoker which produces visible, cool white smoke for the longest period of time wins.

Approved smoker fuel includes:

- saw dust
- leaves/ pine needles
- natural twigs & sticks (no wider than a finger)
- burlap
- newspaper
- cotton
- wood pellets (small pellet variety)
- card board

Any other materials must be approved by the Judge prior to using

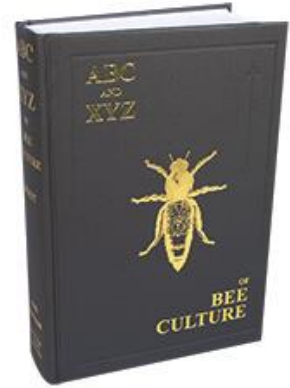
Honey Dessert Competition - Rules & Guidelines:

Bring a homemade honey dessert to be judged. The dessert will be judged based on the presence of honey - the flavor of honey should be tasted - and overall appearance. The dessert will be shared with attendees and judged through blind voting by picnic attendees. Alcoholic items are not permitted.

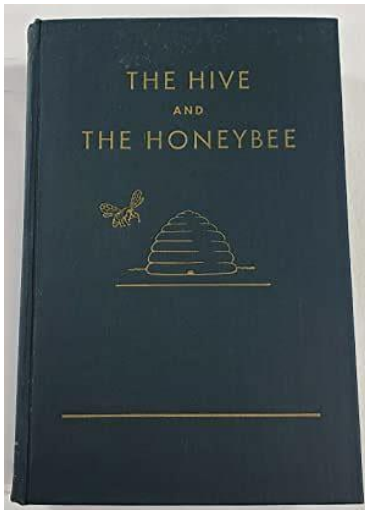


Greetings Beekeepers –

Have you heard of the *ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture*? Beginning in 1877 this book was written and rewritten by Amos Root, one of the pillars of American bee history. It is now in its 42nd edition. Amos died in 1923 but his comprehensive, alphabetized cataloging of all things beekeeping has continued to be refined.



The ABC book (as it is often termed) is not a reading book for the nightstand next to the bed. Root wrote it to be an encyclopedia of current knowledge for the beekeeper. It continues to be that today. The current edition (2020 selling for \$65) begins with “Absconding” and finishes with a history of bee veils.



Another book important through the years has been *The Hive and the Honeybee*, first written by L. L. Langstroth in 1853 and most recently edited by Joe Grahm in 2015. Unlike the ABC it does not attempt to cover all of beekeeping and it does not invest print on much of history, but it is a compendium of the current research and practice in beekeeping written by contributing experts.

For the modern beekeeper with a desire to speak with insight into the history as well as the modern practice of keeping bees, both ancient-made-modern texts are worthy reading.

As a sidelight, former editions of both are often found in used book shops (one of my favorite hangouts). Picking up one of these we will it interesting to see how much of beekeeping has NOT changed. Many of the key sign we observe to guide our time with the bees are found in 100-year-old thoughts. The problems we struggle with (swarming, winter survival...) have been continuing concerns. What is old is new again.

Larry

Don't forget to sign up for the McHenry County Fair Jr and Open Honey Shows. The fair runs July 30th thru August 4 with the Honey competition on July 31st at 10 am in Building E. Registration closes on July 14th. REGISTER NOW!

Chores of the Month –July 2024– The Heat is On! Still lots to do!

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

John Leibinger

What's happening in and around the hive?

The colony population will have peaked by this month. You should be observing lots of bees and still see plenty of brood at all stages being raised to replace the older bees in the colony. The rate of laying of the queen will typically start to taper off from the rate that has been experienced throughout the spring season.

Temperatures are continuing to be on the hot side, 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 preferably, alcohol wash) and take appropriate action to remediate any problems. The best place to start to make the decision on how to treat is to visit the Honeybee Health Coalition website and use their Varroa Management Decision Tool. (See link in General Information section below.) **Beware the high temperatures and the type of treatment you use. FOLLOW THE LABEL!**

The bees should have stored some nectar from May and June and you will likely be finding capped frames of honey in your supers. Unfortunately, many have also found that the bees have been storing a lot of honey in the brood chamber(s). This often leads to a honey bound situation that in turn can lead to overcrowding swarms and based on the word on the street, there has been a **LOT** of that going on. The solution is twofold; 1) Provide space in the brood box for the queen to lay by removing 'honeybound' frames and replacing with new foundation or preferably open drawn comb, 2) Keep providing the bees space to store the honey by adding supers and hope that the bees move some of the nectar/honey up. Don't wait for the bees to cap the existing frames before adding additional supers. Remember, when the bees bring in nectar it is very dilute and takes up lots of space. Over time they remove the moisture and cap the honey, but in the meantime they still require more space for the continuous inflow of new nectar. If you don't provide the space via supers, they will find it in the brood chamber.

This may be the month to start harvesting those capped frames in your supers. You can also harvest frames even if only partially capped or even uncapped, but you **MUST** have a refractometer to be sure that the honey has been ripened enough to get the moisture content down to the 18% or lower level. If you do so early, replace the supers and you may get some more production. The normal late June and early July nectar flows from Catalpa and Linden trees have or will shortly have run their course, but nectar flows continue into July with more herbaceous plants than trees and then taper off as we enter August. When removing honey to harvest, make sure that there is still plenty of honey left for the bees to survive the dearth in August. If you decide to harvest all your supers sometime this month, and if the nectar flow slows down, you will need to feed sugar syrup to help get them through the lean times of mid to late summer. Keep in mind that 'honey' storage at this time will likely be mostly the sugar water you are providing. When a flow restarts for the fall, you will have to decide whether to replace with fresh supers (with drawn comb) to collect a fall harvest or to just let the bees continue storing for their winter needs.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Maintain the space around your hive(s). Your bees work hard at thermo-regulation 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 increases 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 (not your neighbor's pool!) as we move into the heat of summer. Bees collect water (and a fair amount of it) to help cool the hive as part of their thermo-regulation efforts.

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

Know what you have and keep records. Keep varroa growth in check by utilizing a miticide, organic acids, drone comb culling, a combination of IPM methods, and/or a brood break. **Pay attention to labeling instructions (particularly temperature ranges for safe use)** when using treatments and be mindful that you cannot leave honey supers (for human consumption) on for all methods of treatments. The only treatments currently EPA approved for use while honey supers are on are Hopguard 2 or 3, Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS), Formic Pro, and Api-Bioxal (Oxalic Acid). **Remember: THE LABEL IS THE LAW ...PERIOD.**

Sometimes regulations make obvious sense; sometimes they seem.....hmm....less obvious.

Your specific approach will be influenced by your personal goals, philosophy and ethics, but, if you have a mite problem, **doing nothing is not an acceptable answer if you want your colony to thrive and survive.** You must

have healthy hives going into later summer so the colony can raise healthy nurse bees that in turn raise healthy winter bees that will carry the colony through until next Spring. One of your Goals should be **Sustainability** (you want the bees to survive over winter and for you to avoid having to buy new bees every Spring!).

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 know 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. 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. Don't allow your hive to remain queenless. 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. Stay ahead of problems and take action when needed.

Harvest honey appropriately. Don't overharvest, there are some lean weeks ahead for your bees. Consider feeding if needed.

Return extracted frames to the hives for them to continue to make more honey.

If you are calling it a season for your honey crop and are looking to store your frames, place your super of wet combs above your inner cover and below your outer cover. Some beekeepers will put an empty super in between the inner cover and the wet super. Either way, the bees will come up and clean/dry it out and refurbish the comb to 'like new' condition. Don't leave them on too long or the bees will start refilling them. This process makes for much easier/cleaner winter storing. Some beekeepers will elect to store their frames 'wet' to stimulate quick activity next year. Your choice, but beware that wet frames can be the target of various pest so store them well.

Consider starting to split out some nucs to raise bees for next year if this is part of your goal plan.

Consider raising some queens to go into fall/winter with fresh young queens. Statistically, survival of winter colonies improves and reduction/delay/sometimes elimination of spring swarming is a result. Don't delay though, time is of the essence. There are many ways to go about this that do not require a lot of equipment or experience. At the backyard beekeeper level, you can keep it pretty simple. The bees are very good at this if you create the proper conditions. Do some research.

Start to watch out for robbing later in the month. Reduce entrances or add robbing screens if needed. Don't dawdle around when harvesting honey.

Make a decision on how you will configure your hives for overwintering. Single Deep brood chamber?, Single and a Medium?, Two Deep?, Three Deep?, or the equivalent conversions to all mediums if that is your management preference.

This is something I should have brought to light earlier. You will likely have to work with equipment (frames with drawn comb are the biggest concern) that you have already available as the bees production of comb in frames becomes less likely as flows taper off. Stimulative feeding (if you have removed supers) may get you some activity, but as time passes in the month there will be much greater risk of stimulating robbing rather than comb building...**so beware.** Depending on your experience, probably best/safest to go with what you have available rather than try to stimulate the bees to build more comb.

General Info

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)

[Varroa Management Decision Tool](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Sugar Roll Method: [Sugar Roll Mite Inspection - YouTube](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

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

Pollen identification chart:

[Pollen Color Chart](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Inspection sheets:

[Inspection Checksheet \(basic\)](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

[Inspection Checksheet \(detailed\)](#) (Ctrl+Click link)



Beeyard Extras For July

Providing Water for the Colony

- Bird Baths or shallow pails/buckets with Stones or Pebbles for the Bees to perch on
- A Slow dripping hose or outside faucet dripping on a sponge or cloth that will hold moisture
- Chicken waterer with pebbles in feeder rim to prevent drowning
- Short section of soaker hose (requires cutting a couple feet from full sized soaker hose and attaching female hose end and plug on other other end) attached to regular hose turned on very, very, low. Alternately, use a regular soaker hose to water trees or bushes relatively near your hives. Bees will find it.
- Personal Favorite: Boardman Feeder filled with water and attached at entrance (I also make new, shorter entrance reducers to fit).*

Clearing Bees from Supers

-WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

- Shaking and brushing bees from each frame and then moving into an empty covered super (top and bottom) or better yet a Hive Butler. You've got to be quick to move cleared frame to empty box and get it covered. This is best done with an assistant. Consider moving the super a short distance from the hive when doing this. The bees will find their way back. Tip: Flick the bees off the comb rather than taking brush strokes. Also do this while holding the frame by an end bar and flick from the bottom bar towards the top bar. You do this to avoid bees getting injured if their legs fall into uncapped cells (remember, the cells are built at an angle).
- Fume Board. Effective and relatively fast. Don't leave on for extended time or you risk tainting the smell/taste of the honey. I prefer the pleasant smelling versions (almond scent) rather than the ones that are made with butyric acid and smell somewhere between vomit and worse than vomit. It chases the bees away for sure....and anyone in your household if you spill any on your clothing.
- Blowing bees off with low powered leaf blower. This can be a little tough on the bees.
- Abandonment method: Remove the supers after sunset but before its dark. Stand them on end near the hive. Bees will leave to go back to the hive. Note: Best done after a flow. Avoid this method during a dearth as you may incite a little robbing. Take the boxes away shortly after dark. You may have to brush off a few stragglers. Favorite method of C.C. Miller so it's an oldie, but doesn't require any extra equipment.
- Personal favorite: Escape Board with cone escapes, alternately a Triangle Escape Board (almost as good). Generally have to leave on a day or two to clear (don't leave on much longer or the bees will figure out how to get back in). If you have a notched inner cover, you must close off that opening so no bees can re-enter during the process. If you have a particularly well populated colony or if you use single brood hive management practices, consider putting a super filled with empty frames below the escape board to allow space for the bees to move into.*
- No matter the method chosen, try to extract the frames within a couple days of clearing them. This will help prevent damage from pests (Small Hive Beetle, Wax Moth).

John

2024 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Tom Allen

tallen122@yahoo.com

Vice President – Ryan Harrison

rharrison74@gmail.com

Secretary – Kristen Mueller

khuschitt@gmail.com

Treasurer - Ralph Brindise

rbrindise@att.net

Director - John Leibinger

jleibinger@aol.com

Director - Al Fullerton

adfhoneymail@gmail.com

Director – Andre Szechowycz

aszzech804@gmail.com

Program Chair – Larry Kregel

Webmaster – Terri Reeves

Newsletter Editor – Sue Pinkawa

Club Extractor Coordinator – Al Fullerton

Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

Snack Coordinator – Robin Tibbits

Honey Extractor

Did you know that your membership in NIBA includes the opportunity to rent one of the clubs 3 honey extractors?

Two of the extractors are manual, a 4 frame a 3 frame. The third is motorized and is capable of extracting both sides of 9 frames at a time.

Rental fee for either of the manual extractor is \$10.00 for 3 days with a \$10.00 security deposit. The electric (motorized) 9 frame extractor costs \$25.00 to rent for 2 days with a \$75.00 security deposit. Deposits will be returned if equipment is returned on time, clean, and undamaged.

The extractors come with most equipment needed to make the uncapping and extraction experiences go smoothly, except of course, the honey frames and buckets.

To reserve a date contact Al Fullerton by phone or text at 815-382-7139 or email adfhoneymail@gmail.com, if you don't get a timely response, just phone. Pick it up in Cary Illinois.

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. spinkawa@gmail.com

**The queen marking color for
2024 is Green.**

