



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

It's June and it's Summer (some of the days). A few late frosts had some of us worrying about the buds on trees and our vegetable gardens. It seems the frost wasn't as hard as predicted and most everything survived. Our Governor plans to reopen everything like it used to be on June 11th, which is the day of our June meeting. However, our meeting will still be virtual via Zoom. We're planning a picnic July 10th, while following the State of Illinois and CDC guidelines but they're ever changing. We might have only some of the details to talk about during the meeting. We should be meeting back in person at McHenry County College beginning in August!!! Details to come regarding which room at MCC we will be using and mask and social distancing restrictions at that time. We expect there will be no restrictions however, you should dress to your level of comfort. We're talking about using Zoom as well so members can choose to be in-person or virtual. It will be exciting for our new members that have never been to an in-person meeting to see how the meeting was run "back in the day". We'll get our snack committee back up and running. And don't forget about buying those raffle tickets for the door prizes! We'll have to wear pants at MCC 😊 and can't have the adult beverage of our choice to drink during the meeting, but I'm really looking forward to seeing all of you again.

Those of you that returned the survey about holding a picnic this year told us that the majority of the members want to have a picnic. The date will be July 10th, the start time will be around 1pm, with the food being served around 3pm. NIBA will supply some sort of a meal that complies with the current Health department regulations. The food

options will be sent out when they're finalized. We will also supply water and soft drinks. As I write this we will not be holding a honey dessert contest, but we will be doing an open hive inspection and a smoker contest. Please dress to your level of comfort for the open hive inspection. Bring your smoker if you want to participate in the smoker contest; NIBA will supply the fuel for the smokers. We will send out an invitation for the picnic. We will be ordering individual meals (and no extras), so your RSVP is very important. If you come without a reservation you won't have a meal. We will have a band again this year, and we plan to have some lawn games to play. We're not asking anyone to bring a dish to pass but you can bring one to dance with. We will be accepting donations of 1-pound jars of honey for the fair at the picnic so thank you in advance! There will be a porta-potty on site along with a hand washing station and extra hand sanitizer. We hope to have a club extractor there so new members can see what they can rent to extract honey in the fall in case there are questions on its use.

It's time for the broken record again. Please take a look at our SignUp Genius event for the Fair and sign up if you can. We have had a pretty good number of time slots filled up already so thank you for that! Please remember to include your t-shirt size so we order the correct size for you. We hope to make things a bit easier this year by using barcodes and a scanner to track sales, along with the ability to take credit cards!

The Cook Dupage beekeepers have been nice enough to include us in their Randy Oliver webinar on June 19th at 6:30pm. A zoom link will be emailed out when we receive it.

ASK CARL

I've put on my supers, I've done my mite counts, the queen is laying a consistent pattern, all is good with my bees, what should I be on the lookout for in the next 4 to 6 weeks?

Early in June, make sure they have sufficient storing space. If on a flow, nectar can come in quick. The daily gain is about a third the amount of nectar that was brought in. A 20- to 30-pound gain in a week is not uncommon.



If you want well-filled supers, rotate the three outer frames (on both sides) when the super is nearly filled up. When reaching the end of the honey flow (late June/early July) put the last super above the inner cover. If they have space below, they will fill it up, and if they need space they will go above.



When a hive starts to store honey, they are less likely to swarm unless they run out of space.



The Michigan Pollinator Initiative has resumed its monthly webinars.

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

Michigan Beekeeping Webinar June 2021 - Monday, June 14th at 6:00pm CDT

Michigan Beekeeping Webinar July 2021- Monday, July 12th at 6:00pm CDT

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.

Dates and Topics

This series will be offered the last Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. CDT.
June 29 – Reading a Honey Bee Frame with Kate Ihle, USDA

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

Illinois State Beekeepers Association Summer Meeting - June 12th.

Agenda and registration information:

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

IN THE BEEYARD

Sherman Hospital, Elgin - June 5, 2021, Mentor Session
Larry Krengel

It was Saturday afternoon and we were checking two hives NIBA uses as mentoring hives. We had not seen them for a while. As is often the case, we did not find what we expected. Beekeeping is full of surprises. The Northern hive is doing well - two well-packed deeps to which we added an excluder and two honey supers.



The southern hive was found with a surprisingly small population. By the evidence we found in the lower of the two boxes it appear they have swarmed. If I were a betting man, based on the remains of queen cells, I would bet they sent off a swarm and an after-swarm... maybe two.

No idea if they have a virgin queen still on board. Maybe. To be of help, we moved a frame with young larvae from the north hive to the south hive. In a week we can look to see if they have created a queen cell... a sign no virgin was left behind. If no queen cell is present then, we might have a queen that will start laying soon. If we are impatient, we could buy a queen. I wouldn't. At this point the strength of this colony is quite low and the prospect for a honey crop is low. Left on their own, there is a good chance they will strengthen and have a good chance to survive the winter.

It was a good day in the beeyard with a good group of beekeepers. If we had been more of a timely presence in the problem hive, we could have intervened earlier. Just thinkin'.....

SAY BEES!

We know many of you enjoy taking photos in your apiaries. We'd like to invite you to submit your favorite beekeeping-related photos. We'll conduct an informal poll during the monthly meetings, and the top pick will be featured in the following month's newsletter and as the group's Facebook page cover photo. Here are the details:

1. *Submit one photo per month by 9:00 pm the Thursday immediately preceding the scheduled monthly meeting.*
2. *Email your photo as an attachment to stephanie.d.slater@gmail.com with "**NIBA Photo**" typed in the subject line.*
3. *Please include your name and a short caption in the body of the email.*
4. *Each month's top pick may be used for future club activities.*
5. *Participate in as many months as you'd like!*



MAY PHOTO CONTEST WINNER



A Bee Tail
Photo by Randy Mead.



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>

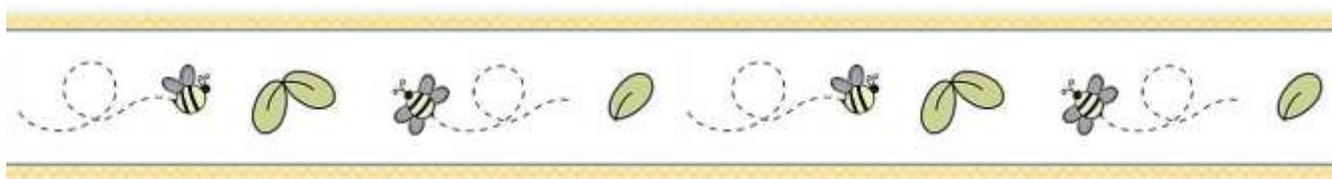
<http://cestanislaus.ucanr.edu/files/141096.pdf>

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 - JUNE

John Leibinger

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

What's happening in the hive?

The colony population should be expanding fairly rapidly and reaching its peak this month....if the weather ever normalizes. Like May, in June the nectar flows and pollen availability are quite diverse and abundant in our area so there is great wealth of resources for colony growth. Resources/nutrition lead to growing healthy hives. You should notice that the bees are probably no longer taking sugar syrup, but rather are collecting nectar from natural sources. Remove the feeders at this transition. Large healthy colonies are susceptible to an increased swarming urge. Make sure that there is plenty of space for colony expansion. The queen needs room to lay eggs. The workers need room for nectar and pollen storage. As you inspect frames in the brood nest, be mindful of excessive nectar/sugar syrup storage in the brood nest. There have been many people reporting issues of their hive's brood nest becoming "honey bound". Excessive storage in this area can restrict the queen's ability to find space to lay and can lead to swarming or reduced colony growth due to lack of egg laying space. Remove and replace excessive storage frames with frames of open drawn comb or new foundation. **ADD HONEY SUPERS!** Keep in mind that the bee population is not the only expanding population. Varroa mites will be on the increase also. Monitor their growth by doing regular mite checks (monthly sugar roll or preferably, the more accurate alcohol wash). Know what you have and keep records. Keep their growth in check by utilizing a miticide, organic acids, drone comb culling, a brood break, sundry other IPM methods, or combinations of any of these. 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.

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

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)

Finish assembling and painting *additional* equipment, if you have not already done it. You should be on a second deep brood box now or very soon (or third or fourth if using medium brood boxes). Brood box addition may vary depending on your management philosophy and specific goals. Let's hope for the best and have honey supers and frames built and ready to install this month.

Feed your Bees.. Feed them until they stop taking the supplemental feed. At some point in the month, if they haven't already, they will switch over to entirely natural nectar sources, at which point you can remove the feeders.

Spend time observing your bees. This is one of the reasons you took up this hobby. Observe their comings and goings. If you have multiple hives (and you should), observe and compare the behaviors of the different colonies. Talk to other beekeepers. This is 'mission critical' to learning what 'normal' is, and a key to becoming a better beekeeper. Are the bees bringing in pollen? What color? What is the source? (See Pollen Identification Chart link in General Info section below).

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. Ask for help and guidance. It may not be hands-on help right away this year (but it is coming), but a good mentor with practical experience will be able to ask the right questions and provide valuable guidance.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Be very observant of signs of swarming and take appropriate action. This is most relevant to overwintered hives and recently installed nucleus colonies. Many reports indicate that the nucs purchased through the club this year appear to be really thriving....so much so that a number of folks have reported seeing queen cells and others already experiencing swarming. Swarming is not likely a big problem for new beekeepers that started with packages on new foundation or foundationless, but for the rest, keep your eyes peeled for telltale queen cups/cells at the bottom of the frames. Do they have eggs or larvae in them? If they do, the swarm is coming....if not, keep watching and provide additional space immediately. Additional information on swarming can be obtained by reading Megan Milbrath's article on Swarms (see link below under General Info **Meghan Milbrath on Northern Swarms** for an extremely comprehensive dissertation on swarming).

Add Honey Supers

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.

Make sure the bees have a water source as we move into the heat of summer. Bees collect water to help cool the hive as part of their thermo-regulation efforts.

Monitor for Varroa Mites monthly. (See General Info section below for references to mite checking procedures)

Treat for Varroa Mites as needed. (See General Info section below link to Honey Bee Health Coalition which has info on mite treatments)

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 counts, 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 in which hive it was observed if you wait to record info after the fact. (See Hive Inspection Form link in General Info section below of one of many checklists that can be found in a quick Google search. Not necessarily the best...just an example.)

The following is a repeat of last month, but it bears repeating. May and June are the months for swarms.

Get your swarm traps out! Anybody interested in getting FREE BEES? This is the time of year to take advantage of the natural biological rhythms of the hive. Overwintered colonies are highly likely to swarm. Why not be an opportunist and capture a colony that otherwise will find a hole in a tree? It is fun, challenging, and IMMENSELY EXCITING when you find bees in your trap. Additionally, these are often colonies that have overwintered....Northern Illinois proven stock capable of handling our winter....wouldn't you want to add some of that quality to your apiary? Here is a swarm trapping website...Jason is "the man" when it comes to swarm trapping. He has lots of advice and encouragement on swarm trapping along with free plans for building swarm traps. Check it out.

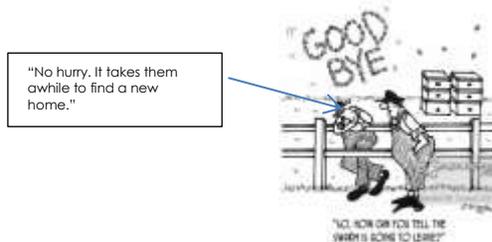
[Swarm Trapping & Bait Hives by Jason Bruns](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

[Swarm Trapping video with Solomon Parker and Jason Bruns](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Assemble some gear to BE PREPARED to catch a swarm hanging in a tree, on a fence, or somewhere else they aren't wanted! Be ready in case a friend calls and says, "Get here quick, my neighbor is freaking out! There are a bunch of bees hanging on my neighbor's swing set, and we don't know what to do!"

From personal experience at the end of May, I can tell you that the difference between thinking you are ready and truly being ready is the difference between catching that swarm and waving goodbye to them. I watched a swarm exit a hive and recorded them massing up on a tree branch at about 12 feet up. "This one will be easy", I mused. I then decided that I wanted to add a few more undrawn foundation frames to the swarm's new hive so that I would take maximum advantage of the swarm's proclivity to produce comb. In that extra 10-15 minutes that I was prepping frames, my 'soon to be caught swarm' had reached consensus on a new home and off they went. They were in the tree for only about half an hour. I had never seen bees leave that quickly.

Be Prepared....Really Prepared.



Note: Swarm trapping and swarm 'catching' are two different things. Swarm trapping involves putting out 'bait hives' for bees to find and inhabit (and then join your apiary). Swarm catching involves capturing a swarm from a tree, bush, fence, or any of a hundred other areas where an initial swarm may land shortly after exiting the hive and while waiting for the scout bees to find a new home. Usually this is the result of a panicked phone call you receive from someone who knows you are a beekeeper. This can be an **INTENSELY EXCITING** activity.

Get your blood flowing! Capture or Trap a Swarm!

Fascinating video to watch the action going on in a clustered swarm. You can observe a lot of scouts doing waggle dances. It gets real interesting at around 24:15 minute mark.

[Check out this swarm video](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

[Catching a swarm](#) (Ctrl+Click link)



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)

Pollen identification chart:

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

Inspection sheets:

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

[Inspection Checksheet \(detailed\)](#) (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)

Mite Treatment Information [Honey Bee Health Coalition](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

[Meghan Milbrath on Northern Swarms](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Stay Safe!



EXHIBIT YOUR HONEY/BEESWAX AT THE MCHENRY COUNTY FAIR

Registration for the open honey show is open **June 1 through July 18**. Drop off is **August 3** and judging is **August 4**.

For more information and to register online, visit

<https://www.mchenrycountyfair.com/exhibitors>

To view the rules and classes, check out

<https://www.mchenrycountyfair.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Honey-Open.pdf>

We had a lot of fun and practice last October during our virtual honey show. The McHenry County Fair honey show will be a fun and educational opportunity, and we hope NIBA is well-represented.



2019 Honey Show



2018 Honey Show

2021 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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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 – 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 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.

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.

