



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

As we move our calendar page to September we shift our focus as beekeepers to helping the bees survive the winter. During the summer months, we are usually trying to manipulate the bees to make as much honey as possible for us. Now we must manipulate them to make good healthy winter bees that will overwinter well. We will be testing and treating if necessary for Varroa mites and feeding them to make sure they have enough food to get through the winter. Most of us have pulled our supers and extracted the honey by the end of August, so the bees have time to store the nectar they collect for themselves. This year, like most years, has been a weird year for honey production. I spoke with many of you that volunteered at the fair about how well your bees were doing and some told me this has been the best year ever. Others said it was their worst year. As we talked, we wondered why this was happening. For those that were having a bad year, as well as those that were having a great year, their hives were where they were in previous years. The weather between all of us is relatively the same. No one made big changes in how they worked the bees. One person had his hives in the back yard like always, and one hive was doing much better than the other one. I guess it's another year that proves bees will do what bees will do.

This had me thinking about the strength of the queen. When we order packages or nucs, we hope to get the type of bees we want, but there's no guarantee we will. I hope my queens are well-bred with good quality drones, but we can't check for that. If a colony has to make a queen, the new virgin queen will fly to a drone congregation area to mate with up to 20 drones before flying back to the hive. Pheromones from the drones help the queen select drones from a different family than

hers to make sure her offspring are genetically strong and diverse. Queen strength is a contributing factor to a colony successfully overwintering, so what can we do to have strong queens? We can buy them from a reputable breeder, let the colony make their own and hope she mates well, or have a queen breeders group within NIBA that could promote queen sharing. The queen's genetics in a queen sharing group should be diverse so that the colonies become stronger because of their genes. You could also buy queens from different sellers to add in hygienic behavior, which should be passed on to their offspring. If you're interested in raising queens, Larry Kregel has taught a queen-rearing class at MCC in the past and may teach one this year. Maybe we can start a group for queen rearing that would benefit us as beekeepers and our bees.

We have a nominations committee that is looking for members that want to be the NIBA Vice President or President. Kristen Mueller, Jim Haisler, Jackie Tesser and Brad Artman make up the group, they will be sending out an email about the upcoming election.

A chef from the culinary department at NIU contacted me about collaborating with students from local high schools and NIU culinary students to teach beekeeping in order to increase their garden yields. I'll have more information in coming months. This could be a fun way to introduce beekeeping to groups of young people. It sounds like they will be looking for donations of woodenware, tools, and bees, so if you're inclined to help, let me know.

Tom

Meeting agenda for September 8th

We will be meeting at the garage near the hives at MCC at 6:30PM

We will try to make this meeting accessible through Zoom but the Wi-Fi signal isn't very strong out there.

This meeting will consist of extracting the super frames from the MCC hives, we'll be uncapping the frames and using the new 9 frame electric extractor to spin the frames. If you're new to beekeeping and want to learn how to do everything needed to extract honey from the frames this is the perfect meeting to attend. If you want to use this extractor being at the meeting in person will count at the training you need to rent the extractor. We also have a 3 frame hand crank extractor there if you want to try that too. Please try to attend this meeting in person, you'll see where our hives are at MCC, you'll learn about the new extractor and you'll be helping NIBA get the honey we sell at the various events.

I've marked the location of where you should park and where the garage is on a map. If you have mobility issues you can park along the road or in the radio station parking lot.

This photo is old and doesn't show the garage but the area I've circled is where the garage is located.



It's time to select NIBA Member of the Year for 2022.

The criteria for the nominations are pretty general and you can submit your nomination at this link <https://forms.gle/xYn5H35Gh3Mwy9uGA>.

We'll also have cards for you to fill out at the September meeting. The deadline is September 30th. We'll announce the winner at the October meeting.

NIBA now has an electric extractor, a Hillco Mini Max made right here in Illinois (Minonk, IL).

It is a 9-frame radial, meaning it will extract both sides of 9 medium or short frames. It can also extract deep frames, but only 3 at a time tangentially, that is, one side at a time.

The cost to borrow it for two days is \$25, plus security and cleaning deposits, \$50 and \$25 respectively. Deposits will be returned if the extractor and uncapping equipment is returned on time, clean, and undamaged.

The extractor comes with everything you need, except the honey frames and buckets. Included is a 2-bucket uncapping system, a knife, 2 types of uncapping forks, a stainless steel strainer, and a few other items to make the uncapping experience go smoothly. In order to borrow the extractor, you need to be a NIBA member in good standing and receive training in its use. We suggest that you borrow one of the manual extractor the club owns before borrowing the electric 9-frame. That will give you the experience of, and learn what's involved in, extracting honey while having fund cranking. Plus the manual extractors are cheaper - \$10 with \$10 deposit - and are lent for 3 days instead of just 2. Contact Randy Mead for the manual extractors.

Al Fullerton lives in Cary and is currently the contact to schedule the 9-frame electric extractor. Contact him by phone or text at (815) 382-7139 or email adfhone@gmail.com. Note, Al doesn't always hear the text or email notification due to background noise, so if you get no response, just phone him.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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/>



Bee Culture[®]
 The Magazine of American Beekeeping
 BEEing Diverse: Inspiring Leaders in Beekeeping
 Mark Your Calendars for September 30 - October 2, 2022
The Return Of Bee Culture's Annual Event

We are optimistically going forward with our planning of this event.
 We will continue to monitor the COVID situation.
 We hope to see you in September/October!
 Be sure and visit www.Store.BeeCulture.com

ROOT
 RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

<https://www.beeculture.com/being-diverse-inspiring-leaders-in-beekeeping/>



UF FLORIDA, AUBURN UNIVERSITY, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY, NC STATE UNIVERSITY, LSU, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, USDA, TEXAS A&M, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

At Home Beekeeping Webinar
 Distance Learning for Beekeepers

We're offering beekeepers the chance to attend virtual meetings from the comfort of one's own home using a computer or mobile device. Speakers include university researchers and extension specialists from across the SE US as well as USDA ARS researchers. Each event will bring participants up to date on timely beekeeping topics with time for Q & A included.

All are welcome!! Join us for this free event!!

- July 26: Beekeeping in the extreme: Dealing with Mother Nature, with C. Swan (ARCS)
- August 30: Planting and managing wildflowers for forage, with K. Perry (USDA-ARS)
- Sept. 27: Behavior, chemical ecology, and genetics of bees, with T. Reamy (FARMS)
- Oct. 25: Breeding and performance of bees with Varroa sensu lato Hygiene, with J. Beekun (USDA-ARS)

Last Tuesday of the month
 6:00 - 7:30 pm Central Time

Watch via Zoom Webinar
<https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838>
 or Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/LowndesCountyStation/>
 Questions? Email [Allyson Shabel ally02127@ars.usda.gov](mailto:Allyson.Shabel@ars.usda.gov)

Our institutions are equal opportunity educators and employers. Everyone is welcome! Please let us know if you have accessibility needs.

SNELGROVE VERTICAL SWARM - PART 3

David Murillo

Today is August 30th. Now we are at the end of August. Extraction took place for most of my hives, and we received more honey than in the past. Was it due to the use of the Snelgrove board? I'd like to think so. With that said, I've heard plenty of beekeepers say this was a good year overall. Being real to myself, I have to admit I that I don't have a baseline or real measure for what I've done. More honey than in the past? Yes, but how much of that was my doing? A little more on that further down this article.

For the month of August, the McHenry County Fair came and went, and our honey placed 1st in the Open Honey Show for the "Light Extracted Strained Honey" category, and for the "Comb Honey in Round sections", otherwise known as "Ross Rounds". Warranted the latter had no competition, but none-the-less it's an achievement we had been working on for 3 years and now we have bumbled upon 2 Blue Ribbons. Worth celebrating in our book as it is certainly a measure of success for some.



During the month, I spent the time continuing with the door manipulations, but the bees have become defensive. That, coupled with unforeseen deadlines at work due to new responsibilities, the inspections have regretfully become rather brief. The population in the hives have peaked and the bees will begin their transition to winter bees in the coming weeks but they are no longer happy to see me, if they ever really were. The supers left behind are still on the hives. A relegation of duty at best. Now I am faced with a predicament; it's the end of August and I have not treated for mites, nor have I removed the rest of the supers, nor had I made a final decision on what to do with the extra colony on top. I had ideas and plans, but they have now changed. Because August is known as being a dearth month, chances are they have consumed more than they brought in. That's fine, it's probably the right thing to do, which is

to leave them with honey to get by. Clearly, I have a few decisions to make: Do I combine the hives now and let the queen selection to mother nature? Do I remove the supers at this point and worst-case scenario take whatever is in there and plan to use it for mead making if its uncapped? Do I move to treat for mites right away?

I feel like these are decision that will have to be made almost immediately as September starts to roll in the colder nights. As I type this article, decisions have been made: I will combine the hives and let mother nature make her choice, as there can only be one queen. I may have failed to mention, I am at full capacity and out of hardware so I cannot expand. A great feeling to anyone who invests in anything; everything you purchased has been put to use. Boy, was I proud... until now. Creating new hives will not be an option, as much as I would love to. What do most beekeepers say? "You can never have enough bees." I will not remove the remaining supers right away and will leave them a few more weeks in the hope of a small fall harvest. And once the harvest is done, I will treat for mites. Not the best plan, but at least I have a way forward.

As I mentioned in my first article, this is about my experience using the Snelgrove board, and managing a 2-queen vertical colony. So, here are my results as I see them:

- 1) I am happy with the decision to run the Snelgrove hives and learned a lot in the process. That is a passion of mine; to never stop learning. The profession I am in, and beekeeping provide that. And sometimes experience is the best teacher. I am happy to have done this and will do it again.
- 2) The Ross Round kit was bought 2 years ago, with no success for 2 years, sitting around, getting cursed at, until now. Mind you, this is our 4th year beekeeping, and not a seasoned veteran by any means. Rather, an amateur back-yard beekeeper with 5 hives. We harvested about one and a half boxes

of Ross rounds from 1 hive, and were the only entry in the 2022 McHenry County Fair Open Honey Show, winning 1st place by default. The new, undisputed, Blue-Ribbon champions. With of all the beekeepers in McHenry County, nobody else showed up. Whether they made Ross Rounds or not, ours won. I'll take that any day, a victory that lasts until next year's Honey Show. And this time, it's not about the money. It's about the prestige to say "Our premium raw honey won first place in the county.", for a whole year. From my perspective, there is only 1 better title, and that is "Best of Show". Had we been better planners, we would have entered Cut Comb honey as well, as our bees make comb honey too, or maybe a frame. And whether you win or not, it's the experience that counts, but ours won this time. Forever memorialized in McHenry County Fair history for 2022. I hope this motivates more entries next year from all over, as it should be a true competition for the title. So, start planning now if you are interested in going down in "honey history", and perhaps we spar next year, for a honey title. Believe me when I write that this brings additional pride to what is for many a labor of love.

- 3) While I feel we harvested more honey than in the past, this may have nothing to do with me or my manipulations. But it kept me more engaged than in at least the past year, as it was something shiny and new. It made me feel like a new beekeeper again as I tinkered with the doors, and inspected my hives with more dedication. I enjoyed every bit of it, week after week.
- 4) I learned a lot about our bees, my limitations, the decisions I made along the way, and more importantly what I would do differently.

So, with that written, here is a summarized list of things I would do differently, were I to go

back in time one year and tell the younger, maybe not so young, version of me:

- Prepare a dedicated calendar way ahead of time, and noting on the calendar when to expect a queen, have my door manipulations documented and planned (for various reasons, such as timing of queen mating flight, and expected return to the hive), and when to expect to see eggs in the new colony. I did all of the above kind of on the fly, learning as I go, and keeping track for these articles. I know it's a lot to do or plan for ahead of time, but it makes the hive management more predictable. Less fumbling around. I was going in blind, no calendar, and learned a few lessons the hard way.
- In conjunction with bullet point one, I would manipulate the back door to coincide with the return of the mated queen. You'll want the young mated queen to be as far as possible from the bottom hive. A mistake that can prove fatal to the top colony if the young queen accidentally goes into the front bottom hive entrance. I got lucky this time.
- I would limit my Snelgrove hives to 2, and only to the hives in my backyard. My own personal advice to me, which may go unheeded next year. You have to religiously manipulate the hive doors week in and week out, and if you have an off-site apiary as I do, it is a chore that needs to be done if you want this to work as intended. It's not like only inspecting a hive, which that can be put off for weeks at a time. These bees need to be accessible and the door manipulations need to be performed. Additionally, as I described in the 2nd article; the inspection process is much more laborious. And you'll always have double the number of bees attacking you (if you only run single hives).
- Take more notes. I would take more detailed notes on my findings for future

years. While I took plenty of notes, one can never have too many notes. You are more likely to retain what you learned when you document what you see and experience, and can return to them in the future for guidance. I would have taken more notes, and pictures for that matter.

- I would have more hard-ware handy. I was at full capacity. Every single deep frame/box, super frame/box I own was used. It was a great feeling. Nothing is sitting around collecting dust or depreciating without the return. To run the hives at full capacity with no hardware sitting idle was rewarding... until. Until I realized I needed to remove and replace super frames, considered making additional splits, or maybe adding a queen excluder to the top hive and adding another super. Any way you slice it, I needed more hardware and I was completely "sold out", as I realized I should keep a little surplus hardware on hand, it's a future decision that will need to be made should I do this many Snelgrove hives again.

As I reflect on the decision to manage a vertical two-queen colony, a few things are clear: one of them being we all only have a limited number of "beekeeping seasons". That's the truth. Each and every one of them

counts, and assuming I am blessed with a long life and can continue to be active, there may very well be less than 30 left, and I enjoyed the experience and rewards doing of something new this season. Last month, I asked a couple questions; will my time and labor pay off? I believe it has with multiple dividends across the board. Will I have a great harvest? I believe I did, but can not say it was all my doing. Have I thwarted and tricked mother nature by keeping bees working the hive and preventing them from swarming? I believe I have.

There you have it folks. Writing these articles helped as I needed to have content and forced me document my actions. I thank Larry Kregel for suggesting the idea that I, David Octavio Murillo, write an article to be



memorialized in time on my experience for all of the Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association members to gain experience from. I thank the

current NIBA Board Members and Marianne Hill for allowing me the chance to publish these articles. As a portion of the Board will be turning over, the pages turn on our organization. So why not do something new, and get involved? The benefits and rewards are what you make of them, and there are plenty to be had.

CHORES OF THE MONTH – SEPTEMBER

John Leibinger

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

What's happening in the hive?

You will observe that the colony population will start to decline noticeably this month. There will, however, still be significant brood rearing going on as the nurse bees work to raise the 'winter bees' (diutinus bees) that will carry this colony through the winter. Though they appear the same on the outside, winter bees are physiologically different from the worker bees raised in spring and summer. They have more fat bodies which produce the vitellogenin that is crucial to their long lives. These bees are very important bees for the survival of the colony, so do all you can to assist them through their wintery journey. That means leaving or providing them with sufficient stores to overwinter, providing them protection against robbing, providing protection against mouse infiltration, providing protection against wind infiltration in the hive, and helping prevent disease by controlling the ever present Varroa mite.

You are likely observing the Fall 'Ousting of the Drones'. Don't confuse this with robbing. A small group of workers will be ganging up on a drone, dragging him to the edge of the bottom board and dumping his lazy, freeloaded carcass over the abyss (drama added for the smiles of our ever increasing female beekeeper population).

You may notice a significant change in the odor (not a pleasant change) of your hives (second or third week of Sept, historically, but maybe a bit different this year....maybe a bit earlier in this strange weather year). This is very common, and is a result of goldenrod pollen collection. FYI, I was just out observing my hives (late August) and pollen is coming in quite frequently. Life is good in the beehive!

You may well be seeing robbing occur. With continued good weather, we may experience a Fall nectar flow primarily from goldenrod and asters, but as the month progresses, food sources will become more lean and opportunistic robbing may occur. Weak hives are most susceptible, so consider combining a weak hive with a stronger one to help the combined colony make it through winter. If successful, you can split the hive in early Spring to increase your colony count.

A robbing event can not only kill a colony, but can destroy drawn out comb which is, arguably, the most valuable resource you have in the hive.

Expect to find your bees have developed some 'attitude' as we get into the month. Reduced resources not only lead to robbing behaviors but also defensive behaviors. Dress accordingly.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Finalize your annual harvest if you haven't already. Let the bees collect and store some natural fall food after your harvest. Return wet supers to the hives to allow the bees to clean them up. Place the wet super above the inner cover and below the outer cover.* Some beekeepers recommend putting an empty super between the inner cover and the wet super to add additional space. Either way works. This has a twofold benefit. First, the bees can pull the remaining honey from the wet super and store it in the boxes below. Second, it gets the super frames cleaned and dried and in most cases repaired and ready for winter storage. You may be surprised at what a nice job they do.

*Beware the possibility of promoting robbing when doing this. Seal off any outside entrance from the inner cover. Don't use a ventilated inner cover when doing this.

Bottle and label your harvest. Sell some, give some to friends and family, prepare some Holiday gifts, **donate some to your favorite bee club** for fund raising.

Monitor Varroa Mite levels 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. Actually, it is a bit late, but better a bit late than never. The brood that will be raised as winter bees are in process. Help them out. Pay attention to labeling instructions when using treatments and be mindful of temperature ranges for various types of treatments. 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 colonies to thrive and survive and come out of winter as healthy hives raring to go for 2023. This is a great step towards sustainable beekeeping.

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. 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. Be aware that robbing is not just honey bee to

honey bee, but oftentimes involves wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets. If you are inclined to use a yellow jacket trap, do not place it near your hives as it may tend to draw more yellow jackets to your hives and cause greater problems.

Add mouse guards. Nights will start to cool off soon and mice will be looking for warm, dry spaces to make fall and winter nests. Don't let that be your hives.

Check your hives for honey stores. Consider moving existing full frames of honey to outer edges and partially filled towards the center allow bees easier access to filling them. Do not break up/ separate the brood nest to accomplish this.

Start feeding and don't stop until they stop taking it.** Use a 2:1 sugar to water syrup mix. Check your feeders often enough to keep them filled. Avoid using Boardman type feeders this time of year to reduce inducing robbing. ** If they still seem to be consuming by the end of October (which is doubtful) you may want to stop. They will need time to reduce the moisture content of the syrup before winter sets in.

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)

[Hive Inspection Checklist](#) (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)

Formulas for making 2:1 syrup for fall feeding:

Sugar (lb)	1	2	4	8	16	32
Water	1 cup	1 pint	1 quart	1/2 gal	1 gal	2 gal

Note 1: Do not boil sugar syrup (its OK to boil the water prior to adding sugar but not after). Boiling can lead to the creation of HMF (Hydroxymethylfurfural) which is toxic to honeybees.

Note 2: Some people are concerned about using sugar from beets. There is no difference in the sugar (sucrose) from beets vs cane sugar (sucrose). Sucrose is sucrose. Genetic modification (GM) in beets modify the proteins in the plants, not the sucrose.

Note 3: Use white table sugar (sucrose) only. Do not use brown sugar or molasses. Do not use organic sugar.

ROBBING SCREENS



MOUSE DAMAGE



MOUSE GUARDS



2022 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger
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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.**