



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – JULY 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

Well we're into the heat of summer now! I hope those of you who attended the picnic enjoyed it, the photos looked like everyone was having fun. I need to thank the NIBA Board and whoever else has stepped in during my absence to make the picnic happen and to continue to work on getting the Fair set. I can't thank you all enough, this took all of you at some very busy times to do more for me than was expected. I heard that Dave's hot dogs and hamburgers were epic, thank you so much for doing that Dave!! I saw Al's plaques for the honey dessert and the smoker contest winners and they looked great! Congratulations to the winners of both contests!

I'm asking the entire NIBA group to please take a look at the Fair signup and sign up for a shift when possible. This signup is going slow which has added to the stress level of those people who are organizing the Fair, if they have to volunteer for more shifts it's a burden on those who are already stretched thin. Please this is the NIBA biggest fundraiser of the year. This is where we get the MCC scholarship money from, the money to pay to rent the room, buy snacks and drinks for meetings etc. The dues we collect don't give us enough to buy the door raffle prizes or much else that we buy throughout the year, the money we get from selling the donated honey and other items at the fair supplies that.

Because of my health issue I'm unable to work a shift at the Fair this year which really bothers me. I'm not going to go into it too deeply but I'm virtually unable to eat much because its difficult to swallow. I have a paralyzed vocal cord and my epiglottis is partially paralyzed. Because of a medication I was taking for my rheumatoid arthritis immune system stopped working. My body became stressed and my teenage mono kicked in which stressed my body more and I got the shingles virus, both of which attacked my mouth and throat. Anyway I'm recovering at the pace a snail runs a marathon but I'm happy for the small gains I make.

I hope to see you all soon!

Tom

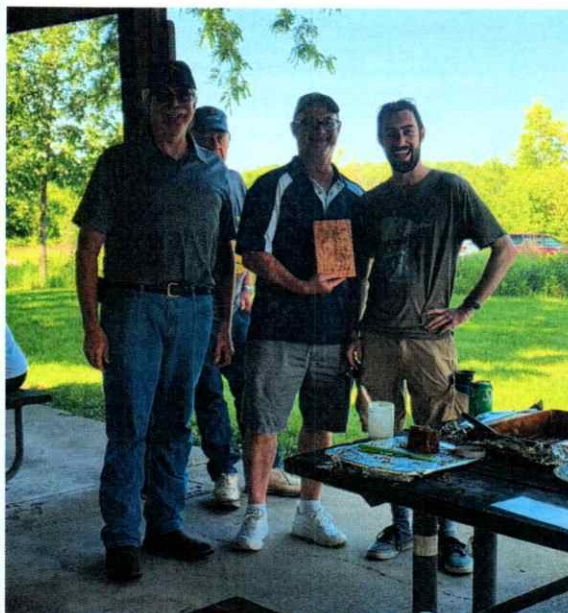


2026 NIBA Picnic









Our Honey Dessert and Smoker Contest Winners !!!



Greetings Beekeepers -

Never bet you know what the bees will do.

OK, with education and experience, we all become skilled in manipulating the bees hoping to achieve our goals as well as engineering what is best for the bees. It is an ongoing challenge. But never bet the farm on knowing what the bees will do. We are indeed the keepers of wild animals. Check this picture from one of the Beeliners who took advantage of a deer tree stand for a perch for his bait hive.

It is a good idea. Research indicated that swarms prefer an abode 12 or 15 feet in the air. In many situations that is uncomfortably high for the beekeeper. A ladder leading to the bait hive on the seat seems is a good accommodation.

Along with a recent email he included this picture. Close but no cigar.

The bees were attracted by the bait hive but missed the invitation to move inside. Instead, they hung on the bottom of the box and began making comb.

Why did they not go in? It was presented well. They must know that winter is coming. It is unusual, but not unheard of, that bees set up home in the open. This colony will not overwinter in the Midwest. Never bet you know what the bees will do.

I am not sure what direction his entrance was facing, but south or east seems the best to attract scouts and an entrance about two square inches



(approximately 1.5 inch diameter hole) appears most appealing. I wonder if a slight change in the setting would have encouraged the bees to move into the box. Perhaps a more "pleasant" smell in the box? Maybe. Don't know. If you want all the specs for a "well-presented bait hive" - Page 56 in Tom Seeley's Honeybee Democracy. Building one could be a good winter woodshop project.

Getting ready for winter

So what does one do to get the bees ready for winter? When does the preparation start? I believe those who advise that winter preparation begins in August (in my climate area) are on the right track. High on the August advice list is controlling the varroa population and thereby limiting the spread of dastardly viruses. The uninformed will think this too early. Winter is months away. Experts disagree. The winter bees will begin emerging in September and October. These are the bees that need to survive through the winter to raise the spring brood. Their health is important to winter success. By controlling the mite population in the August nurse bees who will be raising the winter bees (six weeks later) will be healthy - fewer viruses (passed on by the varroa) and have a healthy ability to produce the glandular substances important to their role as nurse bees. It is important to begin establishing a healthy colony one or two brood cycles ahead of the winter bee regime. Healthy colonies in August are more likely to still be alive in April.

Is there more to overwintering bees. Yes. Most will agree with the above. Later there will be a lot of discussion and disagreement on what comes next. Ventilation? Insulation? Feed? Candy boards? Screened bottom boards. OK, you get the idea. There are many ways to keep bees. But none of those questions are helpful if the colony is so handicapped by varroa and viruses that they cannot maintain the critical population for winter survival.

Lock and load (mite strips that is!). Time to take on the varroa.

Larry



Chores of the Month – July – still lots to do and the heat is on!

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, right now very hot, 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 updated Honeybee Health Coalition website and use their Tools for Varroa Management Guide and the Varroa Management Decision Tool. (See links 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 can lead to a honey bound situation that in turn can lead to overcrowding swarms. Not super common once you get into July, but it does occur. The solution is twofold; 1) Provide space in the brood box for the queen to lay by removing 'honey-bound' 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. 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 a potential 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 on for all methods of treatments. The only treatments currently, that are EPA approved for use while honey supers are on are Hopguard 2 or 3, Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS...being phased out), Formic Pro, Api-Bioxal (a branded Oxalic acid for use in sublimation or dribble (also available as RTU)), EZ-OX, and VarroSan. **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 survive and thrive.** You must have healthy hives going into later summer so the colony can raise healthy nurse bees that in turn raise healthy winter bees (diutinus bees) that will carry the colony through until next 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 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. 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 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. 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, 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. Alternately, you can store the extracted supers 'wet'(straight from the extractor without any effort to dry/refurbish them). It's a bit messy and will require some effort to prevent mold and pest issues, but can speed up early acceptance to refill the following Spring.

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.

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)

[9th Edition of the Tools for Varroa Management Guide](#) (Ctrl + Click)

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)





2026 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Tom Allen

tallen122@yahoo.com

Vice President – Ralph Brindise

rbrindise@att.net

Secretary – Jackie Tessar

hairdresser9@yahoo.com

Treasurer – Sue Pinkawa

spinkawa@gmail.com

Director - John Leibinger

jleibinger@aol.com

Director - Al Fullerton

adfhoney@gmail.com

Director – Brandon Teresi

bteresi10@yahoo.com

Director – Jim Jellissen

jfelli23@gmail.com

Director - David Engelbrecht

edudavidne@gmail.com

Program Chair – Larry Krengel

Webmaster – Terri Reeves

Newsletter Editor – Sue Pinkawa

Club Extractor Coordinator – Al Fullerton

Club Raffle Coordinator – Jim Jellissen

Snack Coordinator – Julianne Anderson

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

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 John Dolsen by phone or text at 630-217-0778 or email john5232@sbcglobal.net, if you don't get a timely response, just phone. Pick it up in Marengo, Illinois.

The queen marking color for 2026 is White

