

SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tom Allen

It's Fall for beekeepers even though the temperatures are still warm. Talking to fellow beekeepers it sounds like some have had a great season and others a bad season regardless of what they did. I hope most of you had a great beekeeping season!

I enjoyed our August meeting even though we had to wear a mask it was great to see people face to face. I hope we can continue meeting in person to start connecting again and build friendships with other beekeepers. I hope our meeting attendee numbers climb each meeting as people become more comfortable being around others. We will continue to try a hybrid meeting so members can either attend in person or via Zoom. If you choose to attend virtually you'll still be able to ask questions or clarify a question for someone in the room.

Please remember to vote for the 2021 NIBA member of the year, Marcin sent out a survey using the google group or if you prefer to vote in person we'll have paper and pens to cast your vote at the September meeting. If you're not sure who a particular member is please reach out to a Board member for some help.

If you would like to be on the Board as an Officer or as a Director elections will be held soon, nominations can be taken from the floor or presented to the Board in September or October. I need several people to be on the nominating committee, if you're interested in doing that please contact Tom Allen soon. This committee won't take up a lot of time.

[SIDEBAR TITLE]

MEETING AGENDA

6:30 Q&A for nubees-
Marcin & John

7:00 Pledge of Allegiance-
Tom

7:02 Presentation by Bill
Hesbach of Wing Dance
Apiary, he'll be speaking on
wintering honey bee
colonies Q&A to follow

8:15 Old Business-Tom
NIBA member of the year
voting
Board positions
Nominating committee
Honey donations
October speaker, Buckfast
history

8:25 New Business-Tom
Green Living Expo
Marcin ISBA Beekeeper of
the year!

8:35 Raffle Drawing

Our snack and refreshment volunteers are Cathy Davis and Christy Binz but going forward nothing will be served until we can be in the building without a mask. There are vending machines with drinks and snacks available down the hall from our meeting room.

Beginning next year when you sign up to renew your membership you'll have the opportunity to have your contact information included in a NIBA directory. This information will be for NIBA members only and will not be shared with any businesses. You'll have to check a box to have your name included in the directory. You will be able to renew your membership using a credit card, check or cash beginning in 2021.

Congratulations to NIBA Board member Marcin Matelski on being awarded the 2021 Illinois State Beekeepers Association Beekeeper of the Year!! Marcin has done so much for NIBA members at our meetings, by arranging top notch speakers for multiple clubs to learn from over Zoom and as a mentor. This award is well deserved, congratulations Marcin, NIBA is a better club because of you!!

CHORES OF THE MONTH

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....it has been a 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 almost like a spring day, some tangerine orange, some yellowish orange, and some off white. Life is good in the beehive!

You may well be seeing robbing occur. With a little 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 2022. 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)

ROBBING SCREENS



MOUSE DAMAGE



MOUSE GUARDS



From Marcin Matelski

Hello Friends,

we're looking for your input in selecting the 2021 NIBA Member of the Year. The criteria for the nominations are pretty general and you can submit your nomination at this link <https://forms.gle/jgka3CzocTG4scDSA>, and we'll also have cards for you to fill out at the September meeting. The deadline is September 30th and we'll announce the winner at the October meeting.

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. We will send out the link monthly as a reminder. We hope that everyone will contribute to this club project. We look forward to sharing the results with you in the future!

Thank you for your participation!

Thanks,
Marcin

From Larry Kregel

It is September 5th, honey extracting season, time to get bees ready for winter. Any swarms that occur now should be left to fly – a Kamikaze swarms.

A swarm in May is worth a load of hay.

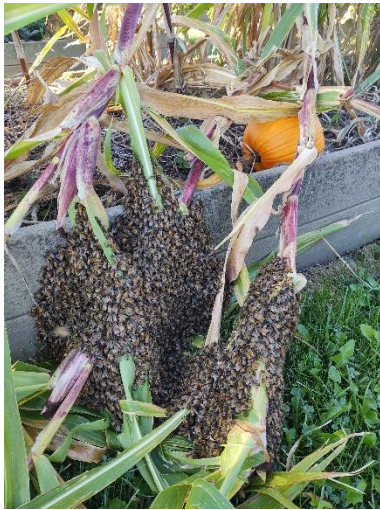
A swarm in June is worth a silver spoon.

A swarm in July isn't work a fly....

What about September?

It is only a saying and dates back to the mid seventh century, but we still pass it around the beekeeping world. The truth is late season swarms are likely not worth the effort to hive them. It must be true.

But... on the fifth of September the picture showed up in my inbox... a good looking swarm. The swarm was down low. No ladder needed. It is a pretty good sized one. The weather is nice. I have a box to put them in. OK.... I'll go get them. It is hard to resist a swarm, even in September.



From Larry Kregel

Let me tell you.

The Illinois State Beekeepers Association has 25 affiliate associations that organize most of the beekeeper activities in the state. The Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association is one of those affiliates. ISBA provides support for these activities including liability insurance for local activities.

The membership of ISBA is about 1700. (Recent figures show 4561 beekeepers registered with the Department of Agriculture in the state.) The Northern Illinois Beekeepers Association, the biggest local association in the state, has a membership of 201 and is far ahead of number two. NIBA's membership is largely from McHenry, Lake, Kane and Boone counties in Illinois and southern Wisconsin, but members are from well beyond. NIBA represents about 12% of the ISBA membership. That is impressive. What is so good about NIBA?

NIBA has a very active board that is supported by a membership that is passionate about beekeeping and who enjoy joining in on many activities. Recently, that included the McHenry County Fair where members talked bees with the "man on the street" and where we had a record number of submissions in the honey competition.

NIBA supports the Farm Bureau's Ag Days and the Master Gardeners' spring Garden Fest. In November NIBA will be a part of .After helping provide the beekeeping equipment for the community garden in Elgin, NIBA uses the site for mentoring sessions. Mentoring sessions are also held at McHenry County College where the association maintains hives.

Experienced NIBA members are available for consultations and the association rents (for a minimal fee) extractors saving members a significant expense. Each spring NIBA organizes a group buy of packages and nucs negotiating lowest prices in the area. Again, saving the members money.

The Sweet Stuff – NIBA's excellent newsletter – arrives monthly in members inboxes with timely info.

Monthly meetings are held in excellent facilities at McHenry County College. During the pandemic break, the meetings went virtual. It seems future in-person meetings will be Zoomed live to members at home.

Each monthly meeting begins with a "nubee session" followed by an impressive list of presentations by local talent as well as distant experts. The head beekeeper at the Buckfast Abby in Southern England will talk at the October meeting!

So what is so good about NIBA? A lot. Thanks to the support of its members.

We will be meeting at MCC in person for the September meeting, 6:30 for nubees Q&A and the regular meeting at 7:00. We will also be holding this meeting via Zoom for those that can't make it or for some reason don't want to meet in person. A Zoom link for the meeting will be sent out in a separate email. Please join us to listen to our speaker on wintering honey bee colonies. We hope to see you at the meeting one way or the other!

Tom