

Presentation Descriptions

Plenary Talk

The Importance of Critical Thinking In Beekeeping

David Burns

Beekeeping isn't just about following formulas but understanding what the bees are telling us. In this talk, we'll explore how critical thinking transforms ordinary hive inspections into meaningful evaluations that guide better decisions. The audience will learn how to read subtle clues, diagnose issues before they become problems, and avoid the common traps that cause so many new beekeepers to quit. This session gives beekeepers the confidence to think, adapt, and respond wisely to whatever they find in the hive.

Beginner Sessions

Basic Bee Biology

Dr. Tom Webster

We will discuss the nature of the honey bee and its life through the course of the year. This will include the biology of queen, worker and drone bees.

Beginner Beekeeper Equipment

Dr. Tamara (Tammy) Horn Potter, KSU Beginner Beekeeper specialist

The choices that beginner beekeepers have to start a hive can be overwhelming. This class will discuss and demonstrate different options for hives, the advantages and disadvantages of those choices, and in general, give you an opportunity to ask questions before you spend any money.

First Year Hive Management

John Antenucci

John will set forth a user-friendly structure for anticipating what to do in the bee yard and when. The goal is to provide the new (and more experienced) beekeepers a simple calendar-based approach to apiary management, reflecting changes in best management practices as they are impacted by climate change. The session will also provide attendees an opportunity to raise questions particular to their needs.

Q & A

Tommy Steele

This is your chance to ask questions and get answers from a beekeeper that has over 50 years of experience and who has mentored dozens of beginners.

A COMPLETE HIVE AND A CERTIFICATE FOR A PACKAGE OF BEES WILL BE GIVEN AWAY TO A "NEW" BEEKEEPER SOMETIME DURING THE BEGINNER SESSIONS!

Intermediate & Advanced Breakout Sessions #1

Varroa Destructor & The Viruses That Kill Bee Hives

Jack Kuhn

The Varroa mite is currently considered the number one threat to the health of your hives. Not only do mites suck the fat lipids from the bee, they transmit over 20 viruses, of which eight are prevalent in Kentucky. Some viruses cause rapid bee mortality and death, while others cause a slow decline in bee/hive health. We cover the life cycle of the honeybee and the varroa mite, and how the mite parasitizes the bee much like a tick on a dog. We will discuss how the mites transmit viruses leading to colony failure. We will explore how hive beetles and wax moths exploit the vulnerable beehive. We will dive into the importance of treatment timing; practical application of various chemicals and why multiple sampling and treatment is often warranted. You will come away with a new appreciation for why appropriate and timely treatment is paramount to the survival of your bees.

If you have a 30-50 percent annual hive loss, this information will dramatically reduce your losses. The speaker has averaged 12 percent hive loss the last ten years since employing systematic varroa treatment.

Swarm Control, Why's, When's, and How's

Chris Palmer

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Explain why colonies swarm
2. Identify when a colony is preparing to swarm
3. Apply practical swarm control techniques
4. Choose the right intervention based on colony condition and season
5. Reduce colony losses and improve honey production

Outline :

1. Introduction: Why Swarm Control Matters
2. WHY Colonies Swarm
3. WHEN to Expect Swarming
4. HOW to Control Swarming
5. If They've Already Swarmed
6. Decision Tool: What Should I Do?
7. Q&A and Local Experience Sharing

Small Scale Non-grafting Queen Rearing Using OTS

Mark Stutler

This class will touch on several ways for hobbyist beekeepers to rear queens, and introduce students to "On The Spot" (OTS) Queen Rearing, made popular by Mel Disselkoen. While not an in-depth OTS class, the instructor will show how simple it is to have your bees generate 5, 6, or more queens from a single hive, without grafting. Mark has used the OTS approach successfully, and has used subsets of the approach successfully, as well. It is a fascinating and effective approach to queen rearing.

Honey House / Principles Applied to Different Scales

Tim Sheehan

From 2 to 200 hives, the principles of harvesting and processing honey are the same. I'll briefly cover how to harvest and handle honey with a few hives. As our apiary grew and we needed a honey house, I'll walk through how it was designed to handle our new harvest and processing strategies.

American Foul Brood and the Dalan Vaccine

Dr. Tammy Potter

This talk will provide a brief overview of the most deadly disease to honey bees. Until recently, there were limited options for control. There is now an EPA-approved vaccine, the first-ever for an insect. The vaccine not only prevents American foulbrood, it may also address a common virus. There is much to learn about this new tool in the toolbox.

Rendering Wax

Arren Heenan

This presentation will discuss rendering beeswax from the hive. We will examine different rendering methods available. We will also look at different ways to use/sell beeswax.

Intermediate & Advanced Breakout Sessions #2

Systematic Treatment For Varroa Mites

Practical implementation of available varroa mite treatments.

Jack Kuhn

If you have been reluctant to implement Varroa mite treatments because you don't understand how to use/employ available chemicals, are afraid of introducing approved pesticides into the hive, concerned about hurting your bees during treatment, or simply need to know more knowledge to improve your treatment results, then this is the class for you. We will have a demonstration on how to use each of the EPA-approved chemical treatments as well as explore several nonchemical management methods of reducing varroa mite populations in beehives. The speaker will outline a robust treatment strategy proven to reduce hive losses. You will come away with a much better understanding on how to implement an effective mite control program and be confident of selecting the right treatment method(s).

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Swarming: Benefits and Myths

Theresa Martin

There are many presentations that describe the downsides of swarming from the beekeeper's perspective. In this presentation, Theresa shares the science that reveals the rarely discussed benefits of swarming from the perspective of the bees and the beekeeper. Review the myths and truths about swarming and learn ways to leverage swarming as a tool for improved bee health and increasing honey production.

The ABC's of Queen Rearing & Grafting

Dorothea Morgan

It is generally accepted that local queens are the best. Also, it is accepted that swarm cells produce the best queens. But hoping to harvest a swarm cell from a beekeepers best queen on the bees schedule is not viable for most beekeepers. This class will help you to use the bees natural instincts to produce great queen cells when you need them (within reason). There are many methods for raising queens. What you learn here will apply to most of them but we will focus on grafting. Grafting easily scales from producing a few queens to thousands. A lot of beekeepers are afraid of grafting but it is a fairly simple skill that can be learned. Grafting is simply the process of transferring larva from worker cells to prepared queen cups. The beekeeper then manages the colony to encourage them to start these queen cells and produce queens as if for swarming.

Making Splits and Growing Your Apiary

Tim Sheehan

Why you split a hive determines when and how. I'll briefly cover these situations, then walk through splitting a hive step by step.

Honey Bee Friendly Plants in the Bluegrass Region

Janet Osborn

This session introduces a wide range of nectar and pollen sources that our honey bees use in the bluegrass region. Whether you want to create or add to a pollinator garden or you just want to learn where honey bees go for nectar and pollen in our region, this session will give you plenty of ideas and resources. It is a structured look at what plants, shrubs, and trees are helpful to our honey bees starting in early spring through late fall.

Candle Making and Using Wax

Arren Heenan

This presentation will be an introduction to the use of beeswax, for creating value added products to sell, in addition to honey. Candle making will be one of the products focused on.

Intermediate & Advanced Breakout Sessions #3

Descriptive vs. Interpretive Beekeeping

David Burns

Most beekeepers become stuck at only being able to describe what they see. Experienced beekeepers learn how to interpret what they see. This talk explains the crucial difference between merely observing bees and truly understanding them. We'll break down real inspection examples that show how shifting from descriptive thinking ("I see eggs") to interpretive thinking ("This queen is strong and maintaining a proper colony rhythm") results in better hive management. Attendees will discover how interpretation unlocks deeper insights, improves outcomes, and accelerates growth on the journey from novice to knowledgeable beekeeper.

Intermediate & Advanced Breakout Sessions #4

Treatment-Less Beekeeping: Biology and Implementation that Determine Success

Theresa Martin

This presentation describes "treatment-less" beekeeping, which has enabled Theresa to achieve 99% colony survival in all her time as a beekeeper. She shares the science that explains the pathology, obstacles, and opportunities of treatment-less beekeeping. Theresa details 4 of her 10 tips for healthy, productive bees that leverage Integrated Pest Management. The goal of this presentation is to enable beekeepers to make the best decision for themselves and their bees on how to handle the significant *Varroa* threat.

Swarm Trapping for Beginners

Mark Stutler

This is an introduction to spring swarm-trapping, a fun activity for beekeepers early in the season. Topics covered include: Why swarms occur, Who can swarm trap and where, advantages and disadvantages of captured swarms, swarm trap types, How to get-started, and how to hive a swarm.

KSU Research Projects

Dr. Tom Webster and Research Associate Joseph Palmer

Current and future KSU Research Projects will be discussed with their current status and results.

Nucs: The Spare Tire Of The Beeyard

Wes Henry

Nucs, splits, artificial swarms, whatever you may call them, are more than just great starts to a full size colony. However, if maintained, they become a great resource to the beekeeper to quickly solve problems that arise in the apiary at little to no expense. Need a queen? Need to boost a weak colony? Need stores or comb, or a frame? Want to experiment? These are a few of the examples and uses of a maintenance nuc- The Spare Tire of the Beeyard- kept onsite. Discover these and more.

New Invasive Pests

Dr. Tamara (Tammy) Horn Potter

Dr. Potter will provide a brief overview of new pests to honey bees, including those pests that have not arrived on U.S. soil. This talk will include a quick overview of the Giant Northern Hornet, its cousin the yellow-legged hornet, and Tropiclaelaps mite. Please note: This talk will **not** include established mites, such as varroa or tracheal mite.

Harvesting Honey: Planning, Preparing, and Processing Your (Bees'!) Crop

Jessica Mayes

This presentation will demonstrate the elements of traditional honey extraction as well as discuss other options for producing and harvesting honey and maximizing profit. In addition to liquid honey, we will touch on basic preparation, equipment and processing for comb and chunk honey as well as a quick overview of marketing including labeling and pricing.