

# SMOKER SIGNALS



ISSUE NO 1 | MARCH 2026 | VOLUME 1



## TOPIC 1

SWARM SEASON  
AHEAD. ARE YOU ON  
THE LIST? SEE PAGE 3

## TOPIC 2

PERFECT RECIPE  
FOR GAME DAY  
USING YOUR LEFT  
OVER HONEY ON  
PAGE 5

## TOPIC 3

WHAT'S THAT  
SMELL? SEE  
ARTICLE ON PAGE

7

## A message from Med

This last weekend I attended the 47 Tri County Beekeepers Association Spring Beekeeper's Workshop. Always an interesting conference with good speakers and many dealers. I did attend a presentation by Dr. Megan Milbrath, who is a researcher and extension specialist in the Department of Entomology at Michigan State University. From her talk, "Amazing Anatomical Adaptations of *Apis mellifera*", I learned some new facts for me that reinforced "why honeybees are the most amazing organisms ever". Her discussion about the morphology and functions of the various types of body hairs on the honeybee was fascinating. A large number of honeybee body hairs have multiple end branches that not only function in pollen collection but also aid in

## Smoker Signals cont.

insulation. When the bees are clustered, those on the outside of the cluster form a tight shield and interlace these plumed body hairs helping to trap air like the down of a goose. She went on to give very good information about the locations and functions of the bee's unbranched sensory hair as well as many other anatomic adaptations. Later in the afternoon, Dr. Milbrath did a presentation on nutrition and honeybees, which was equally informative

The COBA bee schools are underway and have been well received. There were around 60 students at the Scotts Miracle Gro Bee School on February 28. This coming Saturday, March 14, we have another class scheduled at Liberty Mutual Insurance with about 50 people enrolled. The last of four Wednesday evening classes is on March 18. We then start our Veterans Bee School classes on March 28. Schedules for these bee schools and all the associated activities to get our bee yards ready for the year can be found on our website, [Centralohiobeekeepers.org](http://Centralohiobeekeepers.org).

Finally, I wanted to call your attention to an article that has appeared in the Spring edition of The Ohio State Alumni Magazine. In this article, titled "Keeping Ohio State Flying", Dale Gelter, a COBA Board member, is recognized for his 37 years of service at the Ohio State Airport where he "ensured Ohio State's airport met the highest safety standards". He also successfully maintained an apiary at the airport. With a bit of searching at [alumnimagazine.osu.edu](http://alumnimagazine.osu.edu), you can find the entire article. Congratulations on your retirement Dale!



Arica Hamilton of Eaton serves as organization director for Ohio Farm Bureau and supports members in Delaware, Franklin, Madison and Union counties. In this role, she works closely with the county Farm Bureaus to address issues important to members and their communities. Hamilton grew up showing steers, hogs, chickens and still life projects in Preble County. She was a highly active member in youth agriculture organizations, spending 10 years in 4-H and four years in FFA. She previously served as an intern for Congressman Troy Balderson's district office and for Congressman Bob Gibbs in Washington, D.C. Most recently, she worked as a policy analyst at American Farm Bureau Federation in Washington, D.C. This range of experience has provided her with a well-rounded background in agriculture, public policy, renewable energy and Farm Bureau's grassroots structure. Hamilton earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural communication from The Ohio State University, with minors in public policy and agribusiness and applied economics. At Ohio State, she served as social chair of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences'

## General Meeting

The COBA March 18, 2026, meeting will be at Franklin Park Conservatory, in the Veridian Room. Social hour and potluck are at 6:30, and the meeting starts at 7 p.m. The featured speaker is Ms. Arica Hamilton, the Organization Director of the Franklin County Ohio Farm Bureau Federation. Her talk is "The Voice of Agriculture: How the Farm Bureau Shapes the Future of Food, Fuel, and Fiber".

## Swarm Hunters: Tracking Nature's Great Migration

The 2026 Swarm and Cut-Out list will be posted on the COBA website in early April. If you wish to be included, you can let us know by adding it to your membership information in JoinIt or by sending an email to:



claudiakhoureybowers@gmail.com. We will share with the public your phone number, email, and area where you are willing to collect swarms. If you were on the list in 2025, send Claudia an email and let her know you wish to be on the list again in 2026. The list will be updated monthly through the swarm season.

## Support Your Local Small Business

Three-pound package bees with an Italian queen.  
Available Friday 4/03/2026 and Saturday 4/18/2026. Medium nucs April-May. Deep nucs May-June. Packages and nucs pending weather conditions. California queens in April. Ohio queens in May. Complete bee supplies by appointment.

Rich Herman 419-512-2105



Student Council, associate sales manager of AgriNaturalist Magazine and was a John Glenn Fellow with the Washington Academic Internship Program



**DO YOU NEED LAND FOR AN APIARY? IF SO, LANDOWNER MR. JACK ORUM HAS FARMLAND NEAR GROVEPORT FOR YOUR HIVES. YOU CAN CONTACT MR. JACK ORUM BY EMAIL JACKORUM@REMAX.NET OR PHONE 614-325-1699. TELL HIM YOU LEARNED OF THIS POSSIBILITY THROUGH MS. HAYLEY MCNEIL FROM OHIO NCRS/USDA**

Smoker Signals cont.

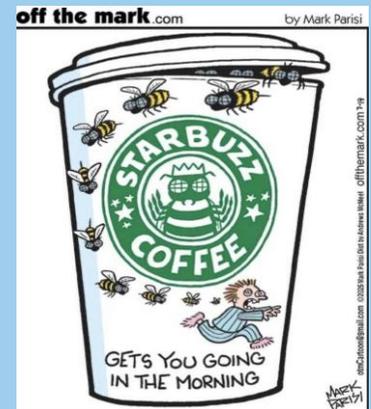
## Create a Buzz: It's Time to Teach What You Know

The bees may still be clustering, but it's almost time for Outreach Season. Schools, libraries, and clubs are scheduling honeybee presentations. If you are interested in volunteering to help, contact Claudia at: [claudiakhoureybowers@gmail.com](mailto:claudiakhoureybowers@gmail.com).



“Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.”

Lewis Grizzard



## BEE SCHOOL SPRING 2026 SCHEDULE

<https://share.google/IZtOZKwXDzGyEdUN8>



# Honey BBQ Wings

## Ingredients

- 2 pounds chicken wings
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt and black pepper to taste
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup barbecue sauce

## Instructions

### In the Air Fryer

1. Preheat the air fryer to 400°F.
2. Toss wings with olive oil, salt, and pepper. And place in the air fryer basket in a single layer. Cook for 15 minutes.
3. While wings are cooking, mix honey & BBQ sauce in a small bowl.
4. After 15 minutes, remove the wings from the air fryer and toss them with the sauce.
5. I recommend lining the air fryer basket with parchment paper when adding the sauced wings Place the wings back in the air fryer basket and cook for an additional 5-7 minutes.
6. Let them rest a few minutes before serving (the sauce will be very hot right after cooking)

### For Oven Baked Wings

1. Toss the wings with 1 tablespoon flour, 1 teaspoon of baking powder and seasonings. Refrigerate for 30 minutes (or up to 4 hours) uncovered.
  2. Toss the wings with olive oil and place on rack that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Cook in a 425°F oven for 20 minutes, flip and bake an additional 15 minutes.
  3. Toss with sauce and broil for a few minutes to crisp.
- Optional additions to the BBQ sauce: garlic, sriracha, fresh ginger, or hot pepper flakes
  - If using an air fryer, cook in a single layer and do not overcrowd the air fryer.
  - The sauce can be very sticky and difficult to clean from a baking pan or the air fryer basket. Line the baking pan or air fryer with parchment paper after adding the sauce to the wings.
  - Do not let the air fryer preheat or run with parchment without adding the wings to the fryer. The parchment can blow around and burn (the wings will hold it in place).
  - Cook in batches if needed. All batches can be reheated in the air fryer at 400°F for 2-3 minutes before serving.

### Nutrition Information

Calories: 398, Carbohydrates: 25g, Protein: 23g, Fat: 23g, Saturated Fat: 6g, Polyunsaturated Fat: 5g, Monounsaturated Fat: 10g, Trans Fat: 1g, Cholesterol: 94mg, Sodium: 274mg, Potassium: 244mg, Fiber: 1g, Sugar: 23g, Vitamin A: 220IU, Vitamin C: 1mg, Calcium: 22mg, Iron: 1mg <https://www.spendwithpennies.com/honey-bbq-wings/> Author: Holly Nilsson



Smoker Signals cont.

## **Greener Growth: COBA Cuts Paper**

COBA recently switched the membership roster to a new platform called Join It. You should have received email (or two) with a request to log in and update your membership profile. If you have, thank you. If you haven't, please do so. You will receive a follow-up email to download your digital membership card. Please place this card in your apple or google wallet. You may need to download the wallet app onto your phone or portable device. If you have any issues, please call or email me. Thanks.

Bob Bowers (330) 353-2316 cell bbowers53@att.net



## **Youth Scholarship News**

The 2026 Youth Scholars are enjoying the fast-paced classes of this year's program as well as Dru's wonderful treats. They will be coming to the FYBY each week, so please welcome them and introduce yourself. We have Dillon, Sophia, Jabar, Vivian, Alejandro, Grant and Soraya, and are looking for mentors who live nearby to help them with questions and inspections as they install their packages and watch them progress. If you are interested in being a youth mentor, please contact Eileen Bolton (614)736-5437 or Jeremy Riga (614)352-5600

Our class of 2025 will be presenting their second and final update on their hives and how they did over winter at the April 15 COBA member meeting at the Franklin Park Conservatory. It should be a lively discussion, so plan to be there!

Thanks,

Eileen

## **Liberty Mutual Insurance Apiary Inspection Dates**

These are the dates agreed upon with Liberty Mutual Insurance for Educational Inspections of the two hives at their location: 518 E. Broad Street. Inspections will begin at 2:00 p.m., weather permitting. COBA members are welcome to join us.

Monday, April 13 and 27

Monday, May 11, Tuesday, May 26

Monday, June 8 and 22

Monday, July 6 and 20

Monday, August 3, 17 and 31

Monday, September 14 and 28

Monday, October 12 and 26

Winnie Williams and Barb Bloetscher, Lead Apiarists

614-787-3533

954-649-6659



# Habitat



# Resources



## Pear Tree Nectar ... YUCK!

By Sarah L Sullivan, PhD

Please submit suggestions for future articles to [sarah@fruitstrengthfarm.com](mailto:sarah@fruitstrengthfarm.com)

Come early spring, the Columbus beltway is awash with trees covered with white flowers. These trees are the highly invasive Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) also known as Flowering Pear. The novice beekeeper presumes that this floral display is a major nectar flow. ... Oops! Honey bees HATE pear tree nectar partly because the sugar value is low. If you have the opportunity to walk through a Callery Pear Forest in full bloom, you will likely experience the floral “fragrance” as nasty.

To test the extent that honey bees hate Callery Pear, find a spot where pear and dandelion are blooming close to each other. Watch which flowers the bees are working. I am willing to bet that ALL the bees will be working the dandelion blossoms and NONE will be on the pear blossoms.

Honey bees will harvest pear only when there is nothing else out there! During pear bloom but before dandelion bloom, if your bees are returning to the hive carrying pollen, that pollen is likely from maple (*Acer*), dogwood (*Cornus*), cherry (*Prunus*), or serviceberry (*Amelanchier*).

To improve your local honey bee forage, remove all Callery Pear from the acreage that you own/control. Then, annually go through your acreage to remove Callery Pear seedlings. In the growing space that you open by removing pear, fill in with workhorse pollinator plants.

- To identify workhorse/pollinator plants: See the Habitat Resources article titled “Workhorse/Pollinator Plant selection via ERA Tool” that was published in the January 2026 issue of Smoker Signals.
- To acquire native plants approved by USDA: See the Habitat Resources article titled “Native Tree Seedling Sales Offered by USDA” that was published in the March 2025 issue of Smoker Signals
- For planting guide: See the Habitat Resources article titled “Planting Bare Root Tree/Bush Seedlings” that was published in the April 2025 issue of Smoker Signals

# April 2026 Activities

at the

## ScottsLawn COBA Apiary

| Date        | Activities                                                                                                                                        | Learning Activity                                                                                                      |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thu, 02 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. De-Winterise &amp; clean-up the apiary</li><li>2. Move over-wintered colonies to new positions</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Yellow jacket traps</li><li>2. Best practices for inspecting a hive</li></ol> |
| Sat, 04 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Install packages of bees</li><li>2. We will be spraying the packages with OA</li></ol>                   | <i>N/A</i>                                                                                                             |
| Thu, 09 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Inspect the over-wintered colonies</li></ol>                                                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Feeding colonies</li><li>2. Swarm Traps</li></ol>                             |
| Thu, 16 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Inspect the over-wintered colonies</li></ol>                                                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Adding supers for collecting honey</li></ol>                                  |
| Sun, 19 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Install a 2nd package of bees</li></ol>                                                                  | <i>N/A</i>                                                                                                             |
| Thu, 23 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Inspect all colonies</li></ol>                                                                           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Planting for Pollinators (given by Dutch Mill Greenhouse)</li></ol>           |
| Sat, 25 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Frame building workshop (location TBA)</li></ol>                                                         | <i>N/A</i>                                                                                                             |
| Thu, 30 Apr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Inspect all colonies</li></ol>                                                                           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Splitting colonies</li><li>2. Feeding splits</li></ol>                        |

### Other Notes:

- At some point in May, we hope to be installing a swarm. Learning activities for that date will be rescheduled.
  - 22 Apr: Earth Day
-

Smoker Signals cont.



Starting in 2026, the COBA activities at the ScottsLawn apiary will be completed by using electronic apiary records.

We have selected HiveTracks to record our records and other activities at the ScottsLawn apiary. To participate, you will need to install the app on your smartphone, but **you do not need a HiveTracks Pro subscription to use this application for the ScottsLawn apiary.**



colony inspection at the ScottsLawn Apiary. To use the HiveTracks app, you will need a **subscription to use**

The instructions for you to use HiveTracks with your

1. Install the HiveTracks app on your smartphone (there is no cost), and then
2. Connect to the ScottsLawn Apiary using either [this link](#), or you can scan the QR code shown to the right using your smart-phone's camera.

smartphone are:

no cost), and then

or you can scan the camera.

The web link will

take you to the pro.hivetracks.com website where you will need to enter your name and eMail to create an account. You do not need to subscribe to a pro subscription to use HiveTracks at our apiary.

As with other COBA systems, there will be no marketing data (spam) coming from us.

---

### Using HiveTracks at the ScottsLawn Apiary

If you are the person recording activities for your team at the apiary, these are the instructions for you to use:

1. Click on **ScottsLawn Apiary**.
2. Click on the hive for which you are going to record activities.
3. There you will see the assigned tasks for the day. Click on one, and when you then click **Complete to-do**, it will prompt you for any additional information needed.

The most common task we will be performing is **Perform Inspection**. Click on that and then **Begin Inspection** to bring up the inspection record form.

There may be more than one task assigned for a day: be sure to check the list.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone!

# Checking Out for the Good: A Way Shopping Can Help Support COBA

The following screenshots are step by step instructions on how to link your Kroger shopping card to COBA. Each time you shop Kroger will donate pennies towards COBA. Every small amount counts!

<https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>

## 2. Link your Card to an organization.

Selecting the organization that you wish to support is as simple as updating the Kroger Community Rewards selection on your digital account.

1. Sign in to your digital account.

2. Search for your organization [here](#).

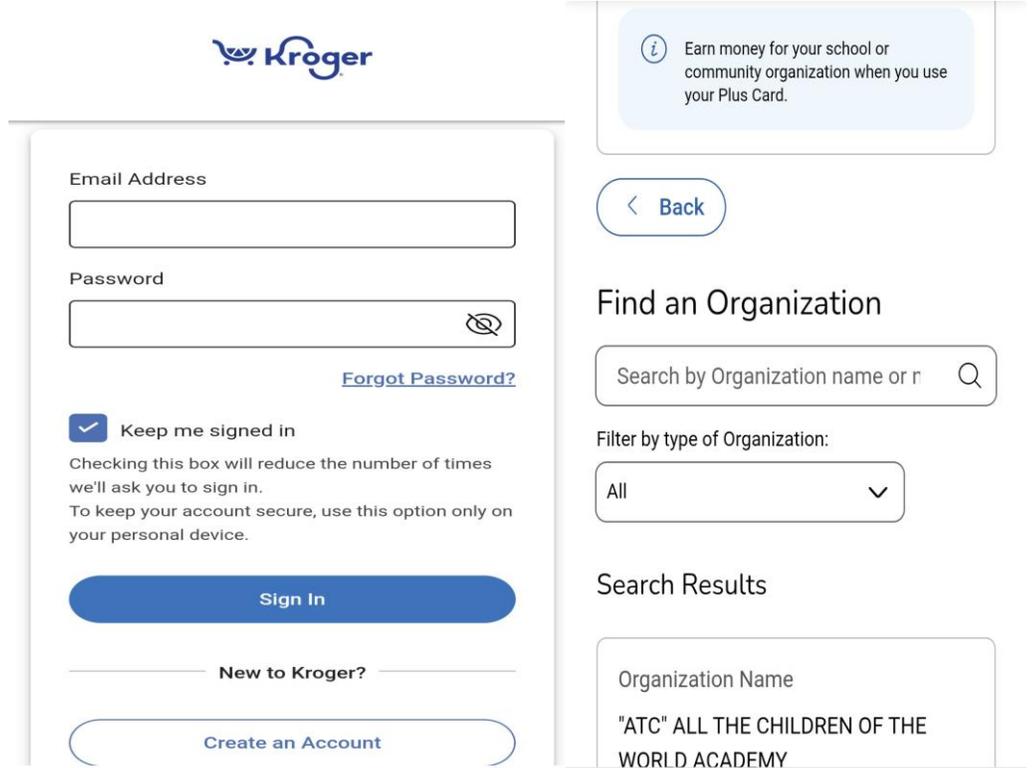
3. Enter the name or NPO number of the organization you wish to support.

4. Select the appropriate organization from the list and click "Save".

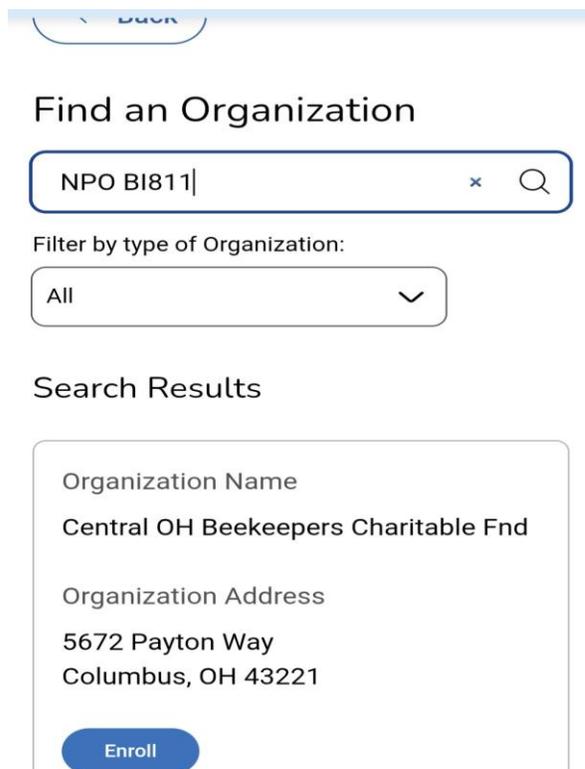
Your selected organization will also display in the Kroger Community Rewards section of your account. If you need to review or revisit your organization, you can always do so under your Account details.

## 3. Your organization earns.

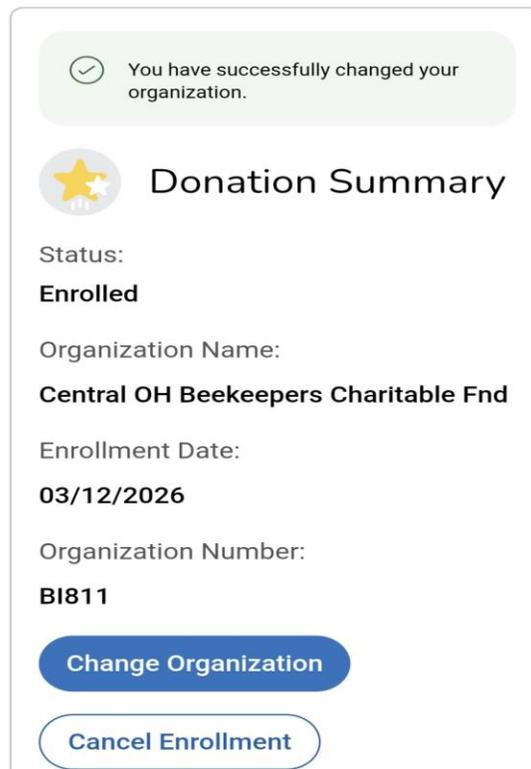
Any transactions moving forward using the Shopper's Card number associated with your digital account will be applied to the program, at no added cost to you. Kroger donates annually to participating organizations based on your percentage of spending



The screenshot shows the Kroger sign-in page. At the top is the Kroger logo. Below it are two input fields: "Email Address" and "Password". To the right of the password field is a "Forgot Password?" link. Below the password field is a checked checkbox labeled "Keep me signed in" with a sub-note: "Checking this box will reduce the number of times we'll ask you to sign in. To keep your account secure, use this option only on your personal device." At the bottom of the sign-in area is a blue "Sign In" button. Below that is a link for "New to Kroger?" and a "Create an Account" button. On the right side of the page, there is a blue information box that says "Earn money for your school or community organization when you use your Plus Card." Below that is a "Back" button. The main heading is "Find an Organization" with a search bar containing "Search by Organization name or n" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar is a "Filter by type of Organization:" dropdown menu set to "All". Underneath is the "Search Results" section, which shows a list item with "Organization Name" and "ATC" ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD ACADEMY.



The screenshot shows the search results page. At the top is a "Back" button. The heading is "Find an Organization" with a search bar containing "NPO BI811|". Below the search bar is a "Filter by type of Organization:" dropdown menu set to "All". Underneath is the "Search Results" section, which shows a list item with "Organization Name" and "Central OH Beekeepers Charitable Fnd". Below that is the "Organization Address" section, which shows "5672 Payton Way" and "Columbus, OH 43221". At the bottom of the list item is a blue "Enroll" button.



The screenshot shows the donation summary page. At the top is a green success message: "You have successfully changed your organization." Below that is a yellow star icon and the heading "Donation Summary". The page displays the following information: "Status: Enrolled", "Organization Name: Central OH Beekeepers Charitable Fnd", "Enrollment Date: 03/12/2026", and "Organization Number: BI811". At the bottom of the page are two buttons: "Change Organization" and "Cancel Enrollment".