



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER - MAY 2018

THE BEE PULPIT

Dave Hill

Marianne and I ordered two packages for the NIBA "late" pickup. They arrived a little bit earlier than expected, however. Delivery date was Tuesday, April 10th. It just happened that I was in Indianapolis on business until Thursday night. Since I was not in town, Marianne picked up the packages. She did not feel comfortable doing the install herself so she arranged for the packages to be kept at Tina Wilbrandt's honey house until I returned home. The weather turned cold by Friday so we picked up the packages and took them home. The weather continued to be too cold or the timing wasn't good so we kept the packages in the office behind the garage and kept spraying them with sugar water.

The two nucs we ordered arrived on Wednesday, April 18th. We installed the two packages and two nucs on Friday, April 20th (the first really good weather day).

We were concerned about the two packages; the boxes looked like there were lots of dead bees on the bottom. We were also concerned that there were not enough bees surrounding the queen cage. But when we installed them, it turned out that most of the bees that we thought might be dead were just "resting." Checked the new hives about 4 days after, and the queen had been released. It was cool so we didn't get into the hive much at all. Placed two top feeders with sugar water, and noticed that they were not taking a lot of sugar. It may be because the bees don't move into the top feeder much until the average temps get a bit higher.

We installed the nucs on the same afternoon as the packages. This was our first time to rehive with a nuc. It went well. We took out the frames, and it was good to see eggs, larvae, brood and honey! We spotted the queen in one of the nucs but not the other. We

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, May 11, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

McBEES FRIDAY

Friday, May 18, 7pm

McDonald's
250 S Eastwood Dr (Route 47)
Woodstock, IL 60098

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, June 8, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

McHENRY COUNTY FAIR

July 31, thru August 5

McHenry County Fairgrounds
12015 Country Club Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

had a couple of frames that were glued together and didn't want to disturb the bees any more than necessary. Put top feeders on and did a quick check a few days later and all seemed well. Again, like the packages, we did not spend much time in the hive because the temperature had gotten

cooler when we did the inspection.

Our idea of moving the hives to a different location is on hold as we did not make that decision and have a new spot in mind when the packages and nucs arrived. We'll keep a possible relocation in mind for a later time.

The weather forecast is finally calling for a warm-up. It's about time because we need to see those girls at work! And it was good to see the first dandelions blooming over the weekend.

Hopefully spring is here to stay!

The April 13th regular club meeting had an attendance of over 100! Tom Allen recapped the MCC Gardenfest event that was held on April 7th. Rebekkah reported on the

successful McHenry County Ag Days which was held on April 10, 11, and 12. If you have not participated in this event, you'll have another opportunity in 2020 as it is held every two years.

Tom Montavon gave a bee inspector report. Jerry Grube talked about the Illinois Queen Initiative and gave a "Bee Bio" report. We recognized over a dozen "newbees" and welcomed them into the club. Larry Krengel gave a couple of presentations on "swarm management". Many questions followed.

We spent a good bit of time getting input and questions from the members on how the early package delivery and installation went. Many good questions and many good ideas were discussed.

Refreshments and the raffle followed. We also had two special raffles. Ed Allen donated a 5-frame nuc. Sue Dietz donated a hive body which Ralph Brindise arranged to have painted by art students from local high schools.

On Friday the 20th there were 9 that met at McDonalds in Woodstock for the "McBee" informal discussion. Good fellowship and discussion followed. Don't forget that members can gather on the 3rd Friday of every month at 7pm.

Our next club meeting will be on Friday May 11th at 7pm at the McHenry County Farm Bureau building in Woodstock. Bee there or bee square!

MCBEE'S FRIDAYS

MEETING AT McDONALD'S

Let's gather to chat. No agenda, just time for us to get together. Time to get to know our fellow beekeepers. Time to compare notes. Time to ask questions.

Interested? Just show up. No need for reservations.

Third Friday of the Month – **May 18, 7 pm**

McDonald's, 250 S Eastwood Dr (Route 47), Woodstock



NIBA VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Tom Allen

Happy May!

I hope those of you that got new packages or nucs from NIBA are seeing them thrive with this nice weather we've been having.

On April 7th NIBA had a table at Gardenfest at McHenry County College. Thank you to John Leibinger for helping set up the table and staying for the rest of the day. Also thank you to Donna Taliaferro, Ralph Brindise, Terri Reeves, and Jerry Gudauskas for manning the table during the event. We spoke to lots of people that were interested in beekeeping and sold some honey. It was a good day.

On April 21st Jerry Gudauskas represented



NIBA at an Earth Day event held by the Bartlett Park District. Based on the photos, it looked like he was popular

with attendees. I received an email from the park district saying people loved the beekeeping info, and they'd love to have us back next year.



Even though it's a couple of months away, I'm trying to fill the time slots for the McHenry County Fair. I have a few people that signed up but not nearly enough. The fair runs from July 31 through August 5. We have 2 shifts on the 31st and 3 shifts per day after that. We applied for a second booth so we could expand on the education aspect. We should know soon if we get the second

booth. If we expand this year, we'll need more people to staff the booth, so please consider signing up for a shift. Feel free to email me at tallen122@yahoo.com or text me at 815-861-1237 if you have a question or



to sign up for a shift. You get a FREE t-shirt for volunteering, so please make sure I have your t-shirt size. You also get into the fair that day for FREE. With these perks, how can you say no?

Food for Thought

What would help push you over the hump to volunteer?

Would recognition help?

Something tangible in return, like a t-shirt or pin?

What if the club required a minimum of 4 volunteer hours per year and had many different options available for you?

We're trying to increase everyone's participation. We have looked at several other non-profit organizations in our area, and these are some of the things they are trying.

I look forward to hearing your ideas.

Tom Allen





MEMBER DONATIONS

A lip smackin' **Thank You** for refreshment donations to the following members:

- * Sue Rancak
- * Lidna & Al Fullerton
- * Cathy and Scott Davis
- * Angie Bradley
- * Donna Taliaferro

An additional huge **Thank You** to these members who made raffle donations:

- * Sue Dietz (**Harvard Eggs, Feed & Produce**)
- * Ralph Brindise (Ralph arranged the custom hive painting with a local high school. Wooden ware donated by Sue Dietz of **Harvard Eggs, Feed & Produce.**)

A couple of additional **Thanks!**:

- * Warren Spencer (**Spencer's Apiary Specialties**) has provided NIBA with a hive body and a super with cut-away sections so that we can have an educational display hive that allows a view of the inner parts of a typical hive set-up. NIBA used this recently at Gardenfest, AG Days, and Earth Day in Bartlett, IL.
- * Jerry Gudauskas for representing NIBA at the Earth Day booth in Bartlett.
- * Bee Distribution Team - Joe Scherb, Ralph Brindise, Tom Allen, Al Fullerton, Gene McCray, and John Leibinger along with a few others who lent some help while at the pick up site. Thanks for your efforts on some challenging days.
- * Donna Taliaferro for setting up the raffle and to those who helped sell tickets in my absence.

Did I forget Ed Allen? Hell No!

Ed very generously donated a 5-frame nucleus colony of bees as the centerpiece of our very successful April Raffle. Thanks Ed!

Note: The lucky winner of the nuc raffle was John Dolsen of Marengo. Congratulations, John!

A general thanks to **Harvard Eggs, Feed & Produce, Spencer's Apiary Specialties, and BL Plastic Containers** for their generous and continued support. When you have some beekeeping needs, please consider supporting these member-vendors.

I think that I captured all the donations, but if I have missed someone, my sincere apologies.

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

John Leibinger

AG EXPO

Rebekkah Burtcher

Thank you so much to all the NIBA members who volunteered their time to participate at Ag Expo! The event was a great success--kids really enjoy learning about bees, and this event allowed us to reach over one thousand! Also, Ag Expo was the debut appearance of Warren Spencer's cut-away hive--a great design that interested the children as soon as they approached our booth. Warren was kind enough to donate both his time and

materials for this project. Thanks again, Warren!

A big thank you to:

- * **Kelly Von Eyser**
- * **Jerry Gudauskas**
- * **Dale Dray**
- * **Doug Hawthorne**
- * **Ron and Pam Zimmerman**
- * **Sydney Burtcher**
- * **Ralph Brindise**



CHORES OF THE MONTH – MAY

John Liebinger

What's happening in the hive?

Packages hived in late March and early April will have already produced new bees and should have a mix of brood at all stages. They may be close to needing the addition of a second box, so be prepared. The nucs hived in mid-April should be well on their way to having built out any new comb they were provided in their lower box and may well be requiring the addition of a second box by now. Overwintered colonies, depending on their strength, will be building population fairly quickly and are likely candidates for swarming later in May and into June. You will notice some drones already hatched and will likely see additional drone brood at various stages. You should be observing a lot of pollen collection daily. You will also notice that they are consuming sugar syrup at an increasing rate. Keep them well fed to promote colony growth.

For Beekeepers with live overwintered colonies, it is time to:

Feed. Sugar syrup at 1:1 ratio (2 lbs sugar/1 qt water) is conventional this time of year. A small amount of heat will dissolve the sugar quickly. Allow to cool before feeding to bees.

Pollen, pollen substitute, pollen patties. Though my personal observation is that there is a lot of natural pollen coming into the hive right now, these supplemental protein sources are good insurance to help the colony raise brood as they build forager numbers. A typical colony will consume upwards of 60 pounds of pollen over the course of the year, so a little early help is a good thing.

Check for swarm cells. A quick check can be made by tilting a complete hive body up and looking at the bottom of the frames for swarm cells (the top box is the most likely box where you will see the swarm cells unless you have already done a hive body rotation). Be careful not to let the top box slide off when doing this. Get assistance if needed.

SUPER UP! If you have a strong colony of foragers, consider removing feed and adding supers to take advantage of early nectar flows. Early honey crops are possible.

Rotate Hive Bodies. If your bees have moved into the top box consider rotating the top box to the bottom. The upside to this is that it provides space for the colony to expand upwards and may reduce or delay the swarming urge. The downside is that you may be dividing the brood nest if it spans both boxes. If this situation exists, addition of a third box above may be a better alternative.

Frame Rotation. As temps warm up, consider removing some old frames (w/o brood) and replace with new foundation as part of an annual comb renewal program. Place new foundation frames at the outer positions in the hive.

Remove Winter Wrappings.

For New Beekeepers just getting started this year:

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)

Finish assembling and painting *additional* equipment, if you have not already done it. You will need a second deep brood box (or third or fourth if using medium brood boxes) now or very soon. You may need an additional 'cover box' for feed jars or buckets. Let's hope for the best and have honey supers built and ready to install later in June.

Keep feed on the bees. You should be able to monitor their syrup consumption every couple of days without going deep into the hive and causing undo disturbance.

Feed your Bees. Feed your Bees. Feed your Bees. This cannot be over-emphasized. Well-fed colonies are larger and more productive. Feed them until they stop taking the supplemental feed. At some point in the month, they will likely switch over to entirely natural nectar sources at which point you can remove the feeders.

Spend time observing your bees. This is one of the reasons you took up this hobby. Observe their comings and goings. Are they bringing in pollen? What color? What is the source?

https://www.nsbka.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=681&Itemid=1092&utm_content=bufferdac80&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer (Ctrl+Click link)

Get a Mentor from the Bee Club. Ask for help and guidance.

For All Beekeepers, it is time to:

Review your Beekeeping Goals for 2018 and act accordingly. See February month's chores list.

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. Here is an example of one of many checklists that can be found in a quick Google search. Not necessarily the best...just an example.

[Hive Inspection Checklist](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Remove entrance reducers. Probably in the mid-May timeframe. As forager numbers increase and forage availability peaks, you want to make sure that the bees have easy access in and out of their hive. This is a very busy and very important time of the year for them to collect and store pollen and nectar.

Monitor the hives for swarming signs. Probably not a big problem for new beekeepers that started on new foundation or foundationless, but for the rest, keep your eyes peeled for telltale queen cups at the bottom of the frames. Do they have eggs or larvae in them? If they do, the swarm is coming....if not keep watching and provide additional space immediately.

Get your swarm traps out! Anybody interested in getting **FREE BEES?** This is the time of year to take advantage of the natural biological rhythms of the hive. Overwintered colonies are highly likely to swarm. Why not be an opportunist and capture a colony that otherwise will find a hole in a tree? It is fun, challenging, and **IMMENSELY EXCITING** when you find bees in your trap. Additionally, these are most often colonies that have overwintered....Northern Illinois proven stock capable of handling our winter....wouldn't you want to add some of that quality to your apiary? Here is a swarm trapping website...Jason is 'the man' when it comes to swarm trapping. He has lots of advice and encouragement on swarm trapping along with free plans for building swarm traps. Check it out.

[Swarm Trapping & Bait Hives by Jason Bruns...](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Note: Swarm trapping and swarm 'catching' are two different things. Swarm trapping involves putting out 'bait hives' for bees to find and inhabit (and then join your apiary). Swarm catching involves capturing a swarm from a tree, bush, fence, or any of a hundred other areas that an initial swarm may land shortly after exiting the hive and while waiting for the scout bees to find a new home. Usually this is the result of a panic phone call you receive from someone who knows you are a beekeeper. This can be an **INTENSELY EXCITING** activity. More on this next month, maybe.

April showers bring May flowers. What do May flowers bring??

Pilgrims, of course! (a little New England humor)

Welcome to the 2018 Beekeeping Season!



HIP HIP HOORAY!

Larry Krengel

In the year 2013 the European Union banned the use of neonicotinoids on plants that are attractive to honey bees. A good move, me thinks. Last Friday the EU decided to ban all use of neonics. An even better move.

<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/04/neonics-neonicotinoids-banned-european-union-protect-bees-pollinators-environment-science-spd/>

Do they know something the Americans don't know? I doubt it.

For the last three decades our apicultural journey has been one scary surprise after another. Here is my take on our present situation.

From the list of threats to the beekeeping world, the neonicotinoid insecticides hold a primary position. Researchers have good data linking these poisons to damage to the honey bee nervous system. They find it difficult to perform necessary jobs such as navigating to and from their hive.

But the researchers have discovered another greater threat to our bees. Neonics decrease the effectiveness of their immune system.

Let me back up in time just a bit. In the late 1980s we learned that bees could be damaged by the blood-sucking varroa mite that invaded the US. Ten years later, before we could develop a method of torpedoing the mites in our hives, we discovered the mites were not as bad for our bees as the viruses carried by the varroa. Among other viral effects, we began regularly seeing bees fatally affected by deformed wing virus.

Another ten years later, the neonicotinoid insecticides were turned loose in the agricultural world. The side effect of this high-powered, high-cost chemical was the diminishing of our honey bee's immune system. We began seeing mass die-offs. Today we continue to find hives dead from unknown causes, likely killed by one of the viruses bees used to be able to fight off.



Neonics enter the soil and degrade only slowly. Future non-targeted plants acquire the chemicals making it available to the current crop of bees in pollen and nectar.

Three cheers for the EU. It is time to stop the contamination. With time, the presence of neonics will lessen. Now is a good time to start.

I hope neonics will get the same treatment here in the US. It is time for us to admit to another big mistake (remember DDT, asbestos, lead).

I will now get down from my soap box. See you at the meeting.

2018 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President – Dave Hill
daveahill95@gmail.com
Vice President – Joe Scherb
sbscherb@gmail.com
Treasurer – Ralph Brindise
rbrindise@att.net
Secretary – Dan Rank
dtrank@sbcglobal.net
Director – Tom Allen
tallen122@yahoo.com
Director – Rebekkah Burtcher
rebekkahcross@yahoo.com
Director – Marianne Hill
mariannehill1213@gmail.com
Director – John Leibinger
jleibinger@aol.com

Program Chair – Larry Krengel
Webmaster – Terri Reeves
Events Coordinator – Tom Allen
Newsletter Editor – Marianne Hill
Snack Committee – Donna Taliaferro
Bee Package Coordinator – Joe Scherb
Club Extractor Coordinator – Randy Mead
Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

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 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.

To reserve a date, contact Randy at 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. Some recent conversations include swarm traps, dropping the queen cage into the hive body, questions and comments from both newbees and veterans, and lots and lots of pictures (and video)!

Join the fun today!