



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2018

THE BEE PULPIT

Dave Hill

We seem to be heading fully into winter! That early November snowfall was certainly unexpected and our honey girls were surprised I'm sure.

"The Old Farmer's Almanac" tells us that the winter in our neck of the woods will be warmer (or less cool depending on how you look at it!) and wetter. I imagine that this means more rain and less snow. We will all remain optimistic that the winter will be a bit milder this year and that spring comes early!

Our regular meeting on November 9th had a really good turnout. We discussed the last club event of the year, the Green Expo which was held at McHenry County College on Saturday November 3rd. Thanks to all those who helped make it a success.

Randy Mead gave a "Beekeeper Bio" at the meeting. He told us how he became involved in beekeeping and presented an opportunity for the club to help with the county 4H

program. He is working to establish a beekeeping group within the 4H organization. Some members have already stepped up to help on their own, and it was the consensus of the club membership that the club participate in this endeavor. What a great way to bring the hobby of beekeeping and its benefits to a younger generation! We will do whatever we can to make this a success.

We spent most of the meeting discussing our late fall experiences with hives and honey bees. We called on Paul Allen, John Leibinger and Marcin Matelski to be part of a panel to answer questions from the club members. The discussion was interesting, informative and lively as the club was able to pick the brains of these longtime and knowledgeable beekeepers. And as usual there were plenty of opinions to go around.

I want to share some thoughts I saw in an article by Hilary Kearney (Bee-

UPCOMING EVENTS

NO DECEMBER MEETING

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, January 11, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, February 8, 7pm

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL 60098

keeping Like a Girl) published a year or so ago. I've paraphrased a bit in the interest of space.

"Five Common Beekeeping Mistakes"

1. Poor recordkeeping. Taking notes is one of the most important activities that a beekeeper can do. Whether it is just jotting down notes, filling out a form, or using one of the online options like Hive Tracks, if you have a history of what you do with the bees and how they behave, it allows you to be a better beekeeper.

2. Inspecting too often. We all get nervous and worry over our bees. We are excited and eager to visit and learn all we can. Just

remember that each time we disturb the hive we create some stress. Looking into the hives every 2-4 weeks is a good rule of thumb.

3. Unpreparedness. You should always think ahead. Make sure you have all the tools and equipment needed to care for your bees.

4. Rough handling. Bees should always be treated with care. You should move slowly and calmly when working with the bees. Rough handling will upset the bees and make them "unhappy". Remember that every time a bee is

smashed she releases a pheromone that will cause the other bees to become defensive. Take your time when working with the bees and enjoy!

5. Spending Too Much Money. Don't get carried away with the excitement of the hobby. Beekeeping requires a fairly sizeable monetary outlay. Not many beekeepers are able to make money keeping bees. Most of us do not recoup the costs by selling honey.

Just remember that mistakes are a part of the learning process. Learn

and keep going. Honey bees have a way of humbling beekeepers no matter how experienced we are (or think we are)!

Please note that there will not be a club meeting in December! Our first meeting of 2019 will be held at the McHenry County Farm Bureau building on Friday January 11th. We hope to see all of you there as we kick off a new year!

Until then stay warm and think good thoughts for spring.



MEMBER DONATIONS – THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thank You for refreshment donations to the following members:

- *Mary Hubert
- *Jan and Joe Magyar
- *Donna Taliaferro and John Leibinger
- *An Unknown who brought peanutbutter cookies but we failed to get a name

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

- *Sue Dietz - **Harvard Eggs, Feed, & Produce**
- *Tom Montavon - **BL Plastics**
- *Ed Allen

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 as they support us.

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

CHORES OF THE MONTH - DECEMBER

John Leibinger

What's happening in the hive?

Not much that can be visually observed. Winter is here. Not officially until later in the month, but for the skeptics, put on your shorts and sandals and take a walk outside. For all intents and purposes, and certainly from the bees' standpoint, winter is here.

The colony will now be broodless and the queen will be reproductively inactive for the next month or two. The bees will be clustering to maintain colony warmth for the next several months. They will be consuming the food that they have stored away specifically for this purpose. The heater bees at the inside of the cluster will be producing heat and the bulk of the rest of the workers will be surrounding them, maintaining layers of insulation to minimize loss of that precious heat. Some of those outer bees will perish and fall to the bottom board. Undertaker bees will periodically push the bodies to the front of the hive (possibly blocking off hive egress at the bottom entrance). The bees will slowly rotate from the colder outside layers of the cluster to inner layers to warm up. This will continue throughout the winter. The cluster itself will also very slowly migrate around the hive in an effort to stay near stored food. They are in survival mode.

For All Beekeepers:

This is not the time to be breaking into the hive bodies and disrupting the seals or the winter cluster.

If there should be a short warm spell in the mid-upper 40's, you could consider an Oxalic Acid sublimation treatment to eliminate any remaining varroa mites that may have been in the colony or brought in by a late season robbing episode. One advantage of an OA sublimation this time of year (besides the obvious effectiveness it has when treating a broodless colony) is that you will not need to crack open the hive bodies and ruin the hive's propolis seal that was created to keep out the imminent winter winds. If you have been on top of your mite treatment program this should not be needed now.

Periodically walk out to your hives and take an external look at them. Remove snow from around the entrance and look to see that there haven't been any pests causing a problem (as best you can without opening the hive).

Make sure you have an upper entrance/exit and it is clear of snow and debris. It helps with ventilation and it is an easy egress point for bees to take cleansing flights in the winter. Sometimes the lower entrances get plugged with ice or snow and even with dead bees.

Consider strapping down your hive for the winter to prevent winter winds from toppling the hive.

If you have been a conscientious beekeeper throughout the 2018 season and have monitored and controlled varroa mites, left the bees with sufficient stores, ended the year with healthy bees and a young queen (less than a year old), you have provided your bees with the chance of thriving in Spring 2019. Still no guarantee, but you have tilted the odds in their favor.

Start preparing for the 2019 season:

Renew your annual Apiary Registration with Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Clean up any dead outs that you have experienced this season.

Continue to increase your knowledge of bees and beekeeping:

- Read and study about bees and beekeeping
- Attend beekeeping meetings
- Increase your knowledge of local plants and trees.
- Form a small group of beekeepers to meet for lunch and talk bees.

Inventory your equipment, tools, and supplies.

Set aside some money - for replacement or expansion bees, new/replacement equipment and supplies, and association dues.

Review your 2018 season (and your notes) for successes and opportunities.

Think about new goals for 2019.

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)

And Finally,

Get a plate of your favorite snacks. Pour yourself a cup of tea...or whatever your preferred means of hydration... add honey of course... and

Kick back and enjoy the Holidays with your family and friends.

There is a new beekeeping season on the way!

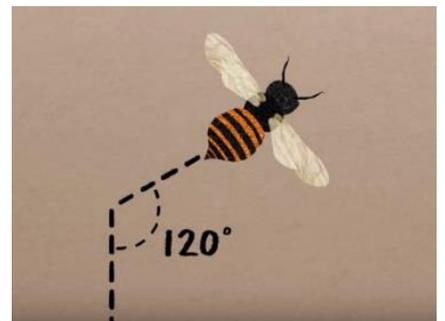
WHY DO HONEY BEES LOVE HEXAGONS?

This is a TedEd talk I came across recently. The link is at the end, if you're interested in seeing all of the animation. Enjoy!
Marianne



Honey bees are fascinating creatures for a number of reasons: Their incredible work ethic, the sugary sweet syrup they produce, and their intricate social structure. But another reason is that honey bees are, in fact, excellent mathematicians. Scientists claim the tiny insects can calculate angles and can even

comprehend the roundness of the earth. But there's particular mathematical bee-genius behind the most important aspect of honey bee life, the hive. Just like humans, bees need food and shelter to stay alive. The hive is not only the bees' home, but doubles as a place to store their honey. Since it's so central to survival, honey bees have to perfect the hives' architectural design. If you examine any piece of honeycomb, you'll see that it's constructed from tightly packed hexagonal, or six-sided, cells. Of all the possible designs, why do honey bees choose this one?



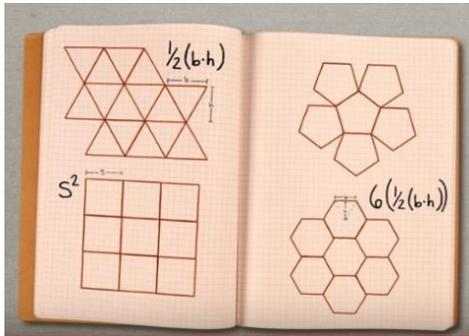
To understand, you need to think like a bee. Bees need a secure place for their entire colony to live. Similarly, there needs to be a place where their nectar can be stored and ripened suitably until it turns into honey. That means there's a need for some serious space efficiency. A good solution is to build little storage units, or cells, just big enough for a bee to fit into, which can also double as the containers in which nectar is stored. The bees' very own honey jars. The next thing is to decide what the little cells should be made out of. Bees don't have



beaks or arms to pick up things, but they are capable of producing wax. The thing is, producing it is a lot of hard work. Bees have to consume 8 ounces of honey to produce just 1 ounce of wax, so they don't want to waste it. So they need a design that allows them to store the largest possible amount of honey using the least amount of wax. What shape does that?

Imagining for a minute that all bees had to attend architecture academy and go to math class. Let's say they asked their geometry teacher, "What shape would give us the most space to store our honey but require the least amount of wax?" And the geometry teacher replied, "The shape that you're seeking is the circle," leaving the bees to return to their trial construction site and begin building their honeycomb using circular cells.

After a while, some of them might have noticed a problem with their design, small gaps between the cells. “We can’t even fit in there. That’s wasted space,” they might have thought. So, ignoring the geometry lesson and taking matters into their own hands, the bees went back to the drawing board to rethink their beehive design. One suggested triangles. “We can use triangles. Look! They fit together perfectly!” Another bee suggested squares. Finally, a third bee piped up and said, “Pentagons don’t seem to work, but hexagons do. We want the one that will use the least amount of wax and be able to store the most amount of honey. Yes, I think that’s the hexagon!”



Why? It looks more like the circle than the others. But how do we know for sure? To find out, the industrious insect-architects calculated the areas of the triangle, the square, and the hexagon, and found that the hexagon was, in fact, the shape that gave them the most storage space. They agreed on an ideal size and returned to work. The space-efficient comb that is a bee’s trademark today is probably a result of this trial and error, but over long periods of evolutionary history.

However, it paid off. Peek into any hive, with your protective goggles and netting on, of course, and you’ll see the end result: a beautiful compact honeycomb that any architect would have been proud to design.

Zack Patterson/Andy Peterson
www.ed.ted.com



THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WHO DONATED HONEY:

Doug Hawthorne
 John Dolsen
 Heidi
 Ralph Brindise & Terri Reeves
 Bill & Jody’s Bees
 Mary Hubert
 Joe Scherb

Mike & Linda Haswell
 Donna Finley
 Gwendolyn Taylor
 Stephanie Slater
 Big Sky Farms
 Angie Bradley
 Tim Cahir



The Walworth County Beekeepers
is pleased to announce

“A Weekend with Keith S. Delaplane, PhD”

Professor and Walter B. Hill Fellow - Department of Entomology University of Georgia

Author of “First Lessons in Beekeeping”

Want to know about Keith Delaplane? <http://ent.uga.edu/people/faculty/keith-delaplane.html>

Where: Army Lake Camp & Retreat Center
N8725 Army Lake Rd.
East Troy, WI 53120
<http://www.armylakecamp.org/>

<p>Saturday, January 26, 2019</p> <p>“Beekeeping Skills for Success”</p> <p>Registration 8-9 AM 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM</p> <p>\$55 (Paid <u>by</u> December 31, 2018) \$65(Paid <u>after</u> December 31, 2018)</p>	<p>Sunday, January 27, 2019</p> <p>“Continue Building Your Beekeeping Knowledge & Techniques”</p> <p>Registration 7-8 AM 8:00 AM – Noon</p> <p>\$55 (Paid <u>by</u> December 31, 2018) \$65 (Paid <u>after</u> December 31, 2018)</p>
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Want to attend both days?

\$100 (Paid by December 31, 2018)

\$120 (Paid after December 31, 2018)

Continental breakfast and lunch provided on Saturday

Continental breakfast provided on Sunday

Limited seating, Act today!

Limited on-site modest lodging available: \$30/night/pp, \$15/additional guest/per room

Off-site area hotel: Quality Inn & Suites, 262-642-2100 (call for availability and rates)

Yes, I'm in! Here's my check for:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, January 26th | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, January 27st | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday and Sunday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On-site Lodging: Fri, Jan. 25th | <input type="checkbox"/> On-site Lodging: Sat, Jan. 26th | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian lunch preferred |

Please Print

Name:	Mobile No:	Emergency Contact:
Address:	City / State / Zip:	Emergency Contact Phone No:
Beekeeping Club:	Email:	Emergency Contact Relationship:

Please make check out to: **Walworth County Beekeepers**

Mail to: WCBK
C/O Scott Kosteretz
N9025 Army Lake Rd. East Troy, WI 53120
Questions/Comments? Send to: skoz@wi.rr.com

LOOKS LIKE HAPPY BEES!

Larry Kregel

Here is the real story. Late season feed jars of sugar water were on the top of the hive, but when the sun came out and the temperature hit 50, the foragers went hunting. Nothing was to be found in the post-freeze environment. The sedum – dry of nectar – still looked good. A spritzing of sugar water on the dry blossoms made them very popular with the bees in minutes. A late season frolic for the colony. The waggle dance back in the hive would have been fun to watch. Fake nectar, but it was good for the heart of the bee-keeper... perhaps for the bees, also.



2018 NIBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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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. We've had LOTS of pictures and videos of your hives! Share your experiences, ask your questions.

Get in on the conversation. Join the fun today!

