



SWEET STUFF

NIBA NEWSLETTER - MAY 2019

THE BEE PULPIT

Dave Hill

Spring is finally on its way! I have to admit that I wrote the previous statement prior to last weekend's "snowfall"! So like most of my fellow beekeepers, I'm more than a little confused. But that's what we get in northern Illinois when it comes weather.



April 4th was the club package delivery. The weather on delivery day was not optimum, but hopefully

everyone was able to make their installations without too much trouble. The day after delivery was better, so if you waited a day or two it may have been warmer and clearer.

Nucs were picked up on Monday morning, the 29th.



Tom Allen, Joe Scherb, John Leibinger and I drove to Sullivan, WI, to make the pickup.

All went well, but it was raining lightly all the way up and back. The rain stopped around 2pm when we got to the Wilbrandts' in Woodstock. I left to return the trailer. Hopefully everyone was able to get their order.

Last year Marianne & I had 8 hives. Unfortunately we had none survive the winter. I believe we did not treat properly and in a timely manner, which contributed to poor colony health, so they were not able to get through our off-and-on winter.

At least 5 of the hives were ravaged with wax moths. I've seen a few hives with wax moths over the years but this one was more than I had imagined. The devastation was complete. After examination, I decided that it was best to pull all of the frames and burn them. I think I was able to save the deep hive boxes but will not know until I take a closer look at them.



The next club meeting will be Friday, May 10th at 7pm at the McHenry County Farm Bureau building in

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Friday, May 10, 7pm

Guest Speaker – Jacob Torres

McHenry County Farm Bureau
1102 McConnell Rd
Woodstock, IL

ISBA ANNUAL SUMMER MEETING

Friday, June 7, starting at 12 noon

Saturday, June 8, 9am – 3:30pm

McHenry County College
Crystal Lake, IL

A DAY AT PETERSON FARM

Sunday, June 23, 10am – 4pm

Peterson Farm
4112 McCullum Lake Rd
McHenry, IL

McHENRY COUNTY FAIR

Tuesday, July 30 –

Sunday, August 4

McHenry County Fairgrounds
11900 Country Club Rd
Woodstock, IL

Woodstock. Special speaker will be Jacob Torres, graduate student from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Department of Entomology.

Look forward to seeing you there. Bee there or bee square!

REGISTRATION FOR THE JUNE ISBA MEETING IS OPEN

June brings something new to the ISBA summer meeting. It will be a two-day event. Here is how you can register.

Registration is open. You have the opportunity to register online for the ISBA Summer meeting set for June 7th and 8th. Click here to register, [ISBA Summer Meeting Registration](#). Use the dropdown menu to toggle between Friday and Saturday registration.

Here are three things you should know about this meeting –

1. There are four short-courses on Friday afternoon. The fee for a course is \$10.00. You may only register for one as they run simultaneously. Registration for these courses will be limited in number and is for members only.
2. There are two discussion groups on Friday evening both starting at 7:00 pm and are open to any interested individuals, one on mead making and one on the raising of local queens. No registration is required. There is no fee. Just come and join in.
3. Saturday, a day with many presentations, begins at 9:00 am and ends at 3:30 pm, and is open to members and non-members. Registration fee for the day is \$25.00 (\$35 for non-members). The first 100 members who register receive a free ISBA hat. A Saturday sub sandwich lunch is available for \$10.00. Walk-in registration is an additional \$5.00.

More information on the Friday short-courses and Saturday presenters is at ILSBA.com.

Registration is at [ISBA Summer Meeting Registration](#).

Knowing that some might not have access to internet registration, special arrangements can be made by calling Wendy Yemm at McHenry County College (815) 455-8764.

Vendors will be available both days.

A note on lunch... our lunch will be catered by Quiznos who will provide a selection of their toasted sub sandwiches.



Vegetarian subs will be available. Deadline for preordering lunch is June 1.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CLUB

Tom Allen

Our next event will be hosting the ISBA Annual Summer Meeting on June 7th and 8th at McHenry County College. If you're not registered, be sure to go to [ISBA Summer Meeting 2019 Registration](#). I hear it's filling up fast.

June 23rd is our third appearance at A Day at Peterson Farm on McCullum Lake Rd in McHenry. A Day at Petersen Farm highlights "McHenry County farm life in 1916" with demos, hayrides, farm animals, music, games, a 100-year-old steam-powered tractor and more. Please contact Ralph Brindise, rbrindise@att.net, with any questions.

HOW MUCH FUN IS THE FAIR???

The dates this year are July 30th through August 4th.

NIBA has a history of presenting a booth at the McHenry County Fair. The public looks forward to our display, our educational



materials, our observation hive, and our sweet honey & wares. This can only happen with the tireless help of our volunteers.

There is a Signup Genius event setup for the Fair, and many of our members have already signed up. There are 3 shifts per day using 4 people per shift. Watch your email for your Signup Genius invite. I will bring a signup sheet to the meeting.

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?

Tom



MEMBER DONATIONS



Thank you for your support!

Thank You to all those who brought refreshments for the April meeting. There were many great treats shared. Your generous donations help foster camaraderie within the group and make the meetings even more enjoyable. Your support is truly appreciated.

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

- *Sue Dietz – Harvard Eggs, Feed, & Produce
- *Dave & Marianne Hill
- *Stephanie Slater
- *Corky Schnadt

A special thank you to Craig and Angie Bradley for the donation of the Honey Extractor that we will be raffling at the annual summer picnic.

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.

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

John Leibinger



LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER

Larry Kregel

Lots of beekeepers. Lots of hives. Think of all the data that can be collected and used to answer the many questions about how we can best keep bees. The problem comes in how we put a data base together and how we draw out the information that is useful in our beeyards.

What varroa treatments work best and when should they be implemented? What management styles get the biggest honey crop and the best wintering success? The questions are many and the mountain of data is daunting. Perhaps Jacob Torres has a better idea.

Jacob is a PhD graduate student at the University of Illinois in entomology, and he will join us at our May meeting. He is looking to recruit "citizen scientists" to assist him in developing a data base unique to Illinois beekeeping hoping to answer important questions about how best to manage Illinois bees.



Come to hear Jacob's proposal at the NIBA May meeting, May 10 at 7:00 PM at the Farm Bureau in Woodstock.

OUR OWN MASTER BEEKEEPER – Jerry Gudauskas

*Recently, Jerry Gudauskas was honored with completing the Master Beekeeper Program through University of Florida. With hard work and the help and mentoring of Corky Schnadt and Joe Magyar, Jerry was able to complete the program in five years' time. Below, Jerry offers a synopsis of what's involved in the program. **CONGRATULATIONS!***



The Master Beekeeper program is offered through the University of Florida at Gainesville. It is a 5-year program which you plan with the help of the extension advisor. I majored in education and minored in queen-rearing. There are several options to apply toward accomplishing the Masters program. They include research, developing an extension project, developing educational materials, showing honey, and public service credits.

The program begins at the Apprentice Level. At this level you meet with the State Apiary inspector and name all the parts of a bee hive, explain what is in or on the honey frames and point out if any parasites or diseases are in the hive. A lab test is on any kind of bee equipment used. And finally a 4-hour written test. You need to be a beekeeper one year before you can take the Apprentice test.



The next step was for the Advanced level. The test included more identification of bee equipment and identifying bees, wasps and flies. This included their habitat, food sources, rearing the species, and benefit to our food supply.

At the five-year level, there was a final written test, which included anything on the previous testing, questions at a more advanced level, and anything that was offered at the University of Florida Bee colleges. Bee colleges are held three times a year. Each is three days with many topics and presenters from many disciplines.

As part of my learning, I included attending national conventions. I attended the American Bee Federation conventions in Jacksonville, Florida, Galveston, Texas, and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Each of these are 5 days long. At each of these conventions, I helped teach the Kids and Bees Program. In January 2020, this convention will be in Schaumburg, Illinois. In addition, I attended the Heartland Apiary Society Convention in St. Louis. During the winter, I attended honey bee classes at the university and at bee clubs and worked with a local beekeeper.

I belong to several National, State and local associations.

If you have any questions, call or email. (815) 354-2317 gud@earthlink.net.

CHORES OF THE MONTH - MAY

John Leibinger

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 from early May and into June. There have been reports of a number of swarms already taking place, so be vigilant of the signs. 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. There was a lot of pale yellow maple pollen coming in during April and then slightly darker yellow willow pollen. Most recently you may be seeing much more orange pollen which is from dandelions which have just started blooming. 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 overwintering 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. This is particularly true considering the highly volatile and crazy weather patterns we have been experiencing. The weather can raise havoc on the pollen supplies. 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 that you will see the swarm cells in 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 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? Take notes.

[Nice Pollen Color Chart by Season](#) (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 2019 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. Consider learning a bit about

Growing Degree Days(GDD). This will give you great insight into when your local plants will be blooming. As you see the blooms emerge, note the GDD year-to-date for future reference.

[Explanation of Growing Degree Days](#) (Ctrl + Click link)

[Great Growing Degree Day Chart/Tool](#) (Ctrl + Click link) [Nice Seasonal Pollen Color Chart](#) (Ctrl + Click link)

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 in which hive 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 Report](#)(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 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.

[Jason Bruns on Swarm Trapping](#) (Ctrl+Click link)

Assemble some gear to be prepared to catch a swarm hanging in a tree, on a fence, or somewhere else they aren't wanted! Be ready in case a friend calls and says, "Get here quick, my neighbor is freaking out! There is a bunch of bees hanging on my neighbor's swing set, and we don't know what to do!"

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 where 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 panicked phone call you receive from someone who knows you are a beekeeper. This can be an **INTENSELY EXCITING** activity.

Get your blood flowing! Capture or Trap a Swarm!

Like the bees we study, we accomplish more together.

John Leibinger



Welcome to the 2019 Beekeeping Season!

THAT'S WHAT I WOULD DO

Larry Krengel

Spring is the time of the year that beekeepers find most challenging. It is the time of the year that decisions are made that will affect the success of the rest of the season. That does make spring a bit more anxiety producing.

It has been a strange spring, but ultimately manageable. I made some nucs early in April. It was so cold on a couple of those early nights that I brought the nucs into my garage. One morning when I moved them back outside I had to shovel snow off their perch. All the nucs look good now.

I recently received an email from a newbie who installed her first two colonies and after inspecting them found one of them in business with a laying queen. The second was found to have no queen sign, an MIA queen. The question was what to do next. Was the queen just slow? Was the queen missing? I thought I would share my answer with you.

If I had two newly installed colonies and one seemed to have a laying queen and the other showed no signs of a queen, I would move a single frame of young brood and eggs - with no bees - from the queenright colony to the laggard. First, it would discourage any of the workers from beginning laying. Laying worker colonies are very difficult to save.



Second, if I saw the colony that received the brood begin to build a queen cell, I would feel sure the original queen is not present. I could let them continue to raise a queen, or knowing for certain there is no queen present, I could buy a queen and - after removing the queen cell - give them the new queen.

In the case of a new colony installed on foundation, adding the purchased queen would give me a better chance of having that colony survive the next winter.

That's what I would do.

I received a question from Deb about installing the nucs many beekeepers in the area picked up in the last few days.



I had mentioned being patient for a day or two for installing packages if the weather is not good. With nucs you have a bit more leeway. If I picked up a nuc and the weather was cold (less than 50 degrees) and rainy, I would hold off on installing them. The nuc is already a functioning colony on five frames. Even if they can not fly because of weather, they can continue to make progress, unlike a package where they can do nothing but drink sugar water from the feed can. A few extra days will likely have no real adverse effects.



I would place the nuc box in the location where I will be installing it in the hive box and open the entrance to allow them to fly if they wish. When the weather improves, they can be moved to the hive box with no problem of orienting to their home location. If it is cold and rainy, they can stay in and cluster.

Weather is often challenging in the spring, but I am confident in the progress my bees are making so far this year. I forecast an abundant honey crop.

NIBA meets on May 10th, same time and same place. The evening's guest will be a grad student from the U of I who is working on research dealing with varroa... specifically in Illinois. I look forward to hearing him.

I hope to see you then.

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Club Extractor Coordinator – Randy Mead
Club Raffle Coordinator – John Leibinger

Membership Has Its Perks!

- 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.

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.
mariannehill1213@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!

**The queen marking color for
2019 is GREEN.**