



Est: 1918

Brown County Beekeepers Association Newsletter

**February
2022**

Website
BCBA

www.browncountybeekeepers.com

Facebook (2)

Northeast WI

Beekeepers

Join Today

(beekeepers

helping

beekeepers site)

**Coffee and
Bees!**

**February 8th
8:00 am**

Virtual meeting only!

BCBA Mission Statement:

We are dedicated to promoting sustainable, responsible, and healthy beekeeping practices in Northeast Wisconsin for both experienced and first-time beekeepers. We strive to create a fun environment where learning opportunities exist for association members and the general public.

President's Message:

As this is written, on January 20th, there are 58 days to SPRING. <https://countdown.onlineclock.net/countdowns/spring/> (Count down to the first day of spring Sunday, March 20th 2022).

There are three important things I consider as spring approaches – and NOW is a perfect time to plan.

1. **Do my bees need food?** February and March are critical months when bees, if not checked periodically, they could starve. Be sure to check resources often by peaking under the cover and looking at frames. If you see bees, they are out of food. There are several methods to feed bees – from mountain camp, to making your own sugar boards, to purchasing winter patties from the local bee supply store. DON'T let your bees starve!

(continued on the next page).

Julie Mazzoleni

VP Brown County Beekeepers Association

Interesting Honey Bee Fact(s):

- . Ounce for ounce, honey bee venom is more deadly than cobra venom. Don't worry, though – it takes 19 stings for every kilogram of a person's body weight to be lethal.
- . The first Anglo-Saxons drank beer made from water and honeycomb, with herbs for flavoring.
- . The word "honeymoon" is derived from the ancient tradition of supplying a newlywed couple with a month's supply of mead in order to ensure happiness and fertility.

Other Notes

President's message continued:

2. **Did any of my hives die?** - No matter how hard we try and think we're doing the right things, bees die. It's always sad to lose a hive. It's important to determine why your bees died so you can make adjustments for the upcoming season. Make sure you do a hive autopsy to determine WHY they died – was it starvation? Mites/varroa? Water? If you understand what went wrong, you can make adjustments. Here's an article from Meghan Milbrath (Univ of MI) from 2016 but still applies today. <https://www.michiganbees.org/why-did-my-honey-bees-die/#:~:text=Lots%20of%20Honey%20%C3%A2%E2%82%AC,take%20their%20toll%20very%20quickly>.

And another paper by Cornell.edu – 33 pages but great information.

https://pollinator.cals.cornell.edu/sites/pollinator.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/Wintering%20Bees%20in%20Cold%20Climates_accessible1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2AkGymw5hL2ud8lTlyfAho45TCaeBIAdmfbCP_i0YSOX4HVgBWFnCBHiQ

3. **Will any of my hive(s) survive?** – it's not too soon to be thinking about spring mite treatments. Treating early ensures your bees have a jump start and are healthy going into spring/summer. It's important to get your mites under control ASAP. Now is a great time to put your mite treatment plan together for the spring AND for the year. What will be your mite treatment early spring? Mid-summer and fall? How's it administered; how long does it stay on? When to safely put supers on (spring), what treatment to use with supers and without? Are there temperature considerations? Below is a great tool from BIP to get you started, specifically Varroa Management guide and Varroa Management decision making tool. <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/program/hive-management/>

Last note: IMPORTANT! if you plan on buying bees this spring, do it ASAP. Prices are expected to be high this year due to shipping costs. I've updated the "WI Honey Bee Supplier guide" on our webpage. Although we are not endorsing any one supplier, use this guide as a REFERENCE, and call supplier to verify prices, needs etc.

Here: <https://browncountybeekeepers.com/blogs/>

Julie Mazzoleni, VP BCBA (The President is vacationing in sunny Arizona! ;o))

Upcoming Meetings

Coffee and Bees

(Second Tuesday of every month)

February 8th, 8:00 AM, **Virtual meeting only.**

Join Zoom meeting:

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84617554819?pwd=V25MVHQ2ZXY4NUpFVU1UV1hxOTY5Zz09>

Meeting ID: 846 1755 4819

Passcode: 146350

BCBA January Meeting

Wednesday, February 16th

6:30 – 8:00 at Green Bay Botanical Gardens

Education

Queen Rearing

Augie Linskins (Linskins Honey Apiaries)

Join Zoom Meeting

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88925725971?pwd=eVh1KzVxbHRnd25rOFM5OFJvUVMxUT09>

Meeting ID: 889 2572 5971

Passcode: 642702

Don't miss our fantastic lineup of education and topics for this year! Make note and put them on your calendar! Some local experts and nationally renowned beekeeping speakers are part of this lineup!!

Dates	Topic	Edu Type	Presenter
Jan 19 '22	Success Factors in Successful Beekeeping First Year Beekeeping	Reg	Kelly Kulhanek, Ph. D. Washington State University Sean Melvin
Feb 18, 22	Queen Rearing	Reg	Augie Linskins
Mar 18, 22	Spring Management	Reg	Dave Elsen and Julie Mazzoleni
Apr 20, 22	Oxalic Acid Hive Health, What an Inspector looks for	MBM Reg	Dick Sturm, Julie Mazzoleni and Carl Fisher Wisconsin State Inspector
May 18, 22	Beginning Beekeeping	Reg	Chelsa Cook Ph. D., Marquette
Jun 14, 22	Topic TBD (Special Date)	Reg	Dr. Jamie Ellis, University of Florida
July 20, 22	Topic TBD		
Aug 17, 22	Honey Extraction Over-wintering Hives	MBM Reg	TBD
Sep 21, 22	Topic TBD		
Oct 19, 22	Topic TBD		
Nov 16, 22	Topic TBD		
December	No Meeting		

MBM (Meeting Before the Meeting), Reg (Regular meeting)

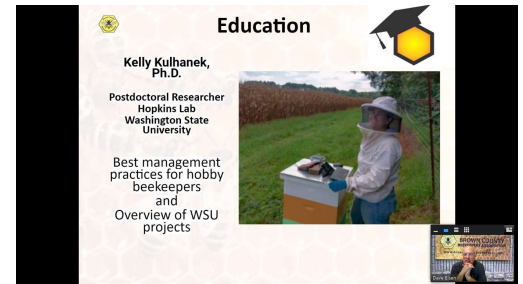
January Highlights!

Hope you didn't miss them!

Sean Melvin
"First year Beekeeping"



Kelly Kulhanek
 Success factors in
 Successful Beekeeping



Most bang for your buck:

Backyard		Professional	
North N=11,630	South N=6,411	Stationary N=596	Migratory N=334
Action on Deadouts	Action on Deadouts	How started new colonies	Honey Produced
Varroa Treatment Y/N	How started new colonies	Honey Produced	Varroa Monitoring Technique
How started new colonies	Varroa Treatment Y/N	Varroa Products Months Count	Winter Prep
Comb Culling Technique	Honey Produced	Varroa Products Type Count	How started
Formic acid use Season	Comb Culling Technique	Varroa Treatment Y/N	Amitra

Top 4 Management Practices

	Average Practice	Best Practice
Action on Deadouts	Store Equipment	Reuse Equipment Immediately
Varroa Treatment	Treat in Fall	Treat When Above 3 mites/100 bees
How started new colonies	Packages	Splits/Nucs
Comb Culling Technique	Don't Treat Old Brood Comb Before Reuse	Freeze Old Brood Comb Before Reuse

Julie Mazzoleni
 Talking about Bees and
 Honey Tasting with
 GB Gardening Club



FEBRUARY - WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE WORLD OF BEES

Seasonal conditions

In Brown County, Wisconsin

Average low temperature - 13

Average high -30

Average Precipitation – 1.21 inches

Average Snow – 9.26 inches

In the hive

- The bees are still clustered, perhaps breaking away for brief [cleansing flights](#) on the warmest days. The cluster has likely moved up to the top of the hive. The queen begins or continues to lay a small number of eggs. Nutritional needs increase and the risk of starvation rises.

Inspection

- When inspecting a colony in winter, it is not necessary to open it. Do a quick external inspection, visual and auditory, to check the cluster. Listen for the bees with your ear directly on the upper part of the hive; if you do not hear anything consider get a stethoscope or renting the [club infra-red camera](#). Tapping the outside of the hive will get the bees to respond but is not recommended since part of the response is to break the cluster.
- You can open the hive if it is relatively warm and windless outside, but do not pull frames or break open the cluster if it is below 50°F (not likely in Green Bay, WI). If you open the hive, check for moisture around the inner or outer covers. If the cluster is far to one side of the food stores, you can carefully move it closer, keeping it together while you do so, or move frames of honey closer to it.

Nutrition

- Colonies are at a higher risk of starvation as the winter progresses. Depending on a number of factors (winter weather, fall stores), the bees' food stores could be running low, since they do not ration their food. Feed them if the hive is light or the stores obviously empty, or if the bees are visible through the inner cover at the very top of the hive. Use dry sugar or a candy board. Some beekeepers feed their bees winter pollen patties at this time to stimulate and support brood rearing.

Equipment

- Finish fixing, cleaning/sterilizing, buying, assembling, or painting equipment as needed.

Yard maintenance

- As in January, ensure that the hive cover is properly secured, check for animal pests, remove ice blocking the entrance, and don't worry about a few dead bees on the snow outside the hive.

Education

- Don't forget to [renew your club membership](#) and to get the upcoming year's meetings on your calendar. The meetings are the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 except for July and December. Watch the newsletter for details of a picnic in July and a Christmas party in December.

Club & Bee Keeping History

and other interesting stories/tidbits

ARE HONEY BEES AN INVASIVE SPECIES?

Honey bees are model workers and important pollinators, but are they invasive? Should we be trying to save them or should we be forcing their eviction?



As beekeepers, we get asked a zillion questions about bees. Over the years, the most common questions have centered on how to “[save the bees](#).” Just recently, that tone has started to shift. Now people are asking questions like these:

What would happen if the bees disappeared AND whether we should save them at all.

Let’s dive into both issues.

WHAT WOULD *REALLY* HAPPEN IF THE *BEES* DISAPPEARED

First, let’s be clear – there are over 20,000 species of “bees.” Bumble bees, mason bees, carpenter bees, leaf cutter bees.....and of course honey bees. If ALL the BEES disappeared, then there would be big trouble. If just the honey bees disappeared, less trouble, but it would still be bleak.

Remember, we are beekeepers. We love honey bees. We also love native bees. They are all fantastic pollinators. Moths, wasps, birds, beetles, the wind, and other animals also act as pollinators. There are some species of plants that require bees. Some even require specific bees. Without those bees, the plants would be unable to reproduce and would go extinct. These include popular trees, ornamental plants, and food crops.

Most of the plants eaten by humans are pollinated by insects, but the majority of our calories come from just a few plant species – wheat, corn, rice, soybeans. These are wind or self pollinated and do not require insects. So if bees disappeared, we would not “starve to death.” Our plates would be pretty bare though; with a diet deficient in many vitamins, minerals, and of course colors and flavors.

Life would be boring without berries, fruit, nuts and most vegetables. Those that can be pollinated by flies or moths might still produce *some fruit*, but not enough to sustain all of humanity.

Native bees could sustain a sizable amount of the fruit and vegetable harvests, but not in the quantities we are used to: they would not be able to handle the volumes in large nut farms or commercial orchards. Like it or not, commercial farms feed the world. They need honey bees. We all need honey bees AND native bees.

So, YES, we need to worry about bee health. Bees, worldwide, are in trouble. Why? Pesticides, poor habitat, lack of quality forage, diseases, and more. What can you do to help?

Personally, we are actively working to improve bee health in our corner of the world. We planted 12 acres of native prairie in 2016 and lost count after planting 200 trees and shrubs. We use no pesticides or herbicides and will continue to plant trees and flowers as long as we are breathing. We are also doing active research on improving honey bee health.

ARE HONEY BEES INVASIVE?

This argument is mostly discussed in the United States. There are many species of honey bees. *Apis Mellifera* is the bee kept by beekeepers in the United States and most of Europe. It originated in Europe (though a recent archaeological dig may have found *apis* species that pre-date European colonization of the Americas.) Based on the current information, honey bees are a “non-native” species. They can, and do, escape cultivation and *can* live in the wild.

In order to be considered “invasive” they would need to displace and prevent native insects from thriving.

This is hotly debated. Most researchers have found that pollination by bees of different species increases fruit set, the number of seeds, and subsequent flowers – thereby increasing forage for all insects. They do not fight with each other and rarely share diseases.

Since adequate forage for all bees is on the decline, could honey bees be taking all the nectar and pollen – leaving nothing for native bees? It’s possible but not likely. Honey bees are most often kept in large commercial groups – moved between big orchards for pollination. Hobby beekeepers are fairly spread out. Native bees stay in their own habitat. They do overlap, but not everywhere.

What is really hurting natives is the decrease in available wild forage, the use of pesticides/herbicides, and the fact that people have figured out how to “keep” bumblebees. Whenever animals start being “kept” their population densities increase, their disease levels spike, and things can go awry.

Long story short – honey bees are not native, but they are not invasive. Perhaps a better term is – ***imported***. They are important for the food/medicine crops they create (honey, beeswax, propolis) and for the plants they pollinate. Without honey bees, our food supply would be greatly reduced and limited. Without ***all*** bees, we would have a very bleak future. So please continue to support bees! They need our help and we need theirs.

Plant flowering trees, shrubs, vegetables, and perennials. Limit your use of pesticides and herbicides. It's good for your health, it's good for the bees, it's good for the world.

Article from Duffy Meadows Research and Consulting.

Club Discounts

Club Sponsor – Hansen Honey Farm, Rhinelander, WI

- 15% Discount for all first-time purchases
- 5% discount for all BCBA members for ongoing purchase
- Note: You must use specific code for these discounts.
- Contact BCBA Secretary for this code! (secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com)

Club Sponsor – Let It Bee, Inc., Greenville, WI

- 15% Discount for all first-time purchases
- 5% discount for all BCBA members for ongoing purchase
- When purchasing ***in-store only***, let them know you are a member of the BCBA.

Bee Culture and American Bee Journal Subscriptions



ABJ Association
Member Subscriptio



Bee Culture
Subscription.pdf

BCBA Leadership

President: Dave Elsen
president@browncountybeekeepers.com

Vice President:
Julie Mazzoleni
vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

Secretary:
Bob Michiels
secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Treasurer:
Tom Cashman
Tcash99930@aol.com

Social Media Chair:
Carl Fisher
info@browncountybeekeepers.com

Membership Chair:
OPEN

Education Chair:
OPEN

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WHPA Youth Program Mentors: Contact Julie Mazzoleni

OPEN POSITIONS

Education Chair AND Membership Chair: Contact Dave Elsen

Free Education Opportunity

Capitol Bee Supply

Check out the link below for some **FREE** e-learning topics by
<https://www.facebook.com/CapitolBeeSupply/posts/2890729754299781>



Club Education Reimbursement Opportunity

Club members are eligible for up to \$25/ calendar year for continuing education

Eligibility Guidelines:

- Must be a **current member** for at least **12 consecutive months**.
- Member must submit their request to the Leadership Team prior to the event including details on how it aligns to the Club's Mission.

Note: BCBA sponsored events, books or magazines not eligible for reimbursements.

Club Expectations of Members Receiving Education Reimbursement

- Overview of the education to the club or an education session.
- Write-up with photos and/or video for club publication.