

# May 2022

## BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER



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

[www.browncountybeekeepers.com](http://www.browncountybeekeepers.com)

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the April meeting Dick Sturm and Carl Fisher did a very good job sharing information on how we can incorporate Oxalic Acid as a tool to help us control Varroa Mites. This aligned nicely with an online seminar I watched on "Concepts in Varroa Management" by Randy Oliver. Here are a few highlights that we may want to consider in our Mite Management Plans:

- Beekeepers generally wait too long to test and treat for mites. April and May is a critical time to get on top of your mites.
- Mite growth is biggest in spring. Best to control mites prior to swarm season
- Up to 80% of mites are under capped brood during swarm season.
- It is easier to keep mites low by monitoring and treating in spring vs. trying to bring them down after they are out of control.
- Most beginning beekeepers' Mite Management Plan is Wishful Thinking. The hope is that their hive(s) will not have mites to manage. This has never worked!
- Randy's Varroa Model on the Web ([chickabuzz.com](http://chickabuzz.com)) - Randy's model turned into a web page.
- When is it best to treat a package of bees: Within 8 days of installation (OA works well).

Continued next page ....

#### Monthly Club Meeting

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

6:30 pm

In Person: Location Change!

NWTC Energy Center  
2740 W. Mason St, Green Bay

Virtual: Here's the link

Meeting ID: 872 0053 9639

Passcode: 836118

#### Coffee and Bees

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

8:00 am

Luna Coffee Roasters  
Bellevue

Off of GV on Monroe

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Check out the Wisconsin Honey Producers and Honey Bee Health Coalition documents / link outlining mite treatment options that can be used throughout the season.

<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/program/hive-management/>

As a club let's all make a concerted effort in 2022 to have healthy hives by implementing an Integrated Mite Management Plan.

Thanks

Dave Elsen

Brown County Beekeepers Association, President

## Special Note: May Meeting Location Change!

*NWTC Energy Center, 2740 W. Mason St, Green Bay.*



## Interesting Honey Bee Facts!

- For every pound of honey produced, a hive must collect 10 pounds of pollen.
- In the United States, more than 300 different kinds of honey are produced every year. The variety in color and flavor is determined by the types of flowers from which the bees collect nectar.
- The European honey bee was brought over to North America in 1622 by the Shakers. Because of this, Native Americans referred to honey bees as the "White Man's Fly".
- Honey bees did not spread to Alaska until 1927.



# Club provided Education

In April, Dave Elsen, Bob Michiels and Wayne Steigelman provided Beekeeping Education to future beekeepers at the Brown County Library - East Branch!



Also in April, Julie Mazzoleni along with assistance from Bob Michiels talked bees to 1st graders at Oconto Elementary!



## "Bee"ing Funny"

Why did the Honey Bee get Married????

See following page(s) for answer!



SITES MANAGED BY  
BCBA

Brown County Beekeepers  
updates on club happenings  
Northeast WI Beekeepers  
beekeepers helping beekeepers

# Other News

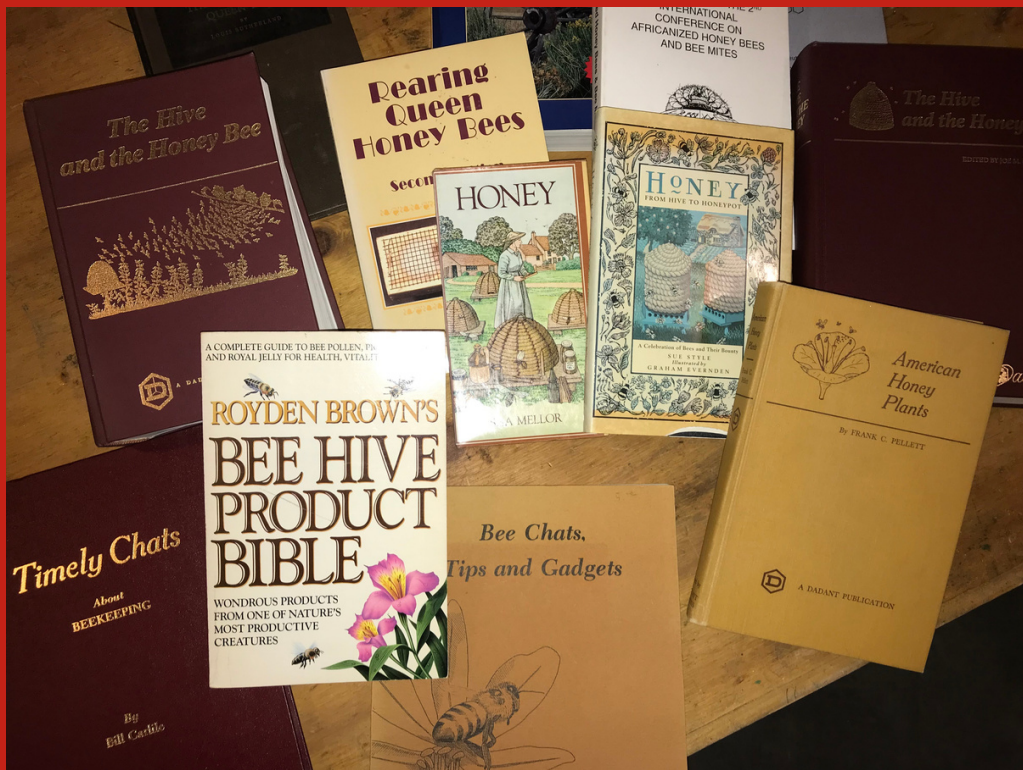
The club received a donation of bee books from Michael Rueden and a few others over the past few months. To honor Michael's wish of sharing these books with our membership, they will be available at meetings for checkout so they can be shared for years to come.

I asked Michael to share a bit about his beekeeping story. It is amazing how he can recall the individuals that not only were influential during his beekeeping, but many of which became lifelong friends. Here is Michael's story:

*I started beekeeping because of the lack of pollination in my garden. First, I went to the library to get a book on beekeeping, there was no internet, and after reading the book I knew this was something I wanted to try. I spent the next 10 months learning about beekeeping by talking to an area beekeeper, John Hinkfuss, and also attended a weekend class at the University of St. Paul. I also started attending spring bee club meetings in Platteville and Ashippun. Those were great meetings to learn what other beekeepers were doing. Buck and A.J. Howery, father and son that lived in southern Wisconsin, had 2500 colonies and were a wealth of information. Another person that was a great deal of help was Lee Heini the manager of the Dadant Watertown outlet. There were many others, but those were the most helpful for the new person in the trade of beekeeping.*

*My first year I had 3 colonies and the next year 15 and in 8 years around 80. The early years I extracted honey in my Dad's machine shed and in 1998 I purchased land from my parents and built a building for extracting, storage of equipment, and a retail store.*

*And always willing to help those that ask.  
Michael Rueden*





## Other News

BROWN COUNTY LAND & WATER  
CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

**2022  
POLLINATOR SEED  
KITS**

Available  
March 1- October 31, 2022

Call or Walk-In  
Monday-Friday from 8am-3pm  
920.391.4620  
2019 Technology Way, Ste. 104  
Green Bay, WI 54311

  **Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
HORTICULTURE PROGRAM



*Don't miss out! Whether you are looking to attract pollinators into your current landscape, plant a pollinator meadow, or want to establish a pollinator corridor in your neighborhood; the Pollinator Seed Kit from Brown County Land and Water Conservation Department has you covered! These Pollinator Seed Kits use an approved NRCS seed mix including a variety of aster, milkweed, black-eyed Susan, purple coneflower, and more! The seed kit will cover approximately 1,000 square feet and costs just \$15. Complete planting and maintenance instructions will be provided to help you get the most out of your pollinator planting. Seed kits are perfect for all gardeners from the beginner to the most experienced horticulturist. Local pick-up only from March 1- October 31, 2022.*

# 2022 Education Calendar

Date	Education	Type	Presenter
January 19, 22	Success Factors in Beekeeping	Reg	Kelly Kulhanek, Ph. D. Washington State University Sean Melvin
February 18, 22	Queen Rearing	Reg	Augie Linskens Linskens Honey Apiaries, LLC
March 18, 22	Spring Management	Reg	Dave Elsen Julie Mazzoleni
April, 20, 22	Oxalic Acid Mite Treatment Hive Health, What an Inspector looks for MBM (5:45) - Bee nucs and package installation (in-person only)	Reg	Dick Sturm, Julie Mazzoleni, Carl Fisher Wisconsin State Inspector Wayne Steigelman
May 18, 22	MBM - Powdered Sugar Roll Mite Check Demonstration	MBM	Club Member
	Beginning Beekeeping	Reg	Chelsa Cook, Ph. D. Marquette University
June 14, 22 (Special Date)	TBD	Reg	Dr. Jamie Ellis University of Florida
July 20, 22	TBD		
August 17, 22	Honey Extraction Over Wintering Hives	MBM Reg	TBD
September 21, 22	TBD		
October 19, 22	TBD		
November 16, 22	TBD		
December (no meeting)			



# Last Month's Education

## April Education

Dick Sturm and Carl Fisher discussed Oxalic Acid treatment(s) for mites.



## MBM

Wayne Steigelman shared with club members how to load a package of bees and a nuc!





# May

## What's going on in the World of Bees

### Seasonal conditions

In Brown County, Wisconsin

Average high - 56, low temperature - 45

Average Precipitation – 3.6 inches

Average Snow Days– 0

### In the hive

- Egg laying and brood rearing are in high gear, with the brood area expanding rapidly. The bees are foraging for pollen and nectar to support this colony growth. They are likely to be less defensive than in fall, with less to protect and lots to do! With the growing population and possible overcrowding, mid-May is the beginning of swarm season. Queen cups are being built along the lower edges of brood frames. If the hive is crowded, some cups will likely be laid in. The drone population is growing. The Varroa mite population is also building.

### Inspection

- Colony inspections should now take place every two weeks and include evaluating the brood pattern, confirming the presence of the queen and/or eggs, evaluating colony growth and available room, monitoring for pests and diseases, and other metrics. Record Keeping is key to making these inspections useful and actionable.
- If you cannot inspect every one of your colonies, inspect those that are not showing as much activity on the outside.
- If the bottom hive body is empty, you might consider moving it above brood nest.
- If you install a package or nuc, allow two weeks for the colony to establish before you inspect it.

### Nutrition

- The bees should be foraging for what they need, but they also need a lot at this time, so remain vigilant and prepared to feed sugar syrup or a pollen supplement if necessary.
- Provide supers if the brood chambers are full and the population/stores are growing with the first honey flows of spring.
- Feed package bees or nucs upon their arrival.

### Pests, parasites, and diseases

- Monthly inspections should include monitoring for a range of pests and diseases: look for problems on the outside of the colony, in the brood, and on the adult bees themselves.
- Monitor Varroa mite levels. At this point in the year, if you find two or more mites (per 100 bees) from a sugar shake, ether roll, or alcohol wash, you will want to treat. Treatment methods will depend on your management goals, the condition of the colony, and external conditions. Drone comb can be an effective cultural method at this time of year. This may be a good time to break the brood cycle (and therefore the Varroa reproduction cycle) by caging the queen or making splits.





# May

## What's going on in the World of Bees

- Monitor for Nosema. It is present all year, but regular monitoring will still help you understand your normal levels and when/if they peak, particularly if you are seeking to understand why a colony is struggling.
- Replace with fresh foundation or newly drawn comb two of your oldest frames in each hive body to reduce the accumulation of Nosema spores, American foulbrood spores, and pesticides.

### Population management

- Install any new packages or nucs that arrive.
- Swarm control: if you do not want your bees to swarm, provide them with plenty of room and check that the colony is not honey bound (meaning that there is honey in or around the brood nest effectively restricting the access of the queen from other areas where she would lay eggs). Move the honey combs out of the brood nest and into a super if needed.
- Keep an eye out for swarm cells. You may consider splitting the strongest colonies, particularly if you are looking to grow your operation or keep nucs in reserve. Cutting out swarm cells can prevent swarming as well, but needs to be done thoroughly and often (every few days).
- You may be able to catch swarms this month.
- Combine weak and strong colonies or equalize them if you want, but only after you have checked for diseases in the weak colony.
- If your inspection reveals that a queen is under performing, if you want the vigor of a young queen, or if you want to introduce new stock for Varroa resistance or other properties, you might consider re-queening. This is a good month to do it, although local queens are probably in short supply this early in the year.
- This is the best time (swarm season) to rear queens. To get from an egg to a mated and laying queen takes about one month takes about one month. Continue to build your cell builder colony while preventing it from swarming.
- Check regularly for swarm cells, and cut out any you find.

### Equipment

- Remove any remaining insulation, winter wraps, mouse guards, etc. Entrance reducers can be left on; many beekeepers use them year-round.
- Consider adding a queen excluder to manage the honey supers more easily.
- Set up bait hives if you want to catch a swarm.
- Foundation will be more likely to be drawn out during a honey flow.

### Hive products and services

- Cut-outs tend to be easier this time of year, when populations are low.
- You may be able to trap a small amount of pollen for later use or sale; this needs close monitoring to keep the pollen usable and frequent breaks to keep the bees adequately provisioned.

# CLUB AND BEEKEEPING HISTORY

AND OTHER INTERESTING STORIES/TIDBITS

## The Legend and Lore of Honey Bees

In the middle of spring, a magical thing begins to happen outside. In addition to the greening of the earth, we notice a change in the local wildlife. Suddenly, squirrels and chipmunks are everywhere. Birds are twittering away madly in the trees, worms are popping up right and left in the soil, and everywhere you look, life has returned. In particular, you'll see bees buzzing around your garden, partaking of the rich pollen in your flowers and herbs. The plants are in full bloom at this time of the spring, and the bees take full advantage, buzzing back and forth, carrying pollen from one blossom to another.

In addition to providing us with honey and wax, bees are known to have magical properties, and they feature extensively in folklore from many different cultures. These are just a few of the legends about bees.

- In some areas of New England and Appalachia, it was believed that once someone died, it was important for the family to "go tell the bees" of the death. Whoever kept the bees for the family would make sure the bees got the news, so that they could spread it around.
- Ancient Egyptian pharaohs used the honeybee as the royal symbol, during the period between 3000 b.c.e. and 350 b.c.e.
- The Greeks believed that a baby whose lips were touched by a bee would become a great poet or speaker.
- If a bee flies into your house, it means that someone is coming to visit. If you kill the bee, the visitor will bring you bad news.
- Several deities are associated with bees and honey - Aphrodite, Vishnu, Pan, Cybele, and Ra, just to name a few.
- Ever hear the phrase "busy as a bee"? Bees in a hive work repetitively at the same task all day long. A bee who goes out foraging may fly as many as ten miles a day, gathering pollen and nectar to bring back to the hive, over and over again. According to the National Honey Board, a bee may visit more than two million flowers to gather enough nectar to make just one pound of honey. Thus, bees are associated with hard work and diligence.



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- If a bee lands on your hand, it means money is coming your way.
- Bees are, in some cultures, associated with purity. This is because the worker bees that produce honey never mate.

Ceri Norman, from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, has a great article on bees in folklore. She says that in folk magic, bees are often associated with health or wealth. In addition, their stings are being used by holistic practitioners to treat pain from both arthritis and rheumatism. She says,

"The Witchcraft Museum in Boscastle retails a charm, promising health, happiness and good fortune that features three ceramic bumblebees in a blue pouch—this is a vast improvement on the old folk charm it is based on, found in Dawlish, that sadly featured three dead bumblebees in the bag. Bees have long been associated with witches and witchcraft: one Lincolnshire witch was said to have a bumblebee as her familiar animal, another witch from Scotland allegedly poisoned a child in the form of a bee, and in Nova Scotia a male witch was accused of killing a cow by sending a white bumblebee to land on it."

Author J.K. Rowling named Professor Albus Dumbledore for an archaic English word related to bees. She says that when writing, she imagined the headmaster of Hogwarts "wandering around the castle humming to himself," and so chose to associate his name with bees.

In Celtic mythology, the bee is a messenger between our world and the spirit realm. Bees are also associated with wisdom. Bees and honey also appear in the Norse eddas, often connected with Yggdrasil, the World Tree.

Finally, it's important to keep in mind the impact that bees have on our environment - bees benefit other living things by pollinating plants. This, in turn, effects our food supply. Without bees to spread pollen, it's estimated that a significant percentage of crops — and thus, food — would vanish from our planet.

# Brown County Beekeeping Association

## Member Benefits



### **Club Sponsor – Hansen Honey Farm, Rhinelander, 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.

### **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.

### **Club Sponsor Website Page**

### **Club Equipment Rental**

Includes Honey Extraction equipment and other items. See website for full list.

### **American Bee Journal Subscriptions**

(Contact Club Treasurer for Discount form)

### **Past Newsletters & Meeting Minutes**

### **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.

## Club Officers

**President: Dave Elsen**

president@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Vice President: Julie Mazolleni**

vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Secretary: Bob Michiels**

secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Social Media: Carl Fisher & Wayne Steigelman**

info@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Treasurer: Tom Cashman**

Tcash99930@aol.com

**Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm**

**Membership Chair: OPEN**

**Education Chair: OPEN**