

January 2023

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to 2023! Have you started thinking about your beekeeping goals this year? Carl Fisher and I are starting our 7th year of beekeeping. We are meeting next week to discuss our goals for the year. Looking back, our first goal was to overwinter our hives. We were 100% successful on one of our two hives! Yes, the math is off, but we have persevered and grown to 5 hives.

The club is working on its goals as well. Based on your feedback, education was a top priority. Several improvements are coming in the education area. The highlights are adding some "At the Hive" opportunities and more opportunities for Q&A before and during meetings. Come to the January 18th meeting to learn more.

We look forward to seeing you in 2023.

Thanks,
Dave Elsen
President, Brown County Beekeepers Association

January Club Meeting.

Wednesday, January 18th @ 6:30p CST

In person: Green Bay Botanical Garden

Zoom: Click Here

Meeting ID: 818 8117 3398

Passcode: 761075

5:30p - 6:30p: Networking & Socializing

A Couple of Notes

2023 Membership

As 2022 comes to an end, so does your membership. Please don't forget to celebrate the new year by renewing your membership. To review membership benefits, please scroll down to the last page. To renew now, [click here](#).

Kaelyn Sumner, our Wisconsin Honey Queen is scheduled to make a visit to our club meeting on March 15th! For more information on our WHPA Honey Queen [click here](#).

Introduction to Beekeeping Class starts January 14th near the Botanical Gardens in Green Bay. So, if you or someone you know is interested in Beekeeping or needs a refresher, this is a great class. Use this link to go to the class registration. [Intro to Beekeeping](#)

About our January guest speaker:

MATT HOEPFINGER

MOVING INTO ALMONDS

Click on the title to see a slideshow from a California honey bee broker crew perspective. Moving thousands of hives into almond orchards can be a lot of work. See how commercial beekeepers, big machines and the weather must all come together to get it done. Intended for hobby beekeepers that are interested in seeing what it takes to move 2 million colonies into the almonds each year.

Matt started keeping in 2011. He serves as director of Mountain High Beekeepers Cooperative and played an essential role in founding the Colorado Professional Beekeepers Association. In 2019 Matt joined the Tech Transfer Team in California working closely with commercial beekeepers in the region to assist with colony assessments, disease monitoring, hygienic testing and sampling for Varroa, Nosema, pesticides, and viruses.

"Bee"ing Funny"

When do bees 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

2023 Education Calendar

(a work in progress)

Reg = Regular Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30p

MBM = Meeting Before the Meeting: Same Wednesday, starts at 5:30p

Date	Education	Type	Presenter
January 18, 2023	Moving to Almonds	Reg	Matt Hoepfinger, BIP
February 15, 2023	Queenless Events (Taped presentation)	Reg	Dr. Jamie Ellis, Ph. D., Florida State
March 15, 2023	Splits	Reg	TBD
April, 19, 2023	Spring Management First Year Beekeeping	Reg	Julie Mazzoleni and Dave Elsen Andrea Michaud
May 17, 2023	Queenless Hive	Reg	Video
June 21, 2023	Foul Brood: Identification, Testing & Treatments	Reg	Donna Stine, WI State Apiary Inspector Dr. Jammie VerGiesen, Veterinarian
July	TBD		
August 16, 2023	Honey Extraction Fall Management	MBM Reg	TBD TBD
September 20, 2023	Varroa mites	Reg	Donna Stine, WI State Apiary Inspector
October 18, 2023	Overwintering Indoors	Reg	TBD
November 15, 22	TBD	Reg	
December (no meeting)			

January Education

January is a great month to order your spring bee purchase. Here is an excellent article comparing packaged bees vs NUCs. Whichever you decide, please remember that your BCBA membership gets you exclusive discounts at club sponsors. Club sponsors can be found on our web page: <https://browncountybeekeepers.com/sponsors/>

Nucleus Colony vs Beekeeping Package

according to wisconsinpollinators.com

The Upside of a Nucleus Colony

A nucleus colony, more commonly known as a “NUC” is one of the easiest ways for novice beekeepers to start a colony in a new hive. A nucleus colony is just a very small colony of a few thousand bees and a queen. A beekeeper can find many ways to use a nuc. NUC boxes come in all shapes and sizes. Usually you see five-frame deep boxes, but they also come designed to hold medium frames.

The Downside of A Nucleus Colony

If you are a first-time beekeeper, evaluating a NUC upon installation can be confusing. Evaluating NUC quality is a practiced skill, and you'll need to make sure your hive is queen right and of a quality that won't shoot you in the foot later in the season (healthy brood pattern, decent population, no signs of mite activity, etc.). More importantly, it is an unfortunate reality that we are now beekeeping in the age of varroa mites. These sneaky little parasites will be concealed (and actively reproducing) within brood cells. On top of that, treating mites in their reproductive phase is a major challenge in the early spring, as it needs to be warmer to use treatments that are effective at killing mites in their reproductive phase

The Upside of a Bee Package

Packages are sold by the pound. There are roughly 3,500 bees per pound so a three pound package contains around 10,000 bees. In the age of varroa mites, packages are recommended over nucs because they are easier to evaluate for beginners, and they can alleviate varroa mite pressures which is the leading cause of colony death among hobbyist hives today. Starting a hive with a blank slate as far as mites makes a massive difference in our new colonies' success rates. Since a package is just a box of loose bees with a caged queen, there are no breeding mites concealed within brood cells. That doesn't mean there are no mites present in packages, though! But, phoretic mites are so much easier to treat.

The Downside of a Bee Package

Since they were not shipped with any comb, they will need to start from scratch in their new home. They will need to build comb for honey stores and for brood, which they will need to replace the worker bees – and soon (remember, worker bees only live about 4-6 weeks). Another problem with packages is that the queen usually comes from a different hive. So, while she is shipped with the workers, but in a separate cage, the workers are exposed to her pheromones, but they have not yet accepted her. As a result, there is a chance that once they have been installed, they will reject the queen and kill her. If she is not replaced in time, the whole hive will perish. Since the colony was not shipped with comb, and therefore have not yet built up any food stores or done anything to establish the hive as “home,” there is a chance that the bees may decide to abscond.





January

What's going on in the World of Bees

Seasonal conditions (WeatherWX.com)

In Brown County, Wisconsin

Average Temperatures: High: 22F Low: 12F

Average Precipitation: 2.2 inches (22 inches of snow)

Average Hours of Sunlight: 90

How to get your bee-fix without opening your hive:

What to look for in a winter bee yard (according to Betterbee.com)

The main question you want to answer in the winter is: are the bees alive and well? Obviously, if they are flying out to relieve themselves you have part of your answer, right away. Even if they aren't flying during your visit, evidence of bee poop gives you useful information.

Are the fronts of the hive only lightly spattered? That's normal.

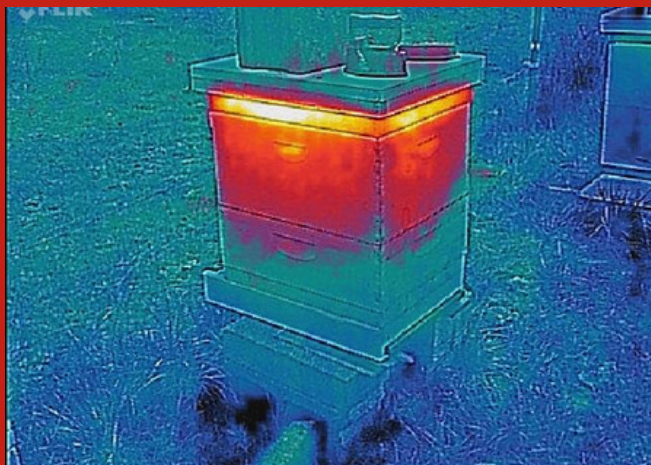
Are the areas around the entrances covered with fecal stains? That's NOT normal!

If there's snow on the ground, you may see thousands of brown spots all over it. That's normal, and if the snow is fresh, it means the bees have very recently had the strength to fly out and relieve themselves, even if they aren't out on the day you visit.

There may be lots of dead bees visible outside, particularly if you have a lot of snow on the ground. Bees that fly out on a mild day after a snowfall may become disoriented and fly into the snow and die there. While this is sad, it is not cause for alarm.

Look around for any signs of other mammals, large and small, that might be pestering your bees. If there a lot of dead bees without their heads, you may have a problem with shrews.

Another safe way to check on your bees during winter is to use a thermal imaging camera, allowing you to see the temperature of the cluster. Large clusters are a great sign. Smaller clusters may mean you need to do more to protect the hive from the elements. As a member, you can rent the club's thermal imaging camera for \$5/3days. [Rent here.](#)



CLUB AND BEEKEEPING HISTORY

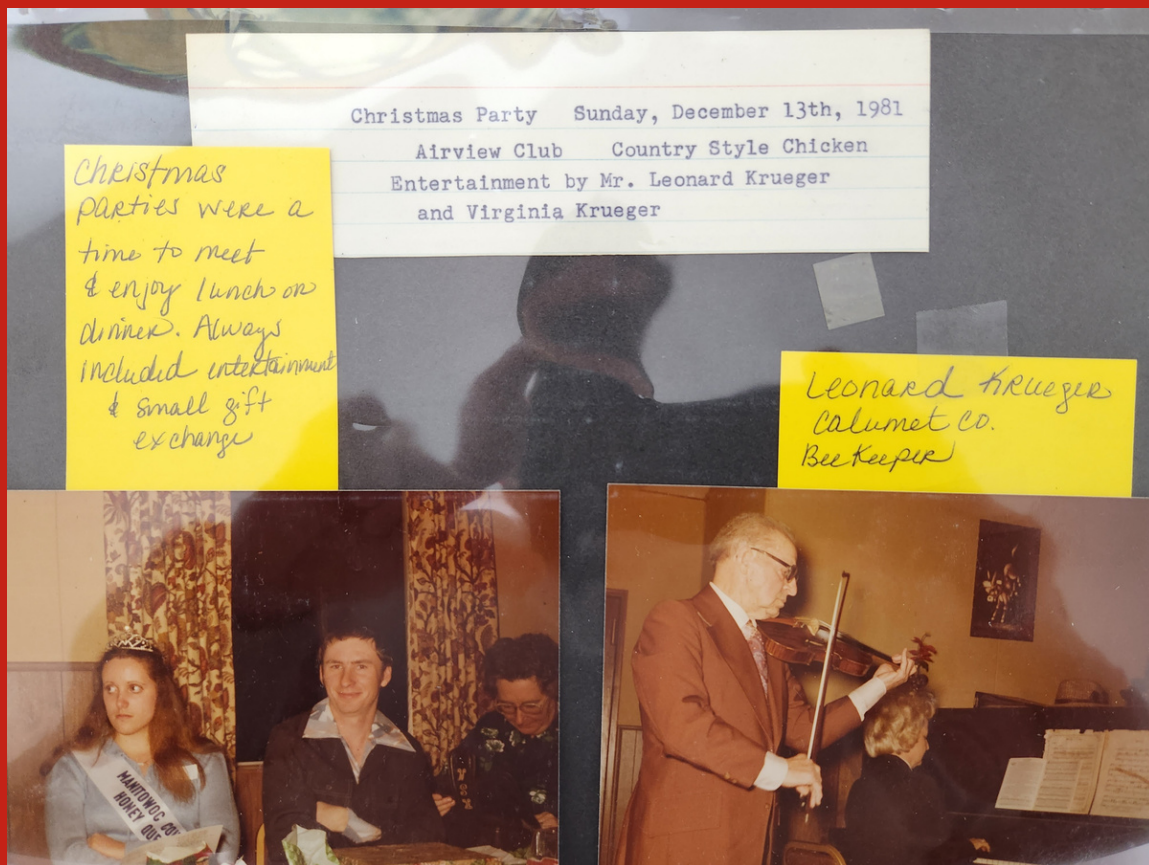
AND OTHER INTERESTING STORIES/TIDBITS

This Month In BCBA History

I bet it doesn't surprise you that BCBA has almost no photos of club happenings in January. Everything that we hold dear about bees comes to a frozen halt in this month. Either way, I'd like to deliver some club news, whether the weather be cold or whether the weather be hot.

I love looking at old pictures.

It reminds me of values and individuals that have built this club. For example, the first news article in possession of Tom Cashman (our current Treasurer) is March 18, 1982. However, according to documents, Tom has been a member since 1971. At the next club meeting, please thank Tom for his time served. It may also be wise to ask him some questions and glean some beekeeping knowledge from him. If you're feeling like a trip down memory lane, ask Tom about the Christmas Party of 1981. See the picture below. He may, or may not, have been there.



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.

2023 Club Officers

President: Dave Elsen

president@browncountybeekeepers.com

Vice President: Chris Groth

vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

Website Chair: Carl Fisher

info@browncountybeekeepers.com

Social Media: Wayne Steigelman

Treasurer: Tom Cashman

Tcash99930@aol.com

Secretary: Nathan C. Frailey, Sr.

secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Education Chair: Julie Mazzoleni

Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm