

February 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

The year is off to a great start. Carl Fisher successfully coordinated the Introduction to Beekeeping class which saw 24 participants take the first step to learn about Beekeeping. Thanks to the club instructors, helpers, Hansen Honey and the participants for making the day a success.

Hope your bees are doing ok. We took advantage of the mid 40s weather to take a look under the top cover to see if the bees were near the top of the deeps. To add some supplemental feed we used the Mountain Camp method. This involves just pouring sugar directly on to some newspaper that sits on your top frames. We add paper to keep the sugar from falling through. Over time, moisture will penetrate the sugar and harden it automatically. The method is easier and takes half the effort of making fondant.

Here are some tips to remember:

- Don't allow newspaper to be exposed to the outside, beyond the hive body so moisture isn't wicked into the hive.
- Don't use confectioner's / powdered sugar as it contains corn starch, and can cause dysentery.
- Do not add pollen early. Come back later to add when it is time to prevent premature brood-rearing.
- Don't open your hive on too cold of a day and open it for a limited time only to reduce chilling the brood and disturbing the cluster.

This will be a fun year. We are all busy pursuing beekeeping education and preparing for the start of another beekeeping season. If you have any questions for me feel free to send me a note at DaveElsenBK@gmail.com.

Thanks,
Dave Elsen
President, Brown County Beekeepers Association

February Club Meeting.

Wednesday, February 15th @ 6:30p CST

In person: Green Bay Botanical Garden

Zoom: Click Here

Meeting ID: 873 8707 2188

Passcode: 695998

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

A Quick Note

Club discount update: Hansen Honey

Last month's newsletter recommended using the month of January to order your bees. Heeding that advice, a couple members reached out to me asking for the online discount code for Hansen Honey. This prompted discussion because both the newsletter and the website showed that Hansen provides a 15% one-time discount and a 5% ongoing discount. Unfortunately, this is incorrect. Hansen now gives club members \$5 off of each nuc or package you order, through April 2023. They will continue giving BCBA members a 5% discount off of orders. We apologize for this and are working on updating our resources to make it reflect the correct information.

If you have any questions or would like to request the code, feel free to reach out to me.

Thanks,

Nathan C. Frailey, Sr.
Secretary, Brown County Beekeepers Association

Ordering bees in February? Don't know the difference between a Nuc or a Package? BCBA can help! We have excellent resources on our website on the installation of both!

[For Bee Package Education Click Here](#)

[For Nuc Education Click Here](#)

We've even compiled a list of beekeeping suppliers with pricing!

[For 2023 Bee Purchasing List Click Here](#)

"Bee"ing Funny"

How do bees style their hair?

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	Craig Spindler - Let It Bee
April, 19, 2023	Spring Management	Reg	Julie Mazzoleni and Dave Elsen
May 17, 2023	Queenless Hive First Year Beekeeping	Reg	Video & Discussion Andrea Michaud
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)			



February

What's going on in the World of Bees

Seasonal conditions (WeatherWX.com)

In Brown County, Wisconsin

Average Temperatures: High: 25F Low: 13F

Average Precipitation: 2.4 inches (24 inches of snow)

Average Hours of Sunlight: 87

What you should be doing for your Bees in February:

SUIT UP & CLEAN UP

Dead bees happen. A lot. Whether from natural life cycle, trying to fly when it's too cold, or from starvation, you likely have dead bees building up at the hive entrance and bottom board. This impaction of dead bees can block live bees from taking cleansing flights on warmer days. Maintain your hive by removing your entrance reducer and using a yard stick to "scrape" the bees off the bottom board. You'll want to suit up, because in this weather, bees can and will fly for just long enough to sting you. You'll also want to collect the deceased bees and carry them away from the hive to avoid leaving bait for unwanted critters. Just remember to reinstall your entrance reducer. Having your smoker lit and ready is also a good idea.

DOWN SIZE!

Just like houses, smaller hives take less energy to heat. If you started out the winter with extra supers, taking them off as they empty may help a smaller, struggling hive. Just work quickly. You don't want to chill the cluster

FEED THEM!

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 are obviously empty, or if the bees are visible through the inner cover at the very top of the hive. See the next page for feeding information.

FEED THEM! (Continued from previous page)

1. Mountain Camp Method. Place a sheet of newspaper over the top frames being careful to not allow the paper to extend past the frames. Then pour 4-5 pounds of white granulated sugar on the paper. See photo. Then make sure you have some space for the sugar so the inside cover fits tightly. Our quilt box has a small space at the bottom which works perfectly. You can also use a 1" spacer. Over time the sugar wicks up moisture from the hive and the sugar will harden.



2. Four Pound Bag of Sugar method. Cut out a rectangular hole on one side of the bag as seen in the picture. Sprinkle about a 1/2 to 3/4 cup of water in the sugar around the hole to harden up the sugar so it doesn't run out when placed either on top of top frames or over the inside cover hole. In either case, then add an empty medium on top to allow space for the sugar. Place a blanket or burlap sack in it to help with moisture and insulation. Then put the cover(s) on top to close up the hive.



3. Winter Patty. When installing a winter patty leave the paper on both sides of the patty. Use a hive tool to score a cross-hatch of slits through the paper on both sides. This ensures that the bees will have lots of easy places to access the food. Gently set the brick or patty down in the center, or right over where the bees are. If you allow the patty to settle slowly down, the bees will move safely away. They are generally thin enough that you can then replace the inside and top covers and close up the hive.

CLUB AND BEEKEEPING HISTORY

STRAIGHT FROM THE CLUB'S ARCHIVES: FEB 1978 NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Honey Producers Win Bout On Food Processing Issue

By RAY PAGEL

Press-Gazette Staff Writer

What is a beekeeper?

Beekeepers maintain they are farmers, even though they may extract the honey from the honeycomb.

But the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection wants them classified as food processors.

The latest round in the continuing controversy was won by the beekeepers. In late January, the Legislature overrode Gov. Martin J. Schreiber's veto of Assembly Bill 150 exempting honey producers from

food processing regulation.

It's a somewhat confusing issue, but the beekeepers argue that right and logic are on their side.

"If a beekeeper is no longer a farmer, he will be subject to all the food processor regulations. We already have adequate regulations applicable to beekeepers," said Orville Fager, Green Bay, first vice president of the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association.

"We feel we would be penalized if we were required to have a food processor's license. Other farmers are not required to have a license," said Floyd

A. Burchell, De Pere, association secretary-treasurer.

Exemption from licensing under the new law applies to beekeepers who market raw honey if "substantially all" of the honey is produced by their own colonies. It does, however, permit them to purchase small quantities from other beekeepers.

In supporting the legislation, beekeepers contended that the extraction of raw honey from the honeycomb is not a "processing" operation.

"Extracting is only a mechanical thing. It's merely

emptying a container, and nothing is done to change the honey," Fager said.

He noted that beekeepers for years have emphasized the meaning of the word as it applies to their business.

"Yet the Department of Agriculture has tried to license beekeepers for food processing, which is a non-agricultural activity," he pointed out.

In his veto message, Gov. Schreiber noted that "the only person who would not be exempt would be a beekeeper who would buy 'substantial' quantities of honey from other producers."

He added: "From a food law and health standpoint, it makes little sense to say that someone who markets honey would be subject to licensing solely on the basis of where he gets the product. This would be like saying a dairy farmer could bottle and sell milk from his own herd without a license, but that another person who purchased some milk could not resell it without a license."

The argument bore little weight with the Legislature. The Assembly voted 87-20 and the Senate 32-0 to override Schreiber's veto.

Beekeepers apparently feared burdensome regulation if they became food processors under law. Honey extractors already are subject to a \$20 fee. Burchell said 287 beekeepers, at last report, have paid the fee.

He estimated that Wisconsin has 20,000 beekeepers. Many of them, of course, are of the hobby variety, with only a few colonies.

The Wisconsin Honey Producers Association has close to 600 members, up from about 170 in 1972, when Burchell became secretary.

"We should have at least 1,500 or 2,000," he declared.



Photo by Liz Howell

Eva and Zbigniew Cisek and their daughter, Donnie, left, of Sturgeon Bay inspect a bee hive to see how many of their bees survived the winter.

Brown County Beekeeping Association

Member Benefits



Club Sponsor – Hansen Honey Farm, Rhinelander, WI

- \$5 off each package or nuc of bees until May 2023
- 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.

[Click here for the Club Sponsor Website Page](#)

Club Equipment Rental

Perks of being a member! [Click here for the full rental list.](#)

American Bee Journal Subscriptions

(Contact Club Treasurer for Discount form)

[Click here for 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