

February 2024

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

I am hoping with the warm weather this winter most of you have had an opportunity to inspect your hives. A lot of the beekeeper discussion this time of the year is on hive survival – how many have made it so far. The best chances of your hives making it through the winter is the prep work that you did six months ago. Let me explain my thinking.

Remember those plans/tasks I talked about in last months newsletter? Hopefully mite management was one of those. Some of the internet posts I have been reading recently are of beekeepers losing their hives and asking the question why. The hive has frames of honey left, but the bees are gone or dead. Inevitably there is an inquiry to their question about mite counts or mite treatment. That inquiry usually doesn't have a solid response to it from the beekeeper.

Six months ago, you should have had a couple of months of mite testing done for your hives and had a pretty good idea of the mite levels. Honey supers have been pulled and mite treatment should have begun. During this same time period the queen is laying eggs that will be the winter bees for the hive. The queen is also starting to reduce the number of eggs she is laying, but the mite counts are still rising if you haven't knocked them back. Are you still testing after your treatment? Are you doing secondary treatments in the late fall? Those mites are going to affect your winter bees directly by feeding on them or indirectly with viruses.

As an example, I had two strong hives this fall I decided to count the mite drop seven days after each of the treatments. In mid-September, I did my usual 4 weeks of oxalic acid dribble treatment. Each week the mite drop numbers went down, all the drop numbers were under a 1% infection level.

With those warm days we had in November and December I decide to do oxalic vapor treatment. Well, I had a little bit of an eye-opening experience. The first treatment with the vapor the mite drop numbers were to the same level as in mid-September, but one hive the mite drop doubled and was at a 2% infection level. A month can make a big difference. Mid-December I was down to an acceptable mite level for me, but was the damage done to those winter bees? The hives are still alive near the end of January, but there are still a few months to go to know the full verdict.

What is your plan for mite monitoring and treatment for the upcoming bee season? Honey Bee Health Coalition has some great website information on Varroa management and Randy Oliver's Scientific Beekeeping website is another great site for Varroa information. These sources should help you with your Varroa mite plan this season and give your bees the best chance of surviving next winter.

- That's what this month's buzz is about

Chris
president@browncountybeekeepers.com

February 2024 Association Meeting

Date/Time: Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Location: Green Bay Botanical Garden

Zoom Meeting: [Meeting ID: 832 2199 6203](#) [Passcode: 948668](#)

No MBM, but feel free to arrive at 5:30p for Networking & Socializing

Intro to Beekeeping Class Recap

We held our Introduction to Beekeeping class at NWTC on January 20th and it was an enormous success. The class needed to be rescheduled due to weather, but our resilient volunteers and registrants showed up. The agenda included equipment, hive location, ordering and installing bees, hive inspection and management, mite management and fall/winter management. We even fit in a session on mite treatment over lunch. The attendees were very engaged and provided positive feedback on the event. We appreciate and thank the club members who volunteered to present as well as our vendors who supported the event. We gained six new individual members and two new family memberships. We look forward to seeing them at future club meetings and guiding them on their beekeeping journeys!

AmeriCorps Presentation Recap

We would like to give a big thanks to David Lee Schneider for his presentation on AmeriCorps at our January meeting. There has been some good interest in the websites David discussed, so we are including the links to the sites below.

[Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#)

[Sign up as a farmer \(honey bee\) producer](#)

[How to Use the Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#)

Kaelyn Sumner Crowned American Honey Queen

WI Honey Queen Kaelyn Sumner was crowned 2024 American Honey Queen at the ABF Convention in New Orleans in January. Kaelyn will spend the year traveling the United States on behalf of the American Beekeeping Federation to promote the consumption of American honey, as well as tell the story of how commercial beekeepers drive agriculture through pollination. Wisconsin Honey Queens are our favorite honey queens! Congratulations Kaelyn!



**FACEBOOK SITES
MANAGED BY BCBA**

[Brown County Beekeepers](#)

updates on club happenings

[Northeast WI Beekeepers](#)

beekeepers helping beekeepers



"Bee"ing Funny"

**What is small, black
and yellow, and drops
things?**

2024 BCBA Meeting Education Calendar

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

MBM = Meeting Before the Meeting: Same Wednesday, starts at 5:45p

Date	Education	Type	Presenter
January 17, 2024	Winter Management Panel	Reg	
February 21, 2024	Honey Judging and Working Bees in Texas	Reg	Stephanie Slater
March 20, 2024	Heritage Honey Bee, Queen Rearing, Nucs and Packages	Reg	Tim Wilbanks
April 17, 2024	Spring Management Installing Bees	Reg MBM	
May 15, 2024	Beekeeping with Nucs	Reg	James Arvey
June 19, 2024	Bees and Butterfly Habitat Fund & Native Pollinators Swarm Recovery	Reg MBM	Mike Laes & Julie Mazzoleni Dave Elsen
August 21, 2024	Fall Management Honey Extraction	Reg MBM	Nathan Frailey
September 18, 2024	Pollen Analysis	Reg	Angie Perrotti, Owner, Mellifloral I Honey Pollen Solutions
October 16, 2024	TBD	Reg	
November 20, 2024	TBD	Reg	

February Management Info

Seasonal conditions (weatherspark.com)

In Brown County, Wisconsin

Average Temperatures: High: 30F Low: 16F

Average Precipitation: 5 inches (4.5 inches of snow, 0.5 inches of rain)

Average Hours of Sunlight per Day: 10.5 hr

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.

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.

In the Hive

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.

For more February management info, visit our month by month education on the management info, visit our month by month education on the [BCBA website](#).



Brown County Beekeeping Association

Member Benefits

Club Sponsor – Hansen Honey Farm, Rhinelander, WI

- \$5 off each package or nuc of bees until May 2024 (Min purchase required)
- 5% discount for all BCBA members for ongoing purchase
- For online discount code, contact secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com
- When purchasing in-store only, let them know you are a member of the BCBA.

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

- 5% discount for all BCBA member purchases, except nucs. In-store only.
- 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)

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.

2024 Club Officers

President: Chris Groth

president@browncountybeekeepers.com

Vice President: Nathan C. Frailey, Sr.

vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

Website Chair: Carl Fisher

info@browncountybeekeepers.com

Social Media: Wayne Steigelman

Club Education CoChairs: Emily Skala and Dave Elsen

Treasurer: Tom Cashman

Tcash99930@aol.com

Secretary: Edmund Poillion

secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Education Outreach Chair: Julie Mazzoleni

Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm