

August 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

Honey harvest is upon us. August is a good time to do assessments, while it is fresh in your mind. How did this season go? What would you change or experiment with your hive management next season? Write your ideas down so you can recall them when you start looking at next year's plan and tasks.

Now is the time to assess your mite load and treatment. The hive is going to start changing over to a winter nest. The queen is going to start laying eggs for winter bees. That mite load needs to be as low as possible to help ensure the hives survival during the winter. Treat and follow up with a mite test. Treat again if the mite load is still too high. You don't need mites feeding on the winter bee larvae.

You also need to assess the amount of honey the hive has for winter stores. If the hive doesn't have enough stores, you need to start feeding to build up those stores. Don't rely on fall flowers to provide the needed honey stores. Remember, you only have a limited time to build up the hive before winter.

Finally, assess the colony strength. Is the colony big enough to make it through the winter? If not, maybe think about combining the colony with another. The dearth is going to point out which hives are weak as the stronger hives are going to try to rob the weaker ones. Maybe think about stacking a small hive on a larger hive as a way to help the small hive make through the winter.

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

Chris
president@browncountybeekeepers.com

August 2024 Association Meeting

Date/Time: Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Location: Green Bay Botanical Garden

Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 814 2785 9732 Passcode: 386215

MBM: Honey Extraction. Feel free to arrive at 5:30p for the MBM, along with Networking & Socializing

OAV and Honey Bee Sustainability

I am now in my 11th season as a beekeeper. My first year started with one hive and everything seemed to go right. The bees built up nicely and produced a whopping 8 pounds of surplus honey that first year. They also survived the winter leading to a successful split to begin year 2. We harvested about 80 pounds that year. How hard could this beekeeping be, right?? Season 3 and season 4 both started with dead bees in the spring. The second round of dead bees really caused me to pause and question whether or not I wanted to continue in a hobby that was not sustainable. The point was not that we couldn't afford to buy new bees again but rather I could not mentally afford continued failure. At the end of the day we sucked it up and bought one more nuc, this time from Steve. The failure of losing bees would haunt me the entire season but it did also drive me to research and get very serious about finding the cause and solution.

Varroa destructor mite - the little creature and problem I didn't believe I had. Regular mite checks confirmed that yes, my bees had mites. Investigation into miticides led me to organic acids and in particular oxalic acid in vapor form. I now, years later, realize oxalic acid vaporization (OAV) was a game changer for sustainability of my bee operation. My initial choice for an OAV applicator was a battery powered wand for \$60, which after several years proved to be slow and awkward to carry a car battery. Then I purchased a ProVap 110 for \$485 which seems expensive but considering the price of bees is really a bargain. This tool was a second gamechanger for speed and ease of use. There are now many cordless vaporizers on the market for about \$559 plus high amp hour batteries. I also use another organic acid, formic acid, (Formic Pro) as an alternate treatment. If you choose to use OAV as a treatment method, or any other treatment, be sure to acquire the proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). I recommend a full-face organic respirator and heat resistant gloves.

Once I had the varroa destructor under control, sustainability and success followed. I now have 31 colonies, which maybe 29 or 30 too many. I have not bought bees since that third season in 2015. There are many other factors that contribute to successful overwintering. However, in my opinion, going into winter with low mite counts and healthy virus free bees is essential. Regardless of which treatment method you choose, it is most important to have a plan for controlling the varroa destructor.

Dick Sturm

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	Reg	
	Installing Bees	MBM	
May 15, 2024	Beekeeping with Nucs	Reg	James Arvey
	Swarm Recovery	MBM	Dave Elsen
June 19, 2024	Bees and Butterfly Habitat Fund & Native Pollinators	Reg	Mike Laes & Julie Mazzoleni
August 21, 2024	Fall Management	Reg	Nathan Frailey
	Honey Extraction	MBM	
September 18, 2024	Pollen Analysis	Reg	Angie Perrotti, Owner, Melliflora Honey Pollen Solutions
	Honey Show Prep Q&A	MBM	Stephanie Slater, AHSTC
October 16, 2024	Discussion Panel	Reg	
November 13, 2024	Products of the Hive and Honey Judging Contest	Reg	Stephanie Slater and Club

August Management Info

Seasonal conditions

In Brown County, Wisconsin

Average Temperatures: High: 79F Low: 58F

Average Precipitation: 3.37

Average Hours of Sunlight per Day: 14.1 hr

In the Hive

There is a second, smaller swarm season in August and September. The bee population begins to diminish faster than it is growing; the brood area may contract. Many of the bees born from the end of August onward are called “winter bees” and live longer than their summer sisters. Left untreated, the Varroa mite population usually peaks in August or September. Remember that Varroa is tough to manage because the mites thrive in healthy, populous colonies, unlike many of the other maladies that affect honey bees. The summer heat requires the bees to ventilate and perhaps beard outside the hive on the hottest evenings. [Start preparing your bees for winter.](#)

Inspection

- Inspections should be especially thorough, particularly for pests and diseases. Your colonies should be able to take on the fall honey flow and then overwinter successfully.
- Check that the hive is not honey bound. Move the honey combs out of the brood nest and into a super if needed. The queen should have all the room she needs to lay, to have a strong young cohort of winter bees.

Nutrition

- August is the month when colonies begin preparation for winter. A full-sized colony should have at least 70-90 pounds of honey to eat by the beginning of October, or more than one full super (the hive would weigh about 135 pounds total). Nucs of course need less. Estimate the weight by slightly tipping and hefting the hive. If you extract honey, leave enough for the bees or feed them sugar syrup to make up for the difference.
- If you feed the bees sugar syrup, it should be a 2:1 ratio, thicker than the spring feed; the bees can evaporate the excess moisture from the hive faster from this thicker syrup.
- The bees will need at least two double-sided frames of pollen/bee bread by late winter/early spring. Supply bees with pollen or pollen substitute if they are short on protein. In autumn, bees use the decrease in pollen flow as a cue to begin rearing winter bees.
- If the weather is dry and there is no water source near the hive, consider providing one.

August Management Info

Pests, parasites, and diseases

- Monitor for Varroa mites and treat if necessary. The threshold for treatment changes at this time of year to 3 mites per 100 bees, as the number of mites rises.
- Note that a fall population spike may be due to mites coming in from bees from other colonies, in addition to natural population growth within the colony of interest. Therefore, even if you have diligently managed mites through the summer, continue to monitor consistently.
- Carefully check every brood frame in each colony for an American foulbrood infection.

Population management

- Swarm control: see the guidelines for May. It is probably too late to split colonies to ensure they are strong enough to overwinter.
- Combine weak and strong colonies or equalize them if you want to ensure strong populations going into winter, but only after you have checked for diseases in the weak colony.
- If you are considering re-queening, this is a good month to do it. An overwintered young queen should start laying in earnest in the spring.

Equipment

- Prepare for the fall flow with at least one super and be prepared to add more if necessary.
- Upper entrances will help the bees ventilate the hot hives and evaporate the excess moisture from their honey.
- Removing bees from honey supers may require a fume board, bee brush, bee escape, or other tools; they each have advantages and disadvantages for different beekeepers and in different environmental conditions.

Hive products and services

- You may be able to trap pollen.

Yard maintenance

- Mow the yard as necessary.

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



**FACEBOOK SITES
MANAGED BY BCBA**

Brown County Beekeepers
updates on club happenings

Northeast WI Beekeepers
beekeepers helping beekeepers

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

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Treasurer: Tom Cashman

Tcash99930@aol.com

Vice President: Nathan C. Frailey, Sr.

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Secretary: Edmund Poillion

secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Website Chair: Carl Fisher

info@browncountybeekeepers.com

Education Outreach Chair: Julie Mazzoleni

Social Media: Wayne Steigelman

Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm

Club Education CoChairs: Emily Skala and Dave Elsen