

BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2025



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

This month, let's take a deeper dive into phenology and bee keeping. Phenology is the study of recurring biological events. As beekeepers we are going to use those biological events to help with the management of our bees. Creating a plant bloom chart helps us to plan when to place honey supers for nectar flows. Capital Bee Supply had a good plant bloom chart for our area, but they no longer have it on their website. Ohio State has a plant bloom chart which tracks plant bloom, hive strength (colony bee numbers and day-old larvae numbers), and hive manipulations. One item to remember is that these plant bloom charts are for specific areas. Plant blooms vary in locality. Blooming is closely tied to Growing Degree Days (GDD). So, these charts may get you into the ball park for your apiary, however your personal observations are going to fine tune the bloom chart. Remember last month I wrote about using your cell phone camera (date stamp) to capture those blooms.

For your apiary you may want to consider having your honey analyzed. This will give you a better idea of what nectar sources your bees are using so you can focus your plant bloom chart on those nectar sources. You may also find some specific blooming information for your local area on those plants your bees are gathering nectar from. Also, observe what pollen the bees are bringing in. Those are important plant species for your bees as well.

As you become more observant to those plant blooms, take note of what the bees are doing in the hive. You may be able to time a bloom to certain management actives- planning for splits, swarming likelihood, honey harvest, making up nucleus hives. The more years you keep track of those blooms the more refined your beekeeping management will become.

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

President: Chris Groth

president@BrownCountyBeekeepers.com



February 2025 Association Meeting

Join the

CELEBRATION!



Welcome Door County Beekeepers!

- ✓ **Chicken Booyah**
- ✓ **Desserts**
- ✓ **Prizes**
- ✓ **Education**

Fun Starts 5:30PM



Bee Squad Education Panel



JENNY WARNER

Jenny has been a valued member of the UMN Bee Lab since 1997 and is a founding member of the UMN Bee Squad. She graduated with a B.S. in Horticultural Food Production and a minor in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

RISHIA ZIMMERN

Rishia Zimmern has been a valued member of the Bee Squad since 2016. Her love of bees and beekeeping is evident and infectious. She enjoys teaching new beekeepers and works by the motto "Always Learning". Rishia enjoys working on lab research, but her true happy place is in the bee yard.



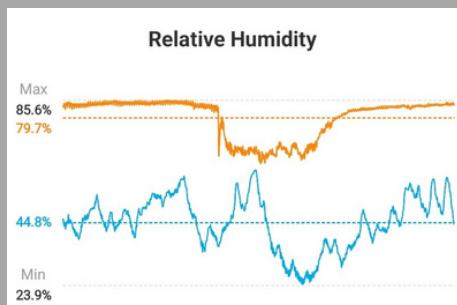
19 February 2025 at 6:30PM

February 2025 Association Meeting



Presidential Beekeeping Facts & Figures

Some of you may know that I converted a small trailer into an indoor wintering home for my bees. The last time I wrote about this I was cussing pillow boxes and cussing myself for not having proper ventilation, as I was blaming both for excessive moisture in the hives leading to excessive mold, dysentery, and colony loss. The jury is still out on pillow boxes; however, I modified my trailer to have an old bathroom fan constantly exhausting air from the trailer. So far this winter I have averaged 38.9 degrees F with 44.8% humidity, which is just about ideal. This is a drastic change from the same average temp but 79.7% humidity last year. I haven't visited my hives since Jan 1 (I write this on Feb 1 and will likely visit today). My belief is that I will find happier, healthier hives.



Vice President Nathan Frailey, SR.

vicepresident@BrownCountyBeekeepers.com

Date/Time: Wednesday February 19th 6:30PM

Zoom Meeting: Green Bay Botanical Garden

Location: Meeting ID: 851 2919 8948 Passcode: 126778



Bring your favorite treat or side dish to share with members!

- ✓ **Fruit or Veggie Tray**
- ✓ **Side salad**
- ✓ **Desserts**
- ✓ **Homemade wine or mead**

Potluck style featuring chicken booyah by Mike & Ema Laes

MIDWEST HONEY BEE EXPO

My wife, Carol, and I attended the 1st Annual Midwest HoneyBee Expo at the Waukesha County Expo on January 25-26, 2025. The event was very well run and organized. The organizers, William Werning and Doug Kolterman, presented a wide variety of excellent speakers, vendors and events and are to be commended. These two local Wisconsin beekeepers did an exceptional job on a first time event.

Despite the fact that Carol and I had an extremely busy couple of months, we entered a few items into the honey show. Learning from mistakes was a takeaway that we will learn from when entering future honey shows. Most importantly, you should NOT create your entries the week (or day) ahead of the show and also take as much time as necessary to check and double check entries before turning them over for judging. The criteria for honey judging is so high that no jar of honey took home a blue ribbon at this honey show! We managed to take home a few ribbons in beeswax block and baked goods with honey categories.

The camaraderie among a large number of beekeepers is an experience in itself. All were very courteous and offered information and experiences in the world of beekeeping. We especially enjoyed conversations with youthful beekeepers attending the expo. One of which was a 14 year old boy who had introduced his grandpa to beekeeping. This young man was able to knowledgeable and intelligently discuss honey bees for over 20 minutes at lunchtime.

With so many high caliber speakers, Carol and I took a divide and conquer approach and then enthusiastically shared information on the hour and a half trip back home each day. My biggest take away came from James Lee's presentation "Avoiding the Chemical Treadmill: Treatment Averse Beekeeping and the Future of Varroa Resistance". His talk has inspired me to take a whole new approach to my mite management plan. In short the plan integrates the development of varroa destructor resistant honey bees by utilizing rigorous and definitive testing. James introduced me to the Harbo Assay used to score queens on reproduction of mite resistant worker bees. A truly intriguing and inspiring discussion that has led me to further research and plan formulation. James also gave me a half hour of his time at his vendor booth. I do have to emphasise this is not treatment free beekeeping, it is a method to treat when you have to all the while doing your best to produce mite resistant queens.

Here are some website to follow up on this topic if you are interested:

<https://www.harbobeeeco.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/JamesLeesBees>

<https://sbgmi.org/>



What a conference! Thank you William and Doug for providing a format to take all beekeepers to their next level.

- DICK & CAROL STURM

GREETINGS FROM ARIZONA!

As you, I am anxiously awaiting spring to see how the hives overwintered. Here in Goodyear AZ, just a bit west of Phoenix bees flying around the flowers at our place each day. I haven't been able to determine where their hive is yet. That's a challenge for another day.



I wanted to learn about local beekeeping in Arizona so I reached out to Tim Moore from HoneyHiveFarms.com. Tim runs between 1000-2000 hives and has been in beekeeping for 17 years. They sell honey products and packages. It was very interesting to talk about beekeeping and learn about some of the challenges he faces. I thought I would share some of the highlights.



Initially I started my search looking for a local bee club. I struggled to find a contact so that's the first question I asked. He noted the local club has about 20 beekeepers. Bees and beekeeping in southern Arizona is not very popular. Many people hate bees. The main reason is Africanized honeybees. They are extremely aggressive and will seek out people and pets often without being provoked. Most of the land for homes is governed by HOA rules and they prohibit having hives. It is very difficult to find land to place bees. He is originally from the midwest and said that the positive attitude towards bees and beekeepers just doesn't exist here. He runs a market each week and says that he very seldom comes across another beekeeper.

With that somewhat discouraging news I asked him to share some thoughts on his beekeeping. We started with discussing Africanized bees challenges. This applies to any swarm caught or any hive that requeens. He is very cautious to find and check the queen. If the queen has a dark or black color vs. the golden color we are accustomed to it may be Africanized. He generally doesn't allow any of his requeened hives to mate with drones out in nature. If they mate with an Africanized drone, he has aggressive bees to deal with. He either sells the hive to someone who is ok with the hassles. The other option is to requeen with one of his known mated queens. Then he takes the hive out in the desert where no people are around and leaves it there for 30 days so all of the previous queen's offspring emerge and the new queen's offspring emerge. Then he reintroduces the hive to his yard.



Some of the different varieties of honey he harvests.

MEMBER TRAVELS

AZ GREETINGS CONTINUED

He said the heat and lack of water is also an issue. They had 158 days without rain last year and the temp was over 100 degrees for over a month. Heat exhaustion is a big concern. He runs screen bottom boards and provides additional ventilation at the top of the hive. Having airflow is crucial. Some hives prioritized bringing in water over pollen (protein) to ensure the hive survives. This weakens the hive and stresses the brood. He has had hives that were so hot that the comb melted. This occurs at 140 degrees. Ouch.

On a positive note the bees have access to blooming plants year round. He doesn't need to feed his bees any sugar water, but sometimes provides a water source and occasionally pollen. He runs one deep for a brood box because additional honey stores aren't required for winter. So beekeepers require less equipment. Honey is harvested year round. Interesting though was that although plants bloom year round they are not as abundant as in the Midwest. He gets about half the quantity of honey per hive in Arizona than he got from the Midwest.

They don't have any bears to contend with, With no winter brood break the mites are a year round issue. He does Oxalic Acid vapor to control his mites. He also experiments with hygienic queen stock.

There are many agricultural fields which seem to be dropped between buildings in the city. That is something I find very interesting. I do see pallets of commercial bee hives that are placed in the center of the fields.

Prior to my discussion with Tim I assumed that the public attitude for beekeeping was generally positive everywhere. We are very fortunate in Wisconsin to have such a positive public opinion towards bees and beekeeping. I also like that we have some downtime in winter. Our climate certainly has some advantages. The extreme temperatures and water issues would be difficult to deal with. Sometimes it takes seeing what another region of the country has to deal with to truly appreciate what we have.



- DAVE ELSEN, EF HONEY -
MEMBER EDUCATION COCHAIR

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

EMILY SKALA

Meet Emily Skala one of two recipients of the Lee Heine Advancement in Apiculture Scholarship that was sponsored by Heritage Honeybee & Mann Lake. Emily is a member of the Brown County Beekeepers Association in Wisconsin and held the role of co-chair of education for one year. She was in both 4-H and FFA, & was president of her 4-H club for four years and an officer of her FFA chapter her senior year of high school. Beekeeping has been an integral part of her life since she was 16, shaping her aspirations and inspiring her passion for scientific discovery. This journey began when she was awarded the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association Youth Beekeeping Scholarship, which ignited her love for beekeeping. Now, as a student in the Laboratory Science program at NWTC, she is determined to use her skills to address the challenges beekeepers face. Beekeeping is more than a hobby for her it is a calling. She aspires to work in a laboratory setting, developing innovative solutions that will benefit the beekeeping community. Congratulations Emily! We wish you the best in your future.



CURTESY OF MIDWEST HONEYBEE EXPO

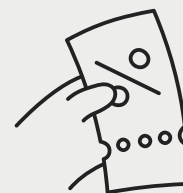
Bonus Information from a proud Mom!

While at UW Oshkosh, she was part of the beekeeping club, and was a huge part of their growth. She continues to educate members and plans to go back to UWO in the fall.

Emily was also part of FFA, where she did two years of SAE projects, which she earned silver her 1st year and top gold in her district the 2nd year.



GIVEAWAY



Congratulate Emily at our February meeting and receive a raffle ticket for a bonus giveaway!

2025 WISCONSIN BEEKEEPING EVENTS

BCBA February Meeting

February 19th

Chippewa Valley Bee Expo

April 19, 2025

BCBA Intro To Beekeeping
At The Hive

May 17th, 2025

WHPA Spring Meetings

March 22nd, 2025

Green Bay Botanical Garden
Social Event: 5:30PM
Meeting: 6:30PM

Identifying and Managing
Honey bee Diseases
Jenny Warner
Rishia Zimmern
Minnesota Bee Squad

www.browncountybeekeepers.com

Northern Wisconsin State
Fairgrounds
Chippewa Falls, WI

Events include honeybee
demonstrations, cooking with
honey, raffles, food trucks,
seminars and youth programs.

www.chippewavalleybeekeepers.com

NWTC Sustainable Agriculture
Gardens.

8:00am to 10:00am Part 2
of our Introduction to
Beekeeping Class.

Must be pre registered

www.browncountybeekeepers.com

Central District

Meeting information
below

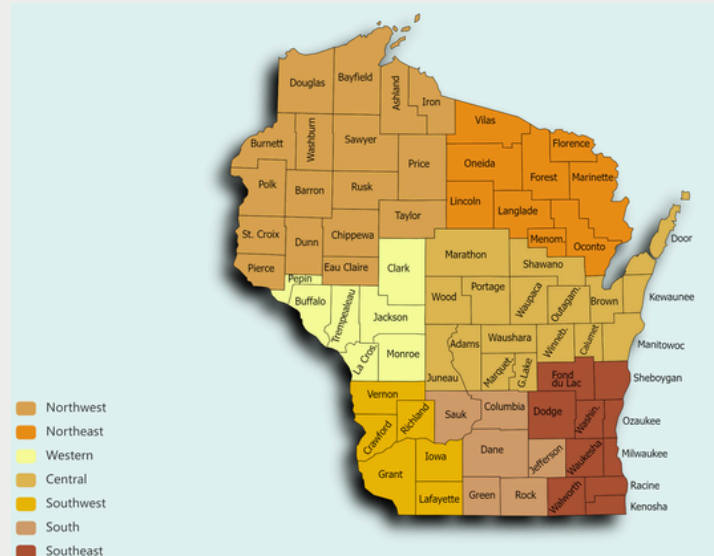
www.wihoney.org

WHPA SPRING DISTRICT MEETINGS

Spring is coming! Kick off the 2025 beekeeping season by attending a WHPA Spring District Meeting. You can attend any of the scheduled meetings, regardless of what district you reside in.

- Western District Meeting - 2/22/25 - Tomah
- Northeastern District Meeting - 2/22/25 - Rhinelander
- Northwestern District Meeting - 3/1/25 - Cameron
- Southeastern & Southern District (combined) Meeting - 3/15/25 - Concord
- **Central District Meeting - 3/22/25 - Waupaca**
- Southwestern District Meeting - TBA

Learn from guest speakers and fellowship with other beekeepers.



BCBA-CENTRAL DISTRICT

CENTRAL DISTRICT – Saturday, March 22nd from 9am – 12pm at Par 4 Resort Golf Course, 201 Foxfire Dr. Waupaca, WI. Coffee & donuts provided/\$5 for non-members. Guest Speakers: Charlie Koenen speaking about spring buildup, backyard bees and alternative hive bodies. Doug Koltermann will speak about oxalic acid strips. Patrick Sizemore, WI State Bee Inspector will give a presentation about DATCP and apiary inspections. Panel Discussion and WI Honey Queen Emily Sydow. Contact Marty Mykisen 920.427.4695; mykisen@mykisen.com.

2025 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 15, 2025	Varroa Mite Management	Reg	Dick Sturm
February 19, 2025	Identifying and Managing Honey Bee Diseases Minnesota Bee Squad	Reg	Jessica Helgen Bee Squad Pgm Director or Jenny Warner Bee Squad Beekeeper
March 19, 2025	Queen Rearing	Reg	Keith Zaidel, Zaidel Wild Apiary
	Honey Decrystalization	MBM	Rance Bennett, This Old Hive
April 16, 2025	Spring Management	Reg	Dave Elsen
	Installing Bees	MBM	
May 21, 2025	Girl Next-Door Honey	Reg	Hillary Kearney
June 18, 2025	Dr. Chelsa Cook, Marquette	Reg	Dr. Chelsa Cook, Marquette
August 20, 2025	Fall Management	Reg	Panel
	Honey Extraction	MBM	Nathan Frailey
September 17, 2025	Wax Processing and Products	Reg	Rance Bennett, This Old Hive
October 15, 2025	Discussion Panel	Reg	Wayne Steigelman Facilitates
November 19, 2025	Products of the Hive and Honey Judging Contest	Reg	Stephanie Slater and Club



February Management Info

Seasonal conditions

Average Low Temp 12 degrees
Average High Temp 28 degrees
Average Snow Fall 10 inches
Average Precipitation 1 inch

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.

Equipment

Finish fixing, cleaning/sterilizing, buying, assembling, or painting equipment as needed.

Yard Maintenance

- As in January, 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.

Prepare for spring

- Check equipment and order queens if needed
- Determine how many swarm traps will be needed for spring
- Start a bloom calendar to document pollen and nectar
- Keep an eye out for maple tree buds, which will be one of the first pollen sources
- Check for dead-outs, Clear bottom entrances of dead bees and other debris
- Attend bee BCBA meetings.



[For more February 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.

2025 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: Mimi Gerner and Dave Elsen

Treasurer: Chad Ford

treasurer@browncountybeekeepers.com

Secretary: Edmund Poillion

secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Education Outreach Chair: Julie Mazzoleni

Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm