

BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 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

November is a month of transition. Hives are settling into winter mode. Brood has been greatly reduced or non-existent. If there are a couple of 50-degree days left in the year, hopefully you can get an oxalic vapor treatment done to really knock down the mite population. If not, hopefully your results from the fall treatments are successful. Mite control is critical to over wintering your bees.

Another item you need to be mindful of is the hive food stores. Do you have the 80 -100 pounds of honey to get the bees through the winter? If not, what is plan B - fondant, sugar, or candy boards. Start gathering those items together so you can put them on the hive when needed.

Another November task for some beekeepers is insulating the hive. Whatever method you use make sure any moisture in the hive is not going to drip on the cluster of bees. Also keep the entrance clear of snow or any bee debris that may accumulate.

The beekeeper also makes a transition of his/her work from duties to the hive to duties to the products of the hive. Bottling and sale of honey. Wax rendering and associated products. The club's contest at the November meeting is a great way to show off your skills and maybe get some bragging rights.

The club also has some transitions going on. A new Vice president and Secretary for 2026. I would like to thank Nate Frailey (VP) and Edmund Poillon (Sec.) for their service the past couple of years and welcome Wayne Steigelman (VP) and Chris DeWolfe (Sec.). I look forward to working with Wayne and Chris on the Leadership team. The leadership team will be meeting in December to plan out 2026 activities. If there is some activity/speaker/demonstration you would like to see next year, let us know

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

Chris Groth - President
president@browncountybeekeepers.com



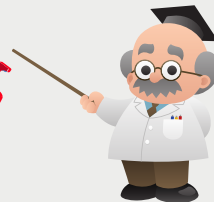
Introduction to Beekeeping Class

Calling All Volunteers – Help Us Welcome the Next Generation of Beekeepers! Hello Beekeepers!

It's that time of year again — our annual Introduction to Beekeeping Class is just around the corner, and we need your help to make it a success!

 Date: Saturday, January 17, 2026
 Location: NWTC Energy Center
 Time: 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



This cornerstone event introduces new beekeepers to the fundamentals of hive setup, management, and bee health — and it's powered entirely by our club's volunteers. The class has helped hundreds of new beekeepers take their first confident steps, and this year, we're aiming to make it our best yet.

We're currently finalizing the agenda and instructor lineup, and we still need a few more passionate volunteers to step up and help teach, assist, or support setup and registration.

Here's where we especially need help:

- Registration (7:30–8:00 AM)
- Welcome / Club Overview
- Hive Location & Setup
- Live Equipment Demos
- Hive Inspections & Installations

If you're interested in helping — even for part of the day — your experience and enthusiasm will make a real difference for new beekeepers.

We'll be holding a short 15-minute volunteer coordination meeting at 6:00 PM before our regular BCBA meeting next Wednesday to confirm instructor roles and finalize logistics.

Let's show new beekeepers what our club is all about — education, collaboration, and community.

To volunteer or ask questions, please contact:

Bob Michiels

920-660-3577

rjmichiels53@gmail.com





Beekeeper's Toolbox: Moving a Hive to Manage Colony Balance

Sometimes the best tool in a beekeeper's kit isn't inside the hive — it's moving the hive itself. Strategic hive relocation can solve several common management challenges: balancing colony strength, calming an overly defensive hive, or creating a colony of nurse bees for tasks like varroa testing or queen rearing. By understanding how bees orient and how foragers “fly back” to their original location, beekeepers can use simple hive movement to their advantage.



Why Moving Works — The Forager “Flyback” Effect

Once a bee becomes a forager, she memorizes the exact location of her hive. Even if the hive is moved a few feet, she'll return to the original spot.

Younger bees — the nurses that tend brood — haven't yet oriented, so they'll stay wherever the brood and queen remain.

This behavior is the key to the “flyback” technique:

When you move a hive a short distance (a few feet to several yards), foragers return to the old site, while nurse bees, brood, and the queen stay behind in the moved hive.

By controlling which bees stay and which fly back, you can easily change the balance of a colony.



1. Equalizing Strength Between Colonies

In any apiary, some colonies race ahead while others lag behind. Uneven strength can cause issues: weak colonies may struggle to defend brood or gather stores, while strong ones risk swarming.

The hive switch technique:

1. Move your strong colony a few feet to the side.
2. Place the weaker colony in the strong hive's original location.
3. Over the next day, many foragers will return to that spot — now the weak hive — instantly boosting its population.

The strong hive, left with mostly brood and nurse bees, will recover quickly. The result: two balanced hives heading into the next nectar flow.

Tips:

- Perform the move on a sunny, calm day so foragers can fly and reorient.
- Only switch healthy colonies to avoid spreading disease.
- Check both hives a day later and adjust entrances if drifting continues.

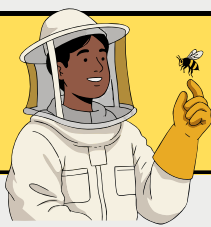


2. Reducing the Population of a Mean Hive

Every beekeeper eventually meets the “hot” hive — overly defensive and quick to sting. Aggression usually peaks in older foragers, the colony's natural guards.

To calm a mean hive:

1. Move the aggressive hive several yards away.
2. Leave an empty hive body, nucleus, or gentle colony in its original spot.
3. The mean hive's foragers will return to the old location, leaving mostly nurse bees and the queen in the moved hive.



Within a day, the relocated hive becomes noticeably calmer and easier to manage. You can then safely requeen with gentler stock to correct the problem permanently. This “flyback split” technique removes the most defensive bees without losing the foraging strength of the hot hive — an elegant and effective solution and with a new queen the aggressive bees continue to work and eventually fade away.



3. Creating a Hive of Nurse Bees

(For Varroa Testing or Queen Rearing)

Nurse bees are valuable because of their biology and behavior. They produce royal jelly, regulate brood temperature, and are the age group most likely to host varroa mites — making them perfect for both **varroa sampling** and **queen rearing**.

To create a nurse-bee colony:

1. Move a strong brood hive several yards from its current location.
2. Leave an empty box or small hive in the original spot.
3. The foragers will fly back, leaving behind a dense population of nurse bees, brood, and the queen.

For varroa testing:

This hive now contains the most mite-representative bees, giving more accurate sampling results.

For queen rearing:

If you remove the queen, the nurse-heavy colony becomes a superb “cell builder.” These young bees will enthusiastically raise new queens, feeding larvae rich royal jelly and maintaining ideal brood conditions.

Pro tip:

Always locate and protect the queen before moving the hive to prevent accidental loss.



4. Timing and Handling Considerations

- **Move early or late** in the day when most bees are home.
- **Keep distances short** (a few feet to a few yards) to trigger the flyback effect.



In Summary

Moving a hive isn't just about changing scenery — it's a strategic management tool.

Whether you're balancing hive strength, calming a hot colony, or creating a specialized nurse-bee hive for queen rearing or varroa monitoring, relocation uses the bees' own instincts to the beekeeper's advantage.

Thoughtful hive movement keeps your apiary balanced, productive, and — just as importantly — peaceful.



Jim Sharp

BCBA's Emily Skala Crowned 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen!

The Brown County Beekeepers Association is proud to share that one of our very own, Emily Skala, has been crowned the 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen! The coronation took place during the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association Fall Convention in Neenah, where outgoing Queen Emily Sydow had the honor of passing on the crown.

Emily's journey with the BCBA has been a shining example of passion, curiosity, and dedication to learning. From her beginnings as a youth member to her involvement in education and outreach, she has continued to inspire others through her enthusiasm for honey bees and sustainable beekeeping.

As the 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen, Emily will represent the beekeeping industry across the state – visiting schools, fairs, and community events to promote the importance of honey bees, pollination, and Wisconsin's vibrant honey industry.

Her appointment not only highlights her individual accomplishments but also reflects the strength and mentorship within our BCBA community. We are incredibly proud to see one of our own take on such a meaningful leadership role at the state level.

Please join us in congratulating Emily Skala, 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen!



BCBA Youth Scholars Honored at WHPA Fall Conference

Congratulations to Lucas and Liam Ford, our BCBA youth members who were recognized at the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association Fall Conference as WHPA Youth Scholar recipients!

Lucas and Liam shared their first-year experiences in beekeeping, highlighting lessons learned, challenges faced, and their passion for honey bees. Their dedication and curiosity represent the future of Wisconsin beekeeping and the spirit of BCBA's mission to learn, teach, and inspire. We're proud of you both – keep the buzz going!



November Meeting Highlights - Honey Products Judging



🍯 BCBA November Honey & Hive Products Judging

It's time for one of our most anticipated events of the year — the BCBA Honey, Wax, and Crafts Judging Contest!

Join us at our November 19th meeting as members proudly display the products of their hives and creativity.

This friendly competition features divisions for:

- Liquid Honey (Light, Amber, Dark, and Black Jar)
- Frames of Honey for Extracting
- Natural Beeswax Blocks and Candles
- Photography and Arts & Crafts related to beekeeping

🕒 Entry Drop-Off: 5:00 – 5:30 PM

🏆 Awards: 1st through 3rd place in each class



All entries must be produced by the exhibitor and submitted without labels. This is a wonderful opportunity to share your hard work, gain feedback from judges, and celebrate the many ways beekeeping inspires creativity.

You are strongly encouraged to read the content rules and criteria before submitting your entries.

There are many categories to choose from this year — including three new divisions: Photography, Arts & Crafts, and Black Jar Honey. Check it out!

If you are entering honey in the Light, Amber, or Dark Honey categories, the club provides the jars.

(Note: We exchanged the jars that had some bubbles in the glass for new jars — they are still available for pickup, contact Wayne Steigelman at 920241-2226)

Please note: The club retains all honey entries for use in future community events and donations.

Complete judging criteria and information can be found on our website.

CLICK HERE



Stephanie Slater

In 2023, she became the first person in Wisconsin to be certified as a honey judge through the American Honey Show Training Council

November Meeting Highlights-Products of the Hive

Hello, friendly beekeepers!



I am reaching out on behalf of the Brown County Beekeepers Association to invite you to participate in our upcoming Products of the Hive Exposition, taking place at the Green Bay Botanical Garden on November 19, 2025, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

This year's theme, "Products of the Hive," will highlight the many wonderful ways honeybees enrich our lives. We'll feature items such as honey, candles, mead, skincare products, honey-based candies, and a variety of bee-inspired art. We would love for you to share your own products, knowledge, or creative expertise!

We're also exploring several related topics for this exposition and welcome your suggestions. Perhaps you or someone you know might be interested in contributing to one of the following areas:

🌻 Pollinator Gardening: Are you—or do you know—a gardener interested in sharing information about pollinator-friendly planting? For example, comparing “plant this pollinator instead of this hybrid” could make a great mini-presentation.

🎨 Art & Craft: Do you create or know someone who creates bee- or nature-inspired art, crafts, or handmade goods?

🍰 Culinary Creations: Do you know a baker or event planner who incorporates honey into their specialties?

🍷 Cooking & Grilling: Are you a cook or grill master who could share recipes or tips for sauces or marinades that feature honey?

Each participant will be provided space in the Botanical Garden meeting room to discuss, demonstrate, and, if desired, sell or offer samples of their products.

If you have questions, ideas, or would like to be part of the planning process, please contact me at **julianne.sanders@yahoo.com**. Your input and participation will help make this event truly special. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you—and can't wait to see everyone at the event!

Warm regards,
Julianne Sanders



November Meeting Highlights-Social & Silent Auction

****🍯 November Meeting: Products of the Hive, Honey Judging & Club Social! 🍯****

Our biggest social night of the year is coming up — **Products of the Hive, **Honey Judging**, food, fellowship... and now a **Silent Raffle Fundraiser** to support the club.**

****📅 Wednesday, November 19th****

****🕒 Fun starts at 5:30 PM****

****📍 Green Bay Botanical Garden****

****🎟️ Silent Raffle Fundraiser****

We're raising funds to support club programs, events, and education in 2026.

****What's already on the table:****

💚 *The Green Bay Packers generously donated official Packer gear* — this will be featured in the raffle.

****What we need:****

We're asking club members to donate ****beekeeping-related items**** — new or gently used. Think: tools, books, hive equipment, suits/jackets, feeders, smokers, uncapping knives, crafts or your products of the hive.

It's a simple way to support the club and a great chance for members to snag solid beekeeping gear at a bargain.

🍴 What the Club Is Providing

- * Sliders
- * Cheese & Sausage
- * Veggie Tray
- * Soda & Water
- * Prizes, Bee Talk, Fellowship

👏 What We Still Need (Sides and Treats)**

Bring a little extra for the table if you can:

- * Your favorite side dishes
- * Treats or baked goods
- * Mead or homemade Wine

This is one of the most fun, interactive meetings of the year — food, learning, competition, community, and now a raffle with some legit items up for grabs.

****Hope to see you there! 🐝****





November Beekeeping Tips – Northeast Wisconsin

Preparing your bees – and yourself – for winter

As the first true cold fronts settle in, the beekeeping season shifts from activity to observation. November is about protecting, monitoring, and setting your colonies up for survival – not intervention.

1. Finalize Winter Prep

Make sure entrances are clear, moisture quilts or insulation wraps are secure, and hives are tilted slightly forward to allow condensation to drain.

2. Check for Weight – But Don't Open

Lift from the back to estimate stores. A full double deep should feel heavy – around 120+ lbs total hive weight. Resist the urge to open; disturbing the cluster now can chill bees and break their formation.

3. Moisture is the Enemy, Not Cold

Ensure top insulation is in place and ventilation holes or vents are open just enough to let moisture escape while keeping drafts out. Reflectix, moisture boards, or double blanket wraps can all help stabilize humidity.

4. Watch for Excessive Dead Bees

A few are normal this time of year, but piles on the bottom board or at the entrance could signal a late-season mite crash. Document it – that data is gold for spring management planning.

5. OAV Treatments (If Weather Allows)

For those following an organic IPM approach, November is the window for Oxalic Acid Vaporization while colonies are mostly broodless. A warm afternoon above 35°F works best.

6. Protect Against Mice & Woodpeckers

Install mouse guards and check for signs of bird pecking, especially on foam or poly boxes. Once they find warmth, they'll return daily.

7. Reflect, Record, and Plan

Now's the time to update hive logs, note what worked (and didn't), and start thinking about next season's goals. Good records in November make better beekeepers in April.

 **Check out this video from Rance at This Old Hive**



[overwintering blanket grommet installation](#)



FACEBOOK SITES MANAGED BY BCBA

[Northeast WI Beekeepers](#)
beekeepers helping beekeepers

[Brown County Beekeepers](#)
updates on club happenings

RECIPES FROM THE HIVE

Hive Recipe: Warm Honey Apple Crisp 🍏

There's nothing quite like the comforting aroma of baked apples and cinnamon filling the kitchen on a cool November evening. This recipe uses honey as the star sweetener, adding a rich, floral depth that pairs perfectly with tart apples.



Hive Recipe Warm Honey Apple Crisp

- 6 medium apples (Honeycrisp or Granny Smith work best)
- ½ cup honey
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup butter (softened)
- Pinch of salt

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Peel and slice apples, then toss with honey, cinnamon, nutmeg, and lemon juice. Spread in a greased 9x9-inch baking dish.
3. In a separate bowl, mix oats, flour, brown sugar, salt, and butter until crumbly.
4. Sprinkle topping evenly over the apples.
5. Bake for 35-40 minutes, until the top is golden and apples are tender.

🍯 Have a Favorite Recipe with Honey?

We'd love to feature it in an upcoming newsletter! Whether it's sweet, savory, or straight from your kitchen experiments, share your favorite honey-inspired recipe with us.

✉️ Send your submissions (and a photo if you have one!) to secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Let's keep our Hive Recipes buzzing with fresh ideas from our members!

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	Wayne Steigelman Nathan Frailey
May 21, 2025	Girl Next-Door Honey	Reg	Hillary Kearney
June 18, 2025	Beekeeping antibiotics	Reg	Justine Nguyen PhD Candidate - USDA SARE Grant Fellow
August 20, 2025	Fall Management	Reg	Panel
	Honey Extraction	MBM	Wayne Steigelman Nathan Frailey
September 17, 2025	Special Guest	Reg	Eugene Makovek
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



Brown County Beekeeping Association

Member Benefits

Club Sponsor – Hansen Honey Farm, Rhinelander, WI

- 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 and Bob Michiels

Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm