

BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 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



January

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let the new beekeeping year begin! Hopefully you had a chance to check on your bees. I hope they are doing well. As with any beginning, there is always an anticipation of what the new year is going to bring. To maintain a sustainable apiary, a beekeeper needs to plan for the new year. First off, are we ready to do any emergency feeding if the bees run short before the first nectar/pollen flow? Do we have enough equipment if we want to expand? Does any woodenware need to be repaired or purchased?

The beekeeper must give some thought to mites. What control methods are we going to use during the year and when? Do we have the mite control agents on hand or do we need to purchase them? Do you have a method to gauge if your treatment was effective?

Also, take a look at colony management. Do you want to change your set up to try something new? Maybe run a single brood box on a colony to see how that compares to your current set up. Maybe try making some nucleus colonies with any swarm cells that you find in the spring. That gives you some options throughout the year – replacement queens, replacement colony for any losses, and replacement resources for your production hives. Now is a good time to research those ideas

The BCBA leadership is also looking forward to the new year. In December, we looked at what we could do better as a club. So, look for those ideas to be presented at the January meeting. The Education Committee also has some exciting learning planned for next year. So, we are looking with anticipation for the Association's new year.

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That's what this month's buzz is about

Chris Groth - President
president@browncountybeekeepers.com



JANUARY EDUCATION



WAX PROCESSING & Wax Products



Rance Bennett will walk us through practical wax processing techniques and discuss what beekeepers can realistically produce at home—safely, efficiently, and without unnecessary equipment.

What We'll Cover

- Types of wax: cappings vs. comb wax
- Rendering methods (slow cooker, double boiler, filtering)
- Cleaning and storing wax properly
- Common mistakes that reduce wax quality
- Finished products such as candles, fire starters, salves, and household uses

About the Speaker

Rance Bennett is a Wisconsin-based, “home-grown” beekeeper with over seven years of hands-on experience. He is the owner of [This Old Hive Honeybee Farm](#) in Neenah and is well known for sharing practical beekeeping education through DIY projects, instructional videos, and ***community outreach***.

Rance is also the inventor and manufacturer of the Red, White, and Blue overwintering system, a condensing-hive approach that has demonstrated strong winter survival rates in Wisconsin conditions. He regularly speaks on overwintering success, hive management, oxalic acid applications, and efficient use of small colonies as resource hives.

Why This Session Matters

Wax is one of the most overlooked hive products. This session will help members:

- Reduce waste
- Create functional products for personal use or gifts
- Add value to surplus wax without major investment

Designed for all experience levels, this presentation focuses on methods that actually work for backyard and sideline beekeepers in Wisconsin.



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86471186406?pwd=gbboebXh4pzhQHyRgK6bFUf5qXXyEA.1>

Meeting ID: 864 7118 6406

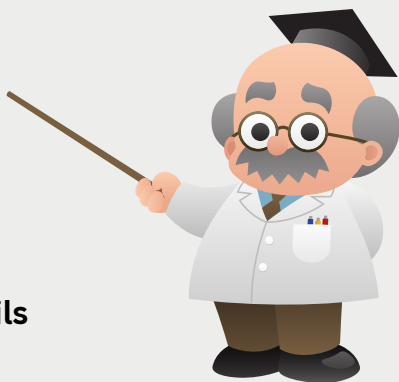
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EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



Join Walworth County Beekeepers for this month's education with our very own Big Wayne, **Beekeeping by the Data**. Wayne Steigelman, Vice President of the Brown County Beekeepers Association, shares how temperature, weight, and humidity data reveal what's really happening inside the hive—helping beekeepers make smarter decisions, reduce unnecessary intervention, and support healthier colonies at any scale.



Zoom Event Details

Date: January 20

Time: 6:30 PM

Format: Virtual (Zoom)

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://gtc.zoom.us/j/84933904593>

Meeting ID: 849 3390 4593



Wayne Steigelman

Vice President |
Social Media & Technology Chair



Wayne is a Northeast Wisconsin beekeeper and serves as Vice President of the Brown County Beekeepers Association, and also serves as Social Media & Technology Chair. He operates A-Frame Acres, a micro-apiry focused on producing high-quality honey for his local community through sustainable, efficient, technology-first management. By combining his professional background in operations, sales, and marketing with his passion for bees, Wayne applies a management-systems mindset to beekeeping—measuring what matters and making biology-based decisions using real hive data. He regularly appears on radio and local news as "Big Wayne the Beekeeper," helping educate the public on pollinators, honey production, and modern beekeeping practices.



UW-Madison Beekeeping Short Course

When: Friday, February 13 – Sunday, February 15

Where: UW Extension Building, 3500 University Ave, Madison, WI 53705

Details: Participants will gain knowledge related to the following topics:

- Basic beekeeping practices and bee biology
- Disease management and sustainable year-round hive management
- Business and financial planning for building a beekeeping business including insurance and liability of a beekeeping business
- Marketing and promotion of honey and wax products as well as supply chain access
- Expanding product lines including regulations and insurance requirements for the sale of non-honey bee products



Intended audience: Beginning and intermediate beekeepers interested in building or growing their beekeeping business.

Cost: Early bird: \$350 regular / \$150 student

After January 13, 2026: \$400 regular / \$200 student

Register here: <https://pollinators.wisc.edu/honey-bees/beekeeping-short-course/>

SPACE IS LIMITED!

Questions? Please contact Dr. Hannah Gaines Day, hgaines@wisc.edu

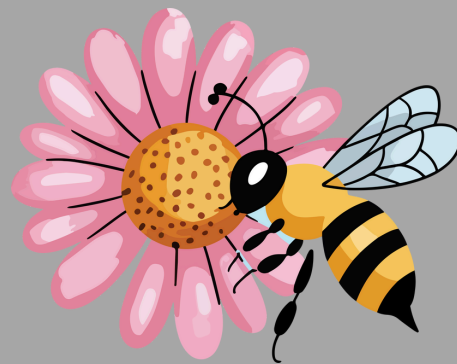


This course is brought to you through a collaboration between the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Entomology, the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association, and the UW Farm and Industry Short Course. It is supported by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees.

CLASSIFIEDS

WHPA members are entitled to two free classified ads a year. Member free classifieds cannot advertise package bees or nucs. There will be a charge of \$10.00 to non-members for a classified.

For Sale: 100 Supers w/ 10 frames per box. 100 Hive Deeps w/ 10 frames per box. \$20 each. Call 608-726-0086. Baldwin Apiaries.



MelliFloral
— HONEY POLLEN SOLUTIONS —

In partnership with our Introduction to Beekeeping course, Angie from Mellifloral is pleased to offer participants and BCBA Members a \$20 discount on a full pollen profile.

A pollen profile is a laboratory analysis of the pollen grains found in your honey. It identifies the plant and floral sources your bees foraged from, helping beekeepers better understand nectar flows, confirm varieties, support labeling claims, and tell a stronger story about their honey.

Use the coupon code **GIFT20 at checkout**. This offer is valid through December 31, 2026.

Learn more at: <https://www.mellifloral.com/>



BEEKEEPING ACROSS THE STATE



SAVE THE DATES – 2026

Midwest Honey Bee Expo

February 6–7, 2026

Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI

Beek Meet

February 21, 2026

Mid-State Technical College, Wisconsin
Rapids, WI

WHPA Summer Meeting

June 20, 2026

LB Werks Shop, Bancroft, WI

WI State Fair Honey Booth

August 6–16, 2026

Wisconsin Products Pavilion, West Allis, WI

WHPA Fall Convention

November 5–7, 2026

Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

DISTRICT MEETINGS

Northeast District

February 28, 2026

Hansen's Honey Farm, Rhinelander, WI
Western District

March 7, 2026

Red Creek School, Black River Falls, WI
Northwest District

March 7, 2026

Cameron Community Hall, Cameron, WI
Southern & Southeast District (Joint)

Date TBD (March 7 or 14)

Concord Community Center, Concord, WI
Central District

March 28, 2026

Par4 Resort, Waupaca, WI

Southwest District

Date & location TBA

More meeting information coming in
January!

Visit wihoney.org for more information.



Central Wisconsin
Beekeepers
Association

Beek Meet 2026

*Start the New Year Smarter,
For You and Your Bees*

REGISTER TODAY

for North Central Wisconsin's
largest beekeeping conference!

Beek Meet 2026 brings together
practical, science-based education
for every level of beekeeper.

February 21, 2026 | 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Mid-State Technical College, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

Learn more about CWBA at cwbees.com!



Midwest
HoneyBee Expo

February 6 - 7, 2026
Alliant Energy Center
Exhibition Hall
Madison, Wisconsin



Learn from industry experts and enthusiasts, learn sustainable practices, and the sweet rewards of honey production. Join us at the 2026 Midwest HoneyBee Expo to explore the latest trends, technologies, and insights in beekeeping. Whether you are a seasoned beekeeper or just starting out.

**Largest Beekeeping Conference & Trade Show
In The Midwest**

Great Presenters & Speakers

Workshops

Honey Show

**Honey Judge Training & Certification Course
From The American Honey Show Training
Council**

**Lee Heine Advancement In Apiculture
Scholarship**



Scan QR Code
& Register Today



Join Us & Be Part Of The Experience
www.MidwestHoneyBeeExpo.com

January Beekeeping Tips – Northeast Wisconsin



Hive Management: Less Is More



Entrances & Airflow

- After snowfalls or drifting, clear entrances so airflow is not blocked.
- Ensure any upper entrance or notch remains open.
- Never disturb the cluster inside the hive. If emergency feeding is required it should be placed above the inside cover or directly on top of the top frames. Look for a day in the 40s and the entire process should take less than 30 seconds.



Food Awareness (Without Disturbance)

- Starvation is the #1 late-winter killer.
- Heft hives from the back to assess weight.
- If a hive feels dangerously light and you are prepared with emergency feed, act quickly and cleanly. Guessing usually means you're already late.



Moisture Matters More Than Cold

- Cold doesn't kill colonies—moisture does.
- Condensation dripping back onto the cluster is deadly.
- Absorbent material above the bees is often more important than ventilation holes.
- Frost under the lid is a warning sign.



Warm Days Are Not a Signal

- Bees flying on a 35–45°F day is normal.
- Flight does not mean inspections are needed.
- Avoid the temptation to “check on them.”



January Is Planning Season

Use the downtime wisely:

- Repair and prep equipment
- Order boxes, frames, and foundation early
- Line up nucs or queens before spring demand spikes



Learn While the Bees Rest

Winter is when good beekeepers get better:

Read - Watch - Ask questions - Attend meetings and classes

Knowledge gained now pays dividends when spring ramps up fast.

Bottom Line

If your colonies made it to January in Northeast Wisconsin, they're doing their job.

Your role is simple: protect food access, airflow, and moisture balance—and don't interfere.



FACEBOOK SITES MANAGED BY BCBA

[Northeast WI Beekeepers](#)
beekeepers helping beekeepers

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

RECIPES FROM THE HIVE

🍯 Slow-Cooker Honey Garlic Chicken



This is a cold-weather classic: set it, forget it, and come back to a meal that's comforting without being heavy. Honey brings balance and depth, not sweetness overload.

Ingredients

- 2-2½ lbs boneless chicken thighs (or breasts)
- ⅓ cup local honey
- ¼ cup soy sauce (or tamari)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger (or 1 tbsp fresh)
- Black pepper to taste
- Optional thickener: 1 tablespoon cornstarch + 1 tablespoon cold water

Instructions

1. Place chicken in the slow cooker.
2. In a bowl, whisk honey, soy sauce, garlic, vinegar, oil, ginger, and pepper.
3. Pour sauce over chicken.
4. Cook:
 - Low: 5-6 hours
 - High: 3-4 hours

Optional: For a thicker sauce, remove chicken, stir in cornstarch slurry, cover, and cook on High for 10-15 minutes. Return chicken to coat.

Serving Ideas

- Over rice, wild rice, or mashed potatoes
- With roasted winter vegetables
- Shredded for wraps or grain bowls

🍯 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!

2026 BCBA Meeting Education Calendar



Reg = Regular Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30p
New Beekeeper Forum (5:30-6:30)

A one-hour forum for new beekeepers to connect, share questions and challenges, and learn from one another. An experienced beekeeper will join the discussion to offer guidance and support.

Dates	Topic	Edu Type	Presenter
Jan 21 '26	Wax Processing and Wax Products	Reg MBM	Rance Bennett, This Old Hive New Member Forum
Feb 18 '26	Splits, Understanding the Queen Calendar and buying queens or hive requeening math	Reg MBM	Dick Sturm Kevin Berry New Member Forum
Mar 18 '26	Development of his northern VSH queens and nucs. How to establish and maintain mite resistant genetics Research with Marquette University.	Reg MBM	Trevor Bouden of Lloyd Street Bees and Marquette University New Member Forum
Apr 15 '26	Spring Management Package and Nuc Install	Reg MBM	Round Table New Member Forum
May 20 '26	Mite Management - Testing, Treatments and Honey Bee Health Coalition	Reg MBM	Club Workshop New Member Forum
Jun 17 '26	Non-standard beehives, like Layens, AZ houses, Top Bars and native bee houses	Reg MBM	Charlie Koenen New Member Forum
Aug 19 '26	Fall Management Honey Extraction	Reg MBM	New Member Forum
Sep 16 '26		Reg	New Member Forum
Oct 21 '26	Discussion Panel or Networking?	Reg MBM	New Member Forum
Nov 18 '26	Products of the Hive and Honey Judging Contest	Reg MBM	Club Judged Competition & Party New Member Forum

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.

2026 Club Officers

President: Chris Groth

president@browncountybeekeepers.com

Vice President: Wayne Steigelman

vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

Treasurer: Chad Ford

treasurer@browncountybeekeepers.com

Secretary: Chris DeWolfe

secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Education Outreach: Bob Michiels

Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm

Webmaster: Carl Fisher

info@browncountybeekeepers.com

Mentoring Committee - Shellie Milheiser

Historian — Edmund Poillion

Club Education CoChairs: Mimi Gerner and Dave Elsen