

# BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER



## FEBRUARY 2026



**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](http://www.browncountybeekeepers.com)



**FEBRUARY**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hopefully you had some time to check on your bees after this cold snap. If not, you may want to check on their food reserves. The bees would have used a quite a bit of food to keep the colony warm and may be in need of emergency feeding.

This February cold gives us beekeepers a chance to catch up on the latest and greatest beekeeping knowledge, products and concerns. One of those concerns is the eventual arrival of the tropilaelaps mite and the effect it will have on the bee industry in the US. Some states are already looking at legislative ways to control the spread of the mite. Some of those proposals will be very disruptive to the industry. The simple act of moving bees may become very complicated. How will that effect the spring package bee business? As beekeepers, we need to get involved in these future legislative conversations when we become aware of them. Right now, do your part by monitoring your hives, implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and reporting anything suspicious to the state inspectors.

One of the new products on the market for the Varroa mite is Norroa. It maintains mite levels by limiting the reproduction of the mite. After doing some research on Norroa, you may consider adding it as a tool to your apiary IPM. From what I have read, it looks promising. Knowledge of beekeeping is ever growing and changing. The internet offers a lot of information on how to manage you bees. What I see emerging now is beekeepers making management decisions for problems and gathering data to evaluate those decisions. Randy Oliver would be a classic example. In our own club Wayne Steigelman employs that methodology in his apiary. I believe that gives us as beekeepers a deeper insight into our bees.

In parting, the next couple of months are the hardest on the bees for food storage. Monitor your hives and feed if needed.

That's what this month's buzz is about

Chris Groth - President  
[president@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:president@browncountybeekeepers.com)



# FEBRUARY EDUCATION



## SPLITS, Understanding the Queen Calendar

Our February meeting will focus on one of the most important spring decision points: splits and queen management. We'll break down how to read and use the queen calendar, understand brood and mating timelines, and plan splits with intention rather than guesswork. The session will also cover the real-world math behind buying queens versus requeening existing hives, helping members evaluate costs, timing, and colony strength as the season approaches.

The presentation will be led by **Dick Sturm of Dick's Bees**, and joined by **Kevin Berry**, President of the **Fox Valley Beekeepers Association**. Kevin is also well known in the beekeeping community as **"Worker Bee"** on Facebook, where he actively shares practical advice and real-world insights with beekeepers across the region.

Who should attend: New beekeepers preparing for their first splits, experienced beekeepers refining spring plans, and anyone considering buying queens or requeening hives this season.



### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84154263258?pwd=HXBABT9OrnnSWldtautODTwDVWxO8e.1>

Meeting ID: 841 5426 3258

Passcode: 104930



# MEMBERS ON THE MOVE MIDWEST HONEYBEE EXPO EDITION



## WI Honey Queen

Hello, WHPA!

As we head into the new year, I am very excited to start my training this January. I look forward to learning about my role as the 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen.

A fun snack that I recommend is a honey garlic Chex mix. It's quick to make – perfect for an after-school snack or family gathering.

Servings: 18 / Time: 20 minutes  
**Ingredients**

- 4 cups Corn Chex cereal
- 2 cups Wheat Chex cereal
- 2 cups butter pretzel spindles
- 1 cup salted roasted whole cashews
- ¼ cup butter

- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper (cayenne)

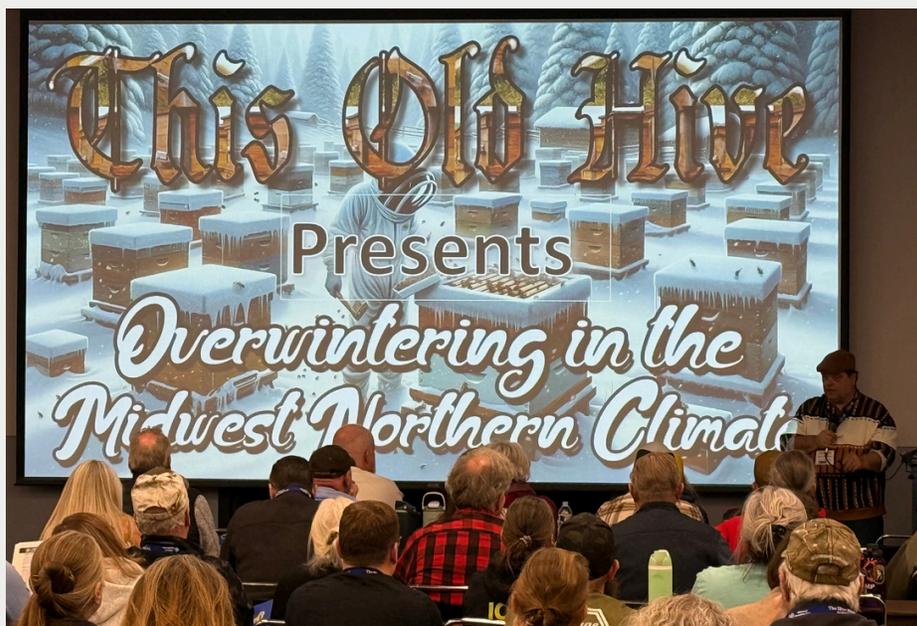
### Preparation

1. Line a large rimmed cookie sheet with waxed paper. In a large microwaveable bowl, add cereals, pretzels, and cashews.
  2. In a small microwaveable bowl, warm the butter, honey, chili powder, garlic powder, and cayenne pepper uncovered on high for 20 to 40 seconds or until melted. Stir and pour onto cereal mixture, mixing thoroughly to coat.
  3. Microwave uncovered on high for 4 to 6 minutes, stirring after every minute, until well coated and slightly toasted. Spread on cookie sheet to cool, about 15 minutes.
  4. Transfer to a large serving bowl and enjoy!
- Recipe from Chex: <https://www.chex.com/recipes/honey-garlic-chex-party-mix>

Emily Skala  
2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen



We're incredibly proud to see BCBA members representing our club on a regional stage at the Midwest Honey Bee Expo. Emily Skala, serving as the 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen, shared education, outreach, and the importance of honey and pollinators with a packed audience, while Rance Bennett of This Old Hive delivered practical, experience-driven education on overwintering and hive management in northern climates. Their involvement highlights the depth of knowledge, leadership, and passion within our membership—and we couldn't be more proud to have them representing BCBA and Wisconsin beekeeping beyond our local community.



### Speaker Spotlight

Midwest HoneyBee Expo  
February 6 - 7, 2026  
Alliant Energy Center  
Exhibition Hall  
Madison, Wisconsin  
[www.MidwestHoneyBeeExpo.com](http://www.MidwestHoneyBeeExpo.com)

**Rance Bennett**

Rance Bennett Wisconsin's "Home Grown" local beekeeper for 7 years. Owner of This Old Hive Honeybee Farm Neenah Wisconsin Face Book Group Page This Old Hive Producer of DIY Projects and Instructional Videos for beekeeping. Inventor / Designer and Manufacturer of Beekeeping Wooden Wares including the Red, White and Blue Overwintering system with averaging 77% Overwintering Success using the Condensing hive method. Speaker Subject: How to be successful at Overwintering in Wisconsin, using the Condensing hive method, Oxalic Acid Sublimation Schedules / Applications and implementing the Red, White and Blue Overwintering System. Additional subject matter: Using 6 frame double deeps as resource colonies and queen rearing.

# MEMBERS ON THE MOVE MIDWEST HONEYBEE EXPO EDITION



The Midwest Honey Bee Expo was a fantastic event! Many speakers with a ton of information, vendor booths with everything bee you can imagine and a HONEY SHOW!

Dick and I entered some items into the show. This was my first time entering a honey gift basket. This idea evolved from my honey old fashioned painting I entered into the BCBA honey show in November. The basket included most everything old fashioned, from honey to bourbon honey infused cherries and honey spiced orange slices and a hardwood muddler with 'honey the old fashioned way' lasered into it. The basket was awarded first place out of 6 entries!



Kudos to the organizers of the Midwest Honey Bee Expo and the judging team who were very kind and helpful to hand out tips and tricks to better future entries. I also entered a honey cheesecake in the baked goods category. Although it turned out fantastic and had a ton of compliments, it did not quite make the grade because the honey flavor did not stand out. I will be working on baking with honey in the future!



-Carol Sturm

**FANTASTIC WORK!**  
*Emily, Rance and Carol*



# 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](http://wihoney.org) for more information.



**Beek Meet 2026**

*Don't wait for warm weather to start planning.*

REGISTER TODAY –  
Be Prepared for Spring  
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](http://cwbees.com)!




**GREEN VALLEY**

**BEE EXPO**

**APRIL 12, 2025**  
**9 AM – 4 PM**

**NORTHERN WISCONSIN STATE FAIR GROUNDS**  
Chippewa Falls

**SCAN THE QR CODE FOR TICKET INFO**



*Honeybee pollinators, cooking with honey, getting healthy with honey. Raffles, food trucks, seminars, youth programs.*

*Learn all about the natural ways!*

# February Beekeeping Tips – Northeast Wisconsin



Mentoring Committee - Shellie Milheiser



## Show Your Bees a Little Love This Valentine's Day

### ♥ Love Means Leaving Them Alone

It's tempting to check on the bees as days slowly get longer—but resist. Opening the hive now breaks the cluster and releases precious heat. Unless there's storm or animal damage, the kindest thing you can do is stay out.

### 🍯 Keep an Eye on Food (From the Outside)

Late winter starvation is one of the biggest risks this time of year. Heft hives from the back to gauge weight. If a hive feels critically light and you're prepared with emergency feed, act quickly on the next mild day. Love means being ready—not guessing.

### 🔧 Plan Ahead, Because Spring Comes Fast

February is when beekeepers show love for their future bees:  
Finalize plans for splits  
Order queens or nucs early  
Repair boxes and prep equipment  
Spring doesn't wait, and prepared beekeepers don't scramble.

### 🐝 Warm Days Aren't an Invitation

Bees flying on a sunny 40°F day is normal. It does not mean inspections are needed. Let them stretch their wings—then let them get back to clustering.

### 💧 Dry Bees Are Happy Bees

Cold doesn't kill colonies—moisture does. Make sure entrances aren't blocked by snow or ice. Absorbent material above the cluster is critical. Frost inside the lid is a sign to pay attention. A dry hive is a loved hive.

### 📖 Share the Love by Learning

Winter is the perfect time to invest in your beekeeping knowledge. February and early spring offer education events, conferences, and district meetings across Wisconsin, covering everything from queen management to overwintering success. Attending these events helps you sharpen skills, learn from other beekeepers' experiences, and bring fresh ideas back to your own apiary. A little learning now can prevent big problems later.

### ♥ February Reminder

If your colonies have made it to February in Northeast Wisconsin, they're doing their job. Your role is simple: protect food access, airflow, and dryness—and don't interfere.

**That's real winter beekeeping love.**



FACEBOOK SITES MANAGED BY BCBA

[Northeast WI Beekeepers](#)  
*beekeepers helping beekeepers*

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

# RECIPES FROM THE HIVE

## 🍯❤️ Recipes from the Hive-Valentine's Edition



### 🍯❤️ Honey Dark Chocolate Truffles

**Makes:** ~18 truffles

**Prep Time:** 15 minutes

**Chill Time:** 1-2 hours

#### Ingredients

- 8 oz dark chocolate (60-70%), chopped
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp local honey
- 1 Tbsp butter
- Optional coatings: cocoa powder, powdered sugar, crushed nuts, or coconut

#### Directions

1. Place chopped chocolate in a heatproof bowl.
2. Heat cream until just beginning to simmer. Do not boil.
3. Pour cream over chocolate; let sit 2 minutes, then stir until smooth.
4. Stir in honey and butter until fully blended.
5. Refrigerate until firm enough to scoop (1-2 hours).
6. Roll into small balls and coat as desired.

#### Beekeeper's Tip

Honey varietal matters—lighter honeys keep flavors mellow, darker honeys add richness.

🍯❤️ Sweetened by bees, perfect for Valentine's Day.

🍯 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](mailto: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.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Edu Type</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
Jan 21 '26	Wax Processing and Wax Products	Reg MBM	Rance Bennett, This Old Hive New Member Forum
Feb 18 '26	<b>Splits, Understanding the Queen Calendar and buying queens or hive requeening math</b>	Reg MBM	<b>Dick Sturm Kevin Berry</b> <b>New Member Forum</b>
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)

## 2026 Club Officers

**President: Chris Groth**  
president@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Vice President-Social Media-Newsletter**  
**Wayne Steigelman**  
vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Treasurer: Chad Ford**  
treasurer@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Secretary: Chris DeWolfe**  
secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

## Leadership Team

**Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm**

**Historian — Edmund Poillion**

**Mentoring Committee - Shellie Milheiser**

**Webmaster: Carl Fisher**  
info@browncountybeekeepers.com

**Education Outreach: Bob Michiels**

**Swarm Czar — Jesse Kallioinen**

**Club Education CoChairs: Mimi Gerner and Dave Elsen**

