

# BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

## MARCH 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)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I had the opportunity to inspect my hives during the warm spell this past weekend. The news wasn't all good. A hive had starved out during the last cold spell. The queen had started brooding and the supplemental feed I had put on wasn't enough to meet their needs. Like I have stated before March is the starving month.

But I did see some encouraging signs. Some of the silver maples along the river bottoms were starting to break bud. Heard the first Sandhill cranes of the season and saw a couple of robins. Most importantly the bees were flying. Those signs mean the 2026 beekeeping season is about to begin.

The bees are starting to build up and I started seeing pollen coming in. Not surprising, but to help them out, I will be putting on a pollen patty. Also, since the brood numbers are low, it is a good time to get a mite treatment in to get the mite numbers even lower. The apiary also needs some maintenance since the snow is gone.

As the buildup moves forward, we will need to monitor for swarming conditions. I am seriously looking at the Demaree method for one important reason. I recently saw a video in which the beekeeper used the top box of the Demaree for the starter/finisher for their queen grafts. In my mind that made a lot of sense. This method keeps the hives honey production going without much disturbance, and no need for a separate hive as a starter/finisher. We will see if this year, I can produce grafted queens.

Let the 2026 beekeeping season begin.

That's what this month's buzz is about

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



## MARCH EDUCATION



### FEATURED SPEAKER *Dev of northern VSH queens & nucs.*

# TREVOR BAWDEN



Lloyd Street Bees  
Queens rule the world.



Trevor Bawden is a beekeeper, researcher, and lab manager of the Cook Honey Bee Lab at Marquette University. As he likes to joke, his website bio says he enjoys cats and dinosaurs—and while he once wanted to be an archaeologist, he ended up a beekeeper instead. Things could be worse.

Trevor manages hives across five apiaries in southeastern Wisconsin and operates Lloyd Street Bees, where his focus is nucleus colony production and selective queen breeding. His work centers on improving locally adapted honey bee genetics for Wisconsin, including the production of instrumentally inseminated queens and the evaluation of new breeding lines through controlled crosses with local stock.

In 2018, Trevor partnered with other queen breeders to establish the Wisconsin Honey Bee Breeders Association, the first statewide network dedicated to strengthening honey bee genetics in Wisconsin. The group provides a collaborative platform for breeders to exchange genetics and improve the quality of queens produced across the state.

Beyond his own operation, Trevor is committed to supporting the long-term sustainability of beekeeping in Wisconsin. Through his work at Marquette University's Cook Honey Bee Lab, partnerships with UW Extension, and presentations at bee clubs throughout the region, he works to help beekeepers expand local stock, improve overwintering success, and strengthen the resilience of honey bee populations in the Upper Midwest.



# MARCH NEW MEMBER FORUM



## GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND LEARN ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGY



### Hive Trackr: Beekeeping Log

beehive tracking made easy

**March 18th Meeting**

**5:30PM- 6:30PM**



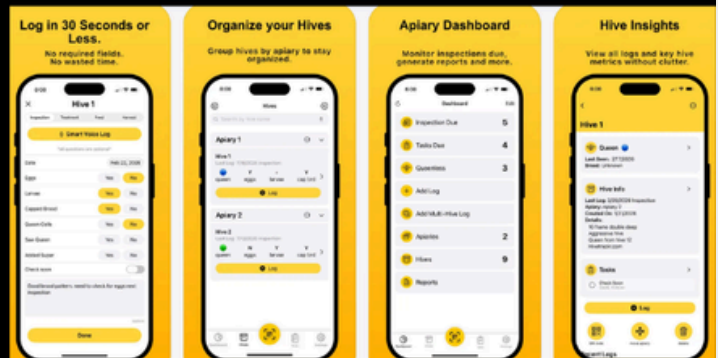
Michael is a mechanical engineer, app developer and the founder of Appco LLC, a mobile software and product development company he founded in 2015. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a graduate degree in mechanical engineering - product design from the University of California Berkeley. Michael spent five years working at Apple in product design for the Vision Products Group, and has since spent four years in product design roles at technology startups.

# SPECIAL GUEST



**Michael Oudenhoven**

He helps his family manage over 30 hives at Dutchman Creek Family Apiary. He found himself facing the same problem many beekeepers do: inconsistent, unreliable records. This struggle led him to build Hive Trackr, a mobile app designed to make it faster and easier than ever to keep good records.



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87669087353?pwd=CPXJWOVbO5iOwszb2RzMhZ1sNsOojj.1>

Meeting ID: 876 6908 7353

Passcode: 978373

## MEMBERS ON THE MOVE VACATION EDITION

*JIM SHARP*



Visiting the Suncoast Beekeepers  
While spending some time in Florida this winter, I had the chance to attend a meeting of the Suncoast Beekeepers Association. It was interesting to see how beekeeping in Florida compares with what we deal with here in Wisconsin.

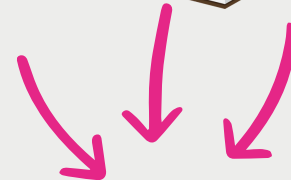
Their February meeting covered familiar topics like robbing, feeding, and preparing colonies for the upcoming nectar flow. In Florida, winter can actually be an extended dearth period. Even though bees are flying most days, natural nectar can be scarce, which makes robbing a major concern. Many beekeepers feed during this time to keep colonies growing so they're ready when the main honey flow begins.

Pests are also a constant part of management. Small hive beetles are an everyday issue, and wax moths can be active nearly year-round in the warm climate.

Their forage calendar is very different from ours. Oak and pine pollen were coming in, the willow bloom was finishing, and beekeepers were already looking ahead to the palmetto flow expected in April.

As the lone Wisconsin beekeeper in the room, I had to smile when several members debated whether it might be too cold to open their hives during a recent 50° cold snap. In Wisconsin we usually call that the first real beekeeping day of spring. 🐝

## MESSAGE FROM OUR BYLAW COMMITTEE



### Watch for Important Bylaw Update Email

As part of our 2026 goals, the Bylaws Committee has completed a review of the Club's Bylaws (last updated in 2018) and will be sharing proposed updates with the membership in March.

Please watch your email for detailed information, including:

- A copy of the current Bylaws
- A document outlining all proposed changes (with revisions clearly highlighted)
- Instructions for providing feedback

Member input is an important part of this process. Feedback will be requested by March 31st, and final proposed amendments will be sent out in April and reviewed and voted on at the April meeting.

We encourage all members to take time to review the materials and participate in this important update to our Club governance.

*THANK YOU*

*DICK STURM & DAVE ELSÉN*

*FOR YOUR WORK*

# MEMBERS ON THE MOVE SMALL BUSINESS EDITION

SUPPORT  
SMALL  
BUSINESS



**Sarah Mueller and Jenny Renfro**

Three years ago my sister Jenny Renfro and I decided it was time to expand our beekeeping adventure and take our two small apiaries to new heights. With our shared love of honeybees we found the many hive resources we collected over the years could be used to create naturally healthy products. We started dabbling and soon we made our first product the Best Sh\*t Ever Healing salve that is true to it's name and our best seller. We continued crafting a line of self care products and Two Chicks Apiary came to life. Over the last three years we learned a lot about business and each other. We are constantly learning and growing with our business and our bees. We started selling at farmers markets, and built a website growing an online presence. Currently our products are in multiple locations statewide. Like all beekeepers, we love talking about bees and sharing tales. Last year we gave 12 presentations for kids and adults.

It's not just about selling our products that motivates us, but managing the hives in our backyards as well as out yard locations. Learning and improving how to manage their hives is a constant for us. We recently attended the North American Honey Bee Expo in Louisville Kentucky and attended presentations given by world renowned speakers on the latest research and practices. We met with industry leaders in honeybee management and small business owners. Meeting up and chatting with fellow beekeepers and so many hive heros we follow on social media from all over the US and world was one of many highlights of the event. Learning the science behind mite management, making splits effectively and learning how to maximize honey production were just a few of the take-aways. We are now gearing up for the Midwest Honey Bee Expo this February in Madison.

Sharing knowledge and experience is part of the beekeeping community.

2026 is already shaping up to be a great year. Two Chicks Apiary has new markets and retail locations that will be carrying our products starting in the spring. We completed a refresh on our website and are having fun sharing educational posts on our social media. Be sure to check out our website: [twochicksapiary.com](http://twochicksapiary.com) and sign up for our newsletter. We would love for you to follow us on facebook and instagram @2 chicks apiary.

That's all the buzz for now!

FOLLOW





# BEEKEEPING ACROSS THE STATE



## SAVE THE DATES – 2026

### ~~Midwest Honey Bee Expo~~

~~February 6–7, 2026~~

~~Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI~~

### ~~Beeek 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

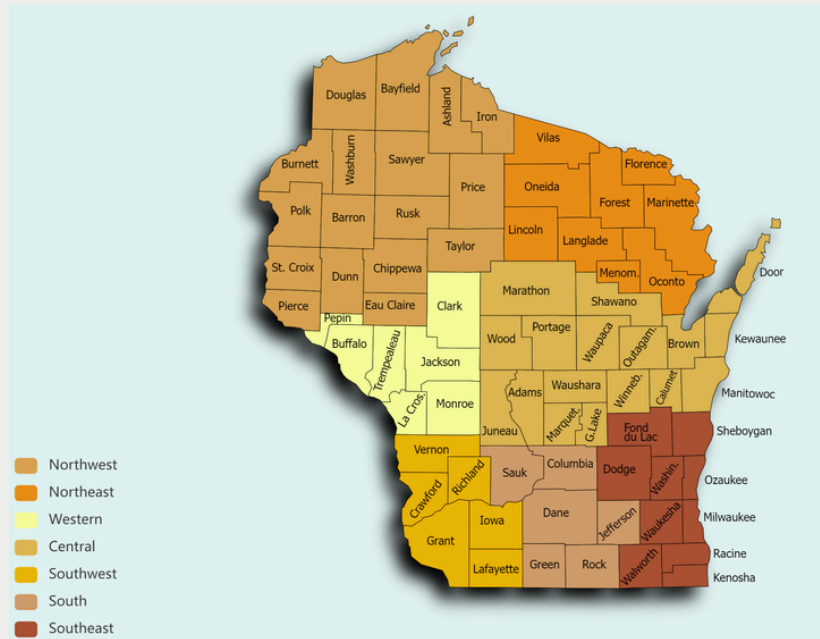
Southwest District

Date & location TBA

More meeting information coming in

January!

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



Central District - Martin Mykisen

Waupaca, WI 54981

(920) 427-4695



## 2026 Spring District Meeting

### CENTRAL DISTRICT –

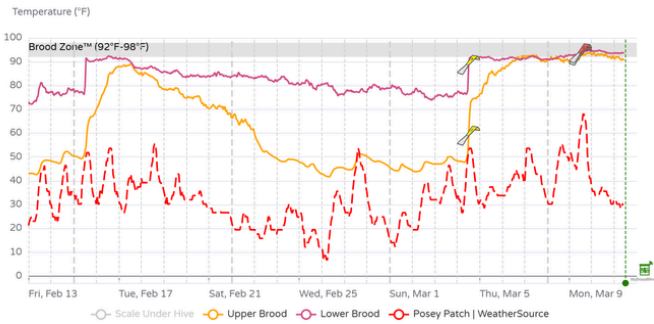
Saturday, March 28th from 9am – 12pm  
at Par 4 Resort Golf Course, 201 Foxfire Dr.  
Waupaca, WI. Coffee & donuts provided/\$5 for  
non-members. Guest Speakers: Michael  
Oudenhoven of HiveTrackr; Julie Mazzoleni on  
pollinator habitat; WI-DATCP State Apiarist  
Brooke Nikkila-Sommerfeldt; WI Honey Queen  
Emily Skala. Contact Marty Mykisen  
920.427.4695; mykisen@mykisen.com.



# March Beekeeping Tips – Northeast Wisconsin



## March Beekeeping Tip – Northeast Wisconsin A Little Luck for Your Bees



March is when winter begins to loosen its grip across Northeast Wisconsin. Longer days signal the queen to begin laying again, but fluctuating temperatures can make this a challenging time for colonies. The BroodMinder temperature data above shows a common early-spring pattern. Around Valentine’s Day, the colony attempted to begin brood rearing as internal temperatures rose toward the brood zone of 92–98°F. However, a stretch of colder weather forced the bees to reduce brood production and the brood nest cooled. As temperatures moderated again in early March, the colony quickly returned to full brood-rearing mode, with brood temperatures climbing back into the optimal range.

### What This Means for Beekeepers

Once queens begin laying, colonies dramatically increase their energy demand. Bees must maintain brood nest temperatures near 95°F, which requires consuming significant honey stores. Even strong colonies can run low on food quickly during this transition period.

### Keep an eye on:

- Hive weight: Late-winter starvation often happens in March, not January.
- Emergency feed: Fondant or sugar bricks can help bridge the gap until natural nectar flows begin.
- Entrance access: Clear snow and ice so bees can take cleansing flights and regulate airflow.

### Watch for Early-Season Brood Issues

Rapid brood expansion during cold snaps can create stress inside the colony. When brood is chilled or humidity rises inside the hive, conditions may favor issues like Chalkbrood. While usually temporary, beekeepers should watch for signs later in spring such as white or gray “mummies” on the landing board. The best prevention is strong colonies with good airflow and adequate food stores.

### St. Patrick’s Reminder:

Good beekeeping isn’t luck—it’s understanding what your bees are doing inside the hive. Paying attention to food stores, brood activity, and early-season stress now helps ensure your colonies build strong for the spring nectar flow.



FACEBOOK SITES MANAGED BY BCBA

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

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

# COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT

*Each month, we will highlight one of the Brown County Beekeepers Association committees so members can see what is happening behind the scenes and discover ways to get involved. Our goal is to encourage participation and help members connect with areas of the club that match their interests.*



## Brown County Beekeepers – Member Education



The Club's Member Education goal is to provide members with the resources and skills needed to successfully manage their apiaries.

A key part of our approach is providing education throughout the beekeeping season that aligns with the hive calendar. Topics follow the natural rhythm of the hive and include spring management, making splits, mite management, honey production, and fall and winter preparation.

### **Club members can take advantage of a wide variety of learning opportunities, including:**

- Monthly meeting education ranging from novice to advanced topics
- Hive dives and hands-on demonstrations
- New Member Forums
- Website-based educational resources
- A mentoring program connecting new and experienced beekeepers
- The Northeast Wisconsin Beekeepers Facebook community – Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers

### **Bringing Outside Expertise to Our Members**

A cornerstone of the Brown County Beekeepers Association education program is bringing in external experts and researchers to complement the deep experience of our local beekeepers. While many of our programs are led by knowledgeable club members who understand the realities of beekeeping in Northeast Wisconsin, we also intentionally invite regional experts, commercial beekeepers, equipment innovators, and researchers to share new ideas, techniques, and research developments.

### **In 2026, this commitment is reflected in presentations such as:**

- Development of Northern VSH Queens and Nucs with Trevor Bouden of Lloyd Street Bees in collaboration with research at Marquette University
- Alternative Hive Designs with Charlie Koenen exploring Layens hives, AZ hives, top bar hives, and native bee housing

By combining local beekeeper experience with outside expertise, the Brown County Beekeepers Association continues to provide members with a well-rounded and forward-looking education program.

**We are always looking for new topics and speakers. If you have an idea or would like to assist with member education, please reach out to one of our Education Chairs:**

**Mimi Gerner – 608-807-6018**

**Dave Elsen – 920-370-5281**

# 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	Splits, Understanding the Queen Calendar and buying queens or hive requeening math	Reg MBM	Dick Sturm Kevin Berry New Member Forum
Mar 18 '26	<b>Development of his northern VSH queens and nucs. How to establish and maintain mite resistant genetics Research with Marquette University.</b>	<b>Reg</b> <b>MBM</b>	<b>Trevor Bouden of Lloyd Street Bees and Marquette University</b> <b>New Member Forum</b>
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**

