

APRIL 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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When inspecting my hive this past month, I noticed a few hive beetles in one of my hives. I wanted to get on top of that infestation right away. Talking with a couple of other beekeepers they noticed they had hive beetles in their hives also. The hive beetles must have had a good winter survival. Thinking of the best way to get rid of this pest, I thought about pest treatments in general. We try to control those best at the weakest point in that pest's life cycle, by whatever method; mechanical, organic or chemical. Or what is called Integrated Pest Management or IPM.



Small hive beetle larvae in a pollen patty during spring feeding – a reminder that excess protein and poor patrol space can quickly turn into a breeding ground.

Photo courtesy of Wayne Steigelman - A-Frame Acres

Looking at the hive beetle problem, their weakest point in their life cycle is this time of the year. The hive beetle needs to pupate in the ground, outside of the hive. The ground being frozen, the beetle doesn't have that option. So, if I can get the adults in the hive, I can control the infestation. I used Swiffer sheets to get them and some beetle traps, with good results so far.

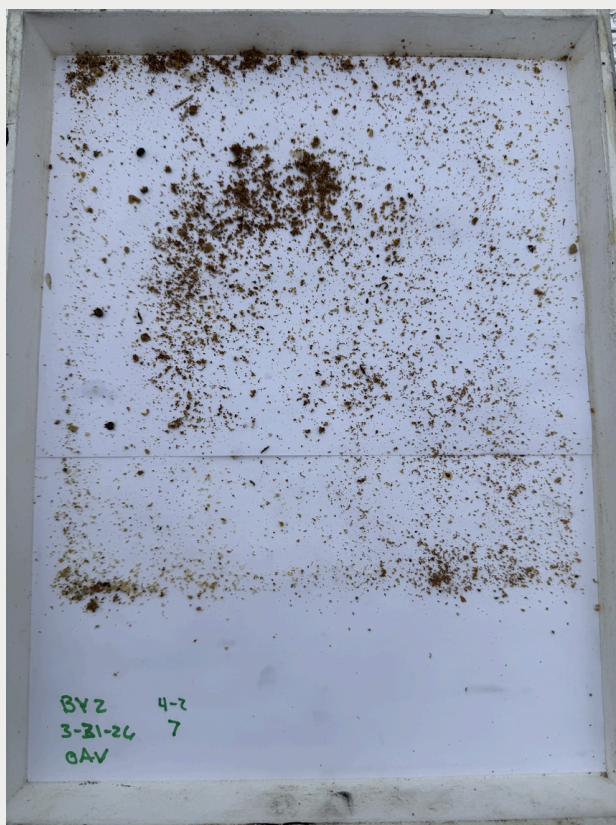
Another bee pest, that is just coming out of its weakest point in its life cycle, is the Varroa mite. The mite needs capped bee brood to increase their population. The bees are increasing the brood production now and so are the mites. The mites are at their lowest population in the hive. Any effective mite treatment method will drop the mite populations even lower, keeping the mites from taking advantage of the increase in brood production. So, if you haven't treated, you may want to think about getting on top of your mite population.

Continued on page 2





A fall pest, that will be coming into its weakest point soon are hornets. If you had trouble with them last fall, now would be the time to prepare for them. Hornets, unlike the honey bee do not survive the winter as a colony. The queens produced last year are the only ones who overwinter. In the spring, they come out and establish a new hive and forage for their young. If you can trap them in the spring, you are getting the queen before she can establish a colony that causes you issues in the fall.



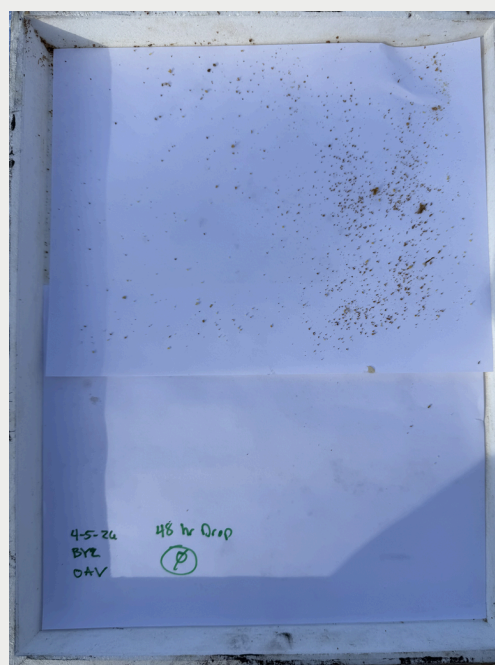
While temperatures are too cold to open the hive, debris board monitoring gives you a window into colony activity – including cluster location and pest pressure.

Early intervention made a noticeable difference – waiting would have made this problem harder to control.

That's what this month's buzz is about

Chris Groth - President
president@browncountybeekeepers.com

Take a little time this spring to think about the pests that are bothering your hives. Research that pest's life cycle to find the most opportune time to take action and what methods work best for you. That is IPM, getting a head of the problem before it becomes a problem.



Debris board after OAV treatment showing mite drop. This is one of the easiest ways to confirm your treatment worked without opening the hive. Look for trends after multiple treatments.

Photos courtesy of Wayne Steigelman - A-Frame Acres



APRIL EDUCATION



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION Spring Management

Spring Management Round Table: Getting Your Hives Ready for the Flow

Join your fellow beekeepers for a hands-on round table discussion on navigating the "Spring Turnaround" here in Northeast Wisconsin. As the weather shifts, we'll be talking about how to move our colonies from winter survival into ****summer momentum**** without getting ahead of the bees.

What We'll Be Talking About:

We'll kick things off with a short video, followed by a panel of experienced beekeepers sharing how they approach early-season management. Topics may include:

- Assessing colony health after winter
- Feeding strategies and when to stop
- Swarm prevention techniques
- Adding boxes and managing brood expansion
- Common spring pitfalls to avoid

Bring your questions—this will be an open discussion aimed at sharing practical, real-world ideas you can apply in your own apiary.

Panelists: Chris Groth, Mimi Gerner, Jim Sharp.

Facilitator: Dave Elsen.

Spring Management Round Table: Navigating the April Transition

A-FRAME ACRES PRESENTS

THE APRIL TRANSITION GATE

- The First Full Inspection**
Triggered when outside temperatures reach 50–55°F, marking the end of weekly OAV suppression.
- Establish a Baseline Alcohol Wash**
Perform a 300-bee wash to create a normalized reference for all subsequent spring decisions.
- Supportive Thymol Suppression**
Apply ApiLife Var in mid-to-late April once internal above-cluster temperatures stabilize.

MONITORING VITAL SIGNS

- Temperature Identifies "Spring Turn-Around"**
Tracking internal brood zone temps (92°F–98°F) reveals cluster size and expansion weeks before inspection.
- Humidity as a Cost Indicator**
Stable humidity signifies an efficient cluster; erratic humidity indicates bees are working harder at a high biological cost.
- "Behavior Reveals Disease Before Symptoms"**
Monitoring foraging shifts can detect health issues before clinical signs of disease appear.

SPRING MANAGEMENT ROUND TABLE

Date: [Date Here] | Time: [Time Here] | Location: [Location Details Here] | Join us to discuss data-driven spring insights!

© NotebookLM



APRIL NEW MEMBER FORUM



GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND LEARN ABOUT INSTALLING BEES



APRIL 15TH

5:30PM-6:30PM

Join us for this month's "New Member Forum" as we cover one of the most exciting milestones in your journey, installing bees from packages and nucleus colonies (nucs). Establishing a strong start is vital for building healthy colonies and developing sustainable management habits from day one.

Our session will provide practical guidance on the "Spring Transition", focusing on managing brood expansion and ensuring your caged queen is successfully introduced and released. We'll also explore how utilizing

Installing the Package into the Hive

3lb. Package of bees



~10,000 worker bees

Metal can with 50% sugar syrup

Queen with 2-3 attendants

Installing the Nuc

Recap of a Nuc

A "nuc" is short for nucleus colony. This is a colony of bees that is relatively small in comparison to a larger production hive.

Pros:

Faster Build Up - Already an established hive. Laying queen, bees in various stages of development & resources.

Availability - Arrives later in spring.

Installation - Easy

Cons:

Greater chance of pests & diseases - Old comb & equipment. Could carry mites.

Cost - Approximately \$50 more than a package.

Equipment: May not fit your hive.



SHELLIE MILHEISER



WAYNE STEIGELMAN



MEET YOUR INSTRUCTORS

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86700079130?pwd=ceHQRftwR4KUncBTOhCHb6mepTJjAb.1>

Meeting ID: 867 0007 9130
Passcode: 104198





MEMBERS ON THE MOVE VACATION EDITION



When you are a BCBA member, you are always on the clock. So we put Bob to work for a little investigative beekeeping. He may have got off track once he had a taste of his Pineapple Slushy.



Beekeeping in Hawaii

As I watched the Kilauea volcano erupt a couple of weeks ago, with Tephra (rock fragments, volcanic glass and ash) falling on my head, I pondered what life as a beekeeper in Hawaii was like? As we traveled through the islands, I saw apiaries here and there. What I learned was this. Hawaii isn't just a paradise for surfers and sunbathers – it's a beekeeper's dream. Thanks to the islands' tropical climate and year-round blooming seasons, honey bees in Hawaii never go dormant. While Wisconsin beekeepers brace for harsh winters and seasonal die-offs, Hawaiian apiaries hum with activity 365 days a year, producing some of the most unique and sought-after honeys on the planet. Foraging 365 days a year, can you imagine!! Wow!!

Hawaii's beekeeping industry plays an outsized role on the national stage. The state produced approximately **1.4 million pounds** of honey in 2021, but its real claim to fame lies in queen bee exports. Hawaiian breeders supply roughly one-third of the mainland's queen bees and as much as **75%** of Canada's – making the islands a critical link in North American agriculture.

Beekeeping in Hawaii isn't without its struggles. The Varroa mite arrived on Oahu in 2007 and later spread to the Big Island, Notably, Varroa has not yet reached Maui, Kauai, or the smaller islands – and strict regulations prohibit moving bees or equipment between islands to keep it that way.

Oh, by the way, the Hawaiian Pineapple slushies were great. And can you imagine macadamia nut blossom honey??? Hmm, good!

Thanks,
Bob Michiels





BEEKEEPING ACROSS THE STATE



WISCONSIN STATE FAIR



SAVE THE DATES – 2026

Midwest Honey Bee Expo

February 6–7, 2026

Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI

Bee 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

Visit wihoney.org for more information.



Visit the WHPA Honey Booth at the Wisconsin State Fair **August 6-16, 2026!** Buy real Wisconsin honey and check out the live bees in the observation hive! Volunteers are needed in the WHPA Honey Booth! Working at the booth is great fun – you can spread the buzz about bees and honey! All volunteers receive a free admission ticket into the WI State Fair. TO VOLUNTEER AT THE WHPA HONEY BOOTH, SIGN UP HERE (LINK WILL RE-OPEN IN SUMMER 2026)! The WHPA Honey Booth is a place to learn about the importance of bees, honey, and Wisconsin’s beekeeping industry.

The WHPA’s main exposure to the public is at the WI State Fair each August. We are located inside the WI Products Pavilion at the WI State Fair Park in West Allis, WI. The Honey Booth offers fairgoers a wide variety of honey and honey products for sale from WI beekeepers. There is also a honey sampling station and a live observation hive where the public can see honey bees and a queen working in the hive. WHPA’s Honey Booth is staffed by beekeepers from around the state. It’s a great opportunity for the public to talk to real beekeepers while enjoying treats from the hive.

In addition to bottled honey, the booth also sells honey sticks, beeswax, pollen, lip balm, candles, honey lemonade & honey ice cream. Our most popular product at the fair are the honey sticks. The Honey Booth sells over 40,000 honey sticks during the fair! The WI Honey Queen also offers daily demonstrations during the fair, teaching the public about the benefits of bees and honey.



- Northwest
- Northeast
- Western
- Central
- Southwest
- South
- Southeast



April Beekeeping Tips – Northeast Wisconsin

April Showers Bring May Flowers... and Strong Colonies

April is when things get real. Colonies are expanding, queens are laying, and pollen is coming in –but Northeast Wisconsin weather can still swing hard. This is the month where good decisions build strong colonies... and missed steps set you back.

April Beekeeping Checklist

Inspect Your Colonies (On the Right Day)

- Choose a 50–60°F day with low wind
- Confirm eggs or larvae (queen-right colony)
- Evaluate brood pattern (solid vs. spotty)
- Check honey and pollen stores
- Look for signs of disease or stress

Monitor Rapid Growth

- Watch for increasing brood area
- Understand that more brood = more food demand
- Start thinking ahead to swarm prevention

Manage Food Carefully

- Heft hives or check frames for remaining stores
- Feed 1:1 syrup if needed to support buildup
- Avoid overfeeding—natural forage should begin taking over

Manage Weather Swings

- Avoid inspections during cold snaps or windy days
- Keep inspections quick and efficient
- Ensure colonies can survive 3–5 day bad weather stretches

Stay Ahead of Mites & Brood Health

- Plan or begin early-season mite monitoring
- Watch for early signs of issues like chalkbrood or EFB
- Keep colonies strong—healthy bees manage problems better

Prepare for Splits

- Identify your strongest colonies
- Make sure equipment is ready
- Decide: buy queens or let them raise their own
- Have a plan before swarm season starts

April Reminder

“April showers bring May flowers”... but only if your colonies are ready.

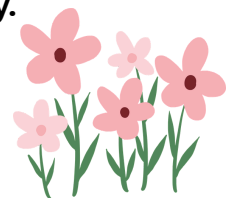
Strong queen

Adequate food

Healthy brood

Prepared beekeeper

That’s what turns spring buildup into a productive honey season.



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 – Newsletter Committee

The BCBA Newsletter Committee keeps members informed, connected, and engaged throughout the year. Our goal is simple: deliver relevant, timely content that reflects what’s happening in the club, in our apiaries, and across the beekeeping community.

Each monthly newsletter combines education, updates, and member-driven content to support beekeepers of all experience levels.

What you’ll find in each issue:

- Meeting highlights and upcoming events
- Seasonal beekeeping insights aligned with the hive calendar
- Committee updates and ways to get involved
- Member features like Members on the Move and small business spotlights
- Practical, real-world beekeeping content
- Key announcements and reminders

More Than Just Updates

The newsletter is the club’s communication hub—keeping members connected even when they can’t attend meetings. It also highlights member experiences, successes, and ideas, helping bring the BCBA community to life beyond the meeting room.

Built by Members

This newsletter is strongest when members contribute. Photos, stories, ideas, and experiences all help make each issue more valuable.

We’re always looking for:

- Apiary photos and experiences
- Short write-ups or stories
- Member business features
- Educational topics or ideas

Get Involved

Have something to share? Send it in. The more members contribute, the better this becomes for everyone.

Newsletter Committee Contact:

Wayne Steigelman – 920-241-2226

vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

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 Bawden 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

