

BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

JUNE 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

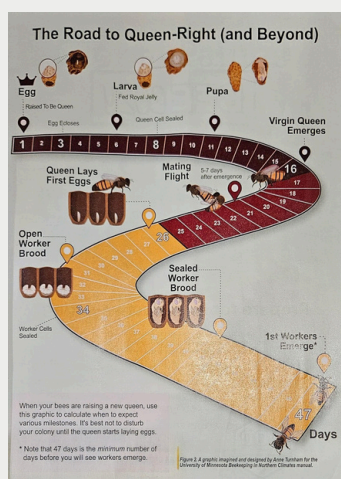


PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The first major nectar flow seems to be starting to taper down a bit. Checking on space for the queen to brood in would be the chore of the week to keep the hive from swarming. If you check the brood area and see a good percentage of nectar in that area, it is time to add a honey super.

The addition of honey isn't the only item increasing. Mites are also increasing and your mite monitoring should be in full swing. If your mite levels are high, you have limited options of chemical treatment while honey supers are on. Options you do have: Move the honey supers to another hive and treat. Drone brood frame method of controlling mites is another option. These methods are not as easy as chemical treatments, but still available with honey supers. During this time of hive expansion, it makes for a good opportunity to expand your apiary with some nucs. From a strong hive take a brood frame with eggs and bees and let them raise a queen. It is an easy way to ensure you have a queen in the fall if you would happen to need one. That method is an easy way to introduce a bunch of empty space in the strong hive for the queen to lay in.

This time of year, is also a good time to graft queens. Developing this skill as a beekeeper opens up even more opportunities for you. Like hive expansions in your apiary, protection from future queen loses, and the ability to develop a strong genetic line of bees.



That's what this month's buzz is about

Chris Groth - President

president@browncountybeekeepers.com



Splits at A-Frame Acres- Wayne Steigelman





JUNE MEETING EDUCATION



Featured Speaker: Charlie "CharBee" Koenen

We are excited to welcome Charlie "CharBee" Koenen of BeeVangelists as our featured speaker for the June 17th meeting. Charlie has spent more than 20 years educating communities about bees, pollinators, and sustainable beekeeping practices throughout Wisconsin. Known as Milwaukee's "Beevangelist," he has helped thousands of people discover the important role bees play in our food systems, gardens, and ecosystems.



Program Topic:

Non-Standard Beehives & Native Bee Houses

Most beekeepers are familiar with the traditional Langstroth hive, but did you know there are many other hive designs used around the world? Charlie will introduce attendees to several alternative hive styles including:

- Layens Hives
- Slovenian AZ Hives
- Top Bar Hives
- Native Bee Houses

You'll learn the advantages and challenges of each design, including management techniques, lifting requirements, honey production considerations, and how different hive styles may fit various beekeeping goals. Charlie will also discuss native bee houses and ways beekeepers and gardeners can support Wisconsin's native pollinator populations. Bee houses can provide nesting habitat for solitary bees such as mason and leafcutter bees, which play an important role in pollination and biodiversity.

About Charlie "CharBee" Koenen

Charlie is the founder of BeeVangelists, an organization dedicated to pollinator advocacy, education, and sustainable beekeeping. His work extends beyond honey bees to include native pollinators and alternative hive systems. Through workshops, lectures, community outreach, and hands-on education, Charlie encourages people to think differently about bees and their connection to the natural world.

Meeting Details

 **Wednesday, June 17, 2026**

 **Green Bay Botanical Garden**

 **Social Hour: 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM**

 **Program Begins: 6:30 PM**



Topic: BCBA Zoom Meeting
Time: Jun 17, 2026 05:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89838722357?pwd=E5fEbPgHRbaDl1qJ9SjwONgMSrMddT.1>

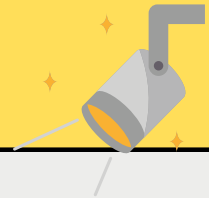
Meeting chat link
<https://us06web.zoom.us/jc/89838722357>

Meeting ID: 898 3872 2357
Passcode: 282788





JUNE MEETING SPECIAL GUEST



SPECIAL LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: 2026 WISCONSIN HONEY QUEEN EMILY SKALA

In addition to our featured presentation, BCBA is proud to welcome one of our own, Emily Skala, who will provide a special update on her experiences serving as the 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen.

Emily, a Pulaski native, University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh student, small-scale beekeeper, former WHPA Youth Scholar, and active Brown County Beekeepers Association member, was crowned the 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen at the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association Fall Convention. Throughout her year of service, Emily has represented Wisconsin beekeepers at schools, fairs, festivals, farmers markets, and community events while promoting honey bees, beekeeping, and Wisconsin honey.

During her brief presentation, Emily will share highlights from her journey as Wisconsin Honey Queen, discuss outreach efforts across the state, and provide insight into the important role the Honey Queen Program plays in educating the public about honey bees and the beekeeping industry. She will also be preparing to represent Wisconsin at the American Honey Queen competition in January 2027.



2026 WI Honey Queen Emily
Skala



Wisconsin Honey Queen Program

1.6K followers • 44 following

Follow the Wisconsin Honey Queen on her travels as she promotes honey and the beekeeping industry.



The Brown County Beekeepers Association is especially proud to see one of our members serving as an ambassador for Wisconsin beekeeping and helping inspire the next generation of beekeepers and pollinator advocates.



Please join us in congratulating Emily and thanking her for her dedication to promoting our industry throughout Wisconsin!

JUNE MEETING SOCIAL HOUR & MEET-AND-GREET



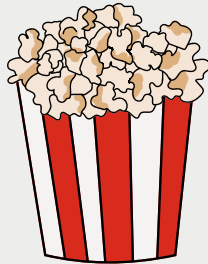
Come Early for Our Special Pre-Meeting Social!

Before our June program begins, we'll be hosting a social hour from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM at the Green Bay Botanical Garden. This will be a great opportunity to meet our featured speaker, Charlie "CharBee" Koenen, along with our very own 2026 Wisconsin Honey Queen, Emily Skala. If you have children, grandchildren, or future beekeepers in your life, we encourage you to bring them along. Emily has been traveling throughout Wisconsin promoting beekeeping, pollinator education, and Wisconsin honey, making this a wonderful opportunity to meet the Honey Queen in person.

To make the evening even more enjoyable, we're asking members to bring a favorite light dish to share.

Consider bringing:

- Chips and dip
- Veggie or fruit trays
- Cheese and crackers
- Cookies or treats
- Snacks and appetizers
- Light side dishes



The club will provide beverages, plates, cups, napkins, and eating utensils.

We also have a special request for our members. It is customary for host clubs to provide jars of honey for the Wisconsin Honey Queen to share during her travels across the state. If you have an extra 1-pound jar of properly labeled honey, please consider bringing it to the meeting. Your honey may be featured at another event somewhere in Wisconsin, helping promote both local beekeepers and the Brown County Beekeepers Association.

Whether you're a new member looking to meet fellow beekeepers or a longtime member catching up with friends, we hope you'll join us for an hour of fellowship before the program begins.

Social Hour: 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Program Begins: 6:30 PM

Come hungry, bring a dish to share, and help us give Charlie and Emily a warm Brown County Beekeepers Association welcome. We look forward to seeing you there!





THE TOM CASHMAN BEEKEEPING RESEARCH GRANT UPDATE - COMMITTEE MEMBERS - DICK STURM, JIM SHARP, RANCE BENNETT, WAYNE STEIGELMAN



Project Title:

Selective Breeding, Rearing and Assessment of VSH Honeybee Queens for Varroa Resistance in a Northern Climate

Project Summary:

This project will establish a sustainable, club-based queen breeding program focused on raising Varroa Sensitive Hygiene (VSH) honeybee queens adapted to a northern climate. In collaboration with Lloyd Street Bees and beekeeper Trevor Bawden, the Brown County Beekeepers Association will obtain validated northern-climate VSH breeder stock and train participating members in hygienic testing, mite monitoring, and selective breeding practices.

The goal is to develop locally adapted “survivor” honeybee colonies that demonstrate measurable mite resistance and reduced dependence on chemical treatments. By establishing a regional drone population carrying VSH genetics and distributing affordable queens to members of the Brown County Beekeepers Association—both hobbyist and sideliner beekeepers.

• May 22, 2026 1st Grafting Day

Found the queen. The fresh frame of drawn comb that was added on Wednesday was perfect for grafting with lots of perfect larvae. Chilly weather, mid 50's. Grafted 50+ cells. Majority by Jim. Rance and Dick accomplished approximately 10 each. Added bees, feeder frame and candy board to starter/finisher hive. ~24 cells in a traditional grafting frame, 33 cells in a German designed top cover that puts the cells over the frames of bees.

• May 25, 2026 Cell Check

Good take on the cells on the frame grafting bars (20). Minimal take on the German top cover.

• May 31, 2026 Harvest Cells & new Graft

Pulled 20 cells from the starter/finisher. Set up 3F queen castle mating nucs at Rance's and added 2 cells to each of the 3 compartments. Set up 3F queen castle mating nucs at Jim's and added 2 cells to each of the 3 compartments. Added 2 cells to existing 2 mating nuc's at Jim's that didn't appear to have successfully mated from swarm cells. Added 6 cells to and incubator to time hatching cells. Grafted 24 cells indeed to the starter/finisher that looked better with more bees from brood that recently emerged. Anticipated hatch date 6/12.

• June 4, 2026 Cell Check

Rance checked the grafts to learn that we had zero cells of the 24 accepted and being raised as queen. The team speculated with a rogue virgin or queen cell hatched that made the starter think they had a queen so no stimulation to raise queens cells.

• June 7, 2026

Evaluated the failed starter from the previous week to learn there were eggs in the starter. Speculated there may have been a rogue QC we missed and that hatched around when we pulled cells so the starter had virgin, so no incentive to raise additional cells. Built a new starter and grafted 30 larvae.

June

Beekeeping Tips – Northeast Wisconsin



JUNE HIVE INSPECTION CHECKLIST

- **Queenright?** Eggs and young larvae present
- **Brood Pattern?** Solid, healthy brood nest
- **Swarm Signs?** Check for queen cups/cells and overcrowding
- **Space Available?** Add supers before bees need them
- **Food & Nectar Flow?** Monitor incoming nectar and comb building
- **Colony Strength?** Frames covered with bees
- **Mite Check?** Perform alcohol wash or approved monitoring method
- **Ventilation?** Ensure adequate airflow during warm weather

⚠️ **June Focus:** Prevent swarms, stay ahead of space needs, and establish your summer mite baseline.

Remember: A colony preparing to swarm can look like a booming success right up until half the bees leave. June management is all about giving strong colonies room to grow while keeping an eye on swarm pressure. 🐝🌻

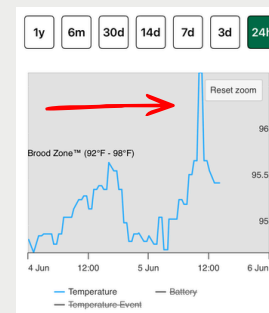
SWARM ALERT IN ACTION!

Technology, teamwork, and a little excitement came together recently at Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve. BCBA member Bob Michiels received an alert from his BroodMinder system indicating unusual colony activity. Suspecting a swarm, Bob headed to the apiary to investigate—and sure enough, thousands of bees were hanging from a nearby tree branch.

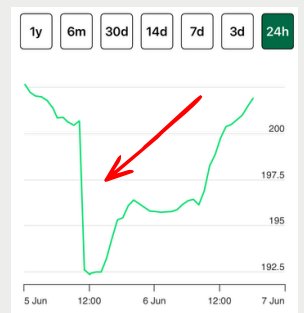


With help from BCBA Secretary Chris DeWolfe, the pair successfully captured and hived the swarm. The event became even more memorable thanks to a nearby school field trip. A group of wide-eyed students watched from a safe distance as the swarm was collected and relocated, turning an ordinary apiary visit into an unforgettable educational experience.

As for Chris? Let's just say the bees were so excited they decided to give him a closer look—resulting in a sting near the eye and a face that looked like he'd gone a round with a heavyweight boxer. 😂



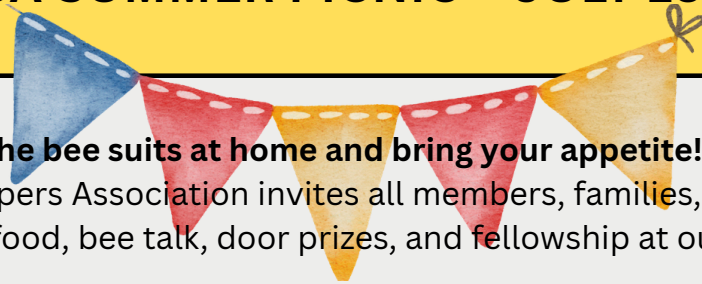
6 degree rise in temperature as the bees prepare for flight



8lb drop in weight as 28,000 bees leave the colony



BCBA SUMMER PICNIC – JULY 15TH!



Leave the bee suits at home and bring your appetite!

The Brown County Beekeepers Association invites all members, families, and guests to join us for an evening of great food, bee talk, door prizes, and fellowship at our annual Summer Picnic.

Whether you're a first-year beekeeper with a single hive or a seasoned beekeeper managing dozens of colonies, this is a chance to relax, share stories, compare swarm tales, celebrate the season, and connect with fellow bee enthusiasts.



Event Details



Green Bay Botanical Garden Outdoor Patio
(Inside if weather doesn't cooperate)



Wednesday, July 15, 2026



5:30 PM – 8:30 PM



**BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS
SUMMER PICNIC**

**Location: Green Bay Botanical
Outdoor Patio (inside if it rains)**

Date: Wednesday July 15, 2026

Time: 5:30 to 8:30 PM

**Meat, buns, condiments, paper
goods, water and soda
provided by the club**

**SIGNUP TO BRING A DISH TO
PASS! APPETIZERS, SIDES OR
DESSERTS!**

**Organizers
Dick and Carol Sturm
RSVP text/call 920-475-7301**

**Signup by July 13
Members Guests are welcome.
Please include in RSVP**

**DOOR PRIZES! BEE TALK! FOOD!
FELLOWSHIP!
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

**Brown County
Beekeepers Association**

This has become one of our favorite gatherings of the year. It's a great opportunity to swap stories about honey harvests, queen rearing adventures, swarm catches, mite management victories, and everything else that comes with life as a beekeeper.

Organizer Dick Sturm is coordinating food sign-ups. Please RSVP by July 13 and let him know what dish you'll be bringing.

We hope you'll join us for an evening of food, friends, and beekeeping fellowship. After all, the best part of beekeeping isn't just the bees—it's the people who share the journey with us. Bring a dish, bring a friend, and come enjoy a summer evening with your BCBA family! 🐝🍯





BEEKEEPING ACROSS THE STATE



Wisconsin

Honey Producers



Register Now for the WHPA Summer Meeting & Field Day!

WHPA Members! You're invited to attend the WHPA Summer Meeting/Field Day

Date: Saturday, June 20, 2026!

Event Details

Location: LB Werks – 8953 Central Sands Road, Bancroft, WI

Time: 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM

What to Expect

The day will feature a variety of engaging and hands-on learning opportunities, including:

- Breakout sessions on topics like queen rearing, beeswax products, Hive IQ, and insights from the Minnesota Bee Lab
- A special encaustic painting workshop (limited seats available + added fee)
- A guest beekeeper speaker panel
- Updates from WHPA and industry partners
- The always-popular Black Jar Honey Tasting Contest (running from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, with results announced at the end of the day)
- A fun Loader Rodeo to wrap things up

(Please see the full agenda for complete details.)

Registration

Online registration is available on our website and closes at 10:00 PM on June 15, 2026

Paper registration forms must be postmarked by June 8, 2026

Hotel Lodging

A room block is available at the Ramada by Wyndham in Waupaca for \$134 per night.

Visit our website for the link.

Optional Friday Night Social

Kick things off early and join us for the WHPA Summer Social & Boat Cruise on Friday, June 19 from 6:00–8:00 PM at Clear Water Harbor in Waupaca.

- Cost: \$5 per person (food and drinks available for purchase)
- Enjoy a beautiful waterfront setting, an outdoor bar (rain or shine), and a two-hour ride on a chartered paddleboat

We've also attached a [flyer with additional details about the honey tasting event.](#)

We hope you'll join us for a great day of learning, networking, and summer fun!

For more information and to register, visit <https://wihoney.org/meetings-and-events/whpa-summer-meeting/?>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to any board member.



Stephanie Slater

stephanie.d.slater@gmail.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	SAVE THE DATE SUMMER PICNIC JULY 15TH		Reg New Member Forum
Oct 21 '26			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

