

BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

September 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

September is the month for preparing to winterize the hives. Nothing is critical but we need to be monitoring the status of the hives. First, the colony queen right. The availability of laying queens is getting tight and odds of a colony raising a queen are getting lower. The lack of a queen may require combining colonies to get a viable colony at the end of winter. Same with the strength of the colony, this may require combining them to get a viable colony next spring.

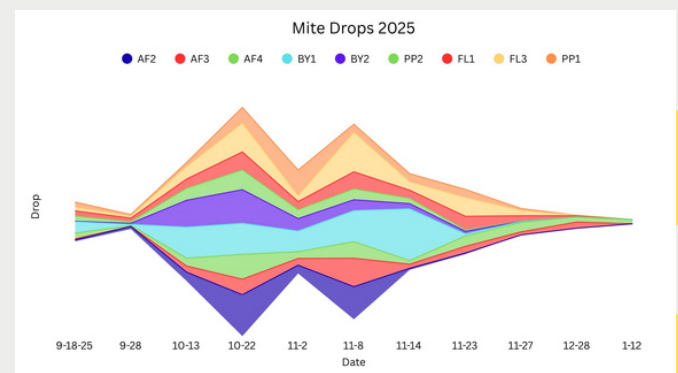
Second, what are the colonies honey reserves. The past 10 days my production hives lost 10 pounds in weight. They are not using the goldenrod this year. Not for a lack of goldenrod flowers, but maybe with the rain the nectar is getting washed out. I am going to start aggressively feeding them and monitoring robbing. Getting the hives up to weight that they can over winter successfully is a priority for the rest of the month.

Third, and most importantly, getting the mites under control. The queen is laying winter bees and those bees need to be healthy for the colony to survive the winter. Assess how successful your mite treatment was after you pull your honey supers. If the counts are high, keep aggressively treating for mites to get those counts down to near zero. Last year Wayne Steigelman and myself noticed an increase in the mite drop in November. Our best guess is the queen had more brood later in the fall than we suspected and those mites took advantage of it. Keep the mite treatment pressure on until they are clustered.

Lastly, gather your overwintering supplies. Wraps, moisture control, candy boards, and mouse guards to name a few. When the cold weather hits you will be ready to end this year's beekeeping season.

That's what this month's buzz is about

Chris Groth - President
president@browncountybeekeepers.com





SEPTEMBER MEETING EDUCATION



Brooke Nikkila-Sommerfeldt — Wisconsin State Apiarist / Apiary Program Coordinator

The Brown County Beekeepers Association is excited to welcome Brooke Nikkila-Sommerfeldt, Wisconsin State Apiarist and Apiary Program Coordinator, as our featured education speaker for our September 16, 2026 meeting at 6:30 PM. Brooke works directly with Wisconsin beekeepers through the state's apiary program and brings a unique perspective on honey bee health, colony management, pests and diseases, and the challenges facing beekeepers across Wisconsin. This is a great opportunity for our members to hear directly from the person who gets to see what is happening in apiaries throughout the state—not just in one backyard or one county. Whether you manage two colonies or two hundred, there should be plenty of useful information to take back to your own bees.

Mark your calendar:

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

6:30 PM

Come with your questions and take advantage of the opportunity to learn from Wisconsin's State Apiarist. This should be a meeting you won't want to miss.



Judging by the photo, Brooke clearly isn't afraid to get very close to her work! 🐝



Topic: BCBA Zoom Meeting

Time: Sept 16, 2026 05:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85720525969?pwd=MQOVp1ahCTal68GHATAnI4i2BrLZKC.1>

Meeting chat link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/jc/85720525969>

Meeting ID: 857 2052 5969

Passcode: 633834





SEPTEMBER MEETING BEFORE MEETING EDUCATION



Rance Bennett — This Old Hive

September 16, 2026 | 5:30–6:30 PM
Meeting Before the Meeting Education

Living Stressors: Controlling Pests Inside and Outside the Hive

Before our September membership meeting gets underway, join us for another Meeting Before the Meeting education session featuring Rance Bennett from This Old Hive.

Rance will be discussing the living stressors that can impact a honey bee colony—the pests and predators beekeepers need to manage both inside the hive and around the apiary.

The discussion will cover practical ways to recognize, prevent, and control the unwanted visitors that compete with, weaken, or sometimes outright attack our colonies. From hive pests to outside predators, this session is about protecting the bees from the things that would happily make a meal—or a home—out of what we are trying to maintain.

Rance is known for his hands-on, practical approach to beekeeping education through This Old Hive, with a focus on helping beekeepers understand not just what to do, but why they are doing it.



For more education and DIY projects, check out This Old Hive Facebook and YouTube Channel by clicking the icons below



SOCIAL HOUR

MEET &
GREET

September 16 — Come Early and Make an Evening of It

We're adding a little more fun to our September meeting.

From 5:30–6:30 PM, BCBA will host an informal social hour for members. Bring a snack or treat to share if you'd like — BCBA will provide water and soda.

This is a chance to choose how you want to spend the hour: meet and visit with Wisconsin State Apiarist Brooke Nikkila-Sommerfeldt, catch up with fellow beekeepers, swap stories and ideas, or sit in on our Meeting Before the Meeting education session with Rance Bennett from This Old Hive as he discusses living stressors and controlling pests inside and outside the hive.

Then at 6:30 PM, Brooke will take over as our featured September education speaker. Come early, bring something to share, and enjoy an evening of good conversation, good education, and good beekeeping company.

Snack
Time

Happy
HOUR



AUGUST HIVE DIVE



Sunday, August 23

It was a great day of preparing the bees for fall. We pulled honey supers, checked honey moisture content with the Refractometer, tested for mites with alcohol wash and powdered sugar roll, treated for mites with Formic Pro and Oxalic Acid Vapor. Then we walked through and did inventory of the feeders, entrance reducers, quilt boxes and insulation for the top of the hive to ensure everything is ready for fall and winter.

Everyone handled frames of bees and participated in mite testing.

Thanks for all that came and helped out. Hopefully everyone learned and we got through many tasks in our Fall Preparation 🐝. Dave & Carl - EF Honey





BEEKEEPING ACROSS THE STATE



**Registration Is Open for the 2026
WHPA Fall Convention!**

WHPA Fall Convention November 5-7, 2026

Chula Vista Hotel & Resort, Wisconsin Dells

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Scott McArt, assistant professor of pollinator health in the Department of Entomology at Cornell University

Dr. Dewey Caron, Author, Professor Emeritus, of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware, and an Affiliate Professor, Department of Horticulture, Oregon State University.

[Click here for more information](#)

**Beekeeping Short Course Coming to
UW-Madison February 2027**



CLICK HERE



THE GRAND OPENING COUNTDOWN IS ON!



This isn't just any celebration... it's your chance to win BIG.



PRIZES GALORE

We're rolling out multiple ways to enter, including:

- In-person entries – stop by the event and drop your name in
- Bonus entries – special surprises announced at the event

More entries = more chances to win. And trust me... the prizes are SWEET.



Why You Need to Be There

- First look at our brand-new building
 - Honey, treats, and family fun
- Community vibes that feel like fall in Wisconsin
- Of course... the giveaways everyone will be talking about

September

The Month That Sets Up Winter

September is where winter preparation really begins. Colonies may still be active and goldenrod may be adding weight, but the beekeeper's focus should shift from production to survival.

The big priorities are simple: food, mites, queen status, colony strength, and proper hive space.

September Checklist

- ☐ Check hive weight and feed light colonies as needed
- ☐ Monitor Varroa and treat when warranted
- ☐ Confirm colonies are queen-right
- ☐ Look for eggs, larvae, and a healthy brood pattern
- ☐ Combine weak colonies that are unlikely to winter well
- ☐ Remove unnecessary empty supers and excess space
- ☐ Reduce entrances if robbing pressure increases
- ☐ Avoid spilling syrup or leaving wet honey equipment exposed
- ☐ Inspect only with a purpose – don't overwork the colony
- ☐ Check lids, boxes, bottom boards, and winter equipment
- ☐ Begin planning mouse guards, insulation, and moisture control

September goal: send every colony into fall heavy, healthy, queen-right, low in mites, and strong enough to winter.



September Beekeeping
Northeast Wisconsin Checklist

September is the month that sets up winter. Focus on food, mites, queen status, colony strength, and proper hive space.

☐  Check hive weight and feed light colonies	☐  Reduce entrances if robbing pressure increases
☐  Monitor Varroa and treat when needed	☐  Avoid spilling syrup or leaving wet equipment exposed
☐  Confirm colonies are queen-right	☐  Inspect only with a purpose
☐  Look for eggs, larvae, and a healthy brood pattern	☐  Check lids, boxes, and winter equipment
☐  Combine weak colonies unlikely to winter well	☐  Begin planning mouse guards, insulation, and moisture control
☐  Remove unnecessary empty supers and excess space	

September Goal:
Heavy, healthy, queen-right, low-mite colonies that are strong enough to winter.

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	Dave Elsen & Jim Sharp Fall Management Honey Extraction	Reg MBM	Lucas & Liam Ford Honey Extraction
Sep 16 '26	Brooke Nikkila-Sommerfeldt Wisconsin State Apiarist Apiary Program Coordinator	Reg	Rance Bennett - This Old Hive "Living Stressors"
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

