

BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

October 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

Not to sound like a broken record and keep repeating myself on treating for mites. A couple of mite treatment products have been a topic of discussion in the beekeeping community lately, Apiguard and Apivar 2.0. The treatments haven't had the desired effect on mite populations for some beekeepers. Fall is the time of the year when beekeepers really try to knock mite populations down to have a healthy population of winter bees. There are some lessons to be learned here. Not about the product, but the methods we use to treat for mites.

Apiguard for some beekeepers has not lowered their mite counts. To some, that was a surprising result because of the success of this product in past uses. The lesson to learn here is no matter what the treatment, you need to do a mite wash after that treatment to know if the treatment lowered the hive's mite population. Not doing so gives a false security that you did indeed accomplish lowering the mite population, and risks the survival of your hive. To truly know, do a mite wash after each treatment.

Apivar 2.0 is a new product on the market and put another tool in the beekeeper's tool box to control mites. Some beekeepers have reported significant hive losses after using this product. The lesson to learn is that when trying something new in your beekeeping operation only try the new item on a few of your hives not the whole apiary. That is a good practice to follow on any changes you are considering.

Another important lesson to learn is always have a plan B in mind if plan A doesn't work for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. The season is getting late and mite treatment options become limited due to time and temperature. So, this winter as you think about your mite treatment plan for next year, have a plan B so you are not caught off guard.

As you are doing your mite treatments, it is also a good time to note maintenance that needs to be done on your equipment. Time to get the winter task list started.

That's what this month's buzz is about

Chris Groth - President
president@browncountybeekeepers.com





BEEKEEPING BY THE DATA

By Wayne Steigelman



A Completed Treatment Doesn't Always Mean Controlled Mites

Our President's message raises an important question: How do we know our mite treatments are working?

This year's exceptional honey production brought strong colonies and extended brood production, potentially giving Varroa more opportunities to reproduce. My PP2 chart combines BroodMinder temperatures, treatments, alcohol washes, and 48-hour OAV mite drops.

Here's what the data revealed:

July: OAV drops ranged from 20–100 during the nectar flow. A two-pad Formic treatment produced a drop of 400.

August: An alcohol wash still recovered 26 mites, followed by an OAV drop of 265.

September: Upper brood temperatures declined, suggesting brood contraction and potentially exposing more mites. ApiLife Var treatments continued.

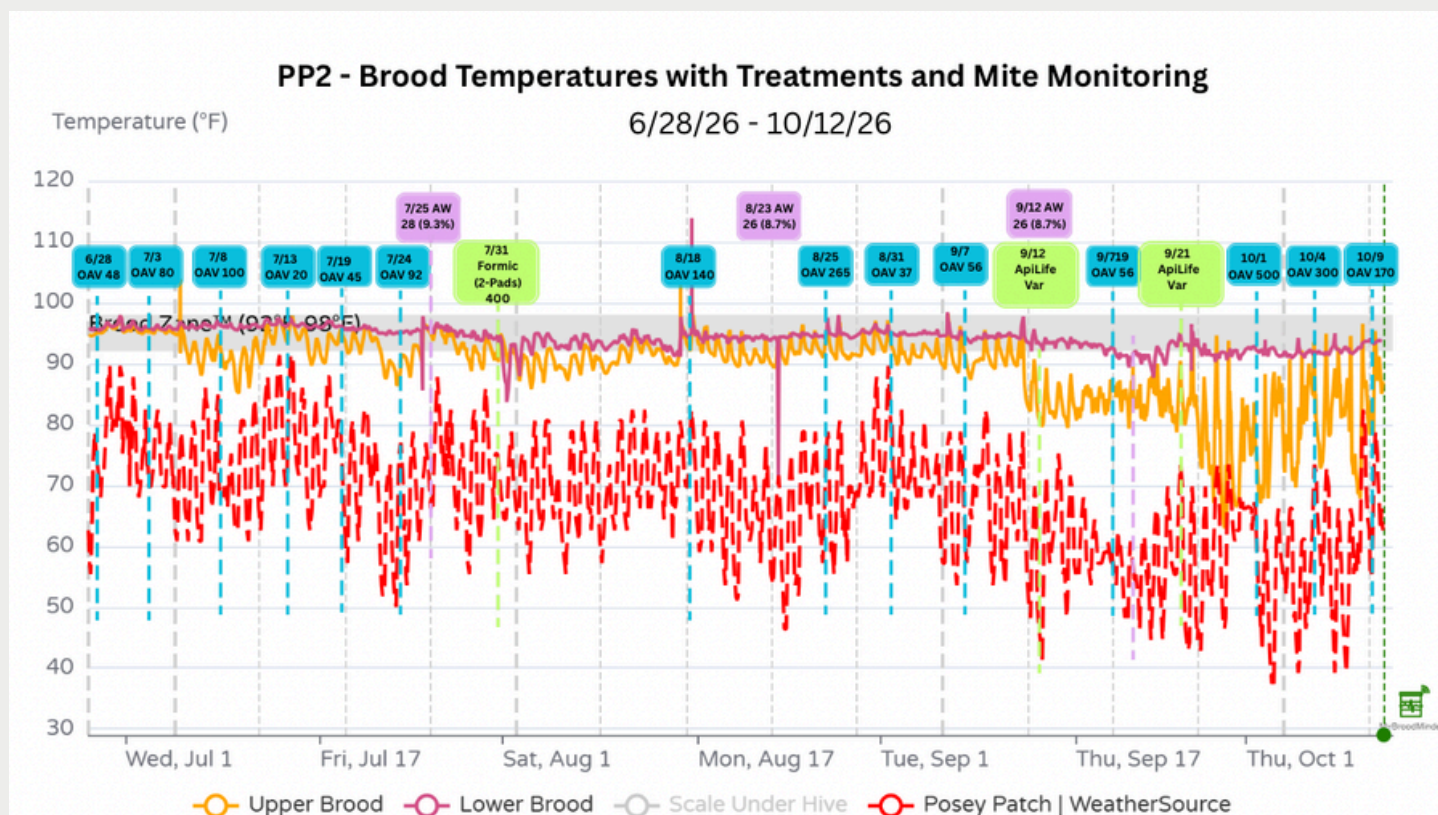
October: OAV drops reached 500 before declining to 300 and 170.

November: As the remaining lower brood emerges, another wave of exposed mites is possible. The battle continues!

Did the treatments fail? Not necessarily. Extended brood production may have allowed mites to continue reproducing beneath capped brood, protected from OAV.

The calendar tells us when a treatment is finished. The data tell us whether mite pressure is controlled.

Monitor → Treat → Monitor.





OCTOBER MEETING EDUCATION



New Beekeepers Talking to New Beekeepers

For our October education program, we're changing things up with a panel discussion featuring new beekeepers sharing their first-year experiences, lessons, surprises, and mistakes.

Experienced beekeepers often know what questions to ask because they've already lived through the learning curve. New beekeepers don't always know what they don't know. This panel is designed to bring those overlooked questions to the surface and help newer members learn from people who were recently in the exact same position.

We'll talk about things like:

Did you accomplish the goals you set for your first season?

- How did you go about purchasing your bees?
- How did you learn what equipment and supplies to buy?
- What was your biggest discovery or learning experience?
- What surprised you most about beekeeping?
- What advice would you give someone thinking about getting started?
- What is the one thing you wish you had known at the beginning?

The goal isn't to hear from experts. It's to hear the real experience of getting started — what worked, what didn't, what was confusing, and what became clearer only after spending a season with bees.

Whether you're brand new, finishing your first year, or have been keeping bees for decades, this should be a great reminder that some of the best questions are often the simplest ones.



10-21-26
6:30PM - 8:00PM

Topic: BCBA Zoom Meeting

Time: Oct 21, 2026 05:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89718655038?pwd=NVQlUaT2ni942aamrQIDZqXQZs8QjGt.1>

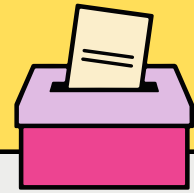
Meeting ID: 897 1865 5038

Passcode: 706993





OCTOBER OFFICER ELECTIONS



October is our annual BCBA Officer Election Meeting, with the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer elected as the first order of business. Nominations may also be taken from the floor, and each candidate must be given the opportunity to speak for up to three minutes before voting. BCBA-By-Laws-2026

To be eligible to vote, members must have paid their dues, joined by July 31 of the election year, and attended at least one meeting prior to the election. Members attending the meeting online may also count toward the quorum and vote, while absentee ballots are not permitted. BCBA-By-Laws-2026

The current bylaws require a quorum of at least 20 eligible voting members, including two or more elected officers. If club membership falls below 80 voting members, the quorum becomes 25% of voting members. BCBA-By-Laws-2026

One important update in the 2026 bylaws is that online participation now counts for both quorum and voting, so members who cannot attend in person still have a way to participate live in the election.

Please arrive on time, sign in, and take part in selecting the officers who will help lead BCBA in the coming year.





BEEKEEPING ACROSS THE STATE



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

WHPA Fall Convention November 5-7, 2026

Chula Vistal 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



**Midwest
HoneyBee Expo**

January 29 - 30, 2027

Alliant Energy Center

Exhibition Hall

Madison, Wisconsin

The Midwest HoneyBee Expo

Home Page



Delve into the world of beekeeping with Midwest HoneyBee Expo. Learn from industry experts and enthusiasts about the fascinating life of bees, sustainable practices, and the sweet rewards of honey production. Join us at the 2027 Midwest HoneyBee Expo to explore the latest trends, technologies, and insights in beekeeping. Whether you are a seasoned beekeeper or just starting out.

The Midwest HoneyBee Expo

Honey Show



October

Finish Strong Before Winter

October is when beekeeping shifts from fall management to final winter preparation. Colonies should now be heavy, queen-right, low in mites, and reduced to the space they can actually defend. This is not the month to keep tinkering. It's the month to finish the work, correct any last problems, and let the bees settle in.

October Checklist

- ☐ Confirm colonies have adequate food stores
- ☐ Finish feeding any light colonies as early as possible
- ☐ Evaluate mite status and complete any final fall treatments if needed
- ☐ Reduce entrances to help colonies defend against robbing and mice
- ☐ Install mouse guards
- ☐ Remove empty boxes and excess space
- ☐ Check that lids and covers are secure and weather-tight
- ☐ Make sure hives are tipped or set to shed moisture properly
- ☐ Prepare or install winter insulation/wrapping if that is part of your system
- ☐ Avoid unnecessary inspections and keep disruptions to a minimum
- ☐ Combine colonies that are too weak to winter successfully
- ☐ Secure equipment against wind and late-season weather changes

October Goal:

Send every colony into late fall heavy, healthy, protected, and ready to cluster.



October

Beekeeping Checklist

☐  Confirm colonies have adequate food stores	☐  Check that lids and covers are secure and weather-tight
☐  Finish feeding any light colonies as early as possible	☐  Make sure hives are tipped or set to shed moisture properly
☐  Evaluate mite status and complete any final fall treatments if needed	☐  Prepare or install winter insulation/wrapping if that is part of your system
☐  Reduce entrances to help colonies defend against robbing and mice	☐  Avoid unnecessary inspections and keep disruptions to a minimum
☐  Install mouse guards	☐  Combine colonies that are too weak to winter successfully
☐  Remove empty boxes and excess space	☐  Secure equipment against wind and late-season weather changes

October Goal:
Send every colony into late fall heavy, healthy, protected, and ready to cluster.

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	New Beekeeper Discussion Panel	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

