



Illinois State Beekeepers Association Bulletin

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Letter from the President

Jim Belli

Happy New Year! Karen and I just returned from the annual American Beekeeping Federation Convention. This year's Convention was held in Hershey, Pennsylvania and was one of the most enjoyable and informative meetings I have ever attended. ISBA was well represented at the Convention, having over twenty Illinois members in attendance and much like last year, they won more blue ribbons in the ABF Honey Show than did the members from any other state.

The past year, 2012, was a watershed year for the ISBA in terms of growth and change. My sincere thanks go out to the entire Board of Directors for making this progress possible.

The year 2013 is shaping up to be another great year for the ISBA. Our Summer Meeting will be held in the Northern District and is co-sponsored by the Lake County Beekeepers Association and ISBA. The Summer Meeting will be held Saturday, June 29, 2013, at the Holiday Inn Gurnee Convention Center, 6161 West Grand Avenue, Gurnee, Illinois 60031. Additional details will be forthcoming. Thanks go out to Dave Bergman, President, and his LCBA Board of Directors for making the arrangements for the Summer Meeting.

ISBA has been in contact with the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association and plans are being formulated to conduct a joint meeting in the fall of 2013 at a location in Southeastern Wisconsin. This will not replace our annual ISBA Fall Meeting, which is scheduled for November 9, 2013 in Springfield, Illinois.



I would like to extend my congratulations to Larry Roth. I was informed that Larry has been appointed the new Superintendent of Department U – Bee Culture at the Illinois State Fair. Larry is a long time beekeeper and member of the Lincoln Land Beekeepers Association. Larry has helped man the Illinois State Fair Honey Show for many years.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to Mike Mason, our ISBA Treasurer. I was informed that Mike has been appointed to a position of Director on the Board of the American Beekeeping Federation.

Finally, with a New Year dawning, lets hope that 2013 produces that bumper honey crop.

Notes on the North American Beekeeping Conference 2013 by Karen Lorence and John Hansen

Approximately thirty members of the ISBA community gathered in Hershey, PA for the 70th annual North American Beekeeping Conference and Trade Show. Some of the highlights of the convention included the crowning of the new honey queen. Caroline Adams from Texas is the 2013 Queen and Emily Campbell from Minnesota is the Princess.



Illinois' own Dr. May Berenbaum gave the well received keynote presentation.

The conference was organized in three tracks: **General Sessions, Serious Sideliner Symposium, and American Bee Research Conference (ABRC)**. The three tracks had presenters simultaneously during Wednesday, Thursday and Friday so there was never a lack of information flow. The exhibitor's hall was also well attended. Equipment ranged from small hive beetle traps, nuc hive bodies, electronic solar powered hive scales to heavy duty fork lifts.

Many interesting topics were covered during the week by bee

researchers from the bee labs and universities. The honey show was well represented by Illinois beekeepers. James and Karen Belli won "Best of Show" on their extra white honey, with several blue ribbons won for their other honey entries, as well as several red and white ribbon placements. Chuck Lorence placed three entries in blue ribbons, with some red and white ribbon entries as well. Gene Killion placed a blue ribbon entry and two red ribbons. Maggie Wachter from Urbana took second place in the Honey Gift Basket competition. The Bellis' first place honey was auctioned at the banquet, bringing in a substantial sum for the honey queen program. All of the

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Letter from the Editor...

January is a great time of reckoning. I find this especially true in beekeeping. At first, I love to see my row of hives in the snow - the prettiest holiday decoration I could ask for. But with the holidays over and finally, a little time on my hands, my vain lawn aesthetics give way to urgent hive rescue missions.

I harken back to my poorly shuffled priorities going into the fall and winter. Knowing full well that I had high mite loads, I went "treatment free." Here was my logic: My queens started the season early, laying in February and March. This late summer seemed to cool down early too, and by late September my queens were only laying in small patches. "She started early - so is she done early? Maybe," I thought. Also, it appeared that my workers were "doing away" with some of her eggs and young larva with the cold nights. "Maybe," I thought, "with this reduction in the brood cycle, the mites will lose their footing and die off. Then I've abated the mite problem naturally and can save my mite treatments for next year."

But gazing out the window at my snow covered hives, guilt is setting in. "Am I a beekeeper, or a mite-

keeper?" I wonder how many hives I'll salvage if I fall back on my old stand-by: "Coats on Hives."

Every year, I upset the peaceful vista of hives in the pristine snow by throwing ugly wool blankets and rotten old coats over the weakest hives. So far, "coats on hives" appears to keep a significant amount of heat in the hive, and for me, it has made a difference. I remove the inner cover and, directly on top of the frames, I lay a slitted sheet of newspaper and pour granulated sugar on top. I add a two inch spacer and then lay the coat directly over it, falling down around the sides of the hive, if it's a big enough coat. I put the telescoping cover on top of the coat and place a weight on that. I found that it provides heat AND breathability. It would seem also that the sugar absorbs excess moisture. Then, when the winter breaks, I take the coats off. This way, the queen doesn't get a false sense of climate.

Today was warm enough to check the damages. One hive had blown completely over in a bad storm. Another was extremely light on stores. The others were looking fine. Only the light one needs a coat and sugar. The others were well populated,

active, clean, and still had plenty of honey.

I ought to mention here that my bees will always be thankful that I met David Stiles, a beekeeper near Peoria with a gorgeous hillside apiary of over 30 Carniolan hives. I was so impressed with the health of his bees when I inspected them. One of the big reasons that his bees were thriving was that he never fed them. This worked because he had a honey harvest rule - "Take no honey after July." This way, his bees always had something in the cupboard all winter long. "I watch the blooms on the flowers real close," he said. "If it's starting to get a little droughty, I stop my harvest and get all the fall honey into them."

It looks like I'll make it through the winter with few losses, if not for my "coats on hives", then for luck, and an ever expanding pool of casual mentors.

Good luck! Spring is coming!

-Eleanor Schumacher



Propolis Facts

meaning "in defense of" and "POLIS" meaning "city", and is descriptive of the protection Propolis provides the bee hives.

Propolis has a long history of medicinal usage, dating back to 350 B.C. the time of Aristotle. Greeks have used propolis for abscesses, Assyrians have used it for healing wounds/tumors, and Egyptians have used it for mummification. It still has many medicinal uses today. It is highly effective on staph infection when normal antibiotics do not work.

Now you can make propolis for human usage and a very

informational book is "The Hive and the Honey Bee" by Joe M. Graham with Dadant & Sons. The book has an awesome section explaining in detail all about propolis and its uses.

Another resource is Mother Earth News which has further information. <http://www.motherearthliving.com/health-and-wellness/inside-plants-8.aspx>

The Honey is not the only product of your bees. Your hive has more complicated products as well.

~Astrid Sabo

The brood

Chamber

Come and see what all the buzz is about!



Propolis is a resinous mixture that honey bees gather from tree buds, sap flows, and other botanical sources. Bees use the propolis to seal the cracks in the hive. If you have ever tried to lift a super off its base, you will know how hard and sticky it is to take off. Propolis' name, comes from the Greek word, "PRO",

The Healing Properties of Honey

by Tim "Big-T" Lindley, President of Tri-County Beekeepers

We all know that foraging honey bees look for flowers that produce ample amounts of nectar, but here is a deeper look. The nectar comes from the *nectary* part of the flower, which is usually deep down inside the flower. The nectar is made up mostly of sucrose (sugar) and water, and has other things in it such as vitamins and minerals.

The honey bees can smell the nectar from a flower with their feet and antennae, and bees use their waggle dance to tell other foraging bees where the nectar sources are. When the nectar source is located, (usually somewhere within a 3 mile radius), the bees lap or suck the nectar up through their proboscis (tongue) into their honey stomach. The honey stomach has a valve in it that opens when the bee needs the nourishment from the nectar, and closes for the bee to transport it back to the hive, kind of like a tank. A forager bee will visit hundreds of flowers and when the honey stomach is full, (about 1 drop); the bee heads back to the hive.

While the nectar is in the honey stomach, the bee also adds the enzyme *invertase* from their *hypopharyngeal* glands to break down the simple sugar sucrose into the complex sugars fructose and glucose. A small amount of the glucose is attacked by another enzyme *glucose oxidase*, and is converted into gluconic acid and hydrogen peroxide. The gluconic acid makes the nectar an acid medium with a low ph where bacteria, mold, and fungi, organisms we call microbes, cannot grow. The hydrogen peroxide gives the nectar short-term protection against these same microbes while the nectar is being ripened into honey, or being fed to larvae. Or, in laymen's terms, the bees gather the nectar and process it into a food for them that won't spoil or ferment.

When the forager bee returns to the hive, the contents of the honey stomach are regurgitated and given to a house bee. I know this sounds gross, but remember that the honey stomach acts like a tank, and does not have stomach acids in it like our stomachs would. The house bee then adds her own enzymes to the nectar, and either feeds the larvae with it, or she will deposit a small drop of it in the cell where it will be stored as honey. The nectar has high water content (80%), and to further preserve it, the bees fan their wings to evaporate off the excess moisture, giving the honey a high osmotic pressure that protects it from microbes and fermentation even more. When the honey has a moisture content of 14-18%, it is considered "ripe" and the bees cap

the cells with wax to prevent air from getting in, much like we can or preserve vegetables or fruit. By the way, when bees build their honeycombs either naturally or on foundation, they are tilted at a 5 degree down angle so the honey stays put and doesn't run out. Pretty ingenious, huh! What the bees now have is a food that won't spoil, and gives them energy to survive the winter. The honey that the beekeeper takes from the bees should only be the surplus honey, leaving the colony enough honey to survive the winter, usually around 60 lbs.

Honey, with its low ph, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal properties and low water content, makes for an excellent source for healing as well as nutrition. Recently I was given the opportunity to read the book Miracle Food Cures from the Bible by Reese Dubin. In the book it says that there are many records of ancient and modern people treating patients with honey. They used honey as a remedy for everything from Arthritis to asthma, burns, constipation, hangovers, from hay fever to hemorrhoids, migraines, shingles, from varicose ulcers to battle wounds.

Most disease producing germs cannot live without water, and with its low water content, honey can dehydrate the germs, causing them to shrivel up and die. This is why honey can be used as a topical ointment on burns, sores, and other wounds. It also can be used for anything from hay fever to insomnia by eating two or more teaspoons at different times of the day. I have had a lot of people say to me that eating a teaspoon or two a day of local honey has helped lessen their allergy symptoms. Most diabetics say to me that they can't have honey, but in this book it says that the sugar in honey is absorbed by the body so slowly, that it does not have the "shock" effect of other sugars, which are difficult for them to handle.

The book also cautions about getting your physician's approval before starting any honey remedy. I myself am struggling with sinusitis and restless leg syndrome. I have been taking two teaspoons of honey before I go to bed, and so far, I seem to be improving. Honey is all-natural of course, and sometimes a lot less expensive and could be more effective than modern medicines. I'm not a doctor, and don't pretend to be one, but the book Miracle Food Cures from the Bible by Reese Dubin is very interesting and you may find a cure for what ails you with something natural, and tastes great too!



APIARY INSPECTION SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Steve Chard, Illinois Department of Agriculture

Greetings! I hope your holidays were grand and that 2013 will be prosperous for you.

Rita Taylor, a 30-year member of our Apiary Inspector Team, has retired from the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Rita is an icon in Illinois' Apiary Industry. Her vast knowledge of beekeeping has greatly benefitted beekeepers across Illinois and outside our borders. Rita has always been respectful of other beekeepers and welcomed their concerns/ideas. I want to personally thank Rita for her many years of dedicated service to the Department and to the apiary industry overall. She will definitely be missed. We wish Rita the very best in her future endeavors!

With Rita's retirement, we will be working to fill the vacant Apiary Inspector position for central Illinois. Anyone interested in applying for the position should contact me at 217/785-2661. One of the requirements is that the person in that position must live in one of the counties in our central Illinois district.

Everyone should have received a notice in November for annual registration of their colonies with the Department. If you haven't responded, please complete the form; sign your name and mail to the Department ASAP. It's very important that our information be updated yearly so we can provide the best service to you possible. Thank you.

Previously, I indicated that at the request of the USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Department was participating in a national honey bee survey in an attempt to help document which bee diseases/parasites/pests of honey bees are and are not present in the US. This survey was also being conducted to investigate potential causes of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). As part of this survey, samples are collected by each participating state and analyzed by APHIS. Due to a general lack of brood late this past fall, we had to suspend sample collection for the 2012 survey. We will resume sample collection this spring as the weather allows. Thanks so much to all the beekeepers who allowed us to sample their colonies. In addition, APHIS will conduct another survey in 2013 and the Department has committed to participating in that survey as well.

January is a good time to reflect on the accomplishments of the previous year and to plan for the new year. During mid to late 2012, I received what I believe to be a high number of calls from citizens across Illinois who had quite a bit of concern over their next door neighbor keeping honey bees. The Department has also received several calls from Chicago property owners complaining that their next door neighbor's bees prevent them from fully using their back yards. Further, I was contacted on more than one occasion from their alderman's office. I encourage everyone to consider possible ways to establish a positive working relationship with their neighbors that will be mutually beneficial. Certainly, there needs to be good give and take in any relationship, but taking the first step as a beekeeper will pay dividends. There will be less opportunity for conflict and much less of a chance for a restrictive local beekeeping ordinance to be adopted that would not be in the Apiary Industry's best interest. Everyone will benefit!

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Notes on the North American Beekeeping Conference 2013, continued

proceeds of the final honey auction on Friday went to support the Honey Queen program.

The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees sponsored a luncheon which highlighted the six recipients of grants for their research on honey

bees. The field trip on Sunday included a visit to Brushy Mountain Bee Supply and to David Hackenberg's operation in Lewisburg, PA.

An interesting side story occurred at the convention. There were a number of small auctions of donated items to benefit the Honey Queen program. Maggie Wachter bid and won the picture postcard of the world-famous photo of past ISBA president Ron Fischer covered with bees, taken by non-other than Richard Avedon, world-famous photographer in 1981.



Rita Taylor: A Life's Work with Bees

Rita Taylor is retiring from her 30 years of service as an Apiary Inspector for the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Here are her feelings and recollections.

I started working with bees in 1959. I enjoyed the bees. I don't know why, but I never was afraid of them. It just happened that we got along fine. My husband Hoyt was a bee inspector and I went along and helped him. I helped at home quite a bit too, cleaning thousands of frames, scraping and boiling them. Hoyt and I worked together until he died in 1982. That year, Mr. Killion hired me on the inspection team. I had already taken the written test to be a bee inspector, so I started inspecting in 1982. I was always the only lady inspector until just recently.

Way back when I started, we didn't have the mites and all the troubles we have today. I remember when the mites first came, around 1987. They came up from Florida with the migratory beekeepers. Mr. Killion had me go to Springfield to a beekeeper's house and inspect two colonies. I put two sticky boards down in the entrance and I used tobacco smoke to get the mites off the bees. I had to keep going back to that apiary everyday to examine the mite drop. It was Thanksgiving day, and I still had to go. The tobacco smoke made the mites let loose of the bees. That was how we did it then.

Maybe you think some men might not think much of a female inspector – but I never had any trouble – they were all good to me, all through the years. And my supervisors were wonderful to work for – I worked for four of them. All of the beekeepers were wonderful to work with too. And I had good working relations with the other bee inspectors over the years - Frank Cassidy from Mt. Sterling, Wilbur Harris from Camden, and Udell Meyer. Sometimes we'd be sent out together and have to spend a week together, going from apiary to apiary, looking at beetles or mites when they were a new problem. We went to one place and my gosh, they were just like fleas on a dog. That was the first encounter.

I worked with beekeepers that kept their hives as clean as your kitchen, and other beekeepers that might only look in on them once or twice a year. We have all kinds.

It's a different situation all together, these days. You've got all these mite related diseases, beetles, problems we didn't used to have. We were most concerned about American Foulbrood, and we would dig a hole and burn them right there on the spot. I remember going over to Quincy with Hoyt and Wilbur. A beekeeper had his bees back in the timber, scattered around. My gosh, they were full of disease. We had to use a wheelbarrel, it was so bad and hilly. We tied a rope on the wheelbarrel to drag it up the hills and we dug a hole and burnt them all – that was a job! And an experience. I was glad to see AFB decrease over the years. I think all the bee schools helped.

I give a lot of credit to the bee schools. They teach the new beekeepers a lot. It's really boosted the membership in the ISBA too. With all the talk about using honey for your health, and in recipes, we have a lot of people wanting to learn about bees.

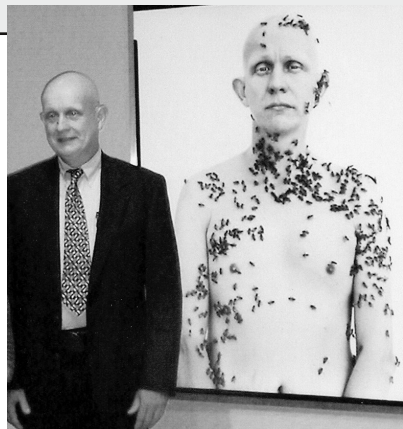
The State Fair used to be a big help too. We always got new beekeepers and ISBA members while we were at the fair. We started to sell the honey icecream way back in the 70s and people came back year after year for it. You had some inspectors working the fair who were farmers and school teachers – they would educate people about bees. We had such nice exhibits and it made people feel good to look at them. I miss the glory days of the State Fair.

I hate to retire – I will miss inspecting very much. But after 30 years, its time to take it easy. I still have my hives, and Ethan and Austie to help me. Ethan is 13 years old (today!) and little Austie will be 7. The bees don't seem to like him as much - he's been stung a few times, but he



always comes back! And I have beekeepers who call me up and talk to me, so I keep in touch with several of them.

I've had good experiences with beekeepers, and the Association, and the Fair. I'm glad I've been able to be in there and do what I did. I'll get myself healthy again – it takes time to get back your strength after several operations, but with the Lord's help, I'll make it.



The original photo is hanging in a New York Gallery. Maggie found out it was Ron in the picture after she'd won, and the two got together for a new photo shoot.

Next year, plan to join us in Baton Rouge, LA from January 7 - 11, 2014.



The Modern Beekeeper: Raw & Unfiltered

by David Burns, certified master beekeeper

Most new beekeepers get started believing they will show the world the right ways to keep bees. They keep great records, make more frequent hive inspections, and whatever it takes to be an above average beekeeper. But once they lose their first colony, they can't believe it died under their watch. It must have been someone else's fault. They blame it on the winter, a poor queen or a bad package. Others start beekeeping loving their new bees like a new pet. A love affair begins and some beekeepers think that their new bees appreciate the privilege of living on their property. Don't laugh, it's true. Regardless, we are all fascinated by this awesome creature and we are enamored by their sheer majesty. Let's be honest, this fascination with honey bees causes all of us, at times, to act a little strange and not to keep our feet in the real world of stark reality when it comes to bees.

Occasionally, there is never a problem. The hive flourishes, produces honey, survives winter, requires little management and we brag of our beekeeping skill and style. All is well, for a while. We brag about our hive numbers as if it was our report card. If last year we had 5 hives and this year we have 14, then we are someone of importance, until one day the unpredictable finally happens. Remember when that new dog ran out into the street? Or what about when the talking parrot flew out an opened door? What about when the cow got sick or our horse contracted some sort of equine encephalitis from a mosquito and died. Bees face the same sort of challenges. Bees die too.

Why do bees die? I've had people ship me bees in a shoe box and ask me to tell them what killed their bees. A hive is a single organism, not just one bee. One single bee seldom gives us a complete picture. Therefore, we have to evaluate the entire colony to determine the cause of death, which, due to so many variables, can remain inconclusive. Was it starvation? Queenlessness? Did the colony swarm in late summer and took too long



to finally raise a good queen, so the population of bees was not large enough to overwinter? These types of problems can and should be prevented. But other problems cannot be easily seen or identified, like tracheal mites, nosema, or viruses spread by varroa mites? These are the invisible, silent killers of colonies, especially to the new and unsuspecting

beginner beekeeper.

My experience in working with thousands of beekeepers a year is that most colonies die due to inadequate beekeeping practices. In other



words, beekeeper error and avoidable mistakes. We used to put bees in a hive, keep an eye out for American Foulbrood and wait until fall and take off a crop of honey. Then the varroa mite made its way into America in the late 80s and early 90s, and hit the bees hard. There was a great falling away from beekeeping. Beekeepers had to get smarter, educated and trained, because there became more to keep an eye on.

Around 2006, CCD changed the beekeeping scene even more. Large operations were hit with what is now called Colony Collapse Disorder - their bees just disappeared. Crazy speculations were tossed around like green Martians were stealing the bees or cell phones were confusing the bee's ability to get back home. Now we suspect it is a combination of stresses, poor nutrition, environmental factors, and pests and diseases. However, with CCD there was a silver lining - interest in saving the bees surged! Everyone started rolling up their sleeves to save the bees. More people became new beekeepers as a way to offset the declining bee population. It worked and it is still working! But more than a short lived fad, something else was brewing on the horizon.

About this same time an interest in local food and a more self-sustainable lifestyle gained full traction. Some call it the green movement, agrarian living or eating more local food known as [locavore](#). Beekeeping was no longer the weird cousin of Agriculture. Now, beekeeping has become the rich uncle and everyone wants written into the will. Beekeeping is now viewed as an essential part of life that we cannot deny. Bees pollinate our food. In fact, bees pollinate the foods that we now want to eat more of such as fruits and vegetables. With processed sugar getting a bad rap, more and more people are moving over to nature's sweetener, honey. We cannot eat well without our bees. Also, more people are looking for ways to add additional income by working from home or on the

The Modern Beekeeper, continued

farm. Selling honey seems more attractive now than ever before as honey now brings an easy \$6 a pound. If a hive produces 70 pounds of honey, that's \$420 a hive.

It seems that no matter what challenges are thrown at honey bees, they survive and so do the courageous beekeepers who are fascinated by this awesome creature, the honey bee. These amazing creatures make us do strange things, like continuing on as a beekeeper.

Prior to mites and CCD, beekeeping was waning some. Now there is an increased interest in beekeeping, more new beekeepers and more funding for research. Prior to today's beekeeping interest there was less media attention and certainly less educational opportunities for beekeepers. Now, with a renewed interest in bees, beekeeping classes abound and the honey bee has earned rock star status. Beekeeping is now an important part of our view of nature, even our very survival.

Sounds so picturesque, right? We still need more beekeepers to help restore the honey bee population. It is getting slightly better, but the bees are not out of intensive care just yet. Today's modern beekeeper can no longer just install a package of bees in a hive and everything will turn out perfectly. The modern beekeeper is a totally different keeper of bees. I call today's beekeeper a "triage beekeeper."

The word *triage* is a French word that means to separate, sift or select. It's a word used in hospitals because ER doctors and nurses select which patients needs the most immediate attention. Triage is the order and priority of emergency treatment. This is what we stress at our advanced beekeeping classes. When inspecting 10 hives, which ones need immediate attention? Which ones need mites reduced? Which ones have small hive beetles? Which one has a failing queen?

For those who are new beekeepers and have only been keeping bees less than 5 years, the bees need your expertise. Bees need you to assess colonies, and to help them overcome their new adversaries, pests and diseases. The bees need you as their ambassador, to encourage others to let the fence row grow up and not to cut down the dandelions. Our obsession to live in a weed-free and bug-free world is probably what is hurting our bees the most. Without weeds, our bees cannot obtain the variety of nectar and pollen they need. We take pride in our weed free yards. We keep our ditches mowed and fence rows cleared. We monocrop

two or three crops that will bring in the most money. No wonder our bees are suffering. This clarion call is for more beekeepers to become better trained and more able to provide triage on hives that need it most.

Today's successful beekeeper must learn to be a triage beekeeper. Some beginning beekeeping classes only focus on how to keep bees as if it was still 1962, giving the basics on how to start but not how to do daily triage. If every commercial pilot was allowed to fly with the same level of knowledge that most beekeepers start keeping bees, the number of plane crashes would be staggering. Therefore, the answer is for every beekeeper to increase their knowledge base and skill sets when it comes to keeping bees in today's climate. Every time we inspect our hives we must assess our hives and determine which ones need immediate attention. As soon as we open a lid, we must be focused on smashing small hive beetles. We should have proven practices in place to evaluate our mite populations in each hive and what actions we will take to reduce mites. I often hear beekeepers say, "I don't have mites". Every hive has mites. Every new beekeeper should be equipped with four non-chemical, IPM methods to deal with varroa mites. Today's beekeeper must be able to identify Deformed Wing Virus, American and European Foulbrood and to evaluate the queen. How well is she laying and how healthy are her daughters? New beekeepers should learn how to conduct a brood viability test. I know it's easy to rationalize that this is not necessary, and our bees will do fine. But they will not, not without our help for a while. You may want to leave this up to your bee inspector. They do a fine job, but think what you can do to help your bees between your inspector's visits if you are the EMT onsite.

Beekeeping is on the rise. The ranks of beekeepers are expanding. Research is working. Most of us who produce queens are working hard to raise local queens from hives that survive year after year without antibiotics and other chemicals. Isn't that really what we want? Not a hive that depends on antibiotics and miticides, but a colony that has their own ability to overcome the challenges of today. While bees make this transition, it demands that beekeepers know as much as we can.



What's Happening on the Local Level?

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Lincoln Land Bee Keepers Association and University of Illinois Extension Logan-Menard-Sangamon Unit are sponsoring an **Introduction to Bee Keeping class**. A four part series, this class will meet from **6 PM to 9 PM every Thursday night from March 7 – April 4, 2013** at the University of Illinois Extension Building, 700 S. Airport Drive, Springfield, Illinois. This class **will not be held on March 14th**, as instead the Lincoln Land Bee Keepers will have their Association meeting at the extension office. Beekeeping students are encouraged to attend.

The class will cost \$30 per person. For more information call the Extension office at (217) 782-4617.

Heart of Illinois Beekeepers Association will again host a **FREE Beginning Beekeepers Seminar on February 23rd at Forest Park Nature Center from 1 to 4 pm**. 5809 Forest Park Drive, Peoria Heights, IL 61614. For more information, go to www.hoibees.org

Greenville resident **Tim Lindley**, received the **Beekeeper of the Year Award** from the **St. Clair Beekeepers Association** at their November Holiday Banquet held at the St. Clair County Farm Bureau in Belleville, IL on Friday, November 30th. Tim, and his wife Anna, have been valued and long-standing members of the St. Clair Beekeepers Association, the Illinois State Beekeepers Association, and the Illinois Queen Initiative.

The **St Clair Beekeepers' Association** is holding its **2013 Beginner and Public Informational Beekeeping Class on Saturday, February 16**, at the Madison County Farm Bureau, 900 Hillsboro Ave., Edwardsville, IL, 62025. Cost is \$25/person, \$35/couple. Refreshments and a light lunch (for those who pre-register by February 9th) will be available along with door prizes, a raffle for a complete hive and a nucleus colony as grand prizes.

Topics to be covered include; history, preparing to keep bees, obtaining bees and equipment, swarms, stings, management, hive products, diseases and pests, and beekeeping regulations.

For more information contact: SCBA President, Terry Combs, 1113 Mulberry St., Keyesport, IL, 62253, Phone: (618) 749-5268 or combstr@yahoo.com. In case of bad weather the alternate class date is Saturday, March 2, same time, same place.

Michael Bush to Speak in St. Louis

Please join Three Rivers Beekeepers and Saint Louis Beekeepers in welcoming Michael Bush, author of "The Practical Beekeeper: Beekeeping Naturally" on Saturday, February 23rd, 2013, from noon to 4:00 pm, at the University of Missouri - St Louis.

Michael Bush is one of the leading proponents of treatment-free beekeeping, and is nationally known for his work in the promotion of natural beekeeping practices. He has been keeping bees since the mid 1970s, usually from two to seven hives, up until the year 2000. The Varroa mite forced more experimentation which required more hives, and his number has grown steadily to about 200 hives.

Michael will be joined by a panel of local beekeepers who will share their swarm luring and catching techniques.

A Question and Answer session will allow you to directly engage Michael and our local panelists with seasonal management questions.

Come join the growing number of St. Louis area beekeepers. All are welcome at whatever level of experience!

Registration available at BeeSpeakSTL.com



Waxing Philosophical ~ the Beekeeping Puzzle

Creating an Ideal Bee Garden

Question: I would like to fill my yard with flowers for a honey crop. What are the best plants? And where can I find seeds?

~ Start with dandelions, a natural. Plant sweet clover in the hard-to-get-to areas, but it blooms the second year. Linden trees for shade and honey, and a few black locust trees on the back edges. Chives in the garden and let your radishes mature and bloom. Also let a plant or two of broccoli bloom. ~ Rich Ramsey, Rochester **3 votes**

~ Best plants? Dandelions! Where to get the seeds? If you don't have any, steal some from your neighbors. ~ Fred Gerberding, Rochester **2 votes**

~ We plant a combination of crimson clover, hairy vetch, purple cornflowers, cotton, sunflowers, sweet alyssum, cosmos, zinnia and shasta daisies. These seem to provide a spring to fall source of pollen for the bees. You can get a premix Honey Bee Wildflower seed mix from places like American Meadows, Eden Brothers, Hancock Seeds and various others from the internet. You need to watch seed count, filler, and country of origin. Places like Wal-Mart come from China and have more filler than seeds. ~ Doug and Rose Leedle, Mulkeytown **4 votes**

~ I have success with these perennials. They grow in poor soil, are drought tolerant and bloom midsummer into fall. Anise Hyssop, Butterfly (asclepias tuberosa), Catnip, Lavender, Russian Sage, and Sedum (fall). Seeds and plants can be found in many catalogs, or internet. I like Bountiful Gardens. ~ Ken Schaefer, Belleville **3 votes**

~ The following is a list of excellent food sources. Your question of the best plants for my garden also depends upon personal perspective.

Crocus, Asters, Delphiniums, Rudbeckia, Bee Balm, Phlox, Coneflower, Caryoptera, Viburnum, Zinnias, Marigolds, Allium, Lambs Ear, Salvia, Lilac, and Compass Plant. White Clover and Dandelions in your yard.

Trees – Basswood, Red Bud, Catalpa, Dogwood, Apple, Hawthorn, and Linden.

Plant in three foot clusters. ~Jerry Staley, Mt Vernon **4 votes**

~ Lavender, Russian Sage, Salvia, Liatris, Cone Flower. Can be purchased at farm supply stores, nurseries, and retail stores. ~ Lonnie Langley, Vandalia **2 votes**

~ Unless one has a great deal of land to plant for the bees, it is unlikely that you will make a difference in the nature or quantity of your honey crop. That should not stop one from planting the bee-favorite flowers just for the joy of watching the bees work. There are many bee-favored blooms for each season. In the spring the fruit trees can come alive with bees.

I really enjoy watching the bees work the giant poppies and the peonies in the summer. You can almost hear the bees singing for joy as they work the sedum in the fall. If emotions exist in bees, these flowers must provide them with sheer joy.

It is worth noting that native plants tend to produce more nectar and pollen than hybrids and that the bees' visible spectrum is skewed to the blue side of our visual spectrum. Bees see reds and oranges as black, but can easily discriminate colors yellow through violet. Our winged friends can also sense ultraviolet, a frequency beyond our senses, allowing them to see things in flowers we cannot.

Indeed every plant helps, but best to plant for the shared joy than for the crop. ~ Larry Krengel, Marengo **6 votes**

~ White Dutch Clover, Russian Sage & Lavender. Purchase at your local nursery. ~ Beverly Tanner, Fairfield **1 vote**

~ Perennial herbs do well in our garden and the bees like them all - mints, sages, lavender, etc. One works especially well because we keep it blooming all summer long - 'Snow Hill' Meadow Sage *salvia x sylvestris*. We use it as a border plant near a fire pit seating arrangement. I pinch it back all season long to keep it blooming with white spiky tops, about 12". The honeybees work them all summer. I started with plants, not seeds. ~ Jane Seume, St. Louis, MO **2 votes**

~ Since Honey Bees generally have to forage in a 2-2.5 mile radius (almost 2,000 acres) in order to do all those things to raise brood over a year and collect enough nectar to make it through a long, flowerless winter, the typical ¼ acre lot is certainly not going to help this process. It will probably help solitary bees and butterflies more than Honey Bees. ~ Jerry Hayes, St. Louis, MO **3 votes**

~ Due to the necessity of a large quantity of a specific plant for good forage, I recommend dandelion and white dutch clover for yards; however your neighbors may not appreciate these choices. For small gardens I always recommend cleome or spider plant. Cleome starts flowering in early summer and continues right on until frost. It produces copious amounts of nectar and a beautiful reddish-purple pollen. My bees will work even a small planting but be fore-warned: it seeds as freely as dandelions and can take an area over if unchecked. Dandelion seed is universally available from most yards. Clover can be obtained from some of the bee supply dealers such as Kelley's. Cleome seed is available in most of the gardening catalogs. ~ Terry Combs, Keyesport **3 votes**

Next Issue's Question:

"How do you spot a drone congregation area?"

Submitted by Marcin Matelski, Chicago

Join the email panel to participate in Waxing Philosophical.

Email the editor - bubblebubb@gmail.com

Membership in the Illinois State Beekeepers Association is open to all persons interested in bees and beekeeping. Beekeepers are urged to join through their local associations or individually if no local associations are available. Dues for 2012 are \$10 for the calendar year January 1 through December 31 only. Dues include a subscription to this newsletter, the ISBA Bulletin. Beekeeping journals are available to ISBA members at about 25% discount. Mention membership in ISBA when sending your subscription payment to the publishers. Rates are subject to change without prior notice.

Make checks for membership payable to: Illinois State Beekeepers Association and mail to: Mike Mason, Treasurer, P.O. Box 21094, Springfield, IL 62703.

Address Changes: Send old and new address six weeks prior to date of change when practical to the association secretary.

Reduced Journal Rates for 2013 (members only)

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr
<u>American Bee Journal</u>	19.50	37.00	52.15
<u>Bee Culture</u>	21.00	38.00	N/A
<u>The Speedy Bee</u>	13.25	25.25	34.00

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