



Our winter apiaries have never been so well-monitored. To combat pandemic and winter doldrums, Hubby and I are getting out and about daily, no matter what the weather, to visit. Based on the harrowing photo-update from beekeeper Brad, further down in this newsletter, it is important to check, yikes.

When we visit our apiaries, we remove snow from entrances, check that there's no branches threatening to clobber the colonies, look for oddities (mammal tracks, spaceships, tiny knitting needles bees might have dropped, etc.)



We also commune by momentarily hanging out, and dreaming about next season. Wonder if they're doing something similar?

Um, probably not. Special thanks to Todd Smith, who has supplied a fascinating [video](#) of winter bees in cluster. I see no tiny knitting needles.

What are your apiary goals and dreams for the upcoming season? The next three years? And are you taking the steps now, during these days of "hibernation", rest, and reflection, to be ready to make them happen?

Rest and reflection are essential for dreams and goals to take deep root. Enjoy these short days of light and low temperatures--which we will tend to forget when we're sweltering (hopefully?) in only a handful of months.

Here's wishing all your deep-rooted apiary desires come true.

Charlotte Hubbard / Editor

PS: Do you dream about writing an article for this newsletter or sharing a photo? I'd appreciate it--please email them to mibeeseeditor@gmail.com; thanks.



Michigan Well-represented on Bee Culture's Beekeeping Calendar

So we asked them more about it!

Melissa Ball-Erickson, featured for September, shared:

My family has had a subscription to Bee Culture for many decades. Year after year, I have always looked at and admired



the annual bee calendar that is sent out in January. When the 2021 theme was *Women in the Bee Yard*, I just had to send in some photos to give it a try. I have been around beekeeping my entire life. My family has been Michigan beekeepers since the 1870s. In fact, my great grandfather met my great grandmother as he was hauling a load of bees by horse and wagon in 1896. I have been working in the bee yards with my father since I was a little girl. I was so excited when I saw my picture for the month of September in this year's bee calendar! It sure is an honor to be included in the annual calendar!

Rebecca Wittekindt, of Bee Present Honey answered:

I've had a subscription to Bee Culture Magazine for a few years now. Great articles and pictures from around the country on all topics of keeping bees. With my January issue they always add their annual calendar. It sits on my fridge and each month, a new picture to enjoy.

The theme for the 2021 calendar was "Women in the Bee Yard". I decided to look through my pictures and submit a few for their consideration.

When my January issue arrived with the calendar I was eager to see the women they featured (not suspecting I was included as I had not heard anything). As I flipped through and enjoyed the collection I found a very pleasant surprise in April! There I was! It's an honor to be included in their great calendar and to represent women in beekeeping!



Hello Beekeepers,

Winter activities for Michigan beekeepers, directly related to the bees, are limited. Nonetheless, many are busy with several events. Perhaps you already heard about the Kalamazoo Bee Club donating honey to local hospital employees. The Saginaw club found this inspirational and is currently coordinating a similar program. Maybe these eleemosynary clubs will stimulate your group to follow suit!

Rich Wieske and committee are putting together an impressive list of speakers and a diverse program for the spring conference. Certainly you will find a talk that will inspire your upcoming bee season. Be sure to register early to save money!

Some clubs select new leaders this time of year. Consider volunteering for your club. I am confident the time spent will benefit not only another beekeeper and the bees, but also yourself.

Pandemics, Asian Giant Hornets, new mites, and other calamities seem less ominous in the spring. I look forward to the coming year. Enjoy your bees.

MBA President's Corner

by *Chris Beck*

President@mba-bees.org

Thanks.

Editor's Note: Special thanks to Chris for teaching me a new word: "eleemosynary". If that word is new to you also, it means charitable. :)



THE BEST BEE-VEIL.
This should be made of black tarlatan, sewed up like a bag, a half yard long, and with a diameter of the rim of a common straw hat, without top or bottom. Gather the top with braid, so that it will just slip over the crown of the hat, and the bottom with rubber cord or rubber tape, so that it may be drawn over the hat rim, and then over the head as we adjust the hat. When in use (Fig. 14), the rubber cord draws the lower part close about the neck, and we are safe. This kind of a veil is cool, does not impede vision at all, and can be made by any woman at a cost of less than twenty cents. Common buckskin or sheepskin gloves can be used, as it will scarcely pay to get special gloves for the purpose, for the most timid person,—I speak from experience,—will soon consider gloves as an unnecessary nuisance.

The BEST "Bee-Veil"

Thanks to MBA VP Rich Wieske for sharing this historical gem with us. I also found it a bit hysterical due to the "and can be made by any woman..." claim. My how times have changed.

If you'd like to wander through the rest of the Manual of the Apiary, here's a [link](#) to the entire document.

Plenty Going on in District 2

Submitted by Dave Pearce

A2B2: is offering a discount to club members on package bees. To obtain the package discount just sign up to be a club member then receive your Discount Code redeemable at Local Buzz Bees & Honey. Five Frame Medium Nucs are also available. Delivery is late April. Non-club members may also order packages or nucs. Just go to www.LocalBuzzBees.com.

A2B2 Bee School enrollment is still open! If you or anyone you know would be interested in signing up just go to A2B2Club.org to register. The first session is February 7. Classes will be virtual until the weather permits outdoor meetings in the bee yard. The school runs monthly sessions from February through October. Cost is \$155.00.

Bees in the D: In January the A2B2 Club hosted a monthly Zoom meeting lead by Brian Peterson-Roest from "Bees In The D". Brian gave a tremendous talk on pests and pathogens.

Chelsea Area Bee Club: is planning on facilitating a method for small to medium beekeepers in the area to sell NUCs and Queens directly to local beekeepers. To that end we have put together a Web Page (chelseaareabeekeepers.com) where we, as a community, can provide a single point to market NUCs and queens to the community. We invite buyers, and sellers alike to visit the page. If you are interested in being listed as a seller please email johnhohner@gmail.com. If you are a prospective buyer, follow the instructions on the web page to make contact and order from a chosen seller.

Lost Nations Bee Club: laying low at this time.

Napoleon Bee Club: "is having small in-person Beginner Beekeeping Classes. The first three classes are already full! There appears to be a lot of interest from newbees again this year. We are passing out flyers with information for newbees to get on the Kalamazoo Bee School ZOOM coming up on February 20th, as well as the MBA Spring Conference. We're also planning a March class on Early Season Management & Critical Checks with Charlotte Hubbard. We hope to hold a ZOOM or Facebook Live class on **HOW TO HIVE YOUR BEES** in April. When our store is open, we do one-on-one classes for beginners.

Finally, there are a lot of rumors going around that we have closed. We are still working on trying to sell our business. However, we are staying open until that process is complete, and will stay on to help the new owners for a few months. Hoping to sell it to a beekeeper who will continue to run the business as we have, with classes for beginners, beekeeping supply and package bee and NUC sales."

U of M Bees: laying low as well, being that they are under the guidelines of the university. However, on February 16, Dave Pearce will be their guest online to talk about beekeeping and issues facing honeybees. On March 23, the club will be hosting Dr. Meghan Milbrath.

March 3 - 6, 2021 - Michigan Beekeepers Association Spring Conference 30 Vendors - 40 Speakers - 4 Days



SO many wonderful speakers at the spring conference! We've pictured only three of them.



Dr. Terry Kane is on the left, Les Eccles center, Dr. Sam Ramsey, right.



You can find more speakers, bios and schedules [here](#). Register soon!

Bees, bees and more bees:

Samuel Ramsey, Juliana Rangel Posada, Meghan Milbrath, Ana Heck, Roger Hoopingarner, Julia Mahood, Peggy Garnes, Dorothy Morgan, Larry Connor ...

What's the real story?

Eva Crane, Lorenzo Langstroth and *Vespa mandarinia* (aka Asian giant hornets)

Entertain the whole family!

garden piano hives, using drones to follow drones, interactive cooking show, yoga for beekeepers, macrophotography, pedaling to your bee yard... did we say mites yet?

Join us online for a gathering of the hive: <http://michiganbees.org>

30 Vendors - 40 Speakers - 4 Days

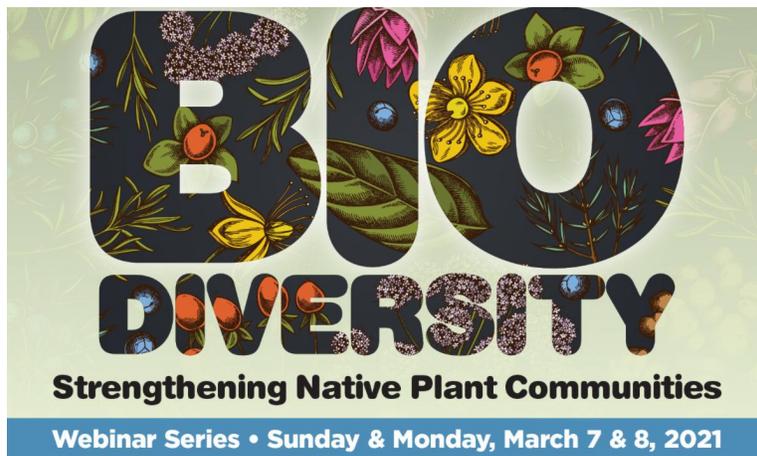
Opportunities Bee-yond Apis Mellifera

Become part of the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program! Gain access to world class gardening knowledge and engage in horticulture-related volunteer service. Course content also focuses on environmental stewardship and integrated pest management to create healthy habitats and support pollinators.

The upcoming trainings throughout Michigan will be held virtually (via Zoom) and are open for registration! Partial scholarships are available. To see all upcoming trainings and who to contact if you have questions please click [here](#).

Wildflowers are bee-loved as well, and here's an opportunity to learn more and / or support the folks working to keep them blooming. Check them out at www.wildflowersmich.org.





The Wildflower Association of Michigan (WAM) is pleased to present the 34th annual **Michigan Native Plant Conference** (formerly the Wildflower Conference). This year the conference will be offered as a webinar event. It is open to both WAM members and non-members. Our attendees are people interested in learning about native plants, their role in nature and landscapes, and the preservation of natural areas. Topics will embrace many levels of interest and backgrounds.



This year we will present two keynote speakers. **Neil Diboll**, CEO of Prairie Nursery in Westfield WI is a pioneer in the native plant industry and is recognized internationally as an expert in native plant ecology. Neil Diboll has dedicated his life to the propagation of native plants, promoting their benefits and furthering their use and in restoration projects. Neil's presentation is titled: "Genetic Diversity and Plant Preservation".



Our second keynote speaker is **Heather Holm**, a biologist, pollinator conservationist and award-winning author. In addition to assisting with native bee research projects, she informs and educates audiences nationwide about the fascinating world of native pollinators and beneficial insects, and

the native plant communities that support them. Heather's presentation is titled: "Restoring Ecosystem Functionality and Biodiversity".

There will be breakout sessions on both days so attendees can explore specific topics of interest. Talks will be on the interactions of insects and native plants, the impact of deer, birds and native plants, medicinal native plants, aquatic plants and much more.

Because public gatherings are limited this year, WAM is offering the conference as a webinar series. Talks will be presented via Zoom and will be held in a live format on March 7 and 8 from 10 am to 4 pm. There will be limited question and answers periods after each presentation. Most talks will be videotaped and will be available to all registrants to view at a later date. This two-day webinar is only \$50. WAM members and students will receive discounts.



For more information, and to register for this exceptional webinar series, go to www.wildflowersmich.org.



Encouraging the preservation and restoration of Michigan's native plants and native plant communities.



Kalamazoo Bee Club's FREE February 20 Bee School

By Charlotte Hubbard
Editor, this newsletter & President, Kalamazoo Bee Club

(When you wear both those bee bonnets, you can write an article to publicizing the upcoming bee school, right?)

- What are the best mite treatments for Spring? (Never too early to think about mite management, right?)
- Is it better to get a nuc or a package?
- You've been stung—what are signs that you should be concerned?
- How do you mark queens? (Or drones for that matter, as they're great for practicing on.)

These and many other questions will be answered at the Kalamazoo Bee Club's annual Bee School, February 20. Morning sessions focus on newbees; afternoon sessions are a smattering of topics, including a discussion of the importance of nucleus colonies, and pollinator plants. (Invite your gardener friends.) We know Zoom burnout is a thing, but the need for quality education continues. Thus, we have short (15 minute!) sessions interspersed with longer sessions in this one-day school for bee-ginner through intermediate beekeepers.

Nucs and pollinator plants will be masterfully handled by Dr. Larry Connor and Mike Connor, two absolute experts in their fields. The keynote presentation also features this brotherly duo, discussing "Connor-dictions", a fun review of beekeeping approaches and essentials.

Did we mention the best part? It's free, although we'd appreciate donations of any size to help pay for our top-notch speakers. See the schedule, the amazing collection or speakers or register here.

Oh yeah, it's free. Hope you can bee there.

Would you like to receive a newsletter physical copy?

Email communications@mba-bees.org to let us know!

Bummer Bambi!

Decatur beekeeper Brad Cloutier found this heartbreak late January. Bears aren't an issue yet in his area; nor does this look like typical bear intervention. He suspects deer, as it is a heavily travelled area, and if they got spooked, they may have run through the yard and hit the boxes. He attempted to save some of the misplaced colonies; time will tell. Good luck Brad!



District 6 Report

by Rodney Bear, District Rep; papabearbees@gmail.com

SVBA: The Saginaw Valley Beekeepers Association (SVBA) is continuing the Honey for Healthcare Heroes Project that was started by the Kalamazoo Bee Club and their article can be found in the Michigan Beekeeper Association [newsletter](#). This is a great way to lift up and thank our local healthcare heroes.

SVBA is targeting to fill 1,000 8 oz bottles which will require around 500 pounds of honey. Once bottled it will be distributed to 4 local hospitals in the Saginaw, Bay, and Midland counties. Covenant Health Care, Ascension St Mary's Hospital, Bay Medical Foundation and Mid Michigan Hospital are targeted to receive these donations.

Distribution to hospitals will take place the second week of February. Given the ongoing virus impacts, we will deliver honey jars to the hospitals and they will distribute them to their front-line workers as they see fit.

SVBA is in need of volunteers and donations. Volunteers will be needed for a variety of tasks: to contact hospitals, communicate with members, document our process, consolidate honey donations from containers smaller than buckets, package honey, create labels, deliver honey, etc.

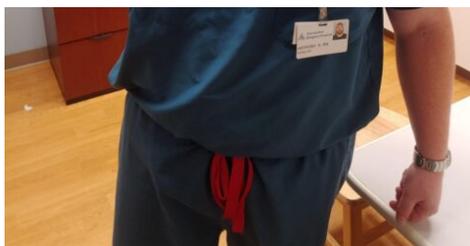
If anyone is interested in donating cash or honey (buckets preferred) to support their project, you can contact Tim Poff at svbasec@gmail.com, Randy Barkley at randy.barkley@gmail.com, Dan Keane at Danny.K@charter.net. Cash donations will be used to buy honey, as needed and for packing supplies and labeling. All donations will be kept confidential. Cash donations can be made out to SVBA and mailed to SVBA, PO Box 161, Freeland, MI 48623.

Sunrise Side Beekeepers: Monthly meetings are slated to start up again in March using Zoom.

Seven Ponds Beekeepers Club: Nothing to report

Mid-Michigan Beekeepers: Nothing to report





These photos result from the Kalamazoo Bee Club's Honey for Healthcare Heroes Initiative. Awesome that Saginaw Valley is doing the same.



You can help sweeten the lives of our overworked healthcare folks by donating to Saginaw's effort. Any amount is helpful.

We look forward to featuring their photos.

Michigan State University Apiculture Extension Update

By [Ana Heck](#)

MSU Extension & Education Apiaries

We wintered MSU Education & Extension Apiaries in November. When temperatures were above freezing and the bees were loosely clustered, we treated all colonies for varroa mites with [anoxalic acid dribble \(solution method\)](#) treatment. We also stapled ½" or ¼" hardware cloth across entrances to prevent mice and shrews from getting into the hives and added spacers under the inner covers in case we need to add solid feed later in the winter.

In the upcoming weeks, we will be checking colony food stores. On warmer winter days when temperatures are above freezing, we will check food stores by hefting hives from the back to gauge their weights and lifting covers to look for honey frames. While we do not worry about opening hives in the winter, we are careful to not lift frames and disturb the cluster of bees. For colonies that appear to be light on honey, we will provide winter feed using the [mountain camp method](#). Other beekeepers may choose to feed with winter patties, candy boards, or fondant.

MSU Honey

Honey from our MSU Extension and Education Apiaries is available for sale from the [MSU Student Organic Farm](#). We also donated jars of honey to the [MSU Student Food Bank](#), and we appreciated [AWS Bees LLC's](#) generosity and help getting the honey bottled.

MSU Apiculture Team Winter Projects

Our team has been busy writing grant proposals, giving online presentations, and planning for the 2021 bee season. A good portion of our work is focused on implementing strategies in our [Michigan Managed Pollinator Protection Plan](#), including writing pollinator stewardship guides (like this [guide for blueberry growers](#)), developing curriculum about pollinators for pesticide applicators and home gardeners, and coordinating a national working group of people who work on managed pollinator protection plans. We are also working with MBA to plan and host the [MBA Spring Conference](#), and we look forward to sharing resources from [MSU Extension](#) with beekeepers.

Winter Opportunities for Beekeepers

Many beekeepers spend the winter months reading up on beekeeping and planning for their next beekeeping season. You may consider reviewing our [list of recommended resources for beekeepers and videos](#). We also hope to "see" you at the [Kalamazoo Bee School](#) and [Michigan Beekeepers' Association Spring Conference](#), both of which will be held online!

If you have questions about beekeeping or planting for pollinators, please send them to us through [Extension Ask an Expert](#). You can also stay connected by subscribing to the [Michigan State](#)

[University Bee Blog](#) and [newsletter](#) (select "Pollinators & Pollination") and by following our Facebook pages, [Michigan State University Beekeeping](#) and [Michigan Pollinator Initiative](#).



Oxalic Acid Dribble



Wintering

*Photos left and above courtesy of Ana Heck
Right: courtesy of Dan Wyns*



Spacer in Place

Update from Meghan Milbrath, MPH, PhD

Assistant Professor, MSU Department of Entomology

Hallå from Sweden!

The new year has brought a new adventure for me, as I'll be continuing my honey bee research from Sweden. For 2021 I will have a joint appointment with MSU and the [Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences \(SLU\)](#), as I work as a researcher in the honey bee lab. It is an amazing opportunity for me to work closely with world renown researchers to learn more about honey bee diseases. Many of you may have heard about the work from this lab, as they are well known for studying a unique population of untreated bees in the Gotland Forest. You can read more about it in the [Thesis of Barbara Locke](#), whose office is right next door to mine.

This lab also does a lot of diagnostic work, and is heavily involved with research standards through the [COLOSS BeeBook](#). This year I'll be working on a pretty practical project - helping to validate methods of measuring cluster size. This work will be part of the [SCRI grant at MSU](#), as well as to help fulfill a task in the giant European project - [Posh Bee](#). Most of my work at the SLU honey bee lab will be analytical - I'll be working with virus sequence data, helping to bring some ongoing projects to completion. I'll be working with a variety of honey bee viruses, and am really thrilled for the opportunity to spend more time on this topic so MSU can become a leader in this field.

One of the most interesting things is that in Sweden the honey bee lab is in the Ecology department, as honey bees are native here. I'm really excited for summer to come so I can learn a new system of beekeeping (also to see the sun - it has been really dark here).



Above: Hives in the snow at my residence.



While I'll be running some MSU projects from across the pond, I'm happy that we have a full extension crew with Ana Heck, Adam Ingrao, Dan Wyns, and Zachary Huang, so can rest easy knowing that beekeeper questions will still be met, and MSU Apiculture education will still continue. I'll see you all (virtually) at the MBA spring conference, and look forward to working with you when I return in 2022!

Center: Antique bee hive in the conference room (Bikupan)

Right: View from my office window.



Connecting with the MSU Apiculture Team

eXtension Ask an Expert: Do you have beekeeping or gardening questions? The MSU Apiculture Team is asking that you submit these questions through [eXtension Ask an Expert](#) because it allows them to better track questions answered and direct your question to the right person to respond.

Facebook pages:

- [Michigan State University Beekeeping \(@MSUHoneyBees\)](#)
- [Michigan Pollinator Initiative \(@MichiganPollinatorInitiative\)](#)
- [Heroes to Hives \(@HeroesToHives\)](#)

Newsletter: To receive notifications of upcoming webinars for beekeepers and other MSU Extension events, please [sign up for our newsletter](#) and be sure to select "Pollinators & Pollination".

MSU Bee Blog: Subscribe to the [MSU Bee Blog](#) to receive occasional updates about MSU Extension Apiaries and related programs.

Fundraising Campaigns

Beekeeping Education & Support Fund: MSU has a new crowd funding campaign to support its education and outreach work for Michigan small-scale beekeepers. While our team's salaries are covered through funds from MSU, grants, and/or endowments, we often don't have funds to run programs unless we receive a grant. Donations provide us with flexibility to promptly respond to opportunities and needs, and they may go toward printing materials, traveling to talk to beekeeping groups (once MSU's travel restrictions are relaxed), and managing teaching colonies. To learn more or make a gift to support our work, please visit the [Beekeeping Education and Support Fund](#).

Beekeeper of the Year, District 6

submitted by Rodney Bear



Mark Spencer is a member of the Seven Ponds Bee Club. Mark is the lead teacher for the Seven Ponds club's New Beekeepers Class as well as a mentor for several new beekeepers every season. He is patient and knowledgeable.

Mark is a sideline beekeeper (Spencer's Apiaries) and enjoys taking his knowledge of beekeeping on the road by speaking at a number of local schools where he has honeybees on display in an observation hive during his presentations. When he's not busy, you can find him at the Rochester Farmers Market selling a variety of bee products.



Have a bee-loved? Why not demonstrate your love for them (and all pollinators) by [adopting a bee](#)? Orders received prior to Valentine's Day will be promptly processed in time for the holiday. February and March are hard times for overwintering bees; let's get as many adopted as we can. :)

And Happy Valentine's Day to all pollinator-loving folks!



STAY CONNECTED

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