



August 2023 Third Quarter Newsletter



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Editor's Musings

by Becky Green, MBA Newsletter Editor



What a bee season it has been. Since the last newsletter, my bees have been hard at work, and have gifted me with a great honey harvest. I hope yours are doing the same! I was concerned that our long spell with no rain and the hot weather this spring would slow honey production down, but the bees seemed unfazed, and I was able to do my first extraction in early June. It yielded the palest honey I have ever produced, and also the thickest and driest, with a water content just above 16%. It is also crystallizing faster than any honey I have ever harvested, with the first signs of crystallization beginning within a week or two of harvest. Worrying what to do with the honey that is rapidly crystallizing in honey buckets has become my inspiration to learn how to make creamed honey. Prototype jars yielded a nice, smooth product, so I took the jump and scaled up. The first jars that I hope to take to market are now cooling and hardening in my little wine cooler/cheese cave. Wish me luck!

And how about swarm season this year? At least in our area, it seemed to be a doozy. I have been on the MBA swarm catcher list and also had a web presence for my business, which is easily found with Google under "honey" or "beekeeper" for 3 swarm seasons. As a result, I have gotten a few swarm calls over the years. Few is the operative word here. This year, for about a 2-week period in mid to late May I was getting 2 to 3 swarm calls per day. Not to mention my bees who, despite my diligent efforts to keep up with swarm management, were swarming as well. I quickly had to start telling callers that I had no more boxes in which to house bees. Fortunately, I was able to refer them to the [MBA swarm removal resource page](#). As of today it lists 88 individuals, located throughout the state. Keeping it up to date has been one of my projects, so I sure hope it served its intended purpose of connecting Michigan communities with beekeepers in their area who could retrieve swarms. If you are listed, and have any feedback about how it worked for you, please send me comments at newslettereditor@mba-bees.org.

What are your bees doing now? Slowing down and starting winter prep? I sure wish mine were. Despite now being well past "swarm season", the bees in my care still seem overly interested in swarming. I tell people that as long as you give them the space they need, you don't usually have to worry about swarms from hives with queens raised this year. But just to prove me wrong, I have had multiple hives with 2023 queens making preparations to swarm in the last month. The first to do so were the handful of VSH queens I imported from California. Well, what do California bees know about Michigan winters? The bees I raised here will know better than trying to make a break for it at this time of year, right? WRONG! I just pulled two Michigan-raised 2023 queens to nucs, after culling swarm cells for 2 weeks in a row. And just in case you think that the bees were just trying to replace crummy queens, those queens are happily laying up a storm in their nuc boxes. A third hive managed to throw a swarm between inspections, despite my attempt to remove all the queen cells the week before. As one friend and fellow beekeeper said of our bees: "It seems like they just aren't reading the same bee books that we are!" That is for sure! But in the back of my mind, I can't help but wonder if what we are seeing is their response to our

warming world. Are they trying to tell us "I sure hope you are paying attention to the climate crisis, because we are!"?



It's not just my bees that seem reluctant to give up on swarming. On August 7, James Hiester, pictured on the left, took his first foray into beekeeping to single-handedly hive a swarm while his beekeeper father was at work. To quote his dad, "Apparently it involved ladders and all kinds of things I'm glad I didn't see. But he got the queen in the box". Photos courtesy of Kurt Hiester

Upcoming Events

Habitat Management Workshop: Offered for free through the Project Wingspan: Agricultural Lands program

August 23, 2023 from 9 am-4 pm EST
Trevor Nichols Research Center (6237 124th Ave, Fennville, MI)

The workshop focus is on the numerous benefits provided to agricultural lands by integrating pollinator habitat. It will provide technical guidance to help you create and manage different habitat installation types to support your land, increase productivity, improve soil and water health, and support pollinators. The classroom portion of the training will be followed with a field tour led by experienced agricultural land managers and researchers.

The following Continuing Education Credits will be available for MDAR Pesticide Applicator Certification: 1A, 1B, 1C, and one private core. This workshop also provides MAEAP (Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program) Phase 1 accreditation.

If interested, please sign up for the event on the [registration page](#)

Dr. Roger Hoopingarner Exhibit
**Building a Buzz: A History of Beekeeping in the
United States**

Michigan State University - Main Library

Opening Monday, September 11, 2023

This exhibit seeks to explore the reciprocal relationship between beekeeping and bee culture in The United States, and the valuable contributions made by the MSU apiaries. Faculty and alumni have influenced the world of beekeeping through their work and scientific endeavors. Some of these apiarists, including A. J. Cook, Frank Benton and, most recently, Dr. Roger Hoopingartner were important on the local, national, and even international stages.

The recent donation of Dr. Hoopingartner's bee book collection has expanded the already impressive Ray Stanard Baker Bee Book Collection at Michigan State Libraries Special Collection to include more recent publications. These books, along with Dr. Hoopingartner's work on bee breeds, continue to shape bee research and enhance our understanding of the world of beekeeping and pollination.

We look forward to welcoming the Michigan beekeeping community to view the exhibit later this fall. Information on an opening reception and other opportunities to visit will be available soon.



Michigan Conservation Stewards Program

Do you like the outdoors, native plants, and wildlife? Do you want to learn more about ecosystems in your area? Do you have a passion for habitat restoration? Do you enjoy sharing what you learn with others? Do you want to find out what stewardship opportunities exist locally for you?

After going virtual in 2021, the Michigan Conservation Stewards Program (CSP) is returning this fall, and will be offered in seven locations around the state: St. Clair, Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw, Capital Area, West Michigan, and Grand Traverse. Registration for this dynamic, 10-week, hybrid program is open and available until Wednesday, August 30, 2023, with partial scholarship opportunities available. Limited spaces are still available!

Beginning the week of September 11, 2023, through the week of November 13, 2023, CSP encompasses:

- Virtual, self-paced lessons
- Weekly, in-person evening sessions at various locations
- 1 to 2 Saturday in-person field experiences
- Capstone (Applied) Project conducted in partnership with local conservation organizations, with guidance provided by a local mentor.

Details and dates for each location as well as a registration link can be found at the [Michigan Conservation Stewards Program web site](#)



Michigan Beekeepers Association Fall Pre-Conference Webinars

Michigan Beekeepers Association Pre-Conference Webinar with Cybil Preston on “The Maryland Department of Agriculture's apiary inspection service: How humans and dogs are keeping Maryland honey bees healthy”. **Monday, October 2 at 7 pm EST**

Michigan Beekeepers Association Pre-Conference Webinar with Dr. Katie Lee on “Top tips for northern beekeepers”. **Wednesday, October 11 at 7pm EST**

These webinars are free, but we strongly encourage you to consider becoming a member of the Michigan Beekeepers Association and donating to support these and other great programs!

[Register for preconference webinars](#)

MSU Extension European Foulbrood Office Hours Webinar

Oct 12, 2023 7 pm EST (US and Canada)

European foulbrood is a severe bacterial disease that affects many honey bee colonies in Michigan. The MSU Bee Team has been investigating why this disease seems to be worsening and has been looking into different treatment and management options. In this evening webinar for beekeepers, Michigan State University honey bee disease experts will provide up-to-date information on European foulbrood (EFB). Dr. Meghan Milbrath and Dr. Peter Fowler will give a brief overview on how to recognize signs of this disease, perform diagnostic tests, and provide recommendations on what to do if you find it in your bee yard. They will highlight some recent research, give plenty examples and allow time to answer questions.

[Register in advance for this webinar](#)

SAVE THE DATE
MBA Fall Conference

October 21, 2023
Clare, MI

Details coming to the [MBA website](#) soon



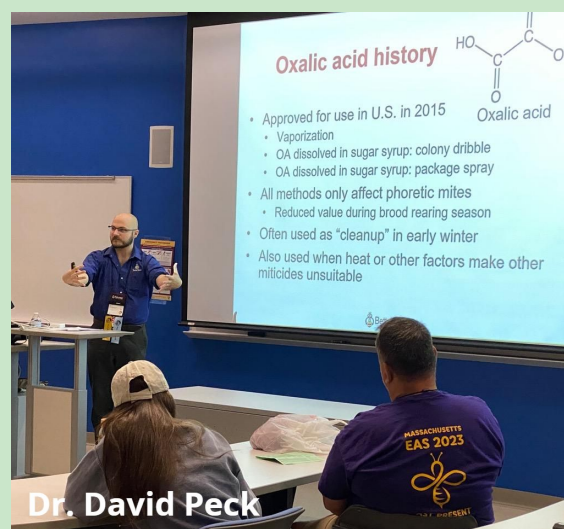
Notes From a Wandering Drone President's Corner by Rich Wieske, MBA president



I spent the first week of August in Amherst, MA, at the 68th annual conference of the Eastern Apicultural Society (EAS). It was so wonderful to share the camaraderie again. My last EAS conference was in Delaware five years ago. How can you go wrong with so many beeks and all the wild t-shirts and bee paraphernalia? It was bee heaven. But on this trip, I had an additional mission; to scope out how you put on a successful

bee conference. Well, this was a good one for that, with great speakers and keynotes, a wonderful location, stellar volunteers and an awesome collection of over 500 beekeepers. Mary Duane and the Massachusetts beekeepers did an excellent job. And did I mention the award winning food at U Mass.

The meeting included nationally known keynote speakers like Sam Ramsey, Tammy Horn, Judy Wu-Smart, and a whole plethora of major players from the world Bee stage, including Tom Seeley, Krispn Given, Paul Kelly, David Peck and of course our favorite walking bee encyclopedia, Dewey Caron, with dozens more sharing their information and experiences. Smoker lighting contest, honey contest, live drone spitting; hey, who says beekeepers don't know how to have fun?



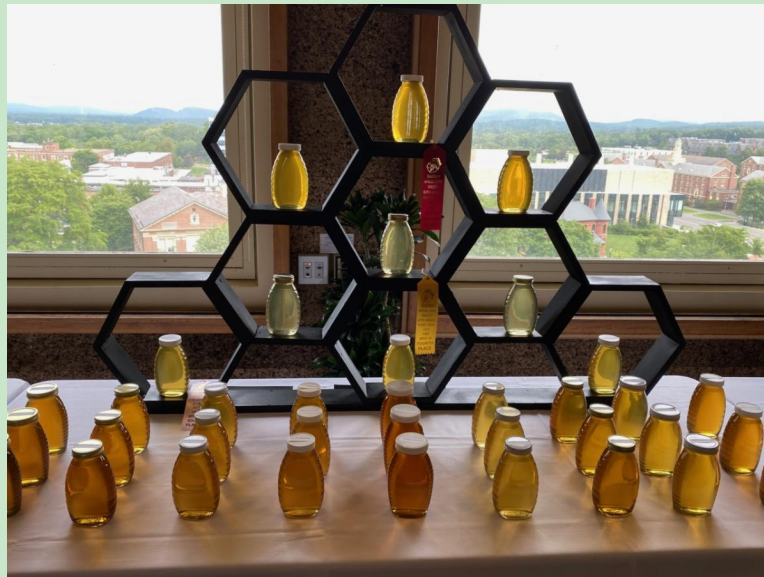
Dr. David Peck

So consider this a call out. We're bringing EAS to Dearborn in 2025, and we want

you there with us. If you've never been to a national or regional bee conference, this is your chance to share your crazy passion about bees without being made to feel guilty or that you're somehow odd for loving a stinging insect. Next year, they will be meeting in Maryland, so if you can, make plans to be there as well. I believe Maryland has the largest number of master beekeepers of any state in the union. They do it by setting up study groups, kitchen bee groups, or bar bees, if you will. I bet Michigan could match their numbers. We have a lot of very intelligent bee lovers here. Ever have thoughts of being a master beekeeper? Now would be a great time to start preparing for 2025.

Going to a bee conference you learn so much, gain so much, and grow in confidence and understanding. I've always been impressed when standing in line or sitting at lunch, that it's the easiest thing in the world to start up a conversation and end up with a new bee bud. Where you're from is always a great starter and of course how many hives you have. Beekeepers can normally be pretty shy and introverted unless you meet them at a conference, then the flood gates open, and the sharing and caring is contagious.

So, make plans for Maryland, August 2024 and See You, Bee You in Dearborn 2025 for EAS's 70th anniversary and Michigan Beekeepers Association's 160th, Yes thank you AJ Cook; 160 years ago he had an idea... and it's still going strong.



In Memory: Bob Hollis

by Lisa Stinson



Seven Ponds Beekeeping Club recently memorialized long-standing member, Bob Hollis, who passed away November, 2021. He was honored at their May meeting for his unique contributions to beekeeping and to the club. With Arborist Mike Connor appropriately slated to present, and with Bob's family in attendance, five basswood trees were planted on the grounds of Seven Ponds Nature Center

to commemorate the life of a man from whom club members enjoyed the paradoxical qualities of unlimited kindness and brutal honesty when delivering

beekeeping guidance.

Bob kept bees for over 24 years. He started as a hobbyist with two hives. This pursuit ultimately blossomed into Golden Harvest Apiaries, a commercial operation of over 300 colonies for the production of both bees and honey, and serving as a local source for beekeeping supplies. His decades of experience made him a valuable mentor and trusted wellspring of information for beekeepers of all experience levels. Despite the laborious nature of commercial beekeeping, Bob always made time for beekeepers who sought his input and guidance without the slightest indication of having been inconvenienced. While beginning beekeepers may have found his delivery of wisdom to be in the vein of “tough love,” his words fell on the ears of those who knew him a bit better in such a way as to produce smiles and laughter. It was in this context that Bob earned the appointment of Curmudgeon at Large on the bee club board.

Fitted with these memories of him, and many others, the members of Seven Ponds Beekeeping Club gathered outside at the nature center, not too far from the club apiary. Joined by Bob’s wife, Shannon, his children and grandchildren, and following Mike Connor’s instruction, members dug holes, removed trees from pots, planted, mulched and watered. When the dirty work was completed, a plaque was set in place so that current and future club members who did not have the privilege of knowing Bob might gain a share of what he freely gave to so many of us and to so many bees.



The plaque reads as follows:

“In loving memory of our friend, Bob Hollis. His wisdom, kindness, generosity, and no-frills advice will be missed but never forgotten by so many. With bees, Bob turned sunlight into honey. Thank you. Seven Ponds Beekeeping Club.”



Honey, Don't Do This Dronings From a Queen Bee

by Charlotte Hubbard, Kalamazoo Bee Club
Queenbeecharlotte@gmail.com

I'm mentoring a swarm of newbees who are lucky enough to have multiple supers of creamy-white capped honey. Yes, lots of honey from first-year colonies! I'd like to say it's because they have an excellent mentor, but I think it has more

to do with being located in the middle of irrigated soybean and buckwheat fields.

I'm delighted and surprised at the first-year honey production. The newbees are also delighted and surprised, and a little disheartened that jars, labels, and extractor rental means spending even more money on their new hobby. Guess they didn't hear their mentor when I told them the joys of beekeeping are ongoing, as are the expenses.



Honey pouring into a bucket

The newbees asked for an overview of honey processing. I shared what I do, along with lots of cautions. I think I've already made every possible mistake in extracting, but fear I will undoubtedly make a few more. At least I haven't (yet) done what my buddy Ivan did. Ivan slipped his cell phone into his shirt pocket "for safety", and then bent over to put a lid on a 5-gallon bucket of honey. Ivan said you'd be surprised how fast a

cellphone sinks in honey. He also shared that, as he stared at the phone at the bottom of the bucket, he just really wanted to take a picture of his stupidity but couldn't because, well, his phone was under five gallons of honey.

So far, my biggest oopsies include leaving open honey gates ... the one on the extractor and another time -- the one on the five-gallon bucket. Both incidents made mortifying sticky puddles on the floor. As a token of apology to bees for wasting their lives' work, I put the honey-laden rugs on the back deck for them to clean-up. They did, but the deck was a frightful blizzard of buzzing insects for a few hours.

Bees are great for honey cleanup, and really efficient. I'd forgotten about that, and once placed a few honey supers outside to heat a bit in the sun. Bees are stunningly efficient. Got to pull that honey off the hives a second time.

Here are a few other helpful honey tips I've discovered:

- During processing, honey will find its way to faucet handles, and every surface and door knob. You'll need a few pails and sinks of hot, soapy water, and plenty of clean rags for continually wiping—perhaps several thousand of those.
- There is always at least one bee on the frames, usually hiding under the ears and very motivated to sting. If you don't find that bee during extraction, you'll find it later—and very late—in your bedroom.
- Five-gallon pails of honey are exciting and rewarding. And heavy.
- The beauty of a new frame of capped honey can leave you speechless. So can adding up the money and time you've spent to get to this point.
- The cat locked in the bedroom during extraction for food safety reasons will, upon escaping, manage to get very sticky. Cleanup is difficult, and displeasing to the cat. Bees will be unable to help with cat cleanup.
- Cute little honey containers are only fun for the first dozen, and then they're a pain to fill and wipe down. Ideally, I'd "package" my honey in five-gallon pails, but they're incredibly heavy.
- Somewhere around the 15th hour of honey processing with no end in sight, you'll feel you have too much honey. When friends and co-workers find out you have honey, you don't have anywhere near enough.
- Have biscuits available, because one of the sweetest rewards of beekeeping is your fresh honey. Fingers also work, although for food safety

reasons, swipe up honey only if it is the last dribs in the bucket, or possibly off the cat.

Goings-on at the MBA

How the MBA is working to support bees, beekeeping, and beekeepers in Michigan

Sponsor: Honey Festival July 15 and 16, 2023

by Kerry Wysocki, District 3 Representative

Kerry Wysocki, who attended as a volunteer and district 3 MBA rep reflects on her day and why it was important to her and to the MBA!

On one of those picture-perfect Michigan summer weekends, the Shiawassee County Fair Grounds in Corunna hosted the annual Honey Festival. For those of us bewitched beeks, it's the celebration of why we all have joined this much feared, misunderstood, awe-inspiring, and dare I say, obsessive, hobby.

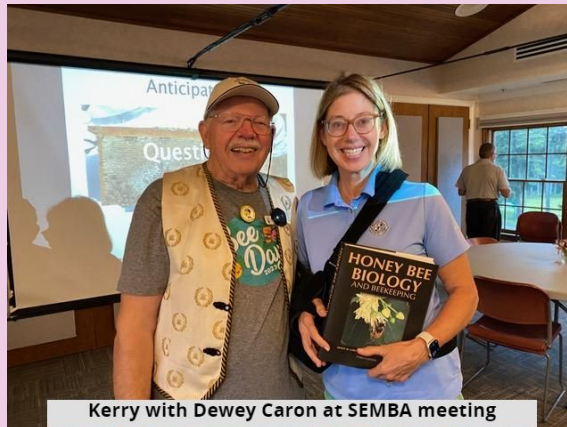
The fairgrounds were swarming with all things bees, decorative crafts, foods made with honey, books written and illustrated by our very own Michigan authors, demonstrations of hives and honey extracting, and multiple vendors hawking any and all items to assist in your journey to raise healthy and productive honey bees. There was something for all ages.



I was there on Sunday, volunteering as a representative for our MBA display table. What I should have packed that day was my propolis tincture spray to alleviate a sore throat from the non-stop talking and engaging with visitors and other vendors. Our observation hive was a huge hit with the families as they quickly identified our Barbie inspired pink queen. Which of course followed into an even better explanation of the bee life cycle display, from day 1 with an egg to day 21 for a worker bee.



We introduced ourselves a lot, handing out brochures with our mission statement and explaining how important memberships are to support MBA's many endeavors. It was rewarding to bring together area beekeepers with their corresponding clubs. So many new beekeepers had no idea there were local clubs in their own backyards where they could gather and receive education and support from others. We renewed memberships of those who had forgotten about MBA and that we are much more than an organization that simply hosts two conferences a year. We spoke of our many projects both ongoing such as the successful Pollinator Tree program, which raised over \$5,000 and sponsored the current Dewey Caron club speaking tour. This fan brought iher textbook to the SEMBA meeting for a photo op and signature. (note his stylish MBA hat)



Kerry with Dewey Caron at SEMBA meeting

Plus, we shared information about all of the activities in the works for 2024 and beyond: ADA-compliant apiaries, Beekeepers in the School program, legislation for increasing honey cottage food law sales limit, and the exciting news of the EAS conference for 2025 in Dearborn. We handed out countless seed packets, Honey Farm coloring books with homemade pollinator-shaped crayons, and received generous donations to support MBA.



What truly stood out for me the most about the Honey Festival were the people and making new connections. It reminded me how important our organization is as a voice for those of us both young and old, obsessed with all things *apis mellifera*. Commercial groups, hobbyists, gardeners, and college and other school programs all comr together. There is always much to do and few who actually get things done. For someone who struggles to ask for help, the festival enlightened me that help is already out there. There are so many incredibly talented individuals with the common love of bees.

So, here is my call to arms for the MBA. Yes, your membership matters, so please renew. Are you artistic? Graphic design skills? Social media talents? Content creator? Public speaking? We need you. Please reach out.

I'll definitely look forward to another honey festival next year. One can only hope to have as good and plentiful a harvest such as 2023. May your supers be full and your stings be few.

MBA Coloring Books

We have a new batch of coloring books available to MBA members and affiliate clubs who are going into schools or other venues where they will be teaching kids about bees.

If you are interested in having some at your event, contact your local club or District Rep.



Bees in School

Helping to educate the public about bees is a vital part of the MBA's mission, and where better to start than with kids? The MBA used World Bee Day on May 20, 2023 to kick off a pilot program matching interested beekeepers with classrooms wanting to learn about bees. Now, as we approach the end of summer, school is coming and so are our opportunities to

bee back in school. As the program grows, the MBA is creating and sharing a host of resources to be used for teaching kids about bees. More information about the program will be included in the next newsletter. Until then, please check out the first of our resources on the [MBA education page](#).

Working to increase the licensing exemption for selling honey

by Rick Dimanin

Chair, Michigan Beekeepers Association Legislative Committee



Photo by Rich Wieske

In many states, the sale of honey by small scale producers is covered under Cottage Food law, which allows individuals to manufacture, store, and sell certain types of foods produced in an unlicensed/uninspected home kitchen. However, under Michigan law, pure unadulterated honey and maple syrup are not considered “cottage foods”; rather, these agricultural products are in their own category and subject to different rules and regulations. Pure unadulterated honey for sale to the

general public must be properly labeled, indicating that it contains honey, the name and address of the producer, a statement that the honey was not processed in a Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)-inspected facility, and the container’s net weight. As long as the beekeeper complies with the labeling requirements for selling pure honey, and does not have gross sales in excess of \$15,000 per year, she/he is deemed to have complied with the law.

However, if the beekeeper has gross sales of over \$15,000, Michigan law currently states that all of their honey must be extracted and bottled in a MDARD-licensed and inspected facility, such as a licensed honey house or commercial kitchen. With a cap of \$15,000, this law significantly impacts the ability of small-scale beekeepers, who are often working with small profit margins, to harvest and market their honey. The challenges involved in complying with the law are significant, as it requires that the beekeeper either construct a MDARD-licensed/inspected honey house on their own (cost estimated to be well over \$20,000, and not financially viable for most small to medium scale beekeepers) or find and rent space in a licensed honey house or a commercial kitchen willing to accommodate extraction and bottling equipment, and full supers of honey with the ever present “straggler” honey bees, as well as find transportation for supers, equipment, and bottles to and from the facility, all at a price point that would allow a profit. Finding such facilities can be very challenging, especially when we are all extracting at around the same time of the year.

Because of the ever-increasing cost involved in beekeeping and honey production, we feel that the \$15,000 amount is simply unrealistic and should be substantially raised to an amount that would encourage honey production, foster small business creation, and provide adequate compensation for beekeepers plying their craft. The board of directors of the Michigan Commercial Beekeepers Association and the Michigan Maple Syrup Producers Association have approved resolutions fully supporting raising the exemption amount. Over the past few months, our legislative committee has been examining ways that the MBA can

help increase the \$15,000 gross income cap that exempts honey from being produced in a licensed facility. The legislative committee has written a position statement explaining why the exemption should be raised by the Michigan legislature. We are now formulating an implementation plan that will be presented to the MBA board for discussion and approval at the August board meeting. We plan to ask the Board to discuss and adopt a resolution calling for an exemption amount that would reflect economic realities of small-scale beekeeping. The legislative committee is proposing the MBA endorse raising the exemption to \$100,000. We will also present various strategies to engage our Michigan legislators, in order to encourage them to increase the \$15,000 exemption. These could include lobbying members of the agricultural committees of the state House and Senate to introduce a separate bill or asking them to amend a related bill already under consideration, related to increasing the cottage food gross income cap, to include a provision to raise the cap for honey and maple syrup producers as well.

If you would like to be involved we would love to hear from you. In addition, as we move forward with this process, each of you will have the opportunity to help by contacting your Michigan House Representative and state Senator to advocate for such a change.

Growing Our Resource Lists

by Becky Green

MBA newsletter editor and Communications Committee member

Cut-out list: I suspect many of you, like me, have had calls from desperate home owners, asking for advice or help related to bees in residence in a house or outbuilding. If you have turned to the MBA cut-out list for help, you know that we desperately need to grow our list. Can you help?

If you are an individual or business or know of an individual or business that can provide cut-out services, we would love to get that information into our cut-out list. Please email information to newslettereditor@mba-bees.org. We need at a minimum a contact name, business name (if applicable), city and county the business or individual is based in, and a contact number. A brief bio outlining experience with cut-outs and ability to travel is optional, but appreciated.

Membership in the MBA is NOT required to be listed.



Swarm removal list: Our swarm list is nothing fancy, but by trading glitz for the ability to update the list using data that pulls from MBA membership profiles, I was able to keep up with updates every 1 to 3 weeks, even through a busy swarm and split season. We peaked out at 92 participants and currently have 88 swarm catchers listed. MBA members can add or remove themselves from the list by editing their member profile. I am open to suggestions and would love feedback about how the list worked for you.

Local honey locator: This list is new and populating much more slowly than I would like. I suspect this is due to the complexity of the instructions. The communications committee will be discussing options for how to make it easier for MBA members to add themselves to the list. **To that end, if you have**

expertise using Wild Apricot, and in particular using the membership directory functions, or if you have expertise in internet security that could guide us about best practices to protect member data if we open up limited membership search functions to the public, we would love to have your help, either as a member of the communications committee, or as a volunteer guest consultant.

Can you think of other resource lists that would be useful to you? Tell me about them at newslettereditor@mba-bees.org.

Bee Club Buzz

A place to introduce your club, and to share stories about club activities

The 100-year swarming season and one club's effort to control swarming

by David Kazyak, District 2 Representative



Swarming is the most natural process for honey bees, but one issue with swarms, particularly in the backyard bee-keeping community, is where the swarm will end up. It can certainly cause friction between beekeeper and neighbors if a swarm takes up residence in a soffit, behind siding, or any number of places that make it difficult and/or expensive for a homeowner to extract.

One local bee club is working on a solution. Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers (A2B2) has been piloting a new nuc program to assist beekeepers who either can't or don't want to expand their apiaries. The A2B2 program is structured to make swarm prevention a simple process. The A2B2 member arranges a time to visit the beekeeper's apiary and, working with the beekeeper, the club member will help split hives at risk of swarming, taking 4-10 frames of bees from the hive. Depending on the beekeeper's wishes, the queen will either be left in the existing hive or taken with the split, leaving either a colony with an existing queen, reduced in size and less likely to swarm, or a colony ready to raise a new queen. The bees from the split are managed by seasoned A2B2 beekeepers and once the split colony is queen-right, of sustainable size, and healthy, the nuc is sold to an A2B2 Club member looking for an additional colony.

What the club members do for the participating beekeepers:

- Assure that enough bees/eggs/frames/honey/pollen remain for a viable hive
- Provide replacement frame parts and foundation
- Teach the split process, step-by-step
- Answer any questions relating to that hive or other hives in the apiary

In addition to managing swarming, this program also lessens the need to import honey bees. Honey bees are in high demand in our area; thus, large quantities of bees are imported from out-of-state. Often the out-of-state bees do not have optimum traits to thrive in local conditions. The greater the population of local bees who have adapted to Michigan conditions, the better the outcome.

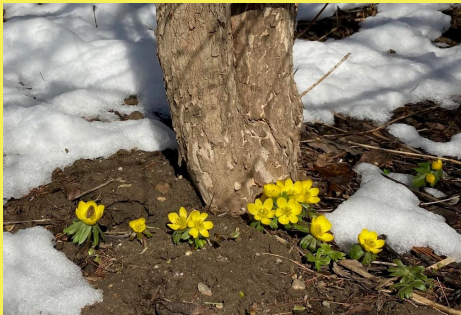
A2B2 is currently in their second year of the program. Typically 15-20 calls come in a season, not all leading to splits. About half the time it ends in a mentoring discussion or a visit to the hive for adjustments. The program is growing, it's helping with the swarming issues and everybody is learning.

It may be a program that other clubs might consider adopting, as we all wrestle with swarm prevention and control.

Gardening for Bees: Bulbs for Bees

By Becky Green with help from Lisa Stinson

When the snow starts to melt in late winter, and the days get warm enough for the bees to venture out, there is nothing that says “spring is coming” like the first sighting of our honey bees on the early spring flowers. As the time to plant bulbs for those early flowers is quickly approaching, I thought I would follow Lisa Stinson’s prior Gardening for Bees lead, and share information with you about three of my favorites. Unfortunately, unlike Lisa, I am not much of a flower gardener. A quick visit to my vegetable garden would show you that, even there, I am much more proficient at growing weeds than anything else. I can claim no credit for the beautiful spring flowers that my bees love so much. Thankfully, my mother is an avid gardener, and when she was still able, she especially loved planting perennial plants and flowers all around the homestead. When my parents passed the farm on to me, I became the keeper of all the flowers my mom had planted over their 34-year residence, and my bees are ever grateful for her efforts. To make up for my lack of expertise, I asked Lisa to help me fill in details and she provided a wealth of helpful tidbits that I have incorporated below!



Winter aconite (*Eranthis*

hemalis): Although winter aconite grows from a tuber rather than a true bulb, the time to plant the tubers is fall, along with your bulbs, so I thought it was fair to include it here. It is one of the earliest flowers to bloom in sunny spots in the spring, and has a small, bright yellow flower that the bees love. Even better, one source explaining care for

aconites said it “prefers neglect”. What more could a gardener like me ask of a flower? It is in the buttercup family (*Ranunculaceae*), native to Asia Minor and Europe. The solitary, yellow cup-shaped flowers are surrounded by bright green modified leaves that look like a collar around the blossom. This ground-hugging plant works well in rock gardens, flower beds and woodland gardens. Once the flowers die back, the leaves appear, and then those also die back, so that by summer, the plant is dormant, waiting for the next spring to appear again.



Snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp): Snowdrops are a small, early-blooming perennial which grow from a bulb. It has waxy, delicate, solitary, white pendant flowers. There are about 19 species of *Galanthus* – in the amaryllis family (*Amaryllidaceae*), all native to the woods and wet, alpine grasslands of cool mountainous regions of southern Europe and Asia Minor. The most popular is the common snowdrop, whose Latin

name is *Galanthus nivalis*. *Galanthus* comes from the Greek gala for milk, and anthos for flower, referring to the color of the flower, and nivalis from Latin for snow covered. They are aptly named, because they can often be found pushing their way up through the snow in the spring. These are small, delicate plants, so they look best when planted with at least three or four plants together. They most commonly reproduce by multiplying bulbs and form compact clusters once established. Under the right conditions, they can also spread by self-seeding, sometimes prolifically. After their early arrival, they die back and are dormant by May.



Siberian squill (*Scilla siberica*): The great thing about this plant is that it has no need for a garden bed. Have you admired a lawn that was a sea of small, bright blue flowers in the spring? More likely than not, what was growing there was Siberian squill or Scilla. Despite its name, Siberian squill is not native to Siberia, but is found in other parts of Russia, and has been cultivated since the 1790s. Each tiny bulb

produces dark green, grass-like foliage and 3 to 5 flower stalks with blue, bell-shaped flowers. They attract a host of pollinators, and I love seeing honey bees with pollen baskets loaded with blue pollen when they are working the scilla. The plants themselves are only about 6 inches tall, and by the time the grass is ready to be cut, they have spread their seeds and gone dormant until the next spring. They also spread prolifically, so plant a handful of scilla bulbs in your lawn, and in no time at all, you have a carpet of beautiful blue flowers in the spring. But do be aware that the same properties that allow it to produce those beautiful blue spring lawns, have earned it a designation as an invasive in some areas.

Lisa added a few (more) great thoughts about my favorites:

- All three grow from bulbs or tubers, which are analogous to bee hives, as they are storage structures and hold nutrients and water to support the plant during the growing season and through dormancy in winter.
- All three are early pollen producers, and all will spread, sometimes quite prolifically. So, for a little work in the fall to get a small patch started, we can provide a pollen source for the bees at a critical time, during spring growth, and all of these plants have the potential to provide more for our bees with every passing year with little or no effort from us.
- All three are toxic to animals and humans. The downside is that if you have a pet prone to digging or a child who might ingest them, they may not be a great choice for you. The upside to the toxicity is that some pests, like deer, tend to leave them alone as a result.
- Don't you just love that you can plant them in the fall, and in the spring they come and go before it is time to mow the grass?

We hope you find this helpful. Happy planting!

Many thanks to Lisa, as well as to the horticulture extension at the University of Wisconsin, and Enchantedgardendesign.com for providing me with information to share with you about each of these plants.

Rapping with the Reps

Throughout the year we will acquaint you with your district

In this edition: Districts 6

MBA's district representatives help provide a link between the MBA and beekeepers and beekeeping clubs in their areas. If you represent a club, are a beekeeper, or a "wanna-bee" and are looking for information about the MBA, or wish to contact the MBA, your district representative is a great place to start!

Don Stockley - District 6

Compiled by Lisa Stinson

Serving Allegan, Arenac, Bay, Clare, Genesee, Gladwin, Huron, Iosco, Isabella, Lapeer, Midland, Ogemaw, Roscommon, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties.

The basics

- Where he calls home: Atlas Township
- "Keep your friends close..." and your family closer: Has a fair amount of family members who live nearby.
- TBD: How many of them have suited up and met Don's bees.
- As if bees aren't enough work: By day, Don is an "IT guy" for Genesee County. As a hobby, he has a penchant for collecting hobbies. Among his assortment are blacksmithing, longsword fencing, RPG miniature painting, hydroponic gardening and mead making.

The bees by the numbers

- Years keeping bees: 6
- Colonies: 3; has the good sense to stay under 6, too.
- Yards: 1; smack dab at the back of his property, affording them secluded flight paths from their hive entrances.

Shameless plug: Don bought some local spring nucs from members of Seven Ponds Bee Club, with which he could not be happier.

The good, the bad and the determined

- Triumph – Biggest Beekeeping Success – "My second year when I filled 5 gallons worth of mason jars. It was more honey than I'd seen in one place outside a grocery store shelf."
- Defeat – It's not so much a failure as a nonsuccess – "Right around my 4th year, I had 6 hives and all of them died out during the winter. I thought a lot about giving up on beekeeping. I think it was due mainly to poor discipline on my mite treatment schedule."
- Ambition - 2023 Beekeeping Goals – "To have healthy hives going into winter and see them all come out the other side."
- Bonus Ambition – 2024 Beekeeping Goal – Making successful splits

In greater bee-tail

Don added beekeeping to his hobby collection via, to borrow a phrase from the entrepreneurial world, "a ground floor opportunity." The kickstarter campaign for the Flow Hive piqued his curiosity. He explains, "It looked interesting and I knew nothing about bees at the time or even if the contraption would work. I liked the idea of someone trying to innovate something new and helping the bees, so I sent in money to back it." Not surprisingly, it didn't take long for him to realize that coughing up the money was the easy part. "When my hive arrived I had no idea what to do with it. I found another beekeeper who let me follow along on his hive inspections and I got hooked."

Since then, Don settled in as a member of the Mid-Michigan Beekeepers Club in Millington, currently serving as club Secretary. And, because the bees never fail to show us how much we don't know, he does the necessary due diligence to continue to develop as a beekeeper by tapping into reliable resources. "I have been slowly building my knowledge from listening to club speakers and going to the MBA conferences."

Community involvement and continuing education aside, time spent with the bees is an entirely different ball of wax (pun intended). His aversion to sweating in a hive suit during the dog days of summer is shared by many as a least favorite aspect of keeping bees, but his favorite experience of beekeeping, although also common, has a worthy goal attached to it. "I like standing outside the hives and watching them fly in and out. One day I'll setup a live stream for myself."

The rap on the rep

Don accepted the opportunity to serve as District 6 Rep as a means of giving back to the beekeeping community. "I've gained a lot from my club and the conferences. After COVID, our club took a big membership hit. I wanted to help our club and others share our successes so that we all benefit."

District 6 covers a seemingly large geographic area, which makes scheduling visits to bee clubs in Don's region challenging. Despite that, he readily describes club visits as the most satisfying responsibility as a district rep. Most surprising to him are the observable differences in how clubs run their meetings. For example, "SVBC pairs up new beekeepers with a mentor in their area and Seven Ponds splits into two tracts with info for new beekeepers and another for experienced ones." He'll continue to share these and other gleanings during his term in hopes of helping the clubs in his region support beekeepers, but his district rep reports might be habitually late.

District Updates

District 8

Copper Country Beekeeping Club

by Pete Cattelino



Our Club helped and supported a student organization at Michigan Tech with a Beekeeping 101 class hosted by the Sustainability Demonstration House (SDH). The SDH provides students with the opportunity to become involved in a demonstration of sustainable living within the community of Houghton. Residents of the house are encouraged to recycle and compost, while

exercising good habits of sustainability by being mindful of power and water consumption. Part of their mission is community outreach. They started beekeeping two years ago with one hive and with Copper Country Beekeeping Club support and involvement they led this beginning beekeeping class. It was offered three evenings the week of August 1, 2023.



Northwoods Beekeepers

Every quarter Bernie Driggs provides the newsletter with a beautiful document full of pictures, summarizing all the many activities of their club. Rather than dissecting it and rebuilding it in the newsletter, to preserve his work and all his great pictures, his document is attached

here for your enjoyment.

Northwoods Beekeepers third quarter update

Update from Michigan State University Extension

Upcoming webinars

- [Michigan Beekeeping August Office Hours Webinar](#) on Monday, August 28th, 2023 at 7:00 PM EST
- [Michigan Beekeeping September Office Hours Webinar](#) on Monday, September 18th, 2023 at 7:00 PM EST
- [European Foulbrood Office Hours Webinar](#) on Thursday, October 12th, 2023 at 7:00 PM EST

Upcoming events

- [Pollinator Habitat Management Training Workshop](#) on Wednesday, August 23, 2023

Online articles and news

- [Supporting Beekeepers & Protecting Pollinators – 2022 Impact Report from Michigan State University Extension](#)
- [Grant Increases Habitat for Pollinators Across Michigan](#)
- [2023 Needs assessment of Michigan small-scale beekeepers](#)
- [Getting started with beekeeping in Michigan](#)

Michigan State University Extension resources and communication channels

- [Michigan Pollinator Initiative website](#)
- [MSU Extension Pollinators & Pollination website](#)
- [MSU Beekeeping YouTube channel](#)
- [Michigan Pollinator Initiative Facebook page](#)
- [MSU Beekeeping Facebook page](#)
- [Getting started with beekeeping in Michigan](#)
- [Sign up for MSU Extension's "Pollinators and Pollination" news digests](#)
- [Ask Extension](#)

Visit our Website





Call for Submissions

Do you have an interesting beekeeping story or picture to share?
Would you like to introduce your club or share some club news?
Have you read an amazing bee book that you would like to tell us about?

If so, we would love to have the opportunity to put it in the MBA newsletter. The newsletter is published quarterly and the submission deadline for the next newsletter is **Nov. 6, 2023**.

Email submissions to: newslettereditor@mba-bees.org
Please include your name, address, best contact phone number and preferred email address with your submission.

Editor's note: I reserve the right to edit all submissions as needed, including editing for content, grammar, length, etc. Although I will try to include all appropriate submissions, some may need to be declined or publication delayed in the event there is an abundance of submissions. Submissions received after the posted deadline will be considered for the next newsletter.

Michigan Beekeepers Association | W2561 State Highway M69, Foster City, MI 49834-9713

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