MAY 2023

MCBA NEWSLETTER

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

DEREK PRUYNE

It's hard to believe how quickly the season is flying. Hopefully you have all had success keeping your bees in your apiary and adding to your numbers with caught swarms! Speaking of swarms, a stretch of dreary weather to close out April and welcome May could have temporarily paused the widespread swarm issuance I think we all were expecting. But with the steady rain and cooler weather behind us for now, be prepared for that activity to resume. And don't forget to visit our <u>Swarm Control</u> page if you need a hand!

We are excited to announce the tentative date for our Annual Picnic on July 29th! Keep an eye out for additional details, but the event is shaping up to look a lot like last year. Barring any changes, the event will once again be held at the Carousel at Pottstown (rain or shine). So mark your calendars and plan to join us for an afternoon of food, drinks (BYO), and honeybee discussion!

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GENERAL MEETINGS

May 25

7:00PM - Montco 4H Center and Zoom

Main Presentation Small Hive Beetles Dr. Jamie Ellis University of Florida

Dr. Jamie Ellis is the Gahan Endowed Professor of Entomology in the Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida. At the University of Florida, Dr. Ellis has responsibilities in extension, instruction and research related to honey bees. Regarding his extension work, Dr. Ellis created the UF, South Florida, and Caribbean Bee Colleges, and the UF Master Beekeeper Program. As an instructor, Dr. Ellis supervises Ph.D. and masters students in addition to offering an online course in apiculture. Dr. Ellis and his team conduct research projects in the fields of honey bee husbandry, conservation and ecology, and integrated crop pollination.

Mini Presentation Making Creamed Honey Dan Boylan

MCBA Past President; Cairnsgrove Gardens and Apiaries

Montgomery County 10-Day Forecast (www.weather.com)

Fri 05	62° /43°	Mostly Cloudy
Sat 06	69° /46°	Partly Cloudy
Sun 07	73º /53°	Partly Cloudy
Mon 08	75° /54°	Partly Cloudy
Tue 09	68° /52°	Showers
Wed 10	65° /48°	PM Showers
Thu 11	70° /50°	Partly Cloudy
Fri 12	74° /56°	Partly Cloudy
Sat 13	79° /58°	Partly Cloudy
Sun 14	77° /59°	Mostly Cloudy

What it means:

Finally back to pleasant spring weather! After a stretch of some cold and rainy conditions, we can expect our foragers to return to the field in full force as well as an uptick in swarms.

If you haven't had a chance to open up your hives recently, be prepared with some extra supers the next time you plan to do so. The extended forecast is setting up for ideal resourcegathering conditions.

Be patient checking for mated queens. The last few weeks were tough for mating flights, but conditions are once again favorable.

EDUCATION WITH MCBA

2023 SPECIAL INTEREST CLASSES

June 20, 2023

Topic: Queen Basics/ rearing (not Queen grafting) Location: 4H Center located at 1015 Bridge Road, Collegeville, PA 19426 Instructor: Michael Awckland Time: 6:30PM-9/9:30 PM -Different ways to raise them -Tools used for raising queens -How to raise them, without skill Register Here

Individual topics open to MCBA members and guests. Cost is \$25 per person for members, per session; \$35 for non MCBA members, per session.

Sessions will be 2.5-3 hours each. Register and pay in advance below. Classes can accommodate 30-35 spots in reserved classrooms.

A minimum of 12 students must be met for class to proceed.

2023 NEW BEEKEEPERS' CLASS

Tuesday, June 6 6PM-9PM

(registration closed) Queen issues Pesticide exposure to bees Honey production and extraction What is a nectar dearth Robbing behavior in honeybees

MCBA - MAY 2023

POLLEN TRAPPING INTERVIEW WITH WALT BROUGHTON

by Regina Rhoa, MCBA Vice President

Several years ago, I bought a Sundance pollen trap thinking that I would like to start pollen trapping. I have bought Swarmbustin' frozen pollen for years. Due to being very perishable, pollen is very expensive, so I thought, 'why not try it myself'. I was so proud of myself but got frustrated very quickly. Most things you read about pollen trapping say not to do it for too many days in a row since it can cause a deficit in the hive. I think I only brought in a few tablespoons of pollen. So, the pollen trap went back in the shed with all the other beekeeping equipment.

Last year, I had a hive that became pollen and honey bound. I run 8 frame medium equipment. Essentially the hive stored about 10-12 frames of bee bread and the rest nectar, leaving the queen with no place to lay. Of course, they started building supersedure cells, telling the queen that she wasn't doing her job. This spring I had the same thing happen in another hive. Why would a hive essentially store so much pollen leading to their own demise?!?! I guess some breeds are more prone to collect pollen. So, I was talking to our President, Greg Lehman, who says he collected about 1 quart of pollen in 5 days. So, I decided to break out the pollen trap again.

Day 1, 1 tablespoon, Day 2, 2 tablespoons, then day 3 a whopping 1 cup. It decreased thereafter until I turned off the pollen trap after 5 days. But I got the same results as Greg, about a quart. I was immediately intrigued.

I decided to reach out to the expert, Walt Broughton of Swarmbustin' Honey. If you have ever had the pleasure of meeting Walt, he is an interesting guy. When I arrived at his home/apiary, he welcomed me with open arms and gave me a big hug like we have known each other forever, though we have only met a few times.We went out to his apiary, which is very colorful, sat down at a table 30 feet from the hives and talked bees.We talked for 2-1/2 hours about every topic of bees and plants (isn't that what beekeepers do?). We never got pestered once by a bee, though we were covered in bee poop. We even walked amongst the 50 or so colorful hives without veils and the bees didn't even notice us. Very docile bees.



POLLEN TRAPPING (CONT'D)

Walt runs over 500 hives with his 3 sons who work with him full time and help him run the business. He runs pollen traps on around 40% of the hives. He stated even though the books say to only leave the pollen traps open for about 5 days a month, he leaves them open for the entire active bee season. He finds that this doesn't create a deficit in pollen, since the girls can get some pollen through, and they will forage until their needs are met. The only disadvantage is that you will get less honey since the bees will be focused on pollen, though Walt harvested 14 tons of honey last year. Walt also states that he uses the pollen traps as a diagnostic tool. If they start bringing in considerably less pollen, he knows he has some issue in the hive, such as a loss in queen. One of the other reasons for leaving the trap open is that the bees have a learning curve to use the trap. It makes them go into the hive a different way through a series of funnel chutes, crawl to the back of the hive, then go through a smaller diameter screen, which then scrapes the pollen off their corbicula (pollen baskets). This is why I was seeing the small amount of pollen the first few days I was trapping.

I asked Walt how much pollen he traps per year. He looked at me, chuckled and said I would be blown away. Over the last 3 years, he trapped 7 TONS!!! And he cannot keep up with the demand. He is one of the primary suppliers of pollen. He services his walk-up clients, does mail order and wholesales to store such as Kimberton Whole Foods. He also ships to Penn State University and the University of Illinois for their bumble bee program. He said the bumble bees are very fussy, so he can only send the very light pollen.Pollen is very perishable, so it is stored the freezer. In the humid summers, he will dry pollen out in screened trays for an hour or so outside, then freeze it. Pollen must be harvested every day from the traps, or it gets moldy. I asked him about dried pollen you see on store shelfs, and he just laughed and said that is junk.

I mentioned to Walt that I had heard conflicting studies as to whether pollen really has any value to humans for things such as allergies. He said he has clients that swear by it and state they definitely feel worse if they run out. Walt's website www.911honey.com states that fresh pollen contains up to 30% protein (depending on plant source), 18 amino acids, as well as notable amounts of Vitamin A, C, D, & E, and is also a superb source of the entire B vitamin complex.Walt stated that he is grateful to live in a microclimate, with a somewhat steady abundance of pollen available, affording them the ability to harvest the pollen in the manner that they do. Not all regions of the country are so fortunate.Beekeepers who harvest pollen need to be in tune to their own microclimate and their bees.

Walt would like to see more people get into pollen trapping since he cannot keep up with the demand. Whether they create their own customer base, or he would be willing to buy bulk from beekeepers. It is also great to feed the pollen back to your bees during the dearth by creating your own quality pollen patties. Pollen traps come as bottom or top mounted, but Walt says Sundance bottom mounted pollen traps are the hands down best. Sundance traps are expensive and run around \$70-90, but they quickly pay for themselves. If you are looking to expand your offerings to your clients, try pollen trapping. It is easy and fun. You will be amazed at the colors you see. It is also fun to start identifying the pollen sources, which makes you more in tune to your local plant phenology. Plant phenology is the timing of plant life-cycle events, such as flowering or leafing out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

Volunteer Opportunities

MCBA members - would you like to get involved in the community? Honey bees are a subject of great interest, and our club boasts a tremendous collective of honey bee (and pollinator) experts. If you would like to share your knowledge, please be sure to check out the recentlyupdated volunteer page on our website <u>HERE</u>. Please note you must be logged in as this is a members-only page (can be found under the MCBA Members Only tab)

Queen Cell Program

The 2023 Queen Cell Program is officially underway! If you are an MCBA member in good standing, you should begin to see emails from the MCBA titled "Queen Cell Alert". After a successful first round the third week of April, you are likely to see more announcements in the coming weeks. If you are a member in good standing and not receiving the emails, please contact MCBA at admin@montcopabees.org To learn more about the Queen Cell Program, click <u>HERE</u>

To learn more about the Queen Cell Program, click <u>mene</u>

<u>2023 International Conference on Pollinator</u> <u>Biology, Health and Policy</u>

The Penn State Center for Pollinator Research is hosting the fifth International Conference on Pollinator Biology, Health and Policy on June 3-6, 2023, with an optional evening welcome reception on Saturday, June 3rd.

It has been thirteen years since the inaugural International Conference, and there have been significant advances in our understanding of the drivers of pollinator declines, the tools to monitor and predict these declines, and strategies to conserve and expand both managed and wild pollinator populations. Moreover, it is clear that broader insect communities are experiencing similar challenges, and can benefit from the strategies developed for supporting pollinators. The theme for this year's conference is understanding and leveraging networks to support pollinator health, from gene networks to ecological community networks, to scientific networks.

Pollinator Habitat Fund Registration Plate

The Pollinator Habitat Fund Registration Plate became available to order on March 3, 2023. Twenty-five dollars from every Pollinator Conservation plate sold will be credited to the Pollinator Habitat Program Fund. The Pollinator Habitat Program Fund was established as a special fund in the State Treasury for the purpose of providing support for roadside pollinator initiative. Applicants for the registration plate must submit Form <u>MV-911</u>, "Application for Special Fund Registration Plate." This registration plate is available for passenger cars or trucks with a registered gross weight of not more than 14,000 pounds.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy Native Plant Sale

Looking to fill out your native garden this spring? The PWC is currently running its annual native plant sale - but don't wait! Inventory is selling out fast! There are still a handful of native plants available, in addition to the in-person sale May 13th and 14th

Online pre-ordering for our Native Plant Sale opens Monday, April 24th at 8:00 am!!

In Person Native Plant Sale & Pre-Order Pick-up: Saturday, May 13th & Sunday, May 14th at Peter Wentz Farmstead

More Native Plants Near You!

Nursery Option for those further north (Lehigh County) **Edge of the Woods Nursery** - check out their spring inventory in addition to a great lineup of events celebrating their 20th anniversary! Click <u>HERE</u>

Nursery Option for central/southern Montco

David Brothers Landscape Services - With a team of landscape architects and certified arborists and horticulturists, David Brothers is a one-stop shop for large and small projects. Click <u>HERE</u>

BeeWorks, LLC

By now you have surely heard of our neighbors at BeeWorks, LLC. A distributor of Forest Hill and Dadant products, BeeWorks is open Wednesdays (2:30-6:30PM), Saturdays (4-7PM) and always by appointment for your convenience. Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 11 as BeeWorks is hosting a "Bee Talk" with Mike Awckland on **Mite Treatments.** BeeWorks will be open from 1-4PM with the talk between 2-3:30PM. This is a great opportunity to strategize your mite plan and grab your miticides ahead of the summer mite population bloom. Click <u>HERE</u> to visit BeeWorks website.

THE BEGINNERS' Corner

Welcome back to the beginners' corner, friends! For this edition, I thought I would discuss my personal preferences when it comes to protective clothing. Please note that this is highly subjective from beekeeper to beekeeper, and I am not telling you what you should or shouldn't do. It is extraordinarily important you feel comfortable and safe when you are working your colonies, especially as you are just getting started on your beekeeping adventure. With that said, here are some of my PPE choices when it comes time for me to suit up and crack open a hive:

Helmet/veil:

The main point I want to make here: wear your helmet/veil/hood combo any time you are in your apiary. I will admit, I cheat this often as my apiary shares a footprint with my garden, so I am always around my bees. But getting stung on the face is no picnic. Quick anecdote - in my first spring, I grew a little cocky when I was cracking the lid to check on my syrup jars. I must have done it 20 times without my veil and without issue. Then, right before my wife and I drove north 3 hours to visit family, an angry missile fired off the inner cover and smacked me right on the lip. My family found my "lip fillers gone wrong" incident more amusing than I did. As you gain experience you will more than likely take such risks yourself at some point. However I must encourage that you always protect your face when getting up close and personal with your bees. When selecting a helmet and veil, I really recommend a ventilated helmet. That will be a common theme here, but hive inspections can be HOT and you will appreciate having spent a few extra dollars on ventilated options.

To glove or not to glove:

To reiterate my opening sentiments - you should do what makes you comfortable here. I will tell you I started out wearing gloves, and I have since abandoned them altogether. Gloves have a tendency to make you a bit clumsy when you are pulling/inspecting frames, and clumsy hands/crushed bees tend to make the bees all the more agitated. There is so much "feel" involved when working a colony. "But don't you get stung a lot?" Well, sometimes. Sometimes not at all! And it seems like 90% of the time when I do catch a sting, it is when I am putting the hive back together (and perhaps dropping my focus a touch).

If you choose not to wear gloves, I won't sugar coat it - you will get stung from time to time. You will also have plenty of curious bees walking across your fingers/hands with completely neutral intentions. Even that can be a tad unsettling before you get used to it. If you are holding a frame full of bees (and possibly your queen), you also must be sure you have the focus and pain tolerance to not just drop the frame of bees to the ground. These are just things to keep in mind as you potentially consider easing into this approach. A small tip: I like to keep a bottle of hand sanitizer and a shop rag nearby. This will help clean up the ultra-sticky propolis that you will surely get on your fingertips!

Jackets:

I won't lie... I do not own a jacket. Chalk this up to "I spent HOW MUCH establishing 2 colonies my first year?" This was one expense I decided to push. If you are trying to avoid stings at all cost, then you likely already have a jacket. On cooler days, I will wear a long sleeve shirt, but since last year, I inspect almost exclusively in a t-shirt. For your safety, I am not recommending this, but I just couldn't take the heat anymore! Generally speaking, I rarely get stung on the arms or torso - the hands are a much more common target.

At minimum, I think it is very smart to own a jacket, and it is on my list. You never know when your bees will be cranky for one reason or another, and one mistake can flip the switch on otherwise docile colony turning it into a defensive one. And although I can't make a true recommendation here on personal experience, I won't consider buying anything that isn't marketed as "vented". You will appreciate it on those 85F+ days! (Side tip: if your apiary isn't near a residence, be sure to pack a cooler with water, especially if you wear a jacket/suit!).

COOKIN' WITH HONEY

*Mojo Sauce

Taco night anybody? This sauce is an ideal addition mixed with pulled pork or chicken and packs a ton of flavor. Please note: tacos are not just for Tuesdays.

Ingredients:

- 1 ripe mango pitted, peeled, and chopped
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1 jalapeño (seeded, if desired, for less heat) and chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste

Directions

Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor and pulse until smooth. Add more salt as needed

*Tieghan Gerard - Half Baked Harvest cookbook

This cookbook is a great addition to any honey-hoarder's kitchen collection. Many of the recipes replace boring old sugar with honey, and I've yet to try a bad recipe. Click <u>HERE</u> to find on Amazon.