



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION of Pennsylvania

December 2022



Note From the President

Greg Lehman

Thank you all for a great 2022! My first year as president was a bit stressful (as expected and warned by Dan Boylan), but more importantly it was pretty inspiring. On a weekly basis, I was blown away by the hard work going on behind the scenes. I knew from my previous years of being on the board and committees that there was a lot going on, but by being president I really got to see all the wheels in motion. Let me tell you – it's A LOT! I can't thank all of the volunteers enough. We were no longer stuck in isolation and this past year we were finally able to get the club closer "pre-pandemic" status.

In 2022 we had some big changes: a new president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Our new board members brought new skills – shoutout to Derek Pruyne for this very newsletter and to Robert Brooks for the new bulk buys! We started new committees, implemented new policies and procedures, formalized a grant process, and created new workshops. Shout out to George Balock for his leadership in formalizing our P&P and grants program!

We made the push to utilize our membership website – special thanks to Kelly Downs for her continued effort. If you haven't checked it out lately, go click around! We distributed more queen cells this year thanks to Jeanne Gable's queen cell program committee and Scott Famous's tireless commitment. Our general meeting speakers were the most prestigious and knowledgeable than ever before, which would not have been possible without Vince Aloyo and his committee's effort. And of course, everything is made possible because of Melissa Natale's hard work keeping the finances in order!

I hope 2023 brings with it as much growth and improvement as this past year, and I hope it brings with it new faces with new ideas. Everything we do relies on volunteers devoting their time to the club. As always, I urge you all to join us (via Zoom) for our board meetings. You can register for them on the events page of the MCBA website. Get involved with the club, get to know the inner workings, and let's keep growing! Through our membership website, everyone has a profile that shows available volunteer options (a checklist shows when you go to "edit profile") – give it a peek!

Needless to say, this entire association would not have lasted over 100 years without its members, so thank all of you for another year. Y'all rock. Happy Beekeeping and Happy Holidays. See you next year!

What's ahead:

Tue 13	42°/23°		Sunny
Wed 14	41°/25°		Partly Cloudy
Thu 15	42°/40°		Rain/Snow
Fri 16	47°/29°		Showers
Sat 17	41°/25°		Mostly Sunny
Sun 18	36°/25°		Mostly Sunny
Mon 19	40°/25°		Mostly Sunny
Tue 20	39°/21°		PM Rain/Snow Showers
Wed 21	35°/21°		Partly Cloudy
Thu 22	35°/21°		PM Snow Showers

www.weather.com

What it means:

With winter temperatures setting in, the bees are spending most of their time inside the hive in cluster formation. On a moderate sunny day, you may notice cleansing/housekeeping behaviors and localized foraging (e.g., water), but entrance activity is very low in these conditions.

Be sure to verify your mouse guards are secure, hives are locked down, and check on emergency food stores as the weather allows.

General Meetings – Review of 2022

A huge thank you is in order following a spectacular program of General Meetings in 2022. Thank you to all our main presenters, mini presenters, committee members, and meeting participants! The conversation and Q&A following presentations is often as insightful as the presentation(s) itself. Here is a look back at the main topics covered in 2022:

- January – Dr. Juliana Rangel – Texas A&M University – Research on Honey Bee Wax Pesticide Contamination and its Impact on Queen Physiology and Reproductive Health
- February – Dr. Thomas D. Seeley – Cornell University – Hive Thirst – How Does a Honey Bee Colony Regulate its Water Collection?
- March – Mike Palmer – French Hill Apiaries – Brood Factories
- April – Christopher J Cripps, DVM – Honey Bees and Veterinarians
- May – Dr. David Tarpy – North Carolina State University – Diagnosing Queen Problems: Is it the queen, the colony, both, or neither?!
- June – Dr. Katie Lee – University of Minnesota – Varroa and Risk Factors
- August – Stephen Repasky – Meadow Sweet Apiaries – Single Brood Chamber Management
- September – Bill Hesbach – Wing Dance Apiary – Thermoregulation and Ventilation
- October – Dr. Robyn Underwood – Penn State University – Which Bees Are Best: Testing the performance of commonly available honey bee stocks for Midwestern and Northeastern beekeepers

Kicking Off 2023

January 26, 2023

- Dr. Keith Delaplane – University of Georgia (main presentation)
 - Pollinator Partnerships Among Bee Species: How one bee species can affect the pollination efficiency of another species
- Jeff Eckel – PA Dept of Agriculture (mini presentation)
 - Importance of Apiary Registration and Role as State Apiary Inspector

Program Committee Members: Dr. Vince Aloyo (Chair), Jeanne Gable, Denise Ranucci, Justin Schiffler, Derek Pruyne

Committee and Club Shoutouts

In 2022, MCBA committee members and volunteers put in a lot of time and hard work to organize services, events, and resources that benefit the greater MCBA membership. In this section, we reflect on an extremely productive year with excitement around the momentum we are taking into 2023. There are so many people that volunteer their time and energy to make some of these things happen – if we missed any names, please know that you are appreciated and you are what make this club go!

The Banquet Committee

Our biggest annual event was another success in 2022 thanks to the work of this committee, the sponsors, and of course, all those who attended! The annual banquet is a great time to get together, talk about bees, get to know each other better... and talk about bees! This event is so well thought out and executed every year, and that starts with the committee:

- Judy Balock (Chair)
- George Balock
- Wayne Downs
- Marilyn Hibbard
- David Hibbard
- Anna DeLamater
- Jeanne Gable
- Kara Lehman

Banquet Sponsors

- [Balock Woodturning](#)
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The Queen Cell Committee

If you aren't familiar with the MCBA Queen Cell Program, the Committee has assembled a ton of great information on our website; click [HERE](#) to learn more!

The MCBA Queen Cell Program is designed to improve the genetics of bees in your apiary. We select from the best queens available (locally derived queens or breeder queens). These queens are used to produce queen cells that are provided to members in good standing for a nominal fee.

There are many reasons you might consider requeening a colony. Doing so, however, can often lead to performance uncertainty if the queen or cell is derived from an unknown source (or from an unproductive or otherwise inadequate colony). By properly introducing a queen cell from this program, you are substantially increasing your chances of producing a quality and highly performant queen in your operation.

Another huge thank you to the skilled queen cell producers, Susan Alfano (cell distribution coordinator), and to the Queen Cell Committee members:

- Jeanne Gable (Chair)
- Vince Aloyo (Cell Producer)
- Scott Famous (Cell Producer)
- Melissa Shainline
- Melissa Natale
- Kurt Skowronek
- Jim Stutzman
- Regina Rhoa
- Dan Boylan

In 2022, Scott and Vince produced 13 rounds of queen cells between May and August, with nearly 300 claimed over the course of the season! **What can you do?** The obvious answer is simply participate! However, this program would love your feedback. Did your queens successfully emerge and mate? Are they checking off the performance parameters that you wish to see out of your queens? Taking notes and providing feedback is extremely helpful and may provide data points that guide selection choices in the future.



The Grants Committee

We are extremely excited to announce a formalized grant process for 2023. The objectives of the Grants Program as defined by the Grants Committee are as follows:

- To disseminate information on beekeeping and modern, practical apiary management
- To provide those interested in honeybees a forum to discuss beekeeping and provide beekeeping education
- To promote the scientific study of honeybees, honeybee pollination, and honey production
- To foster an appreciation of the economic and ecological importance of the honeybee
- To provide or improve environmental conditions by providing or enhancing pollinator habitat

To learn more about the Grants Program, requirements, and application documents, visit our homepage or click [HERE](#). And of course, a huge thank you to this committee for putting in the time to detail a thorough and ethical process that the MCBA may use for years to come:

- Regina Rhoa (Chair)
- George Balock
- Melissa Shainline
- Vince Aloyo

The Policies and Procedures Committee

The product of this committee comes without some of the glitz and glamour of some of our other initiatives. However, formalizing the policies and procedures of the Board and the MCBA is critically important to the success and future of our club. A new committee in 2022, this group updated several policies that had become outdated (or did not exist) including our bylaws, committee SOPs, grant process, and more. Great work and more thanks to the hard work that went into churning out a great foundation as we look toward continued improvements in 2023!

- George Balock (Chair)
- Kelly Downs

Wax Dipping Committee

How many hours have you spent weather-proofing your brand new woodenware? Multiple coats of oil-based primer. Multiple coats of exterior paint. Hours between coats to dry, and enough brush strokes to make just about anyone arm weary. How about an alternative? Wax-dipped woodenware not only requires only a single application, but also offers much greater longevity than paint or stain. The MCBA organizes 2 wax dipping events per year (spring and fall), so be sure to take advantage in 2023! Click [HERE](#) for more information on how to participate, and thank you to our committee and volunteers for enabling this great service!

- George Balock (Chair)
- Bob Buswick
- Jeanne Gable
- Kelly Downs

Bulk Orders

More of a one-man-show than a committee, a big thank you to Robert Brooks for the 2022 pilot bulk order program. Robert researched multiple suppliers and quantity options en route to securing and distributing 120 boxes (6,000 lbs) of fondant and 144 hive wraps. The level of interest and participation from our members was high enough to justify continuing this program in 2023 with the possibility of adding additional resources such as pollen sub/pollen patties. Keep an eye out for club announcements/emails – and thanks again Robert!

Education With MCBA

2023 Beginners' Class

First, we would like to extend once again a sincere and profound thank you to Mark Antunes who is stepping aside as the MCBA Beginner's Class educator. If you are reading this newsletter, there is a great chance you started your beekeeping journey with Mark's class. Over the years Mark has made a tremendous impact on our beekeeping community through the MCBA, volunteer work, the beginners' class, and no doubt hours of casual beekeeping discussion with many of you. As we all know, the learning curve of beekeeping is extremely steep for beginners. This class and Mark's deep knowledge of beekeeping gave many of us the foundation we needed to jump in (and stay in). So again, THANK YOU, Mark!

With that said, we are excited to announce the 2023 Beginners' Class educators: Kelly Downs and Jeanne Gable! Kelly and Jeanne, knowledgeable and skilled beekeepers in their own right, have been as involved as anyone in the MCBA over the last several years. In addition to serving on multiple committees and volunteer efforts, Kelly and Jeanne have also worked alongside Mark in the beginners' course and are prepared to take the reins in 2023 without a hitch. With a rock-solid curriculum and course agenda ready to go, the 2023 class registration is officially OPEN. So please spread the word, and find more information on our website [HERE!](#)

Workshops

In 2023 and beyond, the MCBA is transitioning away from the Intermediate Course and instead moving to more workshop-style classes. This is designed to offer more hands-on (when appropriate) opportunities and to touch on more specific or advanced aspects of honeybee management. A great example from 2022 was the Queen Cell and Grafting class. While the workshops offered may change from year to year, these short courses will offer intermediate or advanced beekeeping lessons without the commitment of the traditional intermediate course. Stay tuned for announcements, and please don't hesitate to make suggestions for workshops you would find useful!

PA State Beekeepers Association

Here in the MCBA, we are so proud of the participation and engagement we receive from our membership. And while we are committed to providing the best services and resources possible at our own local/regional level, there is another organization at work to benefit the entire Commonwealth: the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association. Hopefully you are aware of some of the things this organization does on behalf of Pennsylvania beekeepers, honey bees, and pollinators, but below is a synopsis of some of their key contributions to our community:

- Promotion – PSBA supports a group that looks for ways to promote honey, beekeeping, pollination, and the industry as a whole.
- Ag Progress Days – PSBA spends 3 days each year at Ag Progress Days selling ice cream, educating, and promoting beekeeping
- Farm Show – PSBA and countless volunteers spend hundreds of hours staffing the Farmers Market, Food Court, Learning Center, and apiary exhibit area at the state farm show. This event is probably our most public presence in front of an estimated 600,000 people each year. The market is the place where beekeepers across the state can offer their honey and hive products for sale. The food court offers a taste of honey and the learning center and exhibit area showcase and educate everything about beekeeping.
- Pa Honey Queen and Princess – PSBA sponsors the Honey Queen program. The queen and princess travels throughout the state speaking at schools, fairs, festivals, beekeeping meetings, etc. They participate in television, radio, and print media interviews promoting the beekeeping and honey industries. The focus of the Honey Queen program is education and industry awareness.
- Legislative – PSBA regularly meets with legislators monitoring governmental actions potentially impacting beekeeping in our state. We have a presence with the game commission assisting policy related to bears and beekeeping. Additionally, we routinely review and recommend legal policy affecting our industry.
- Advisory Board – Through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, PSBA maintains a group of advisors consisting of commercial, sideline, hobby, and a Penn State Extension representative. We meet semi-annually with the Department of Agriculture in regard to policy, problems in beekeeping and the bee inspection program. This group is currently actively engaged in conversation related to proposed changes to the bee law which will now be called the Plant and Pollinator Protection Act
- Meetings and Banquet – PSBA plans and takes care of all the organization and tasks to deliver a successful, fall conference and summer picnic each year. We also help to promote and support regional meetings and events.
- Publishing – PSBA creates an outstanding newsletter filled with great information, maintains a website, has a social media presence, and periodically issues press releases.
- Research – PSBA supports research through funding and volunteer services such as data collection, analysis of winter loss survey data, the Pennsylvania Queen Bee Improvement Project and Penn State research.

We encourage everyone to consider PSBA membership. The work they do on behalf of all PA beekeepers is well worth the \$20/year single membership fee (and can now be purchased online!). Click [HERE](#) to find the PSBA membership page and explore the PSBA website.

The Beginners' Corner

Derek Pruyne

Happy Holidays fellow beginner beekeepers! If this was your first or second season, I hope you found success and that you confidently put your healthy colonies 'to bed' for winter!

It goes without saying, our time in the apiary has slowed substantially as the winter weather has moved in around us. There are still a few things you can be doing periodically – but for the most part, management decisions have been made and we will have to live with those choices until weather begins to break in the spring.

Rather than discuss mistakes made and lessons learned (I will surely return to that format in the future), I thought this would be a good time for a bit of a "brain dump" for some thoughts that I find useful for this time of year. Forgive the lack of cohesion, but here are some general things for you to consider as we plunge into the heart of winter.

- Start researching swarming. It sounds crazy to think about it now, but if you successfully overwinter your colonies, things can move EXTREMELY fast in the springtime. Learn all you can about swarming: how to recognize the early signs, how to manage or prevent, phenological indicators such as maple tree and dandelion blooms. It would be great to spend a day in your mentor's apiary in the early part of spring to see some of this hands-on. I also recommend *Swarm Essentials* by Stephen Repasky. This is a great winter read and can help you prepare for a potentially chaotic spring.
- Buy more stuff! I know... beekeeping is expensive, and you *probably* overshot your budget in year 1 or year 2. But here is something you may not have been told so I am telling you now. You are going to need more equipment. Frames. Buy more frames. Hive bodies – you just never know. I honestly recommend having 1 full spare hive setup on hand. Bottom board, inner cover, top cover, a few bodies and some frames. This will give you what you need to produce a split (if you go that route). And the more drawn frames/supers you have on hand the better. If you need to split or add supers, you don't want the chore of acquiring more equipment. Best to do that in the offseason so you are ready!
- Embrace humility if you lose a colony. Even the best, most experienced beekeepers experience winter loss. We beekeepers, especially early on, tend to look for reasons it was not our fault. It's hard to admit failure, especially when the financial and time/energy investment is so high! And while some circumstances are outside of our control (it is nature, after all), there is almost always something we can learn or could have done differently to set up success. So, if you lose a colony, consider everything. Hive location, mite loads, remaining stores, etc. Every outcome, good or bad, is a learning experience. There are some great videos online that will walk you through inspecting a "dead out". Gather as many clues as you can before tearing down and starting anew.
 - Quick FYI – hive beetles and wax moths did not kill your colony!

Cookin' with Honey

Honey Lavender Cheesecake

Provided by Regina Rhoa

CRUST

- 1 ¾ cups graham cracker crumbs
- 4 TBSP melted butter

TOPPING:

- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 TBSP sifted powdered sugar
- ¼ cup lavender honey (see note)
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

LAVENDER HONEY:

- 1 cup light or medium honey
- 2 TBSP dried lavender flower/bud

FILLING:

- 2 lbs cream cheese; room temp
- 1 cup sugar (200g)
- 4 large eggs
- 1 TBSP vanilla extract
- 2 tsp lavender extract
- ½ cup lavender honey (see note)
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- Violet food coloring (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Lavender Honey:

1. Warm honey in small saucepan just enough to make fluid (do not overheat).
2. Turn off heat and add lavender buds directly to warmed honey. Let sit at room temperature for at least 1 hr (longer is better)
3. After soaking buds, strain in fine mesh strainer by pressing buds with spoon to extract all flavor. If honey has set up in pan, warm slightly prior to straining

*NOTE: You can buy store bought lavender honey as an alternative to making your own

Crust:

1. Preheat oven to 350F; prepare 9" springform pan with cooking spray
2. In small bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs and melted butter until thoroughly combined
3. Press crumb mixture into bottom of pan and about ½" up the sides
4. Bake 12-15 minutes until crumbs are set; cool on wire rack

Filling:

1. Preheat oven to 325F
2. In a stand mixer with paddle attachment, beat cream cheese until light and fluffy
3. Add sugar and beat on high for an additional 3 minutes
4. Add vanilla extract, lavender extract, honey, and salt – mix until combined
5. Add eggs, one at a time, scraping down side of bowl with spatula after each addition
6. Add a few drops of violet food coloring and mix until desired color is reached (continued below)

7. Add sour cream – mix until combined
8. Add heavy cream – mix until combined
9. Wrap outside of springform pan in extra wide heavy duty aluminum foil making sure foil reaches top but does not hang over top of pan. Two layers are ideal to prevent water leakage in water bath.
10. Pour cream cheese filling into springform pan. Smooth the top with a spatula
11. Place the pan inside a high-sided roasting pan
12. Create water bath by filling the roasting pan with water until you reach halfway up the side of cheesecake pan
13. Bake for 1 ½ hours
14. After 1 ½ hrs, turn the oven off and crack the door open 1 inch
15. Leave like this for 1 hr
16. After 1 hr, take the cheesecake out of the oven and place clean aluminum foil over the top without touching
17. Refrigerate for 4 hrs

Topping:

1. In a medium bowl, combine sour cream, honey, vanilla, and powdered sugar. Mix until combined.
2. Spread mixture over top of the cooled cheesecake
3. Decorate as desired



ENJOY!

Montgomery County Beekeepers' Association of Pennsylvania (MCBAPA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Our membership consists of individuals who are both commercial and hobby beekeepers. The MCBAPA encourages and promotes active involvement within our community and our organization. Membership is open to an individual who is a beekeeper or has an interest in beekeeping, and who wants to promote honeybee health.

Our Mission: *Providing educational outreach to the public, supporting fellow beekeepers and working to promote sound beekeeping practices and honeybee health*