



nnjbees.org

March 2014



NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

A division of New Jersey Beekeepers Association

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2 nd V. Pres.	Bobby Slanzi	845-304-4333	Treasurer	Karl Schoenknecht	201-891-0947

Meeting on: **Friday, March 21st at 7:30 PM**, Location: **Ramapo College of NJ, 505 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430**



Bee Enthusiasts & Bee Curious always welcome!



Weather permitting.



Welcome New Jersey Apiarists. Spring has finally sprung (or is about to). Believe it or not, the beekeeping season is upon us. We actually get to open our hives and do the beekeeping thing. It's been so long but it has finally arrived so let's all jump back in and get back up-to-speed.

"Spring Prep: Installing Nucs & Making Splits" presented by Bob Hughes will include topics such as tips on installing nucs, the benefits of making splits from overwintered hives and other preseason chores to ready your apiary. Bob is a two-time President of the NJBA, teaches the Bee-ginners Beekeeping Course at Rutgers University and owner/beekeeper of Bob's Buzzy Bees.

Yearly Dues are payable starting now!



Your \$20 yearly dues goes to fund all of our activities, our post meeting refreshments, club supplies and all the other necessities required to bring the best possible programs, classes, mentoring and to introduce new beekeepers to the art and craft of the hobby we all love so much. See Karl Schoenknecht to make your timely dues payment and from all the officers, "Thank you for your continued support."

Message from the President:

Hello Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

March is here, and that can only mean one thing, Bee Season is FINALLY here! After our very long and very cold winter, it feels so good to know that our hives are getting ready to explode with activity. I am always amazed at how well the hive functions, especially when you realize that the queen begins to ramp-up brood production in the dead of winter, thereby creating all the bees just in time for the beginning

of spring. We are still a few weeks away from any large amounts of blooms, so please make sure your bees have plenty to eat, as your hive can still starve. Also, if you are planning on reversing your hive boxes, remember what Grant Stiles said at our January meeting, “reverse your boxes in mid-March or it will be too late to make a difference.” Since we are still having some fairly cold nights, I have not reversed my hives yet, but I am planning on doing it soon.

The past few months, I had been worried about how my hives were going to fair this winter, especially because it was so unbelievably cold. I use screened bottom boards, which I keep open throughout the winter, and I also use vented hive tops, so for the first time, I was worried about the effect the polar vortex was going to have on my hives. I had four hives going into winter, and when I checked on/fed fondant to them in early February they were all alive. However, just a few weeks later when I went to refill the fondant, one of my hives had died. I was surprised because it had the same amount of bees as the other hives, but now it was dead. I reminded myself that when a hive dies it is important to learn from it so I can become a better beekeeper. I did an autopsy on the hive, and there were a lot of dead bees, most had fallen to the bottom of the hive, so I knew they did not starve to death. Since I had seen the hive alive just a few weeks before, I think the fluctuating temperature must have somehow compromised the cluster. Also, this hive was on the end, and thus not as protected as my other hives which I think must have contributed to its demise. I think what I learned from this hive is in the past, when I have treated for mites, I have used the minimum dosages. Now, for this upcoming season, I think I will try a full treatment. I decided to take this approach because mites are the number one cause of bee deaths and weak hives. So this year, by being more aggressive, I hope I will have a much stronger hive going into winter.

So, with one season having ended and another about to begin, my message, especially to the newer beekeeper is to always remember the Zen of beekeeping—even if you do everything 100% “right,” something can still go wrong. Beekeeping is never like building a Lego set, where all the pieces are exactly the same for everyone, and if you follow the directions you will always get the precise finished masterpiece. While there is a lot of science behind knowing what to do, Beekeeping is more of an art and somewhat of a gamble then it is an exact science. Or, to say it another way, Beekeeping is a form of agriculture, and there are too many variables at play for any beekeeper to accurately predict the outcome. Ask any beekeeper and they will tell you about hives they lost and lessons they have learned. If keeping bees were an exact science, there would be a step-by-step “cookbook” approach that everyone would follow, without any disagreement on the right way to do things.

It is always tough when you lose a hive, which is why it is super important to remind yourself that you can lose your hive and still be a good beekeeper, as long as you continue to light your smoker, put your veil back on, and try, try again.

I look forward to seeing everyone at this month’s meeting!

Frank Mortimer

President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers



Hive Assembly Workshop

9:30 am, Saturday March 22

Do you need to assemble your hive? Would you like some help putting all your frame pieces together?

This Saturday at Bergen Community College, (exact directions below), the Northeast NJ Beekeepers will be holding our second annual Hive assembly workshop, hosted by our own Hugh Knowlton.

There will be plenty of tools, space and guides to help you turn your wood boards into a beautiful hive!

If you are interested in attending, please send an email to: frankmort@gmail.com.

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- ✚ Where: Bergen Community College at Grounds Maintenance Shop
 - ✚ Exact location: Shop is next to the parking lot of the Orchard Hills (Bergen County) Golf Course which is accessed from college entrance.
 - ✚ Directions: Googlemap/GPS 400 Paramus Rd, Paramus, NJ 07652 which will bring you to the entrance of the college. Upon entering bear left around large circle island with flag poles. Keep going left around circle (as if you are heading back to Paramus Rd); when you go past flag poles which will be on your left look for signs and road to Orchard Hills Golf Course on right. Our shop is first building on right with fenced in yard. If parking lot is full park in our yard; gates will be open.



Ulee's Gold

Beekeepers should see this film. Everyone else *must* see it! In addition to being a powerful drama about the sort of situations too many families fall into, *Ulee's Gold* portrays the beekeeping lifestyle with clarity, accuracy, and compassion. From a beekeeper's perspective, movies just don't get any better. If you want to look inside a beekeeper's life a little, or introduce the beekeeping world to friends or relatives who don't seem to quite understand it, this movie provides the perfect vehicle to make that connection happen. Peter Fonda, in the role of Ulysses Jackson, acts as if he had kept bees for thirty years. This strong, inward-looking character is so completely believable that Siskel and Ebert have declared that Fonda should be remembered at Oscar nomination time. The Florida Beekeeper's Association has already given Peter Fonda their highest recognition - he was named *Beekeeper of the Year* last year.

The plot is entirely plausible, at times a bit measured, but the slow pace is necessary to build the drama and to keep the tale believable. A wayward son, an addicted daughter-in-law, a wild teenaged grand-daughter, an introverted younger grand-daughter, a divorced (*twice*) neighbor, and more bee work than he can manage, make up Ulee's immediate world. His internal world is haunted by friends he lost in Viet Nam and a wife who died six years earlier. The story becomes rough, with some crude language, as Ulee faces his son's accomplices in crime. Parents may feel the language and some of the scenes - especially of the drug withdrawal - are too graphic for younger audiences. Despite these minor caveats (by today's standards, the movie is tame and there are no gratuitous scenes of violence or sex) it is an excellent, powerful drama.

I was pleased to see *Ulee's Gold* has opened among the top ten films in North America, with gross weekend ticket sales of almost one million dollars. The movie has not been heavily advertised, so we might assume that many of the audience attended because of the absolutely stellar praise the media has lavished on this work. IN Jersey says the movie is *Pure Gold*. Variety describes this movie as '*A gem of rare emotional depth and integrity... graced by a completely unexpected performance from Peter Fonda that is by far the best of his career.*' Entertainment Weekly also says '*Peter Fonda gives the performance of his life... playing with almost biblical rectitude...with a hint of tenderness that can wrench your heart out.*' Among Entertainment Weekly's praises are a nod to Van Morrison's closing credits tune [Tupelo Honey](#), which the reviewer describes as a gift to the audience.

As a beekeeper, I was especially enamored by some of the dialog:

When describing his work to his neighbor lady-friend, Ulee says, '*What with moving bees, pulling honey. chasing bears... it's pretty hard work. Most young folks wouldn't be bothered. But don't get me going talking about bees...*'

In a scene where you would expect Ulee to crack someone's skull, Ulee's nemesis, Eddie Flowers, says, '*I always thought it was a stupid business, messin' with bees.*'

When his imprisoned son asks how the bees are doing, Ulee says, '*Mites are choking them, pesticides are killing them, the drought's starving them... they're fine.*'



Over 1000 Strong!!!

We quickly blew through the 1000 member milestone and are, as of this writing 1012 members strong, and growing on our Facebook page! Be sure check it out. See the great pics and stories posted by the Facebook fans we have at our page.

Remember: <http://www.nnjbees.org> is your website! Check that site for everything Northeast New Jersey Beekeeping!

Next Month

From hedges to perennials, gardens can bloom after spring, and many of them are rich food sources for pollinators, migrating birds and insects. The NJ Beekeepers Association has collected a list of plants that provide late season nectar and pollen for pollinators. Lorette Cheswick will be talking about how these plants give pollinators, and you, reasons to keep coming back to your gardens.



Mary Ann's Gourmet Market
1011 MacArthur Blvd.
Mahwah, NJ 07430
201-962-8611
www.maryannsgourmetmarket.com

All Beekeepers Receive 10% Off!

❖ Volunteers ❖

Judy and Terry Regan	Refreshments – Cakes, cookies, brownies, tea, etc
Tom Miller	Refreshments – Cakes, cookies, brownies, tea, etc
Rachel Avenia-Prol	Web site creation and training: www.nnjbees.org
Jennifer Phillips	Refreshments – Cakes, cookies and other treats.
John Gaut	NJBA Constitution Committee.
Michael Miller	Apparel production, beekeeping instructor
Hugh Knowlton	Workshop/Event coordinator and presenter
Rob & Gloria Leustek	Legislative Liaisons and Craftsman's Corner

MARCH TIMELY TIPS

Finish up new boxes, repair/paint any other woodenware that need it, and be sure your honey supers are ready to go. Clear bottom entrances of dead bees and other debris.

Prepare your swarm traps. Swarm traps go out in April so order swarm lure or try lemon grass oil. Is your equipment ready for the year?

If it isn't too cool, perform a quick inspection to see if you have bees, larva, eggs, and a queen. Remember, if you see eggs, with 1 per cell, there is a queen. If there is a problem it might be prudent to pinch the queen and combine this hive with a good one using the newspaper method. Brood production also brings mite production. Determine your method for counting mites, your threshold, and control method.

If you have been keeping pollen patties in the hive, beware when weather warms up, unused patties will attract small hive beetle. Keep your eye out here.