



njbees.org

March 2016



NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

A division of New Jersey Beekeepers Association

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Meeting on: **Friday, March 18th at 7:30 PM**, Location: **Ramapo College of NJ, 505 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430**



Bee Enthusiasts & Bee Curious always welcome!



Weather permitting.



Please join us on **Friday, March 18th** when we continue with our BeeTalk® Series with the official NYPD Bee Wrangler, Swarm Catcher and Northeast New Jersey Beekeeper Association member, Detective Dan Higgins. Dan will speak about his excellent adventures blocking traffic, causing mayhem and saving New York City citizens from the horrors of wayward honeybee swarms. Dan will bring his equipment to show and describe his techniques in swarm capture under pressure. Are you aware that he has to fill out an arrest report for each bee in the swarm? Oh, the massive paperwork! Please join us this Friday to be educated and entertained!

Yearly Dues are payable now!



Your \$25 yearly dues goes to fund all of our activities, our post meeting refreshments, club supplies and all other necessities required to bring the best possible programs, headline speakers, classes, mentoring and to introduce new beekeepers to the art and craft of the hobby we all love so much. See Bob Jenkins to make your timely dues payment and from all the officers,

“Thank you for your continued support.”





Message from the President:

Happy March Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

And like that, the season has begun! Hopefully everyone has opened their hives and found their colonies strong and healthy. You should keep an eye on the weight of your hives, and if there is little to no honey, feed-feed-feed until the nectar flow is on. We are close, but hives can still starve if they don't have any reserves left to eat.

It is really satisfying to open your hives and see them overflowing with bees. For me, the more bees in a hive, the more satisfied I feel about my previous year's mite treatment schedule. The key point to remember is that the strength of your hive today is directly impacted by last year's mite treatment plan. Or, think of it this way:

More treatments = More Bees = More Honey

I like to remind everyone that in about a month, the fun REALLY begins, so now is the time to finish all your hive preparation, like assembling, painting, repairing, and building. I think now is also a good time to clean all your hive tools and equipment. I like to soak my hive tools in boiling water so I can start off the season without any of my tools being sticky and looking as good as new. Also, it's good to remember that you should wash your bee suits and veils. Your protective clothing takes a beating during the season, and better to wash it now than to have your bees, and everyone else, smell you coming from a mile away. I throw everything but my veil into the washer and then let my suit and gloves air dry. I hand wash my veil and also let it air dry.

If you are waiting for your nucs, they will arrive sometime in the later part of April. We cannot give you an exact date when they will arrive, as so much depends on the weather and how fast the new colonies are growing. Remember, beekeeping is agriculture, and as such, there are many variables beyond our control. For me, that is the Zen of beekeeping. You have to accept that you cannot control everything; therefore focus on what you can control and remain flexible enough to adjust and change direction no matter what Mother Nature throws at you. The longer you are a beekeeper, the more you


realize how little is really in your control. So, the "real" secret of success is the more you adjust to what your hive is telling you, the more successful you will be.

This month's meeting is going to be a fun one. I am really looking forward to hearing all the firsthand stories from the NYPD's Beekeeper, Dan Higgins.

I hope to see you on Friday!

Sincerely,

Frank Mortimer
President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers



Beekeeping in March – Spring is arriving a little Early!

John A. Gaut

The weather in March has been Spring-like so far. Last year we still had snow on the ground! I have seen lots of pollen coming into the colonies. I'm amazed how much they are finding! More normal and cooler temperatures will return in late March and early April. If the colony is able to maintain brood nest temperatures, they will continue to ramp up.

Because the colony is raising brood, the bees will consume a lot of honey and pollen stores. Adding a protein patty is a good supplement to the pollen stores. In cool weather they will not be able to forage as much, so the protein patty will enable them to continue feeding the brood. The nurse bees need the nourishment of both honey (carbohydrate) and pollen (protein) or a protein substitute to produce the food for the young larvae. When you look under the inner cover, you should still see honey at the top of the frames. If the hive is light (does not have much honey left), you will need to feed sugar in some form. Fondant is a good feed while the temperatures are still low. As we get into daily high temperatures of consistently 50F or more, sugar syrup (1:1) can be feed. Division board feeders are good while it is in the 50s. Top feeders can be used when it is a little warmer. Having both sugar syrup and protein patties available will help the nurse bees keep the brood well nourished, even during periods when the bees cannot fly. The protein patties should be removed once the bees are able to consistently forage for pollen; the small hive beetles love to use the patties to raise their young too!

Many beekeepers treated their hives with ApiVar. After the ApiVar has been in the hive for 3 to 4 weeks, check that the strips are located where the bees are. Reposition the strips if necessary and leave in the hive for another 3 to 4 weeks. You should remove the strips 14 days before adding honey supers in April.

If any colonies died, inspect the colonies for any signs of disease. Many colonies die due to high mite infestation. Some beekeepers assume that the treatment they used killed the mites. Unfortunately the assumption that the mites were reduced enough is often tragically wrong. The only way to determine if the treatment was effective is to test with the alcohol wash. We will have the Alcohol Mite Washer for sale at our next meeting. Here is an excellent video with Tim Schuler demonstrating the Alcohol Wash: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36oHVUI3INA>

Do you want to know the “Secret to Successful Beekeeping?” (It should not be a secret, but sadly seems to be.) If you want your colony to survive and be productive, you must manage the Varroa mites. Managing the mites means;

- 1) Monitoring the level of infestation and
- 2) Treating effectively.

I will monitor mite levels in my colonies every month beginning in April. To determine the effectiveness of the treatment, mite levels must be checked before treatment and after treatment. I am treating with ApiVar now and will use MiteAwayQuickStrips while the honey supers are on. The bees do much better when the mite infestation levels are low; less than 1%.

If your colony did die this winter and you are not sure why, check out this information from the Bee Informed Partnership; <https://beeinformed.org/2016/03/08/why-did-my-honey-bees-die/> This is an excellent analysis and does sound familiar to many beekeepers. You are not alone in your loss; others have lost colonies this winter too. Learn from the experience and work to preventing a recurrence. You can definitely reuse the drawn comb, including the frames that have dead brood. The drawn comb will give the next colony a jump start. If there is also honey and pollen, the new colony will be way ahead.

Each Beekeeper should register the locations of their hives (apiaries) with two State agencies.

The first is with the State Apiculturist in the Department of Agriculture. This will enable Tim Schuler to notify you of any potential disease issues in the area; a smart idea.

https://www24.state.nj.us/agriculture/AG_NJFARMS/welcome.html

If you have registered in the past and you know your Apiary Inspection Number, you can have the form pre-populate the data. You will only need to change any new information.

The site and form are a little tricky to use. On the site hover your mouse over Apiary Registration and click on the Dialogue box with the instructions.

When the form appears, you may need to save it to your desktop first. Open the form from your desktop and in the Acrobat Security settings select "Always Trust this Document." Save it again and then reopen it and enter your information. That worked for me. Otherwise there are more detailed instructions.

The second registration is with the Department of Environmental Protection. This will enable anyone spraying insecticides to notify you and allow you time to protect your colonies. There may be increase spraying for mosquitoes this year, so it is very wise to register with the DEP too.

<http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/pcp/bpo-bee.htm>

Even if you do not have hives in the locations just yet, you can still register.

Watch your smaller colonies for robbing during these warm days. Some of the bees are foraging for nectar. There isn't any nectar, so they may go for weak hives. Keep the reducers in and be sure there are no other openings except the small top opening and the reduced bottom entrance. If a colony has died, seal it up and save the honey for the new colony (nuc). (Robbing is not a typical spring problem; when it is this warm before the nectar flow it can be a problem though. I saw a yellow jacket foraging too!)

I have had a few questions related to reversing the brood chambers. It is still a little early for any reversals in our area. The weather will turn colder and the reversal will disrupt the organization of the brood nest. The bees may have difficulty keeping the brood warm when the temperatures dip to 40F or colder at night. When the weather warms up again, it may be time to determine if reversing is needed. I do not automatically reverse though. I assess the colony and how they are utilizing the space before deciding to reverse. If the bees are all in the top and there is no brood, little or no pollen and little or no honey in the bottom box, I'll reverse. If there is some brood in the bottom box, I definitely do not reverse. Typically I see at least pollen and some honey in the bottom box. I've found the colony has intentionally organized their nest in this way and usually do not disturb their work. The queen will be moving down as the brood area increases and as the weather becomes warmer. In cool weather, especially at night the warmer part of the hive is at the top; the brood needs the warmer temperatures.

Looking ahead, we will need to get the honey supers on soon. To reduce the swarming impulse, I put supers with empty drawn comb just above the brood nest. Once the bees have started to fill the cells, I'll put another super of empty frames just above the brood box and below the previous super. If the space above the brood nest can be maintained with mostly open comb, the bees are less likely to swarm. Once the nectar flow is fully underway, I will use supers of foundation too. This method is called "bottom supering."

I am excited about this spring. The bees seem to be so happy to be out flying early and gathering pollen and raising new bees for the honey flow. I feel like I get a tremendous amount of positive energy just standing in the bee yard!





PSE&G Give Back Program

The Northeast NJ Beekeepers Association is happy to announce a partnership with PSE&G's Give Back Program and Bayonne High School Wood Shop Students who will be making hive bodies, (each consisting of 2 deeps, inner & outer covers, and a bottom board,) for the club to distribute to its members.

The 10 hives will be given to members who otherwise would not be able to get into beekeeping due to the financial hurdles of purchasing all the necessary equipment.

Details to follow. Please email or call Jaimie Winters at jaimw@aol.com or 551-486-7479 if you are interested in obtaining one of these hives. All information will be kept confidential.



Message from the State Organization

Members who have not paid their dues by February 1 "...are delinquent and their names shall be dropped from the States secretary's roll." Members in good standing, those whose dues for 2016 or beyond have been received by the state treasurer, will be able to list themselves on the swarm page. Those members where the state has not received their 2016 dues, will not be able to list themselves.

PAY YOUR DUES

Do you have a Beekeeping Addiction?

John A. Gaut

I heard someone say bees are a “gateway bug.” I understand the comment. The more I learn about honeybees the more I am curious about other insects, especially other bees (bumble bees and solitary bees for example) and wasps (even yellow jackets!). I am also very much more aware of the weather and other flora and fauna. Do you think you are addicted to the bees? A beekeeper in California, Hilary Kearney has developed The 10 Stages of Beekeeping Addiction.

<http://beekeepinglikeagirl.com/the-10-stages-of-beekeeping-addiction/>

Are you guilty of any of these traits?



THE 10 STAGES OF BEEKEEPING ADDICTION

www.beekeepinglikeagirl.com





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1,458 Strong!!!

We quickly blew through the 1000 member milestone and are, as of this writing 1,458 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

The Northeast NJ Beekeepers will continue our BeeTalk© Series when we discuss “The care and feeding for your new nuc”. Before you know it the nucs will be delivered. Learn the essential facts this Friday. Bee There!!

❖ Volunteers ❖

Celia Miller	Refreshments – Cakes, cookies, brownies, tea, etc.
Jennifer Phillips	Refreshments – Cakes, cookies and other treats
Billy Neumann	Club photographer
Hugh Knowlton	Workshop/Event coordinator and presenter
Mike Miller	Club apparel
Emma Stein	Resident artist
Bob Slanzi	Meadmaster