



njbees.org

April 2016



NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

A division of New Jersey Beekeepers Association

President	Frank Mortimer	201-417-7309	3 rd V. Pres.	Karl Schoenknecht	201-891-0947
V. President	Rich Schluger	201-693-6949	Secretary	Jaimie Winters	551-486-7479
2 nd V. Pres.	John Gaut – Mentor Coordinator	201-961-2330	Treasurer	Bob Jenkins	201-218-6537

Meeting on: **Friday, April 15th 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, April 15th** when we continue with our BeeTalk® Series. The topic of discussion will be caring for and feeding of your new nucs. Delivery of the club ordered nucs is scheduled for later this month and we are here to talk to you about hiving those nucs and what exactly to do with and expect from your new bees! 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 Tax Day Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

Well, this spring weather certainly cannot make up its mind. We started off early with typical spring weather, but that has alternated with ice cold wintery days and nights. The good news is that the crazy weather does not seem to have slowed down the bees' early build up. The other good news is that the cold spells we have been having has not had a negative impact on the nectar flow. This year, the flow is a solid three weeks early. It is amazing to see such an early buildup of colonies and how much work they are accomplishing. Back when I went into my hives in EARLY March, I was amazed at what I saw. I had been feeding my bees fondant for the previous few months, and I was mostly going into the hives to see if they needed anymore fondant. When I opened the cover, I saw that all of my hives had built burr comb where the fondant was, and in the comb was nectar! Lots and lots of nectar. I was shocked to see comb filled with so much nectar. When I went in for a deeper inspection, I was amazed at the weight of the top box. During that inspection, all I kept saying to myself was, "But it's March! March!" In the end, instead of feeding more fondant, I ended up putting supers on my hives. "And it only March! March!"

The lesson in this story is that once again the bees have not read the book. They didn't "know" they should have waited until April to start their buildup. Seriously, it is important to go into your hives often and "listen" to what your hives are telling you, even if it's, "March!"

If you are getting nucs, the nectar flow we are experiencing should benefit us. There will be plenty of nectar sources for your colonies, which should help them to build up fast and strong. However, even with a strong flow, I would recommend feeding your bees sugar syrup that is 1 part sugar to 1 part water. You want to make sure your bees have access to nectar 24/7 so they can draw out the comb as quickly as possible. It takes a lot of energy for the bees to build comb, which means they have to consume a lot of nectar. (It takes eight pounds of honey for bees to make one pound of wax.) Also, by having a feeder on your hives, you know your bees have access at night when they can't leave the hive to forage, and on rainy days when they're stuck inside.

At Friday's meeting, we will go over more of the basics and what to do with your new nucs, so if you're a new beekeeper and you are getting nucs, then this will be an extremely important meeting for you to attend.

For everyone reading this, remember that you cannot have Apivar in your hives at the same time as you have your honey supers on. If you treated in late winter, please remember to remove all the Apivar strips from your hives before putting your supers on. If you are getting a nuc, there will be an Apivar strip in between the frames. You will want to make sure you also transfer the Apivar strip when you hive your nuc. We will give you a date to take it out, and do not remove it before that date.

Please also remember that spring is when many people get interested in plants and the bees that pollinate them. We are all ambassadors for our hobby, so if anyone shows interest in honeybees, is curious about them, or wants to know what they can do to help the honeybee, remember to take the time and talk with them about the importance of bees. Education is a powerful tool, and the more people who are knowledgeable about bees, the more people who will welcome beekeepers into their neighborhoods. And the more people who get excited about the wonder of the honeybee, the more future beekeepers we will have.

Happy Nectar season! I hope to see all of you on Friday!

Sincerely,

Frank Mortimer
President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers

BEEKEEPERS

Thank you from NJ State Apiarist, Tim Schuler

Our bee club, the Northeast New Jersey Beekeepers Association, recently donated \$500 to Tim Schuler for the great work he is doing with beekeeping in Malawi. His efforts have brought sustainable beekeeping practices to people who would otherwise not be able to afford themselves the many benefits of bees. Below is the email he sent us for our donation. Life changing work like Tim is doing truly fulfills our club mission to bring beekeeping to others and we thank Tim for allowing us to reach all the way to Africa to do it.

From: **Tim Schuler** <tim.schuler@comcast.net>
Date: Tue, Apr 5, 2016 at 12:11 PM
Subject: Thank You for Sponsoring Me in the Water Walk
To: Mortimer Frank <frankmort@gmail.com>

Zikomo! Zikomo! Zikomo!

(Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!)

Thank you for your supporting me in the Villages in Partnership 2016 Water Walk! I hope you realize that you are helping to transform lives of some of the poorest people in the world, our brothers and sisters in Malawi Africa. I am grateful for your gift toward supporting my goal for the Walk as well as the gift you have given to our friends in the remote villages of Malawi.

Click the link listed below to see how your donation has contributed to my goal and check in on my progress as the fundraising continues. Don't forget to forward the link to anyone else who might be interested in supporting our cause! For more information about how VIP is helping move people from survival to sustainability, visit www.villagesinpartnership.org

[Click here to visit my page!](#)

[Click here to visit my team's page!](#)



Beekeeping Mentoring in April

The following is another installment from John Gaut as part of the mentoring program for new beekeepers. It's so good that we believe that all beekeepers can benefit from it.

We have had an early warm spring; the bees and their pollen sources were about 3 weeks ahead of normal. Now we will have some February weather for a few days! The colonies will need a lot of honey to get through the next few cold nights and keep the expanding brood nests warm. (Insulating the hive sides really is beneficial when we have these cold snaps in early spring.) I hope the cold temperatures will not knock back too much of the early blooms.

Below are some suggested topics for the Mentor to review with the new beekeepers before they get their new bees:

- Is the hive(s) ready for the new colony(s) including feeders
- Is the hive placed in a sunny spot and elevated off the ground (e.g. with concrete blocks)
- Bear and other pest protection

- How will the new colony be installed in the Hive?
- Beekeeper behavior when approaching the colony
- Feeding and water source
- Smoker operation and use
- Hive tool use and care
- Recognizing Drones, Workers and the Queen
- Recognizing Pollen, Honey and Brood in comb

Keep the bees calm by using a small amount of smoke. A small amount of smoke will help mask any alarm pheromone the bees produce without sending the bees into a panic. Too much smoke will cause the bees to run and buzz (or fan) to try to clear the smoke. A frequent "soft breath" of smoke is usually good. The smoke should "roll" across the front to the nuc and over the frames when it is open. There is no need to pump smoke into the nuc or between the frames.

The Nucs will have an ApiVar strip in-between two of the frames. The ApiVar strip is most effective when it is in the area of the brood. Try to place the ApiVar strip between two frames of uncapped brood. Insert the strip slowly and carefully so as not to injure any bees, especially the queen. If it is stuck to a frame, just leave it where it is. The strip should remain in the colony for 42 to 56 days after you get the nuc.

There are some instructions for installing a Nuc on our Northeast website for your reference:
<http://www.nnjbees.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Installing-a-Nuc.pdf>

Grant Stiles will inspect every nuc before delivery and verify the queen is laying eggs. (The queens will not be in cages.)

After you have closed up the new hive, record any observations you may have. For example was there some honey and pollen? How much brood did you see; larvae and capped? Did you see eggs? Record these observations.

The new colony will need to be fed continuously to build the new comb on the frames of foundation. If you have a feeder jar or pail, you can place it right on top of the frames over the cluster (and place a hive body around the feeder jar or pail). A top feeder will give the colony as much sugar syrup as they need and will not need to be filled as frequently as a jar or pail. The colony will remain in a "building mode" as long as they have sugar syrup. If the feeder runs dry for even a short time (a day) and there is limited nectar from natural sources, the colony will go into a "ramp-down mode" (slow the building new comb and raising new bees) to conserve resources. If you have frames of comb, use those instead of foundation. Place the frames of comb on each side of the brood frames; any frames of honey and pollen can be place to the outside of the brood and empty comb frames.

Allow the bees to settle in for a few days, and then perform an inspection. Look at the health of the brood and look for new eggs laid by the queen. Again, record you observations.

For established colonies, now is a good time to get fully prepared for the main nectar flow. Verify the colony has enough food; some colonies may need to be fed 1:1 sugar syrup for brood rearing, especially on rainy and cold days. Any ApiVar strips should have been removed. If the bottom brood box is nearly empty and has no brood, it can be reversed with the other brood box. (If there is brood in the lower box, do not reverse. The colony has already expanded downward.) Remove the entrance reducer once you observe congestion on the warm days.

Supers should be placed on the strong colonies not being fed. Two or more supers can be placed on the hive. Ideally the top super has drawn comb and the bottom super can be foundation. Do not use a queen excluder; it increases the potential for swarming and the bees will not draw out foundation above the excluder.

During your inspections, check for any diseases. This is a very good document for the identification of diseases: <http://extension.psu.edu/publications/agrs-116/view> You can purchase the book online or from the Bee Suppliers. Read the online version until you get the book. Call me or Tim Schuler if you have any questions or concerns related to diseases.

Mid-April is a good time to test for mites. If you haven't already, purchase an alcohol washer. They are available from the club at \$20 each. See Frank you need one before the next meeting. Below is the link to Tim Schuler performing the mite wash test:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36oHVUI3INA>

The Honey Bee Health Coalition has issued the Third Edition of their "Tools for Varroa Management." <http://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/Varroa/> You must manage the Varroa mites to be a successful beekeeper. The "Tools for Varroa Management" includes recommendations for the effective controls through the beekeeping season. Right now colonies are increasing in population. The Honey Bee Health Coalition says the mite level should be below 1%, control may be warranted at 2% and control promptly at 3% or more.

The Eastern Apiculture Society will be meeting in New Jersey this year at Stockton University (near Atlantic City) the week of July 25th. There will be beginning and intermediate beekeeping courses during the beginning of the week; a good opportunity to increase your knowledge. On Wednesday to Friday there are various topics presented all related to beekeeping. It's a great opportunity to be totally engaged in beekeeping for a week in our backyard. Put it on your calendars; registration will open soon.

Also, the State Beekeeping Spring meeting will be in Liberty Corners (near Basking Ridge) on Saturday, April 23rd. Dr. David Gilley will talk about swarm management, Dr. Judy Chen from the USDA will talk about viruses and Grace McMackin will present the services our State Laboratory provides. This should be a very valuable meeting to attend. You can register here:

<http://www.njbeekeepers.org/store/>

The bees will be hunkered down for a few days while it is cold and windy. They will be anxious to get back to work once the temperatures return to normal!



An Early Spring!

John A. Gaut

Wow, a very interesting spring so far. We had above average temperatures in March, giving the bees and Flora (the goddess of flowering plants) a good start. The bees have been bringing in pollen since the beginning of March and continue to find pollen even with the cooler temperatures. And it looks like they are finding some nectar too! The cool temperatures did not slow the brood build up in the few colonies I peeked into on Monday. I find the insulation on the sides of the hive is very beneficial when it gets cool and windy at night. The colony can keep the larger brood nest warm. I will leave the insulation on the hives for another week or two, until the night temperatures are consistently above 40F.

I track the daily high and low temperatures and compare them to “normal.” The bees and flora think we are about 2 to 3 weeks ahead of normal this year. And many colonies are building up quickly. Some of my colonies asked for more space a couple of weeks ago so I started adding supers.

Many colonies are in the initial stages of swarm preparation. They have plenty of honey left over from winter, have large brood nests and are raising drones. I will need to work with these colonies to try to prevent swarming. One way to interrupt the swarm preparation is to put empty supers just above the brood nest, where honey would normally be stored. The colony “thinks” they do not have enough honey to swarm yet. (The swarm needs to leave behind enough honey for the parent colony to survive with a much reduced forager population.) Often interrupting the swarming impulse with empty comb above the brood nest will prevent a colony from swarming, but not always! Overall, this season may see above average swarming. Also since the winter temperatures were milder, Small Hive Beetles may be more of a problem.

BEEKEEPERS



Working with the Bees

John A. Gaut

The bees have been a pleasure to work with this spring; not too defensive. A beekeeper recently asked how to prevent getting stung; an interesting question since we are working with stinging insects! To minimize stings:

- Wear light colored clothes. Bees will focus in on the darker moving objects. I guess a darker object looks like a bear.

- Your scent should be “neutral.” Bees have extremely sensitive organs to detect scent, mostly located on their antenna. They will be attracted to any slight fragrance or odor. If the fragrance is strong or does not seem natural, they may attack. For example some shampoos seem to attract bees. Also some laundry detergents seem to cause defensive behavior; Tide for example. Of course if you smell like a bear, you are going to get stung.
- Use a little smoke. Only use as much smoke as you would tolerate blowing in your face if you were a bee. Too much smoke is very disruptive and alarming to the colony. A little smoke covers the alarm pheromone produced by the guard bees. Too much smoke actually alarms the bees.
- Stand behind the hive, not in front of the entrance. Also move slowly. Typically there are a few guard bees flying around the hive; they will be quicker to investigate any fast moving object in front of the hive.
- Bees can hear, they do not have ears but can sense vibration of both the hive and through the air. So give the hive a little smoke before touching anything, including the rock on top or the ratchet strap. Be very gentle when opening the hive. Move slowly and carefully. Handling frames is much easier and gentler without gloves.
- Open the top cover and inner cover slowly. Let the bees get used to the light.
- If you are stung, move back from the hive, remove the stinger and apply smoke to the stung area. Smoke will mask the pheromone left behind from the sting.
- Get used to touching bees and having the bees on your hands. Bees are used to being touched; they are touching each other all the time. Just be considerate and don't pinch any bees (between your fingers and the frame for example). Give the bees a chance to move out of the way.
- Listen to the bees. If you hear an increased pitch or intensity in the buzzing, time to wrap things up and close the hive.
- Use a cloth to cover the part of the hive not being inspected. The cloth keeps the bees much calmer by reducing the light in the hive. The cloth also helps retain heat in the hive. (Keep the cloth clean.)
- Be one with the bees. When a hive does not feel threatened and defensive, you can watch each bee doing her job. You can watch a bee carrying pollen try to find a cell to unload her baskets. And another bee packing the pollen in. New bees will be emerging, small and fuzzy. You may even be able to see the queen searching for open cells to lay her eggs.

There are various opinions about how much the hive is set back when it is opened; some say a week and some say only a little. (I know, shocking there are various opinions....) The colony is at least impacted a little by opening the hive; temperature and humidity must be re-established. If you were “like a bee” going through the hive and the colony hardly noticed you, the impact will be minimal. If you were “like a bear” going through the hive, the colony may be set back a week.





Ridgewood, NJ Daffodil and Earth Day Festival

The 2016 Ridgewood Daffodil and Earth Day Festival will be held on Sunday, April 17th, from 11:00 am - 4:00 pm at Memorial Park at Van Neste Square, East Ridgewood Avenue and Oak Street in Ridgewood, New Jersey. This year's theme is: "Butterflies, Bees, & Bats – Save Our Pollinators" The Ridgewood community will hopefully be in full bloom with the 19,000 daffodil bulbs planted by the Conservancy. Ridgewood businesses are invited to celebrate by highlighting their "green" practices. There will be environmentally focused vendors and organizations.

The Northeast New Jersey Beekeepers Association, as usual, will be there with our own booth. It will feature an observation hive, beekeeping equipment and honey tasting. Any and all members are encouraged to stop by to chat, help or just show your Northeast NJ Beekeeper pride.





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1,471 Strong!!!

We quickly blew through the 1000 member milestone and are, as of this writing 1,471 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!

❖ 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

Next Month

The Northeast NJ Beekeepers will continue our BeeTalk® Series when we discuss “Hive inspection and summer management”. Soon after your hive is established the routine maintenance must be done to help insure strength and longevity. Be There!!