



nnjbees.org

April 2017



NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

A division of New Jersey Beekeepers Association

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Meeting on: **Friday, April 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.



Please join us on **Friday, April 21st** when The Northeast NJ Beekeepers will go over care for your new colony and what to expect your first year. Swarm season has already hit with one of our member's colonies swarming on Easter. We will discuss swarm management, splits and what to do if they do swarm.

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:

Welcome to Spring Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

Wow, what a weird start to spring. We had summer-like weather in February, followed by a snowstorm in March. Last year, I had honey supers on before April 1st, and this year, it was tax day when I put a few on. I do think the nectar flow is going to hit fast and strong, so make sure your bees have plenty of room to store nectar to make honey, and plenty of room for the queen to continue to lay her eggs.

The club had its annual nuc pick up day on the 17th, which was the earliest we've ever had it, and also the most successful. I hived my nucs the morning of the 18th, and I was impressed! My nucs were overflowing with bees. It was a great sight to see. Since I am the eternal optimist, I am hoping we will all have another good honey crop this year.

If you are starting new hives this year, remember to feed—feed—feed! Bees must consume anywhere from five to 20 pounds of honey in order to produce one pound of wax. So, the more you feed, the faster they can draw out the comb. And the faster they draw out the comb, the faster they can start making honey for you!

Also, if this season does come on fast and strong, it will be extra important for all beekeepers to make sure their colonies have plenty of room. If you have drawn comb in your honey supers, remember that if your hive is strong, they can fill a super in just a few days. If you only have foundation, it's important to remember that bees don't consider frames with only foundation as "room," they have to draw it out so it's usable before they can use the room to alleviate overcrowding.

Lastly, I want to call attention to all second year beekeepers. Many times, everything goes great the first year. Your colonies work on drawing out the wax, then storing it with soon-to-be honey for the winter. In some ways, the first year is the easiest. Maybe that's nature's way of make it easier to start keeping bees? However, the second year is when you will need to make sure you are going into your hives every 7-10 days. You should pull out at least 4 frames from each of your deeps to get a solid idea of what is happening. And, if you don't see what you need to, then you have to keep

pulling frames until you are confident you know what your bees are doing. Questions to ask yourself are:

- How does the brood pattern look?
- How much brood are you seeing?
- Where is the queen laying?
- Are your bees bringing in pollen?
- Are your bees bringing in nectar?
- Where are your bees storing the nectar?
- Have they capped any honey?
- Do you need to add a super?
- How calm are your bees?

Every time you go into your hives, you should have a goal or purpose. Before you go in, ask yourself, "Today I want to check/see ____" Then after you go in, ask yourself if you saw what you were looking for.

I wanted to target this to second year beekeepers because if this is your second year, then that means your queens are most likely 2 years old now. This is important because the older the queen, the more likely the hive is to swarm, supersede, or experience queen failure. So, it is up to you to make sure you are aware of what your bees are doing. At Friday's meeting, we will be talking about how to prevent your hives from swarming, and I encourage you to attend.

The good news about your second year is that you have a great opportunity to pull in some serious poundage of honey. Last year, your bees had to focus on drawing out the comb, this year, they can focus on filling the comb with honey. But a good honey harvest also requires a good beekeeper who is mindful of his or her hives and confirms they are focused on making honey for the colony and for you!

I look forward to seeing everyone on Friday!

Until then, bee well,

Frank Mortimer

President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers



Spring Beekeeping Thoughts

By John Gaut

We have had a near normal spring from my observations and measurements. I know a lot of people think this weather is “wacky”; it is normal for the temperatures fluctuate a lot in the spring! I collect both Growing Degree Day and “Bee Degree Day” data for my area. The data shows we may be slightly ahead of normal. The forsythia began blooming on April 10th, just a few days earlier than the normal time here in Mahwah. (Forsythia is just an easy to see indicator, the bees do not get any pollen or nectar from forsythia. When forsythia is blooming there are other pollen sources available at the same time. Nectar sources soon follow.)

I have had a few questions related to reversing the brood chambers. I held off reversing when the weather was cold at night because the reversal disrupts the organization of the brood nest. The bees could have difficulty keeping the brood warm when the temperatures dip to 40F or colder at night. Now that the night time low temperatures are forecast to not go below 40F, I am reversing the brood boxes when needed. I do not automatically reverse though. I assess the colony and how they are utilizing the space in the boxes 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 brood already in the bottom box, I definitely do not reverse. Typically, I see at least pollen and some honey in the bottom box. The colony has intentionally organized their nest in this way and the queen will be moving down as the brood area increases and as the weather becomes warmer. (Some beekeepers say they have to reverse multiple times in the spring. They may be working against the bees.) This time of year, the colony wants to keep the brood nest in the warmest part of the hive; that is at the top. Feral bees begin the spring at the top of their nest and the colony moves the brood nest down as the colony grows, the temperature increases and as nectar comes in.

The colonies will need a lot of honey to feed the brood and keep the expanding brood nest warm. They are bringing in some nectar now. If the colony does not have much honey left (less than 3 full deep frames), they should be fed. Dry sugar or fondant (or candy) is okay now. Syrup can be feed once the night temperatures are above 40F if needed.

The Nucs from Grant Stiles 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.njbees.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 pail, you can place it right on top of the frames over the cluster (and place a hive body around the feeder). 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 placed 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 your 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. As outlined above, 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. The foundation acts as a queen excluder, at least before the bees start drawing comb. If there is a good nectar flow, the bees will fill the comb with honey and you may need to add another super. If the super is foundation, add it to the bottom.

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 of 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. Below is the link to Tim Schuler performing the mite wash test: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36oHVUI3INA>

Beekeepers must manage the Varroa mites to be a successful beekeeper. The mite count should be very low this time of year, 0 to 2 mites per 300 bees; less than 1%. There are mites in the colony, specifically in the capped brood though. If your colony has 1% or more mites, treat! And then retest

with the alcohol wash. If the mite count is less than 1%, test again in June or July. This year I will test in mid-summer, early fall and then frequently in the fall. October and November is when mites from collapsing colonies (due to ineffective or no treatments) invade good strong colonies.

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. (I’m more aggressive; I’ll treat anytime I see 1% or more.)

If you had bees last year, please consider completing 2 surveys.

The first is from BIP, the Bee Informed Partnership.

<http://26.selectsurvey.net/beeinformed/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=2017>

The second is from Tim Schuler.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NVV9ML2>

Swarming season is here now too. The colonies mission right now is to reproduce. Beekeepers can discourage swarming by insuring the queen has plenty of room to lay eggs and there is plenty of room to store nectar and honey. I have been putting on at least 2 supers on my colonies. We will talk more about swarming at our meeting on Friday.



Hälsningar från New Jersey USA biodlarförening!

(Greetings from New Jersey USA Beekeeper's club!)



By Frank Mortimer

For anyone who knows me, knows that I am passionate about three things: Bees, Sweden, and the New York Rangers. I was thinking about how I could combine my passions, and while I am still working on a way to teach my bees to play hockey, I thought I should focus on the other two. During our big March snowstorm, my wife told me that NJ had more snow than they have back home in Sweden, and this got me thinking...

I started googling Swedish bee clubs, and I found one from where my wife is from, Örebro. While I only know a tiny bit of Swedish, google translate can do enough to make me dangerous, so that I have a decent idea of what I'm looking at. Their website looked impressive, <http://www.orebrobiodlarna.se/> and I found their President (Thomas Claesson) and his email address. I thought it would be fun to email him and ask him a few questions about how they keep bees in Sweden and see how many things we have in common, and how many things we do differently. So, I wrote him an email, in English, and then asked my extremely patient wife, who puts up with way too much of my crazy bee stuff, to translate my letter into Swedish. Then I waited for his reply. The two main questions I asked him were:

- 1) Do you insulate your hives and
- 2) How do you treat for Varroa?

My thinking was that Sweden's winters are a LOT colder and a LOT longer than ours, so I wanted to know how they approached the cold months, which in Sweden is 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ months of the year. (KIDDING!) I was interested because *apis mellifera* is native to Sweden, and is not to the US.

I also wanted to know about how they treat for Varroa because Sweden is much more attuned to doing things naturally and what is most healthy.

I was also thinking it would be fun if the Northeast NJ Beekeepers had a "sister" club across the Atlantic where we could share ideas and information. My goal was to establish a long term relationship with the Swedish club and see what we can learn from one another. Needless to say, I was pretty excited...

About 36 hours later, I got a response. Thomas was happy to hear from me, and he sent me a link to his own website. <http://biodlarn.se/> He was happy to answer my questions, and I learned that we have more in common than I could have realized. For my question about insulating hives, he said that some members do, and others do not. Overall, they don't see any real difference.

(WOW, has he been secretly attending our monthly meetings?) One interesting thing he did say was that they always leave a little bit of the screen bottom board open to allow for air flow to control the moisture. To me this is significant, as they are more concerned about condensation than a Swedish winter!

Regarding Varroa, he said they don't sell ApiVar in Sweden, so they do not use it. (I had told him in my email that ApiVar was our treatment of choice and that we were seeing good results with it.) He said the treatment of choice is oxalic acid, using the drizzle method. I sent him a follow up email and asked him about vaporizing oxalic acid, and he said that no one in Sweden uses it that way. He also sent me a Swedish booklet on treating Varroa (in Swedish) that showed using formic acid too. I was amazed to hear about oxalic acid being the treatment of choice, and that they were using it with the drip method. My concern with this method (because of the time of year you'd apply it) was getting my bees wet when it was cold outside. However, if it doesn't bother the Swedish bees, then the cold doesn't seem to be the issue I was thinking it would be. Now, I am rethinking my position on Oxalic acid, and I may try using it this year, because if it's good enough for the modern day Vikings, then it's good enough for me!

I am looking forward to asking Thomas more questions about how they do things compared to how we do them. If you have something you'd like to know about Viking bees, please let me know, and as long as my wife continues to humor me and my crazy bee obsession, I'll ask her to translate it, and let you know.

As they say in Sweden, **Ha Det Bra!**

Frank Mortimer

President & Swede-wanna-bee

BEEKEEPERS



Frame and Hive Building Workshop!

Dear Members,

On Saturday April 22nd from 10 am to 2 pm at Bergen Community College, we will be offering a frame and hive building workshop. The Workshop will be led by Hugh Knowlton & Mike Miller.

Stop by and get help putting all of your equipment together, and learn a few tips and tricks for what to do.

The workshop will be at the Grounds Maintenance Building, which is located at the Orchard Hills Golf Course parking lot (accessed from main entrance to the College: 400 Paramus Rd, Paramus, NJ).



Please bring your own tools (glue and nails).

We will have some tools, glue, and nails but can't guarantee there will be enough for every job. Also, if you have old frames that need to be cleaned of wax, etc., there will be a table to work on cleaning up your old frames.

Repairs can be made, and new foundation installed.

This will be a fun time working together!

Directions:

- Enter Bergen Community College main entrance (400 Paramus Rd, Paramus, NJ).
- Proceed left around the large circle island which has flag poles.
- Follow signs for Orchard Hills Golf Course.
- Go all the way around the island as if you are heading back to Paramus road but turn right onto golf course access road.
- Grounds Maintenance Building will be on the right as you enter golf course parking lot.

If you have any questions, please call Hugh on his cell at: (201-783-4601).

And remember, it's always good when you're as busy as a bee.



Beekeeping Equipment For Sale from Barbara Perl
Contact larry.barbara@verizon.net
Barbara's Cell 201 820-7711

After 7 years I have decided to quit beekeeping. I sold my hives in the fall and now I would like to sell my nucs, supers, hive boxes, and lots of other stuff.

Prices: 2 complete nuc boxes (painted green) for 5 frame nucs, with outer cover, inner cover, bottom board and frames of drawn comb inside. **\$100 each**

1 painted yellow super box **\$15**

2 brand new and unpainted supers from Hudson Valley Bee Supply, special construction. They come with 10 frames of wired foundation. I paid \$100 for each one last August. Will sell for **\$60 each**

Wax foundation for deeps and supers **\$1 per sheet**

Box of wired foundation for small super **\$10**

10 assembled frames for deeps and 10 for medium supers	\$1 each
Custom made stand for setting frames on while examining hive	\$25
1 frame holder	\$8
Woman's bee suit size medium with veil and gloves - used	\$40
One veil	\$8
2 large nets that fit around hive to transport bees	\$5 each
2 bee brushes	\$1 each
2 German steel hive tools	\$8 each
Pair of extra large heavy duty men's gloves	\$1
4 plastic strainers	\$2 each
roll of labels for your honey jars	\$2
uncapping needle roller	\$10
double boiler, cheesecloth, strainer and mold for making candles	\$5
wiring device (spool and wire) with board for foundation	\$5
embedder for wiring foundation	\$4

NEW JERSEY

BEEKEEPERS

Queens Available

Grant Stiles will have his first batch of queens available this coming Tuesday, April 25th after 11 am. They are \$30, and will be sold on a first come first served basis. For more info, please call Grant at 732-661-0700.



Northeast New Jersey Beekeeper

Public Group

Joined ▾

Share

Notifications

...



1,691 Strong!!!

We quickly blew through the 1,600 member milestone and are, as of this writing **1,691** members strong, and growing on our Facebook page! Be sure check it out. See the great pics and stories posted by the Facebook fans from all over the world!

Remember: <http://www.njbees.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 continues our BeeTalk Series where the focus is on your questions. The subject will be hive inspections and summer management.