



nnjbees.org




July 2017



NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY
A division of New Jersey Beekeepers Association

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Meeting on: **Friday, July 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, July 21st** when The Northeast NJ Beekeepers continues our BeeTalk series where the focus is on you and your questions. This months' topic is **Honey Harvest/Extraction**. How sweet it is! Bring your questions and enthusiasm. See you there!

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:

Hello Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

Welcome to a hot & muggy July, otherwise known as honey extraction season. Usually for our July newsletter I write that now is a time for celebration, as excess honey for the beekeeper is an accomplishment that shows how much hard work you put in caring for your bees.

However, this month I want to write about matters much more serious.

As many, if not all of you have heard, there was recently an incident with one of our members that involved the local Office of Emergency Management. Additionally, the news reports of the incident must have relied upon 1970's horror films for their facts, as what they falsely reported did not match honeybee behavior and only refueled the public's misconceptions and fears of honeybees.

One of the key goals in the Northeast NJ Beekeepers' Constitution is to educate the public on the facts and benefits of honeybees. I for one have worked very hard to generate positive publicity for our club and the benefits to everyone—especially the general public—about honeybees and their gentle nature. Unfortunately, one negative story can cancel out years' worth of positive publicity.

As a beekeeper and as a member of our club, each one of us has a responsibility to be a good beekeeper, as our actions not only impact what happens in our own backyard, but also impacts every beekeeper in New Jersey. As we were reminded again at last month's meeting, one bad beekeeper in New Jersey has created such ill-will with his neighbors that the neighbors continue to fight to stop the state bee laws from being put into practice.

Let that sink in: **One beekeeper is impacting laws that will govern an entire state.**

Since our club encompasses the most densely populated region of the state, it is even more critical for every one of us to ALWAYS be a good neighbor, and to ALWAYS use the best and recommended practices for working your bees. Some of the key points to ALWAYS remember are:

- 1) **Always Smoke Your Bees:** This should be a no-brainer. Bees release a pheromone when they are afraid/fear the hive is under attack. Smoke blocks this pheromone from being

detected by the bees. If bees can't smell it, they don't get defensive, therefore always use smoke.

2) **The Dearth & Robbing:** When there are no nectar sources, bees will look elsewhere for potential food sources. When you are pulling your honey supers, you want to always minimize how long your honey supers are exposed and out in the open. When there's no other food available and you have frames of honey lying out in the open, you have created a recipe for a sure-fire disaster. When you pull your supers, get them out of your apiary and inside as quickly as you can. Never have several hives opened at once, and never leave frames of honey sitting out where they will activate the bees' instinct to start robbing everything in sight. Last, it's always best to pull your honey supers off in the morning, and never mid-day when every forager is out looking for food.

3) **If Your Hive Is Overly Defensive Tell Someone:** If something does not seem right with your bees, tell an officer of the club or your mentor. If your bees seem like they are always buzzing, or stinging you or others, then you need to speak with someone on how to find a solution. In this month's Bee Culture Magazine, James Tew wrote about an overly defensive hive in his backyard apiary and how he moved it to a remote location for the sake of his neighbors. If you are keeping bees, then it is your responsibility to always be a good neighbor.

4) **Be Careful Where You Get Your Queens:** If you're ordering queens through suppliers from other parts of the country, you need to make sure your source is not too far south where bees with Africanized traits are more common. It is important to always think about the likelihood of introducing bees that are overly defensive into our area, so always be diligent about where you are sourcing your bees.

5) **Negative Comments to the Press:** Bad news sells/gets ratings, and sometimes a reporter is looking to spice up his story by getting a beekeeper to say something about bees that makes them seem dangerous. While you might not have meant any harm, your negative comment, taken out of context, will reinforce the public's misconception about honeybees and beekeeping. For example, during the most recent event, I had a reporter trying to bait me with questions that only painted bees in a negative light. I keep insisting that what he was asking, and what the Office of Emergency Management had reported was simply wrong. Bees don't "swarm a neighborhood attacking everyone in their path." I am convinced that reporter reached out to other beekeepers until he found quotes that he could use, out of context, to "explain" why the bees were "terrorizing* a neighborhood." If a reporter is asking you a leading question, then you need to think about how your words could be used to fuel people's misconception about honeybees. If a reporter asks you a question that any answer could be used to prove bees are "aggressive", refuse to answer the question. Just because someone asks a bad question does not mean you have answer it. Every time I am interviewed, I am aware of the implications of the questions being asked, and the consequences my answers will have on every New Jersey Beekeeper. If you are in a position to be interviewed by a reporter, then you must realize that you will be a spokesperson for all of us, and you must choose your words wisely.

*** To be clear, I was quoting the reporter here. Bees do not fly around a neighborhood in an organized fashion attacking people or animals. This is complete fiction.**

Members, I am very upset about what happened. I am thankful that the beekeeper and his wife have recovered and are healthy. I am concerned about the impact this incident will have on all of us, and all the other beekeepers in New Jersey. This incident needs to be a reminder to every beekeeper that any action can, and will, impact others. Everyone must follow the best practices when keeping bees to ensure nothing like this happens again. Beekeeping is an amazing hobby, but it is important to remember that with it comes with a great deal of responsibility. I hope this incident will serve as lesson, as an example to others, so we never have something similar happen again.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Friday's meeting.

Sincerely,

Frank Mortimer
President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers



Mid-July Beekeeping

John A. Gaut

The main nectar flow is over in Mahwah. The Linden Trees (aka Basswood and Tilia) are at the end of their bloom. The bees are working the white clover in my yard. I also see honey bees and other pollinators on milkweed (I see 3 varieties around here) and other wildflowers. I am in the middle of extracting honey now.

I have had my share of swarms again this year. I caught most of the swarms; not all. The "silver lining" to the swarms that got away is good genetics are spread to the surrounding area. Hopefully the queens I raise will be mating with mostly drones from my colonies, directly or indirectly. Most of the colonies that swarmed are producing a nice honey crop. Healthy colonies that did not swarm are producing nice honey crops.

In late July, there will be very little forage for the bees; maybe some pollen but very little nectar. Late July and August is a period of dearth in our area. The colony needs to at least maintain its self through the dearth and then get ready for the winter. The colonies winter preparation really starts at the end of the dearth. Key for the winter preparation are young bees to help raise the bees that will

raise the winter bees. The winter bees must live through the winter for as long as 5 to 6 months! For the winter bees to be healthy, the previous two generations need to be strong and healthy. The bees need to have adequate food and mites must be under control to be strong and healthy.

Most colonies will need to be fed, especially the new colonies. Feeding keeps the brood rearing process going at a reduced rate. Tim Schuler recommends feeding about a gallon a week of 1:1 sugar syrup during the dearth.

Continue to maintain a water source for the bees. When it is hot, the bees need the water to cool the hive! If you do not maintain a water source, the bees will find another source quickly (could be your neighbors pool!)

Now is also the time to be sure the mite population is low. Check for mites and if the count is more than 1 mite per 100 bees, TREAT! And then check to assess the effectiveness of the treatment. We will be talking about treatments at our July meeting.

Here are the Tips on using MAQS:

- Apply only when the daytime high is forecast to be less than 85 F for the next 3 days; less the 80 is even better.
- Apply the strip in the evening; ideally an evening when it will be cool overnight.
- Close the bottom board (insert the IPM board). THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!
- Remove the entrance reducer.
- Refrigerate or freeze the MAQS before application to reduce the initial evaporation of the formic acid.
- Minimize the disturbance to the colony; open the colony, place the strip and close the colony quickly and gently. Use only a few "breaths" of smoke.
- Remove the strips after application when you are doing the second treatment or taking the mite counts.
- Watch this video: <http://nodglobal.com/application-usa/>

The population of the colony will naturally decrease as the nectar flow disappears. The mites do not stop reproducing though. The result is even though the percent of mites may be low now (e.g. 1%), the percent of mites will increase significantly as the bee population decreases resulting in more parasitized bees infected with viruses. Managing mites must be a top priority now!

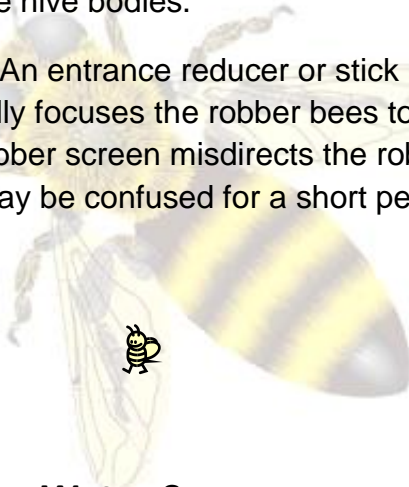
A few thoughts related to extracting and robbing. Robbing is a natural behavior for honey bees. ("Robbing" is an anthropomorphic term for the behavior. There really is not a "criminal" intent. Robbing is a special foraging behavior to collect honey.) The honey aroma and sugar content is very attractive to bees when there is limited nectar available. There are always scout bees searching for new food sources; they find honey quickly and recruit nest mates quickly. During extraction, the beekeeper needs to minimize the time the honey and comb are exposed. Plan ahead to minimize the time the hive is open. Supers of honey should be quickly removed from the hive and covered top and bottom. Early morning is the best time to remove supers; more bees are foraging at that time.

Extraction should be done in a bee-proof room. (The windows should be closed; otherwise there will be a large audience on the screens!) The supers should be covered top and bottom before returning to the hive. Returning the supers in the evening, just before dark will minimize the robbing. The supers can be placed above the inner cover to allow the bees to clean any remaining honey. Put the inner cover hole down to minimize robbing, or close off the hole completely for a day or two. DO NOT put equipment out for the bees to clean!

Robbing is more likely to occur during the death. There are a few things you can do to minimize robbing.

- Minimize hive manipulations
- Any time the hive is open, cover the top and bottom of hive bodies to minimize the aroma of honey.
- Plan ahead to minimize time in the hive. Have any equipment needed immediately available.
- Use smoke in the area to mask the honey aroma.
- Repair any holes or cracks in the hive bodies.

One last tip is to use a robber screen. An entrance reducer or stick in the entrance is often not effective. The reduced entrance actually focuses the robber bees to that point; that smaller hole is where the aroma is coming from! A robber screen misdirects the robber bees away from the actual entrance. The bees from the colony may be confused for a short period but find the real entrance.



Water Sources

John A. Gaut

As part of responsible beekeeping and being a good neighbor, you must maintain a water source near your colonies. Bees will forage for water and will return for to the same source once it is discovered. It is very difficult to “un-train” the bees once they have found a reliable water source, your neighbors’ pool for example. The water source should be maintained from March to November. The water source must be available in the early spring; bees will learn to use that source and continue using it all summer and fall, ideally staying out of your neighbor’s pool. Once they found the pool, it is difficult to have them learn a new source, even if it is closer. The concept is to have something floating or standing in the water that the bees can land on and pick up some water with their proboscis. A bucket of water (even with sticks) is not attractive. If the water source goes dry, they will begin using a new source (your neighbors’ pool). Below are some pictures of attractive (to

the bees and us) water sources.



Queens and Genetic Diversity

John A. Gaut

NPR had recent article about the lack of genetic diversity in the drones and queens we have in North America. Here is the article: <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/07/13/536884827/no-offense-american-bees-but-your-sperm-isnt-cutting-it>

For a few years, I have been increasing the diversity in my queens. Every year I bring in some new genetic stock. A few years ago, I purchased an Instrumentally Inseminated queen with Varroa Sensitive Hygienic traits from John Harbo. I also had a breeder queen that was very hygienic and a very good honey producer. I raised many daughters from these queens over the last two years. Hopefully I spread their genetics around the area too. This year I am continuing to rear queens from the daughters of these queens. The “breeder” queens have overwintered here in Mahwah and built up early in the spring. Overwintering is big test for the queen and her colony. The colony must be able to resist viruses, bacterial diseases and fungal diseases during the winter and early spring.

I recently purchased a few “Mite Biter” (aka “ankle biter”) queens and will be rearing queens with those genetics. I also picked up a queen from Vermont for a little more diversity.

The queens are only part of the equation; drone diversity is the other part. I select my “breeder” queens and I also select the colonies to produce drones. The drone colony must be gentle and must be a good honey producer and free of any disease. I usually have about 10 colonies producing drones of various stock.

The NPR article uses the analogy of a deck of cards for the genes. I like the analogy, except that I think of a very big deck of cards; there are many genes. Most of the genes needed are in the deck somewhere, just not enough sometimes. Stacking the deck in the bees and our favor is helpful. At the same time, we must be careful how we select. For example, a colony may not be a great honey producer but somehow maintains low mite counts. There may be some genetic traits of that colony/queen that would be useful in the diverse genetic pool. It would be a mistake to write-off that colony/queen if the data shows it has desirable traits. (I monitor mite counts and nosema regularly.)

I'm happy with the genetic diversity I have now, but never satisfied. I'll continue to add diversity in a selective manner every year.





Northeast New Jersey Beekeeper...

Public Group

Joined ▾

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Notifications

...



1,711 Strong!!!

We quickly blew through the 1,600 member milestone and are, as of this writing **1,711** 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.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 is proud to continue with our BeeTalk series. The subject will be feeding, dealing with the dearth and mite treatments. Bring all your questions.