



nnjbees.org

April 2018



NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

A division of New Jersey Beekeepers Association

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Meeting on: **Friday, April 20th at 7:30 PM**

Location: **Ramapo College of NJ, 505 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430**

 *Bee Enthusiasts & Bee Curious Always Welcome!*  *Look for the Bee-u-tiful Yellow Signs* 



NUCS

The nucs will be here this Friday,
April 20th, sometime after 8:30 pm.

Nucs are \$170, and must be paid in full upon delivery.





Message from the President:

Hello Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

This year that groundhog wasn't kidding around about six more weeks of winter, and So far we have had about 14 hours of spring weather. It will be interesting to see how the rest of the season plays out, as I am not sure how this weather will impact this year's honey crop.

Many new beekeepers are reluctant to go into their hives for various reasons, and the other day I was reminded why you can't judge a book by its cover, nor can you tell how your hives are doing by just standing there and watching bees come and go from their hive.

I have been itching to get into my hives and do some frame by frame inspections. This weather has made it a difficult year for me to get done what I need to get done, because like most of us, I also have to work to pay for my beekeeping addiction. All the weather reports were saying that this past Saturday was going to be fantastic, and I couldn't wait! On Thursday before work, I pulled my honey supers out of storage so I could air them out and be ready for Saturday. That night when I got home, and I saw and smelled all those sweet supers, so I decided I'd take a ride over to my main apiary and take a quick look at my hives and see if I needed to do anything else in the yard when Saturday finally rolled around. The yard looked fine and I made a note that I needed to bring the weed eater to trim down some brush on the far edge. Over the past few months, several big trees had fallen, and I was thankful none had landed on my hives.

Excited to be close to my bees, I stood on the side to watch the bees come and go. I don't care how long you've been keeping bees, watching them fly to and from your hives is away special to see. I saw a lot of pollen coming in, which is away a good sign, and I saw a lot of bees, which was another good sign.

As I moved my eyes down the row of hives, I realized that my yellow hive was the only one that didn't have any bee activity. I went around to the other side of my row of hives and watched a while longer, but still no bees. I was feeling a little bummed as I assumed this hive must have recently died. As I left, I prepared myself for what I would most likely find on Saturday.

When Saturday finally arrived, thankfully all the weather reports were spot on and it was a beautiful, sunny day. I made a beeline to my apiary and I was happy that I would be spending all afternoon in my hives. I started with my green hive, and it was overflowing with bees. They had built burr comb on top where I had a shim in place from when I was feeding them. I scraped off all the comb, and then did my hive inspection. The hive was picture perfect, and just like the bees had finally read the textbook, all their brood was in the top box, so I reversed my boxes and put on two honey supers. Next up was my pink hive. When I opened it up, I could see there were not as many bees as there was in the green hive. After doing a full hive inspection, I realized that my queen was starting to fail. I saw brood from eggs to capped, but nowhere near the amount of brood I would have expected to see in the spring. I also saw the queen, and she was smaller than you'd expect, which was another clue that she was running out of steam. Next, was the yellow hive. I took a deep breath before I popped off the cover, waiting to see nothing. But, as soon as I took off the outer cover, BOOM bees! The yellow hive was BOOMING! I scraped burr comb off the top, and since there was brood in both boxes, I didn't reverse them. I also put a honey super on the hive. The rest of my hives also looked strong, including a nuc I had overwintered. Actually, the nuc was going so strong that I had to reverse its boxes!

When I left my apiary, I was still chuckling to myself about the yellow hive. If I had based my opinion just from standing to the side and watching the bees, I would have thought that my pink hive was super strong and my yellow hive was dead. This is a good illustration why it's important to always go into your hive and do a frame by frame inspection. Just seeing bees doesn't tell you what's really going on. The only thing that can tell you what's happening with your hives is when you look what is happening in and on the frames. No matter how many bees you see, always pull your frames. You need to look for eggs and small larvae. This will tell you the queen was laying just a few days ago. You also have to make sure you see at least 4-5 frames of brood. Just seeing one frame of brood is not enough information to judge how your hive is doing. If after seeing one frame of brood in my pink hive, I would have thought everything was fine, and it would be another few weeks before the queen is done and I could potentially be left with a queenless hive at the start of the nectar flow.

Instead, I am going to move the brood and queen from the pink hive into a nuc box. Then, I'm going to requeen it, and wait for it to build back up again. I am also going to move my overwintered nuc into the now empty pink hive and toss on a few supers, as that colony is exploding.

Thanks to a careful frame by frame inspection, I will be able to utilize my overwintered nuc and also save my other colony before it could have potentially died out from a failed queen.

So remember, while it's always special to watch your bees work, as their keeper, you have to go into your hives to know how you can best care for them.

The nucs will be here on Friday! I look forward to seeing everyone then!

Frank Mortimer
President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers



Beekeeping in April & May

by John A. Gaut
Master Beekeeper, EAS

Beekeeping in April and May is a very exciting time! Busy and exciting! New beekeepers will be installing their nucs and watching them grow. Beekeepers with established hives are adding supers and watching the colonies grow too! And the bees are excited too; nectar and pollen everywhere. And time to reproduce!

Besides adding supers, I will be busy with swarm management and queen rearing. With a little help, I checked most of my hives for mites. We did not find many! I know the mites are there tough, in the capped brood. I will check monthly and once I see the mites higher than 1%, I will treat.

March and the beginning of April have been a little cooler than normal. The previous two years were warmer than normal, accelerating the season by a week or two. The maple buds started to come out in late February and the bees got a little pollen but then it got cold again. I did see more buds coming out at the end of March and now in mid-April.



Maple Buds on February 26th.



Frozen Buds



Maple Flowers on March 22nd.

I expect swarming to start in late April in Mahwah, it may have already started in warmer areas. Once swarming starts in South Jersey, I know it will be a week or two before swarming starts in our area. I manage my colonies to minimize swarming; it takes a lot of attention though. The colonies instinct is to swarm this time of year.

Swarm management is ultra-important in populated areas. A cluster of bees hanging in the neighbor's tree can undermine good neighbor relationships with beekeepers. Beekeepers should not use queen excluders during swarming season since they make it more difficult for the bees to move nectar out of the brood nest to the supers. Too much nectar in the brood nest is a trigger for swarming. **To proactively manage swarming, beekeepers need to assess each colony once a week. The swarming impulse is less likely to be triggered if beekeepers 1) provide plenty of space for nectar storage, 2) provide plenty of space for the queen to lay and 3), manage the hive's population. Provide space for nectar by providing plenty of supers. Provide space for the queen to lay by providing empty comb. Manage the hive population by moving frames of capped brood with covering bees (no queen!) to smaller colonies. If the swarming impulse is triggered but the colony has not swarmed yet, there are several methods to prevent an actual swarm. Finally, if the colony has swarmed, be prepared to capture the swarm.**

Beekeepers wonder if they should inspect the colony after it swarms. I suggest beginning beekeepers do not go into the colony for two to three weeks after it swarms. A colony typically swarms any time after the first queen cell is capped. If the hive is opened up too soon after a swarm, the queen cells can be damaged. If all the cells are damaged, the colony will become queenless. Once a cell is capped, the queen will not emerge for 8 days. The new queen then needs to mature for a few days, take her mating flight(s) and then begin laying eggs. The earliest a queen will lay after she has emerged from her cell is about 13 days; usually a few days more. Opening the colony can also disrupt the queens mating flight. There is really no reason to inspect the colony until about 2 weeks after it swarmed. The colony will have little or no capped brood at this point. If you do not see eggs, look again in a week. If you do not see eggs a month after the swarm, the colony may be queenless. I will add supers to the colony during the 3-week period if needed. Finally, look at the queens laying pattern after a month and half to verify she has a good pattern. If not, I replace her with a queen that does.

A Varroa treatment tip for swarms: I have treated swarms from an unknown source with an Oxalic Acid dribble to knock down any mites they may have brought along with them. (The unknown source could be a feral hive or another beekeeper; the mite levels could be high.) Treating a swarm with Oxalic Acid dribble is very easy and inexpensive. Since there is no brood, the treatment is very effective. I use a solution of 2.8% Oxalic Acid and Sugar Syrup (1:1). Once the swarm is established in a hive (a few days to a week), I treat each seam of bees with 5 mL of the solution or a maximum of 50mL per colony.

If you bought Nucs through the club, they will have an ApiVar strip. This strip should remain in the hive for 8 weeks after receiving the nuc. The strip should be repositioned to the center of the brood nest area if necessary. Once the ApiVar treatment is finished, you will want to check the mite count in late June. If it is high, a follow-up treatment will be needed.

Keep feeding the new nucs and any swarms you catch. Both need to draw out comb; often the nectar flow is not strong enough to support comb building. Swarms are “primed” to build comb; if they are fed they will build comb quickly. Bees that are producing wax need a lot of carbs and some pollen. There is usually enough pollen coming in; they usually need sugar syrup! Randy Oliver experimented with 1:1 syrup or 2:1 syrup for colonies building comb. He found both mixes worked equally well. Other researchers have found similar results. The difference was the bees needed twice as much of the 1:1 syrup as the 2:1. I usually feed a thicker syrup to reduce the number of times I need to feed. His article has other useful information too: <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/light-or-heavy-syrup-for-drawing-foundation/> It is important to continuously feed the colony. If there is an interruption in feeding, the wax producers will shut down and then a new generation of wax producers must be engaged before comb building begins again.

There are a lot of maple buds and blooms now. On the warm days, the bees will be gathering both nectar and pollen from the blooms. The colony size will increase rapidly and they will begin swarming preparation if not managed closely. It's a busy and exciting time of year!

If you have any topics that you would like to see more information about, let me know!

NUCS 🐝 NUCS 🐝 NUCS

The nucs will be here this Friday, April 20th, sometime after 8:30 pm.

We will hold our regular monthly meeting at 7:30 pm, and once the nucs arrive, we will adjourn to the parking lot. Please begin arriving at 7:00 pm to pay Bob Jenkins for your nucs.

For everyone who ordered NUCS, please read to the end and read carefully:

Pick up will begin after 8:30 pm at Ramapo College. Directions where to pick up your bees will be given at our monthly meeting which will start at 7:30 pm.

Bring the balance of money that you owe for the NUCS you are picking up, and your 2017 club dues if you have not already paid them.

All nucs must be paid in full before you can pick them up. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

You will first pay your owed balance to Bob Jenkins, get a ticket/receipt and collect your ordered NUCS.

If you do not show up, have not made other arrangements for your nuc to be picked up, and you have not contacted the club, your nuc will be sold and your deposit will be forfeited.

Additionally, the Nuc of bees you are receiving is a living organism that must be tended to immediately. There are no guarantees as to its ultimate survival other than nature and your own efforts.

Any issue with a nuc will be noticeable within the first week it is installed and must be reported immediately.

Stiles Apiaries makes no guarantees, and is not responsible to replace or correct any problems, after 7 days from pickup. If needed, Stiles Apiaries also reserves the right to consult a third party.

See you Friday!

Spring Turnover

by John A. Gaut
Master Beekeeper, EAS

Most of my colonies are building up nicely. A few are struggling though. They have enough honey and pollen. I see the queen; she is walking around on the comb looking like she wants to lay eggs. Her abdomen is a little smaller than other queens though. There may even be eggs in a dozen or two cells but no larva or capped brood. Mites tested very low in the Fall. The number of bees keeps dwindling though. What is happening????

One possibility is the “winter bees” are dying before the colony can raise new bees to replace them. Winter bees do naturally die during the early spring. Often these bees fly out of the hive to die. Some die prematurely during foraging flights. If the colony was small during the winter, the winter bees could not keep a brood nest warm enough. Any eggs the queen laid got cold and did not hatch. The bees will also consume eggs that they cannot care for; a conservation of resources behavior.

Some of the colonies struggling had high noseema levels. Nosema reduces the lifespan of the infected bees. The winter bees die prematurely. Also, the bees infected with nosema produce less jelly to feed the young larva.

A third possibility is the colony is suffering from viruses (transmitted by mites late last fall). Viruses are difficult to diagnose. Only a few provide any indication the bees are infected (e.g. deformed wing virus).

Most of these colonies can survive if given a boost. A bee and brood boost! I will take a frame or two of mostly capped brood, covered with bees and put them in the weak colony. The frames need to be covered with bees to keep the capped brood warm until it emerges.

Once the brood emerges, there will be enough bees to allow the colony to expand. The eggs the queen lays will be nurtured and the colony will expand.

The frame of brood and bees is pulled from a strong colony. I inspect the frame carefully to verify the queen is not on the frame. I place empty frames of open comb in the strong hive.

Equalizing colonies by moving frames of brood and bees is a common beekeeping management technique. Boosting a colony that is below average often enables the colony to produce a honey crop. Pulling a frame or two of capped brood and bees from an above average colony reduces the colony's population and the open comb provides room for the queen to lay, delaying or eliminating their swarming impulse.

Putting the small colony in a Nuc with a frame or two of brood and bees is another option. The colony can maintain temperature and humidity conditions much easier in the small nuc box. Often these downsized colonies are able to build quickly and need more space in a couple of weeks. I add a second nuc box on top and once it is mostly full, move the colony back into a full sized hive.



WHAT'S THE BUZZ IN RAMSEY?

by

Susan and Dave Lindstrom

We wanted to update the club on things going on in Ramsey regarding beekeeping. Last August after the “incident” was reported incorrectly in the press, I was walking into the town library and decided that the display case might be a vehicle to educate the community on positive aspects of beekeeping. I talked to the reference librarian and was able to reserve the display case, but not until this month, April, 2018.

The next step in advocacy was attending a Board of Health meeting following the event in Ramsey. The BOH booked Frank as a speaker this past March as part of their Lecture series. This added to an appreciation of beekeeping in Ramsey since first responders as well as a Councilman were in attendance.

In the last few Council meetings, Dave and I managed to advocate for the ordinance against the new NJDA revised bee regulations. After providing ample reference materials to review, the Borough Council passed the ordinance last month. Thanks for the in person support of Frank Mortimer and John Matarese, the Council gained a positive perspective on beekeeping.

I want to offer the library display as a “stop and look” opportunity for the membership if you are nearby. The pictures speak for themselves but in the display, we first had prominent shelves with what else for a library display, but “how to” books, journals, and beekeeping supply catalogues. Gooserock Farm donated some of Landi’s honey products to highlight what else one can do with honey and comb besides eating it.

You will see some equipment, pictures of the bees themselves, highlights on Beekeeping 101, pollinator plants and hives in a beeyard. Several beekeeping brochures are on the circulation desk for patrons to pick up. The Northeast NJ Beekeepers were listed as a primary resource, with the dates of our next two meetings.

The potential for good will in Ramsey by this effort makes you want to buzz the message to others!



The display cases inside the Ramsey Library showing off lots of the fascinating information about honeybees. The display is up all month, so please stop by if you can!



Beekeeping Regulations – Update

Assemblyman Kevin Rooney has introduced a bill that would prohibit the Dept. of Ag from using property size to regulate beekeeping!

Bill A3336 reads:

An act concerning the regulation of bees and apiary activities, and supplementing Title 4 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

Notwithstanding any law or rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto to the contrary, the Department of Agriculture shall not regulate the minimum property size required per number of hives for the purpose of keeping honeybees or related apiary activities.

This act shall take effect immediately.

We need to continue to get every town to oppose these regulations. If your town has not passed a resolution opposing them, please see John Matarese ASAP.

My Mentor – Randy Zberle

By Rick Schluger

Back in the day, when the Northeast New Jersey Beekeepers met in the Glen Rock Annex and the club consisted of about 12 old guys who met every month to talk about bees, I first set out to research this new (to me) insane hobby that would become very important to me. I had to dig deep to find out any information about the club, meeting times etc. and finally one Friday (yes, we still meet on the third Friday of every month) I wandered into a meeting. I sat in the back and listened. Eventually, they noticed a new face and started asking me questions. There was one guy there who was kind of quiet but when asked to speak you just knew that he had knowledge and experience. This was my first introduction to Randy Zberle. He was friendly and reached out to me. “Would you like to see how I work my hives?” “Sure!” I said. I made my way over to his house in Rochelle Park and he spent time with me going through his hives, explaining what to look for, how to recognize diseases, see if the hive was queenright, etc.

There were no stupid questions, always enough time, no lengths to which Randy wouldn't go to get his point across to help me understand. Of course every beekeeper has his or her own way of doing things and Randy told me his. Some may have defied convention or popular practice but he let me know them anyway and to this day I have adopted them. I guess that is what learning is all about.

I remember when, after a year of studying about it, I finally got my bees. Randy drove out with me to Flemington NJ to George Schafer. No club purchases of 100+ nucs and delivery to Ramapo College in those days. The nuc was \$65 and all the talk was about how expensive bees had gotten (that gives you some perspective, huh?). We drove back to my house and hived the nuc. I remember clearly that Randy had trouble walking to my hive and I had to help him. Nevertheless he got there and made me do all the hiving (as it should be).

I would call him on almost a weekly basis to ask his advice about how to handle this or that and he always made time for me.

There was one time he called me for a favor. A bear had destroyed his hive at the Audubon Center in Franklin Lakes and he asked if I could give him a hand. He picked me up in his old pickup and we headed on over there. What a mess! The hive was strewn all over and the bees were seething. I made him stand there while I pieced together the hive and finally it was done. We both took many stings that day but he was grateful for the help and I was glad to do it.

One time, when I was at his house he gave me a pound of his honey and he told me "I want a pound of your honey from your first harvest." I told him "Gladly." It was three years before I got any honey but I did keep my word.

Last month, when I heard the news about Randy's passing, it touched me deeply. My entire beekeeping life flashed before me and he was a vital part of it. I guess this tradition is still alive in our mentoring program and I, for one, can attest that it is way more than learning how to keep stinging insects alive.

Randy, you were a very good man, you will be missed greatly and your traditions are still being carried on. In that way you're still around and that makes me glad.

Randolph "Randy" Zeberl

1930 - 2018

Beekeeping Memories

Why I Remember Stanley Debiak

By

Karl Schoenknecht

Shortly after I became a beekeeper, I started to associate with older members that had more beekeeping experience. Many were 'live off the earth' type of people that kept to themselves but came to our meetings to discuss something about their hives or something new that could help other beekeepers. I remember Art Poivan came to a meeting with a large funnel that had a 3 foot diameter top and a 6 inch diameter chute at the bottom. Art claimed it was great for catching swarms because you could put the swarm in a small box. Most swarms easily slid down the smooth metal sides and through the chute. He said "If it is a large swarm, I just swirl the bees around with my hands to help them through the chute because swarming bees don't sting." Needless to say, Art's Idea never became popular.

I was born in 1942 and have lots of memories of horses coming to my dad's house in Emerson. Our neighbor had over 100 chickens and I used to help candle the eggs that she sold for a quarter a dozen. The local paper claimed that Bergen County had more than 400 beekeepers in 1950. We did not keep bees but I got stung a lot because our lawn had lots of clover and I loved to run around barefoot. Cathy Cassetta's father had 50 hives within a half mile of our house so our 16 fruit trees and berry bushes got plenty of pollination. Thirty plus years after that news article I met Stan Debiak.

Stan looked younger than he was and unlike the other members, he always wore a silk shirt. Stan was the club treasurer before my father-in-law George Hewitt. Stan was a good treasurer that kept all records in a large ledger size book and issued large commercial size checks. I remember seeing that book when George was treasurer. Stan lived in Passaic and banked at a location that was convenient but George changed banks to his liking when he became treasurer. Stan was a gardener like me and told me that I should plant a Bee-Bee tree.

One day he came to my house and helped me plant a 2 foot high tree. The old timers are gone now but I will always remember Stanley Debiak. His tree lives on and has produced more baby trees.



KOREAN EVODIA HONEYBEE TREE - 2018

Planted 1985

Family: Rutaceae (roo-TAY-see-ee) ([Info](#))

Genus: Tetradium

Species: daniellii (dan-ee-EL-ee-eye) ([Info](#))



Karl's tree in bloom (July 15 until August 10). Each tiny blossom turns reddish in the fall then ripens to produce BB size seed in October. The seed are Morning Dove favorites.

This tree tries to grow like a bush during its earlier years. I trimmed or brushed off small starter branches to about 7 foot in height, maintaining one smooth bark central trunk (now 10 inches in diameter). The tree shown is 33 years old, 30 plus feet in height and in good health. The small leaves and flower stems easily disappear into the lawn when I mow in the fall. The first blossoms started when the tree was 7 years old and my honeybees love it.



Northeast New Jersey Beekeeper...

Public Group

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Notifications

...



Our Facebook Group has **over 1790 fans** from all over the world! It's a great place to connect to other beekeepers, so bee sure check out all the great bee pics, bee stories, and bee info.

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
Mike Miller	Club apparel
Bob Slanzi	Meadmaster

Next Month

Hive Inspections & Summer Management



The First Rule of Bee Club: Tell Everyone about Bee Club!