



nnjbees.org

July 2018



NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

A division of New Jersey Beekeepers Association

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Meeting on: **Friday, July 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* 



Got Mites? Get Apivar!

The Club will be selling Apivar at

Friday's meeting.

Apivar 10-pack = \$35.00





Message from the President:

Greetings Northeast NJ Beekeepers,

Wow! What a wild nectar flow we ended up having! Back in May, if anyone would have bet me on what kind of honey crop we'd end up with, I would have lost, as I would have guessed it would have been an off year. Instead, this was a record-breaking year for me. I ended up getting 1,030 pounds of honey from eight hives. That's a 1/2 of a ton of honey, 86 gallons, all in 17 buckets. And think, it takes 12 bees to make a teaspoon of honey!

Looking back, I think the extremely wet April we had led to a much more intense nectar flow in late May and June. Thankfully, my colonies were strong enough to have a big population of foragers who could go out and collect all that nectar.

The two things that I did to maximize my honey production were super early and extract twice. For supering, I use what I call the Rich Schluger supering method, as Rich taught me how to do it. As early in April as I can, I put two honey supers on my hives without Queen excluders. I know the queen will probably go up and lay eggs in my supers, but I deal with that later in the season. The extra room the supers provide for the queen means that in 21 days, the hive will have a lot more bees. These extra bees mean my hives explode with activity as the nectar flow begins.

Now, on some of my really strong hives, I have to add additional supers—even if the nectar flow has not started—just to make sure they have enough room to prevent swarming. Providing all this extra room creates very large colonies before and during the nectar flow. I have also found that once the brood in the supers hatches out, the bees backfill those frames with nectar, as the workers have pushed the queen back into the deeps since that brood has long since hatched out. Also, on all my supers with drawn comb, I use 9 frames instead of 10. This allows the bees to draw the comb out deeper than they normally would, giving them room to store more honey. I have found that supers with nine frames instead of 10 hold significantly more honey, and is one of techniques that I attribute to my high yields per hive. Finally, 25+ days before I am going to extract, I put my queen excluders on, this ensuring all the brood hatches out and the bees have more room to make honey.

This year for the first time I extracted in mid-June and again in July. I extracted in June because many of my supers were already filled with capped honey and I did not have any more supers with drawn comb. Instead of putting new supers on with just foundation, I decided that I would extract and put those supers immediately back on the hives. Also, since I was using my fume boards to drive the bees out of my supers, I also used this opportunity to put my queen excluders on. I went frame by frame and anything that was capped and did not have brood on it, I extracted. My June harvest ended up being 370 pounds, providing me with some of the lightest honey I have ever harvested. By harvesting and putting the supers back on meant that the bees did not have to devote resources to building comb and instead were able to make more honey. (Remember that bees need to consume approximately 8 pounds of honey to make 1 pound of wax.)

This year was also the first year that I used fume boards, and they made pulling the supers so much easier and bee-free than the bee escapes I had previously used. The great thing about beekeeping is that you are constantly learning, and this year I learned that I love fume boards! I can't believe it took me so long to use them, and I strongly recommend that you give them a try. I used the John Matarese method, as I used two fume boards at a time. I would alternate between two hives, pulling one super at a time. Using two fume boards on two different hives provided enough time for the fumes to drive the bees down from the top most super as I alternated between the two hives. I used Fischer's Bee Escape, which is all natural and did not smell bad. It was so easy, and most importantly, it meant I brought almost no bees home with me.

However, since I am running 9 frames in my honey supers, the bees tend to build a lot of drone comb, and since the drones cannot get through the queen excluders, they remain in the supers and fly out once you take off the fume boards. (I did end up bringing a lot of drones home with me, but the positive was that my daughter enjoyed “playing” with the ones that made it inside our house.)

At the end of the day, I am pleased with my results and I will definitely be using my new tricks in the years to follow. Now, I just need a trick to find a place to easily store a 1/2 ton of honey.

I hope to see you at Friday’s meeting.

Drowning in honey,

Frank Mortimer
President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers



Beekeeping in July

by John A. Gaut
Master Beekeeper, EAS

Harvest Time And The Dearth

The bees had a fantastic season in this area. The weather and nectar sources were near perfect for a strong nectar flow. The Spring weather was near normal and June had excellent foraging weather. With the strong nectar flow, the bees were also able to raise a lot of very good queens in June.

I'm continual amazed how well the bees can do if they are healthy and swarming is managed. Healthy bees mean they have good nutrition and are free of disease. Maintaining low mite levels minimizes viral and bacterial diseases. Successful Swarming Management can be the difference between a good honey crop or none at all.

We have had plenty of rain the last two weeks. The soil moisture should keep some nectar flowing for a little while. I do hear that the nectar flow is over to the south of us. The major nectar sources are finished around us too. I do see the bees working the white clover. But I am also seeing more robbing behavior, especially in the afternoons. At this point, I'm leaving any honey stored in the hive for the bees. They will need the honey during the dearth and will reduce the amount I have to feed.

Below are some things for all beekeepers to think about.

- **Honey Harvest** – Is there enough of a surplus to extract? The colony needs a reserve of honey to make it through the upcoming dearth. At least 30 pounds of honey should remain in the brood boxes, mostly in the top. If the colony has less honey, they will go into conservation mode and stop raising brood.
 - **Providing water for the bees** – The colony needs water to cool the hive as well as normal metabolism. Provide a water source so the bees stay out of your neighbor's pool!
 - **Nectar Dearth and Robbing** – Prevention is the best way to control robbing.
 - **Hive Inspection and Colony Evaluation** – Verify there is no signs of European Foul Brood or American Foul Brood.
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- **Mite Monitoring** –The counts in the Alcohol wash typically increase this time of year, especially in colonies that were highly productive
- **Mite Treatment** – Once the mites get above 1% at this time of year, treat.

There will be very little forage for the bees in July and August; maybe some pollen but very little nectar. July and August is a period of dearth in our area. The colony needs to at least maintain itself through the dearth and then get ready for the winter. The colonies winter preparation really starts at the end of the dearth. Beekeepers start preparing the colonies for winter NOW! Key for the winter preparation is young healthy 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. In July and August, the bees need to have adequate food and mites must be under control so the colony is strong and can raise healthy young bees.

Most colonies will need to be fed in July and August, 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. I have Mann Lake and Brushy Mtn feeders. I only put syrup in one side. This works especially well with the Brushy feeders. I alternate sides with the Brushy Feeders with the floats. This allows the bees to clean one side without drowning while feeding on the other side.

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 two weeks after the treatment to assess the effectiveness of the treatment.

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. 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 will minimize the robbing. The supers can be placed above the inner cover to allow the bees to clean any remaining honey. The bees will also patrol supers and protect them from wax moth. Put the inner cover entrance 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! All beekeepers need to be considerate of their neighbors and follow Good Beekeeping Practices to minimize robbing behavior in their yard and scouting bees their neighbors' yards.**

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 will find the real entrance.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!



Beekeeping in the Land of the Midnight Sun

by

Frank Mortimer

I was recently in Sweden for a family vacation, and while I was there, I did what any overly-obsessed beekeeper would do; I spent time with Swedish beekeepers. Sweden is about the size of California, and most of the people, plus all of the larger cities, are located in the southern half of the country. My wife is from Örebro, which is smack in the middle of the bottom half of Sweden, about two hours between Stockholm and Gothenburg. Before heading over, I had emailed with Thomas Claesson, the president of the Örebro Beekeepers Association. (Örebro Biodlarförening) We made arrangements for me to see his operation, and also for me to attend their club's weekly meet ups. Thomas is a sideliner, running about 30 hives and raising his own queens. He produces around 3,000 pounds of honey a year, which he sells locally to support his beekeeping habit and the extra income.

The Örebro beekeeping club owns its own building/club house that sits in a local park. Additionally, they have an apiary within the park where they keep club hives and also some member hives. During the spring and summer, they have weekly meetings where anyone can show up to work the hives. They also hold classes at the apiary, and use the space to show anyone interested in beekeeping what it's like to work a hive. It's a great way for them to attract new members, a great teaching venue, and a nice place to Fika with fellow beekeepers. (Fika is a Swedish custom that best translates as, socializing over coffee and snacks with friends, family, or co-workers. It's something that everyone partakes in, which is why per capita; Sweden is the world's second largest consumer of coffee.)

The most common type of bee in Sweden is the Carniolian. It's the bee of choice because it overwinters so well and is very docile. I was amazed to learn that they overwinter their bees in just one box/deep, and even though their winters are longer and colder, they require less food stores. Thomas told me that in September he puts a 16 kg bucket of 3-1 syrup on his hives,

and that's it, which means his hives have less than 40 pounds as they go into a Swedish winter. When I told him that start checking out bees in December to see if they need to be feed, he said it is too cold for them to open their hives, and they will not feed them until March, at which time they will also feed their bees sugar candy.

Since there is only three-four hours of darkness during the summer, the bees are flying almost 20 hours a day. This worked out well for my visit, as I met with everyone after the workday and we never had to worry about running out of sunlight.

One of the biggest differences of keeping bees in Sweden, and possibly the most confusing, is that they have four different sized frames and boxes. The most common size is called, Lågnormal, and the most traditional (older) size is called, Svea. The beekeeping catalogs carry all four sizes, and I am happy that sizes in the US are more standardized. Also, their frames, instead of having self-spacing shoulders/end pieces, use pegs to maintain bee space. The advantage from what I could see is that their frames don't get cemented together with propolis, and are easier to remove.

In their smokers they like to burn mushrooms/fungi they find growing on the sides of trees.

The varroa treatment of choice is oxalic acid and sugar syrup using the dribble method. (ApiVar is not legal to use in Sweden. They also use Thymol or formic acid, but oxalic is by far the main treatment.) The majority of beekeepers treat for mites once a year, mostly in the fall. If they use formic acid, they use it in liquid form, and soak a thin sponge/thick paper towel with it, putting it in their hives for three to four days. Some beekeepers make their own thymol patties as an alternative to buying Apiguard.

The most interesting thing that I learned was that there are areas in Sweden without varroa! Northern Sweden, which is at or above the Arctic Circle is currently mite free, as is some of Sweden's archipelago, and a few of their islands. In order to try to control varroa from spreading, Sweden is divided into zones, and has strict laws about moving bees between zones. For

example, you are not permitted to move bees from Southern Sweden to the North. (But you can freely move bees from the North to the South.)

Even though the summers are shorter in Sweden, their average honey production per hive is similar to ours in New Jersey, which is mostly due to the added hours of sunlight that allow the bees to fly throughout our night. Thomas likes to harvest three times a year; spring, mid-summer, and late summer/early fall, as he gets three distinct nectar flows. He labels his early spring honey as dandelion honey, (Maskros Honung). In late summer/early fall, the primary nectar flow is from Heather, which he said is very thick with a jelly-like consistency, making it difficult to extract and remove from the comb. Swedes primarily consume crystallized/solid honey instead of liquid. (Many consumers are suspicious of liquid honey, believing it is not pure honey, but some sort of adulterated sugar syrup.) They do not use the Dyce method to make creamed honey, so some of it can be harder than we are used to, and it varies from batch by batch.

Sweden is moving towards becoming a cashless society, and they have more phone apps and other ways to e-transfer funds to one another. In the beekeeping world, Sweden, just like in the US, uses the honor system at their roadside stands to sell honey. Only, in Sweden in addition to cash, you can use your phone to pay for your honey, making it easier for customers to buy more honey.

One of the things that I enjoyed the most was that even though I was on another continent and meeting new people for the first time, we all shared something in common; our love for the honeybee. Thomas and I hope to see one another again, and we will continue to share and compare beekeeping stories. Many of the club members didn't speak English, yet when we were gathered around a hive it didn't matter. We were focused on what was happening inside the hive, as the working relationship that humans and honeybees have shared for thousands of years transcends arbitrary borders and all of our many different languages. Beekeeping is a bond shared internationally, and to join, all you have to do is profess your love for the honey-making bug.



Thomas Claesson, President of the Örebro Biodlarförening & Frank Mortimer, President of the Northeast NJ Beekeepers



It's a Swedish Bee Club House!



This is the Svea Sized Frame. Note that it is much longer than our frames.



This is the hive the Svea frames fit into. This hive was built in 1925.



An experienced Swedish beekeeper mentoring new beekeepers on how to care for their bees.



Note the pegs used to maintain bee space. (and how clean the ends of the frames look.)



A Swedish Queen in her mating nuc



Swedish Roadside Honey Sales. Note the scan codes to pay with your phone

A Blessing In Rutherford

by Jaimie Winters

The Rutherford beekeepers held a Bee Blessing and Honey Harvest at the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford, where Northeast NJ Beekeeper Jaimie Winters keeps her apiary in what is called the Peace and Love Garden. Winters, an elder at the church, and her bees have been welcomed at the church and garden for four years.

Every July, church members and the community at large are invited to the blessing to help with the early harvest, which has become a community-wide tradition.

After the blessing by Reverend Pete Wilkinson, the community gets to work uncapping and spinning the honey, resting in between for a picnic of deviled eggs, cucumber sandwiches, fruit salad, bee cupcakes and lemonade. Kids head to the craft table to color in bee coloring books and make Tie-Dye t-shirts, or hang out at the bee station table with the observation hive learning about bees.

Northeast NJ Beekeeper members Kelly Palazzi, Robert Vitalli, Warren Stroedecke, James Ferduko and John Gaut helped with this year's harvest. Attendees got a treat this year, as Gaut, our master beekeeper, went into the hives and did a demonstration including a mite wash. They learned that the varroa mite is the bee's biggest threat. Gaut also passed around a frame of brood in which a baby bee was emerging.

The Sunday school students plant and maintain the garden that bears tomatoes, raspberries, strawberries, peppers, cucumbers, sunflowers and herbs.

After a long day of spinning, about 50 attendees got to take home the fruits of their labor -- a half-pound bear of Blessed Bee honey.

Beekeeping Memories

Harvesting Honey

by

Karl Schoenknecht

After the late snow this past winter and cool spring, I was worried that my three brood box hive would run low on bees and chill down. I treated the hive with ApiVar from mid-October to early December, later than in previous years. On a warm day in February I was happy to see my bees flying and surprised to see them bringing in pollen. I could not find any signs of spring yet the bees were finding pollen. I should have realized after finding only one Varroa mite when I tested in April that my hive was healthy and able to generate enough brood heat in spite of the cool weather.

My hive swarmed, as I mentioned last month and I am so glad that I was able to capture the old queen. I realize now that the old queen went with the swarm and moved into the new hive location on the right. The hive on the left was a three brood box hive before I realized the hive was going to swarm. I thought I would prevent a swarm by just adding space. I added the honey supers with drawn comb and foundation.

After I found the open queen cell I moved the bottom brood box with capped brood to the new location on the right. I added another brood box with a couple of frames of larva and eggs, some drawn comb and some foundation. The only honey on the new hive was around the capped brood in the bottom box. I hoped the bees in the new hive location would make a new queen. That did not happen when the old queen moved in with the swarm.

Most of the field bees were still going to the old hive location but the new hive got most of the capped brood and the old queen came with a strong desire to fill every cell with eggs. The new hive was exploding with growth and trying to stay ahead of the queen by drawing out new comb in the upper brood box. I added two honey supers to the new hive in early June and the first week of July they were heavy with honey. I added a third honey super on top of the upper brood box with a spacer box on top of that. I put an inner cover with an escape on top of the spacer box and then added the two full honey supers. Lifting that top 30 lb. honey super took all the strength my 76 year old bones could muster.

The next day I removed the upper super with almost no bees and quickly moved it into the garage. It was 10 frames of capped honey. The next box was full of uncapped honey, nurse bees and capped brood. I removed the escape and spacer box and returned the honey super with brood to the top of the hive. I must now wait for the capped brood to hatch out and for the bees to clean, fill and cap the honey. My three Evodia trees are starting to bloom and ready to give my hives a late honey flow. I like to harvest and extract the same day but I must wait this year.

The new queen in the left hive got off to a slow start but is looking good and her bees are starting to fill one of the honey supers. I removed the top super which is not needed and has foundation that will not be drawn out this late in the season. If I am lucky, I may get some late honey for me or for the bees.



This is how my hives look today 7/16/2018 after a warm day at 7:30 PM.



Northeast New Jersey Beekeeper...

Public Group

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...



Our Facebook Group has **over 1812 fans** from all over the world! It's a great place to connect to other beekeepers, so be 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

**Feeding, Dealing with the Dearth,
& Mite Treatments
—Club Bee Talk Series**



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