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# May 2019

**NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**  
A division of the New Jersey State Beekeepers Association

President	<b>Frank Mortimer</b>	201-417-7309	3 <sup>rd</sup> V. Pres.	<b>John Matarese</b>	201-481-5426
V. President	<b>John Gaut – Mentor Coordinator</b>	201-961-2330	Secretary	<b>Rich Stellingwerf</b>	201-693-2571
2 <sup>nd</sup> V. Pres.	<b>Jaimie Winters</b>	551-486-7479	Treasurer	<b>Bob Jenkins</b>	201-218-6537

Meeting on: **Friday, May 17 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* 



## ***This Month's Meeting:*** **Hive Inspections/Summer Management**





## Message from the President:

Hello Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

The nectar flow is on and our bees have begun making honey. While we are off to a slow start, and the weather is bouncing around like toddler on a trampoline, I remain optimistic that we are in for a good year. All the rain we're having is good for a big bloom; once the sun and temperatures climb up into summer weather. For now, the best thing we can do is keep checking for signs of swarming, because this season might go down as Swarmageddon if the bees continue to be stuck inside the hive day after day.

The four or five members who read the newsletter know that I am a big believer in learning from my mistakes. I also believe that many of my mistakes are *SO* epic that they not only help me, but can also help countless other beekeepers to learn better beekeeping practices. And once again, I have another lesson to improve my, and possibly your, beekeeping techniques.

Last month, I was installing a new nuc into its hive. For everyone who got a “Grant Stiles Nuc” knows firsthand that the nucs were jam-packed with bees and brood. After using a cordless drill to unscrew the lid, I set it down in front of the new hive. I then moved one frame after another from the nuc into the waiting hive. After all five frames were in the hive, I added five frames of drawn comb, and shook all the remaining bees that were in the nuc box into the hive.

Many bees were in the grass in front of the hive, so I grabbed my smoker and puffed away until the bees thought they were at a Grateful Dead concert. My goal was to get them to fly into the hive and stop clustering in the grass. Next, I closed up the hive, removed the nuc box, packed up my bee gear, and started loading everything into my bee mobile. After I had all my stuff in the car, I walked back to my apiary to take one final look, or as I like to say, do an “idiot check” to make sure everything looked good and everything was in its place. I took a few minutes to admire all the bees coming and going from their hives, as I always enjoy standing at one side of my hives and looking down the row to see the thousands of bees flying as fast as they can into and out of the hives. It is always such a wondrous site to see and reminds me why I love keeping bees. Looking around, I noticed that the grass needed to be cut, as it had gotten quite long and there were a lot of broadleaf weeds growing in front of the hives.

I noticed a few bees standing on top of one of the broadleaf weeds, and for some reason, the scene caught my eye. When I took a closer look, I saw several bees in a circle, with a larger bee in the middle. I did a double take and sure enough, it was a queen bee with a few attendants, outside of the hive, hanging out on a leaf.

Grabbing my queen clip, I scooped up the queen and her royal attendants. She was one hive away from the nuc I just installed and it hit me like a ton of bricks when I realized what had happened.

When I took the nuc lid off, I set it down in front of the hive. I never bothered to look at the bees on the lid, as I thought, “queens stay on the comb, so why bother.” I had forgotten the golden rule of beekeeping: The bees never read the books about what they should and should not be doing.

So, when I originally saw the bees on the grass, it was because they were clustering around their queen, and when I smoked them, the plump with eggs queen flew just a short distance away with her most loyal of subjects sticking close by.

Thankfully, I know myself well enough to perform the “idiot checks” as it afforded me the opportunity to correct my mistake and put the queen back where she belonged. Looking towards the future, I am certain that two things are going to happen: First, from now on, I will be taking a closer look at my hive lids before placing them on the ground. Second, I am absolutely certain that with as many mistakes as I continue to make, someday I’ll have made enough of them to fill an entire book.

Until then, see you at Friday’s meeting!

Frank Mortimer  
President  
Northeast NJ Beekeepers



# Beekeeping in May

by **John A. Gaut**  
**EAS Master Beekeeper**

The main nectar flow is almost here!

April and early May had **plenty** of rain. All that moisture usually results in a good nectar flow. Some of my colonies have already started storing honey in the supers. Other beekeepers have reported the same, especially to our South.

I was happy the first round of queens emerged and mated in late April. This was the first batch and the most difficult to raise due to the cool weather and typically rainy conditions. My wife and I spent two weeks in Peru. (A great trip!) When I returned, I was glad to see most queens were mated and laying. I started a second batch as soon as I returned. Like chickens, I don't like to count any queens before they hatch (and are laying), but this looks like there was good acceptance of this last cohort.

I did have a chance to look at a couple of Grant Stiles nucs that other beekeepers got from the club. They looked very good, especially if they were going into a hive with drawn comb.

Beekeepers with nucs should continue feeding the new hives until 15 to 18 frames are filled with (sugar water) honey, pollen and brood. Once most of the frames in the 2 deeps (or the equivalent if using mediums and or 8 frame hive bodies) are filled, stop feeding, remove the ApiVar strip and put honey supers on. Many nucs installed with additional drawn comb will be ready for honey supers soon. Nucs installed with foundation will take a little longer.

Mite Management is another very important task in late May. All colonies should be checked for mites using the alcohol wash method. If a colony has more than 1% mites this time of year, a good treatment option is MAQS or Formic Pro. The weather is still cool and the formic acid vapors will penetrate the capped brood killing most of the mites. Most of the mites (up to 80%) are in the capped brood!

Strong over wintered colonies are likely in swarm preparation mode. I have heard of some swarms in our area already. Mid May to late June is usually the peak swarming period in our area. I have been trying to check my colonies weekly, removing frames of bees and brood in the strong colonies and replacing the frame(s) with open comb. This gives the queen more room to lay, reduces the nurse bee population and prevents the population from exploding. I

use the frames of bees and brood to boost a weaker colony or to make mating nucs for queen rearing.

Some beekeepers are performing splits. Splitting a strong hive will reduce the swarming impulse; it may also reduce the honey production. The art of beekeeping includes managing a colony to be as strong as possible without swarming. Have extra equipment on hand in case there is a swarm!

Water has not been an issue for the colony so far this year. It will get dryer though, so have a water source close to the hives. This is especially important for beekeepers in a neighborhood with pools. Once the bees learn to forage for water at a pool, they will continue all summer long. You can prevent this behavior by providing an attractive (to the bees) water source close to the hives now.

I am also checking my hives weekly to be sure there is plenty of room in the supers. I give each colony at least one super of drawn comb, usually two. Once the main nectar flow starts (the end of the month), I will add supers of foundation too.



Frame of nectar being processed into honey

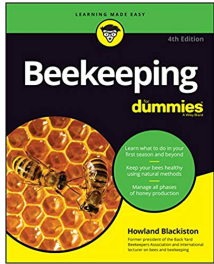
I looked at a few Black Locust trees in Mahwah and saw flower buds just beginning to develop. So far, it's looking good. Black Locust can produce a lot of nectar, or very little at all (if there is a late frost for example). This cool weather will slow the development a little. The rest of the month looks warm and not as rainy. If that forecast holds, we should have a good Black Locust flow.



Black Locust Flower Buds

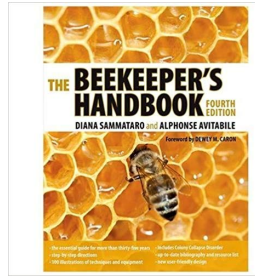


# Northeast NJ Beekeepers Bee Books for Sale



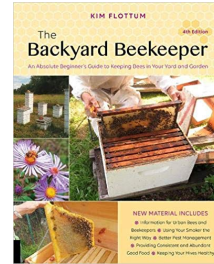
**Beekeeping for Dummies**  
An excellent basic intro guide to beekeeping

**Price: \$20**



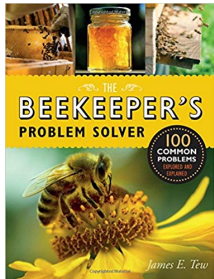
**Beekeeper's Handbook, 4<sup>th</sup>**  
If you're only going to buy one book, this is the best guide to the hobby & profession of beekeeping

**Price: \$25**



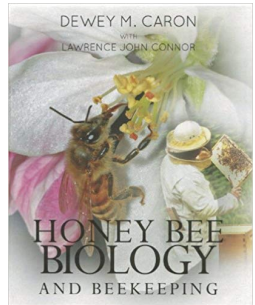
**Backyard Beekeeper 4<sup>th</sup>**  
The premiere introduction to backyard beekeeping

**Price: \$20**



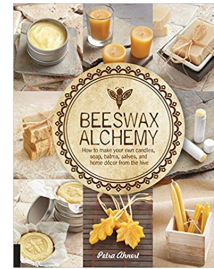
**Beekeeper's Problem Solver**  
100 Common Beekeeping Problems Explored and Explained

**Price: \$20**



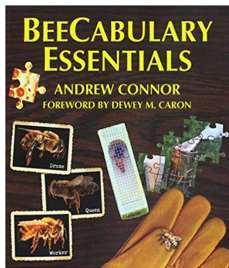
**Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping**  
The only beekeeping textbook teaching college students & beekeepers the science & practice of bees & beekeeping

**Price: \$45**



**Beeswax Alchemy**  
Over 40 DIY projects that's the perfect combo of recipe, craft book, & beekeepers' guide

**Price: \$20**



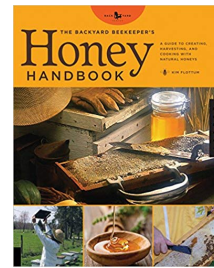
**BeeCabulary Essentials**  
All the special terminology about bees and beekeeping

**Price: \$30**



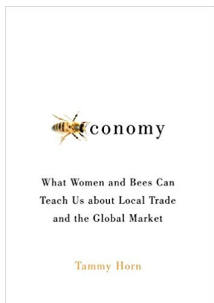
**Honey From the Earth**  
Internationally acclaimed honeybee photographer Eric Tournet spent FIFTEEN YEARS traveling the world to capture the breathtaking diversity of bees and beekeeping traditions on six continents.

**Price: \$50**



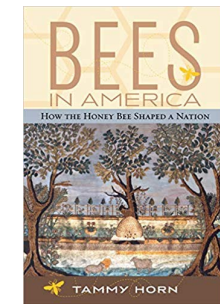
**Backyard Beekeeper's Honey Handbook**  
More than just a cookbook, it introduces the literal cornucopia of honey varieties available

**Price: \$20**



**Beeconomy: What Women & Bees Can Teach Us about Local Trade & the Global Market**  
Examines the fascinating evolution of the relationship between women & bees around the world

**Price: \$20**



**Bees in America: How the Honeybee Shaped a Nation**  
Cultural history of bees and beekeeping in the United States, from the colonial period, when colonists first introduced bees to the present

**Price: \$20**



**Better Beekeeping**  
Takes beekeepers past the beginning stages and offers solutions and rewards for keeping bees a better way.

**Price: \$20**

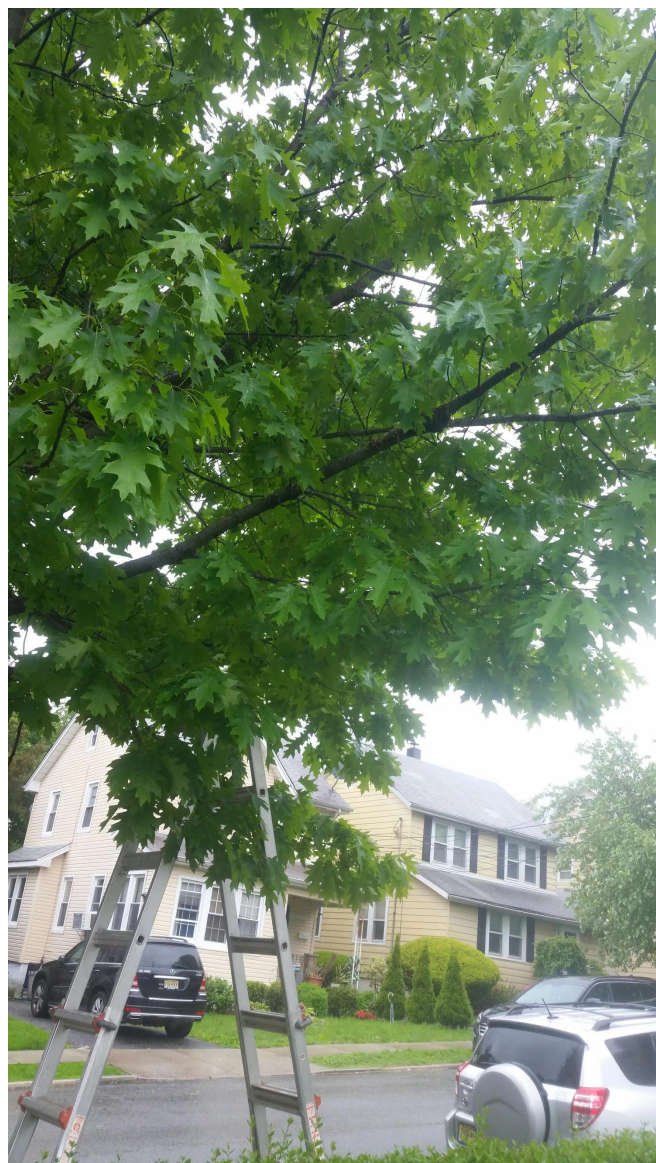
*All Books are only available to members at our monthly meetings*



# Swarm Season

## by John Matarese

This week, I had my first swarm catch of the year. With all of the unusual weather recently, we can rest assured that it will be a busy swarm season! Catching a swarm, depending upon where it's located, can be challenging and sometimes dangerous. We encourage our members to use good judgment and common sense when attempting to catch a swarm. Special attention and caution should be used when using a ladder. From level ground, check for electric utility lines, tree limbs and a level surface before heading up. When in doubt, call someone that is better equipped to handle it. The risks are too great and it's not worth a trip to the hospital or worse!



# Rich Stellingwerf

## Our New Club Officer

We are proud to announce that Rich Stellingwerf is the Northeast NJ Beekeepers new secretary. For those who have attended any of our club's many events, you know Rich, as he is always lending a helping hand and the first to volunteer. Rich also assists several of our members with their seven hives, including Leigh, one of our most senior members. Rich is going on his fifth year of keeping bees, and this year, he has expanded his apiary to 13 hives. Our club is only as good as its volunteers, and we are lucky to have Rich as a member. Please take a moment and join me in congratulating Rich as our new club secretary!



**Rich and his daughter Kaylee getting ready to work the hives!**



Our Facebook Group has **over 1825 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 it for everything Northeast New Jersey Beekeeping!**

**Next Month**

**Tim Schuler – Mite Management**





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