nnjbees.org

March 2020

NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

A division of the New Jersey State Beekeepers Association

President	**Frank Mortimer**	201-417-7309	3rd V. Pres.	**Rich Stellingwerf**	201-693-2571
V. President	**John Gaut** – Mentor Coordinator	201-961-2330	Secretary	**OPEN**	--
2nd V. Pres.	**Jaimie Winters**	551-486-7479	Treasurer	**Bob Jenkins**	201-218-6537

~~Meeting on: **Friday, March 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***

This Month's Meeting:

CANCELED

STAY HOME

Message from the President:

Hello Northeast NJ Beekeepers!

I hope everyone is doing okay with all that's going on in the world today. Please remember that it's most important to stay safe so we can all bee well! Actually, this is a decent time to be a beekeeper, as working your bees is the good way to maintain social distance, so dive into your hives.

It looks like we are going to jump right into spring, so make sure you're regularly checking on your bees. Since we had a mild winter, and because we're still a few weeks away from a major bloom, make sure your bees have plenty to eat. Remember, many colonies die in March as a result of running out of food. I would recommend sticking with solid sugar (Bee Candy) until our nights are above freezing. It's a good way to make sure your bees have plenty to eat without the worry of having extra liquid in the hives while the weather is still too cold.

For those of us that dropped some Apivar into our hives back in January or February, make sure you pull all the strips out of your hives, so you have the required amount of time between your treatment and when you put your honey supers on. (The directions for Apivar state that you should have the strips out of your hives for two weeks before putting honey supers on.)

Since I am an admitted bee-obsessed maniac with a one-track bee mind, the social distancing that is currently being practiced by people around the globe made me think about our bees and the threat of varroa. The parasitic mite, varroa destructor, is the world's single leading cause of bee deaths. First, the mites weaken the bees as they feed on the bees' fat bodies, creating colonies of bees that are less equipped to survive. Second and more deadly to bees are the viruses that the mites spread throughout the bee community.

According to a Cornell University study, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, honey bee colonies were able to tolerate more mites, a higher percentage per 100 bees, than they are today. Why? The mites feeding behaviors have not changed, but the number of bee viruses that the mites are vectoring has increased and have become more deadly. A good example of this is that at one time beekeepers in our area could treat once a year with success, now most of us are treating three to four times a year.

If you look at how quickly COVID-19 has spread and the number of people that have been infected, it makes you aware of the deadly power of a virus and how entire populations are being impacted.

Now, think about the lessons we're learning about social distancing and apply this our bees. Bees are very intelligent, but they are incapable of practicing social distancing. Since bees travel three miles from their hives, they regularly come in contact with someone else's bees, so what are beekeepers supposed to do? The answer is simple: **Test and Treat Your Bees for Varroa.** The only way the world's population of honey bees are going to survive is if every beekeeper takes the threat of varroa and the bee viruses they are carrying, as seriously as the world has for human viruses.

When you compare what we've had to do for the survival of our own species, is it really that difficult for some to understand that all beekeepers need to test for mites and should only use proven, EPA approved mite treatments?

Once the mandated lockdown is over, there will be many lessons learned that impact our future behaviors and beliefs. I hope that one of the lessons will be for every beekeeper to understand the impact he/she can make to stop varroa and the viruses they spread.

Bee Safe & Bee Well,

Frank Mortimer
President, Northeast NJ Beekeepers

Club Secretary Wanted
Computer Skills Needed

Do You Have Computer Skills?
Would You Like To Help The Club?

Dear Members: Our Club Needs Your Help!

We need someone who can step up to bee our Club Secretary. Responsibilities include monthly newsletters, emails to our members, and overseeing our website. If you're comfortable using a computer, knowledgeable of programs such as Word, PowerPoint, Adobe, and Word Press, you would bee perfect! The position is our Club's Communication Manager. If you're interested, please contact Frank at frankmort@gmail.com. THANK YOU!

Beekeeping in March

by John A. Gaut
EAS Master Beekeeper

Spring is here! I see Forsythia beginning to bloom right on schedule. Forsythia does not provide any pollen or nectar for the bees; it is a good indicator of the beginning of the beekeeping season though. The red maple trees are blooming too and the bees are gathering pollen and a little nectar from the small red flowers. Next will be dandelions. Dutch clover and other wild flowers.

My bees are building very nicely. Most of the colonies have young vigorous queens from last fall; they are laying nice brood patterns now. Typically, I find between 3 and 5 frames of brood in the colonies. I did have to replace a couple of queens though; they just were not performing as well as the others. Yes, I know. I'm brutal! Brother Adam (who wrote the book *Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey*) was brutal with queen replacement too. It's a little easier to make these tough decisions since I have plenty of overwintered queens in nucs looking for a bigger assignment!

This is a picture of a nice frame of brood. Actually, I would count this as 1.2 frames of brood since both sides look like this. A common standard for a frame of brood is to have 65% or roughly 2/3s of both sides filled with brood (eggs, larvae and/or capped pupa). The other 1/3 of the frame is typically honey in the upper corners and a band of pollen between the honey and brood.

Most of my colonies still have enough honey from the fall too. Colonies will start consuming more honey now as the brood nest expands and there are thousands of hungry larvae mouths to feed! I was putting in protein patties. Now that the pollen flow started, I am cutting back. I typically see a frame or two of fresh pollen stored in the hive. I'll watch the weather. If the bees cannot forage for pollen for an extended period (a few days) I will add protein patties so the colony can keep brood rearing going. I'll also watch the honey stores closely and feed sugar syrup if any colony is low on honey.

On the warmer days, I have been removing the ApiVar strips from the hives. I inserted the strips in mid-January. I just started to test for mites with an alcohol wash. [I have some Alcohol but need more. I will use windshield washer fluid if needed instead.] I test all my colonies. Usually I find mite levels are very low in all the colonies (0 mites per 300 bees) but there is occasionally one that has higher mites (more than 1or 2 mites per 300 bees). I want to find that colony so I can re-treat it before it becomes a mite bomb!

Once the colonies have 6 or more frames of brood, I will be pulling some frames to make queen mating nucs. I plan to start grafting queens the end of this month. Others will be reversing the brood boxes or making splits. Swarm Management will be a top priority beginning in April. I put honey supers on in early April to give the colony more space and reduce the swarming impulse.

Below is a picture of a brood frame taken on 3/13/2020. I would count this frame as a one frame of brood since there is honey and pollen around the top and sides. The center of the frame has eggs and young larvae in the open cells; brood has emerged from these cells and the queen has laid eggs in the cells as soon as they are open and prepared. Note the drone cells on the bottom bar and a couple of queen cups. The drone cells have eggs and larvae. The queen cells are empty….for now. This colony and others are in the very early stage of swarm preparation. I will be taking steps to interrupt their swarm preparation steps.

Since we are not able to meet this month, please email me any specific questions you may have about managing your bees in March. John.A.Gaut@Gmail.com

Welcome Al Symon!
Our New Treasurer

Sometime this summer, Bob Jenkins will be stepping down as our Club Treasurer. Bob and his wife are retiring and heading south. For the past five years, Bob has overseen our club's finances and set the bar high for all to follow. Bob will be missed and hopefully will occasionally attend some of our club events.

The great news is that Al Symon has stepped up to help the club and will be bringing his 30+ years of corporate accounting experience to our club! We are very lucky to have Al on our team!

In additional to keeping bees, Al also enjoys making maple syrup. During the summer, if he isn't tending to his hives, Al is either deep-sea fishing or fresh water fishing at Lake George. He has been married for 28 years to his wife Linda and his daughter Nicole is a student at Ramapo College.

Please take a moment and join me in welcoming Al to the NNJbee Leadership Team!

Al's email is:
Al.symon@verizon.net

We look forward to seeing all that you will do!

PHOTO: Al and NJ State Honey Queen, Mikhaila Sanchez

NEED NUCS?

Nucs $175 ❖ Deposits $50 per nuc

The Club will bee ordering nucs from Grant Stiles
They will bee 5-frame nucs, treated with Apivar

We expect delivery in late April
Reserve your nuc & mail your deposit to:

Bob Jenkins
314 Graydon Terrace
Ridgewood, NJ 07450

Checks made out to: Northeast NJ Beekeepers

Include a note with your check stating how many nucs you are reserving. **Checks only!**

Free Screening of Honeyland

The Northeast NJ Beekeepers is hosting
a free screening of
"Honeyland" the Oscar winning documentary.

The screening is:

Stay Tuned For New Date!

Sharp Electronic Corp.
100 Paragon Dr. Montvale, NJ.

The screening is Free and Open to All!

Top Insulation and Ventilation

John A. Gaut
Master Beekeeper, EAS

I am continuing my observation of 4 hives with clear inner covers. Brood rearing is in high gear resulting in more metabolic moisture in the hive. The clear inner covers enable me to compare condensation in hives with Insulation between the inner cover and top cover with hives that do not have insulation. I'm also comparing hives with top ventilation and hives without top ventilation. I am seeing some unexpected results!

There are 4 hives
Hive 1: Insulated Top and Ventilation
Hive 2: NO insulation and Ventilation
Hive 3: Insulated Top and NO Ventilation
Hive 4: NO Insulation and NO Ventilation

Below are some pictures from the morning of March 16th when it was 28F outside.

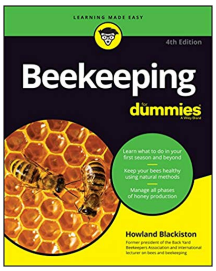
I expected to find the hives without ventilation would have excessive condensation build up and insulation would not make much difference. Instead I found **insulating the top of the hive significantly reduces condensation and ventilation is not much of a factor.**

Here are my observations to date:

- Insulation significantly reduces condensation on the inner cover
- Insulation keeps the inner cover and the upper part of the hive warmer
- Relative Humidity is lower under insulated inner covers
- **A vented inner cover does not significantly reduce condensation!**
- The condensate on the inner cover will freeze when outside air temperature ~20F or less
- The condensate does "rain" on the cluster
- The cluster is looser when the top is insulated
- The cluster is able to move to food stores
- There is heat loss from the upper entrance

Bottom Line: Top Insulation has a significant benefit for preventing condensation in a hive and only a very small (3/4" X 3/8") opening is needed for an upper entrance.

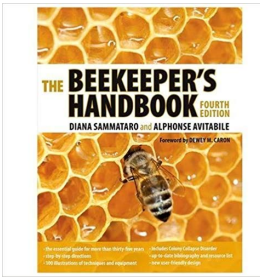
Northeast NJ Beekeepers Bee Books for Sale



Beekeeping for Dummies

An excellent basic intro guide to beekeeping

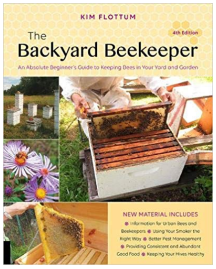
Price: $20



Beekeeper's Handbook, 4th

If you're only going to buy one book, this is the best guide to the hobby & profession of beekeeping

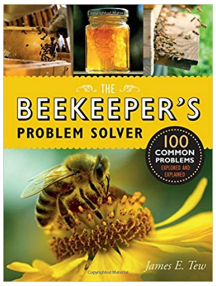
Price: $25



Backyard Beekeeper 4th

The premiere introduction to backyard beekeeping

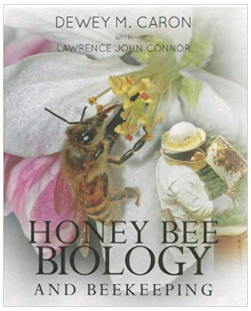
Price: $20



Beekeeper's Problem Solver

100 Common Beekeeping Problems Explored and Explained

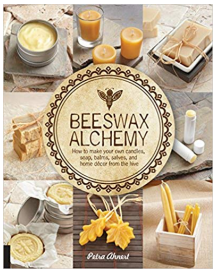
Price: $20



Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping

The only beekeeping textbook teaching college students & beekeepers the science & practice of bees & beekeeping

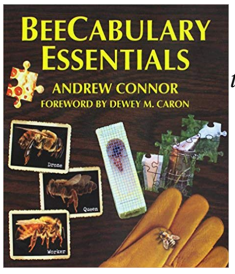
Price: $45



Beeswax Alchemy

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

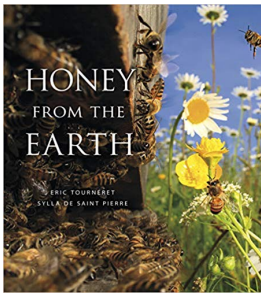
Price: $20



BeeCabulary Essentials

All the special terminology about bees and beekeeping

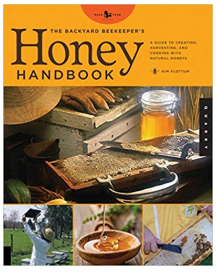
Price: $30



Honey From the Earth

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

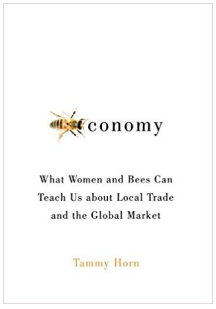
Price: $50



Backyard Beekeeper's Honey Handbook

More than just a cookbook, it introduces the literal cornucopia of honey varieties available

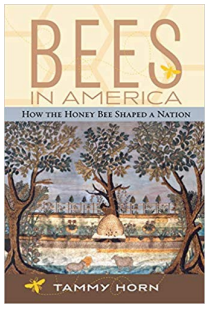
Price: $20



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

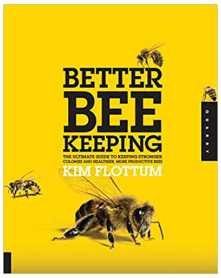
Price: $20



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

Find us on Facebook

Our Facebook Group has **over 1890 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 it for everything Northeast New Jersey Beekeeping!

Next Month:

Getting Your Bees Ready for Spring!

April 17th

NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS

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