

The Miami Valley Beekeepers Association

Newsletter

Monday, October 3, 2022

7:00 p.m. Tipp City Library

Guest Speaker: Dr. Meghan Milbrath, Assistant Professor at Michigan State University

Topic: Towards Treatment Free

Every beekeeper wants to be treatment free, but many beekeepers who are trying to reduce chemical inputs end up losing lots of bees. This talk discusses the philosophy of treatment free beekeeping, and the theory behind some of the common practices. We'll discuss a plan that allows you to keep bees with minimum inputs that doesn't put your bees at risk.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83253722387>

President Notes

Do You Talk With Your Bees?

We've had a variety of pets in our house over the years: dogs, hamsters, sugar gliders, and a rabbit. My family frequently talks to these pets as if they can understand us. My wife will say "excuse me" when the dog gets underfoot in the kitchen. I'll say "Good morning!" to the bunny when I walk by. And of course there is plenty of "baby talk" when the pets do something cute. You may call it weird, but I'd say it's pretty typical based on checking in with other pet owners.

I do the same with my bees though I don't think of them as pets. As I'm taking off the top cover I'll say "Hello girls - how's it going?" And then I'll

usually comment on the weather or something from my hive notes. When I spot the queen I'll take a moment to say "Hey queenie! Lookin' good -- keep up the great work." Or, if I can't find the queen or things are not looking like I would expect, I will ask them "What's up? Why aren't you packing in pollen or nectar lately? Why isn't your queen laying in this box yet?"

Communication and intelligence are what set humans apart from other species. We've developed ways to convey information to other humans via speech and writing, even non-verbal. Sure, other species communicate using sound: I love opening my windows to hear the song birds. But our intelligence is what allows

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

effective communication in humans - understanding and speaking in multiple languages or reading and writing in cursive or print. Intelligence also allows humans to interpret based on what we see: we can draw conclusions based on our observations.

This is how the bees communicate with the beekeeper. Once you know what to look for, it's much easier to "read" a hive based on what's happening at the entrance, on the frames, and even from observing the bees' behavior. Here are some examples:

- Before cracking open a lid, I watch the front entrance to see if the foragers are bringing in pollen. I love seeing the various colors in their "pollen pants". This lets me know that pollen sources are available. I also like to see lots of arrivals and departures. Learn what orientation flights look like compared to a swarming exodus.
- As I'm doing a hive inspection, I try to notice any changes in sound. There's the "happy buzz" of normal activity, but occasionally the buzz goes up a few pitches and it's no longer happy. This is when I know it's time to close up the hive because they've had enough or maybe robbing is starting to happen.
- While manipulating frames, do the girls move out of my way or do they start ping-ponging off my veil or hands? Defen-

sive behavior is a signal that they either do not like something you have done or the hive has been open too long. Techniques to prevent defensive behavior include slower movements, not squishing bees, using cool smoke, and having a plan for your inspection to limit the time to as short as necessary.

Inspect your brood frames (and all of them if you can). Seeing eggs, larvae, capped brood, and drone cells are just the beginning. Learn to spot evidence of pests and make sure to check out your bottom boards if possible. Seeing the queen is great but not necessary if you're simply able to see eggs centered in the bottom of the cells.

I highly recommend keeping notes about your hives so you have a history for later reference. Write down your observations and keep notes on what's working and especially what's not. It's ok to experiment, but be ready to let the bees tell you what they think about it.

See you at the next meeting. Happy beekeeping!!

Jeff Adler

MVBA President

MVBA Secretary Report September 2022

MVBA Meeting Minutes September 12, 2022
Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m. at the Tipp City Library. There were 19 beekeepers attending and 1 person via zoom.
Announcements by Jeff Adler, MVBA President

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Jeff sold the club honey at a festival in mid-August for \$450. He also had available for purchase honey from his own hives. His observation was that people preferred the darker honey (club honey) to the lighter variety, and the 1 lb squeeze jar as opposed to the glass jars.

New members and guests introduced themselves.

Brian Willis, Treasurer gave a brief report on funds.

Jeff asked for recommendations and suggestions on worthwhile ways for the club to spend some of their money. Some ideas were 4H Beekeeping grant, donation to the library for the use of their facility for our monthly meetings, purchase beekeeping books for the library to put into circulation. If you have any ideas, email the club at miamivalleyba@gmail.com

Swarm List – Club is still receiving calls for swarms. Be sure and ask for a photo of the swarm before responding because sometimes the public mistakes yellow jackets for honeybees.

In the Apiary

- Asters are in bloom and goldenrod flow is on. You'll notice a different smell in your hives from the goldenrod like dirty socks.
- Now is a good time to extract honey. Beware of robbing this time of year if you put frames out for the bees to clean up. It is recommended to place frames inside the hives, rather than out in the open, for clean-up.
- Right now, the bees that are hatching are winter bees. Treat now for varroa mites to help with successful overwintering.

Next meeting is October 3rd, 2022, with guest speaker Dr. Meghan Milbrath.

Program by Tom Davidson, Master Beekeeper, on Honey Bee Winter Preparation. He shared the following checklist with lots of great information. He provided the opportunity to take a close up look with a magnifying glass of varroa mites, hive beetles, wax moth and bees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



Honey Bee Winter Preparation Checklist

Ohio - September 2022

by Tom and Fran Davidson - Master Beekeepers

Inspect Hives and:

- Identify and correct queenless conditions
- Remove unfinished supers and excess comb or foundation. (Reduce empty space for winter).
- Store frames of comb and foundation safe from moth, beetle and physical damage.
- Consider use of Para moth or CERTAN for comb storage protection.
- Ensure that ample honey and pollen stores are in hives for producing healthy winter-bees.
- Distribute capped honey frames from stronger hives to needy ones if available.
- Feed sugar water (1 to 1) and protein supplant for healthy winter bee feeding if bees lack stores.
- Feed solution of (2 sugar to 1 water by weight) to hives in order to provide 1-2 boxes of capped syrup per hive if bees failed to make that much honey.
- Provide emergency feed of sugar brick or fondant in top of hives in case bees run out of food before spring.

Develop plan to control Mite population

- If you have bees, you have mites! Use one of following to evaluate infestation level.
- Use alcohol or Dawn detergent wash to test 300 bees for dead mites. If more than 9 dead; treat.
- Use powdered sugar shake with 300 bees for mite count. Only 70% accurate so treat with 6 dead.
- Use Oxalic acid vapor and count dead mites on white board after 5 days. Treat if over 50 dead.
- Use evidence of Parasitic Mite Syndrome to determine need to treat. (Experienced beekeepers)

Treat for mites using one of the following approved methods:

- Apivar – Uses synthetic chemical “Amatraz” to kill mites.
- Apiguard – Uses Thymol organic compound (extract of thyme oil)
- Mite Away Quick Strips MAQS- Formic Acid
- Formic-Pro – Formic Acid
- Oxalic Acid Dribble – crystals diluted in sugar water or glycerin
- Oxalic Acid Vapor- crystals heated to vapor

Other Overwinter Recommendations

- Insulation – Especially inside top cover
- Provide windbreak against sub-zero winter winds
- Provide mouse guard at entrance to hives
- Try Oxalic Vapor treatment after brood break for increased effectiveness
- Replace winter losses in spring with queens you raise from survivor colonies

References and further education:

Tools for Varroa management – Honey Bee Health Coalition

Free new (1 August 2022) <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/resources/varroa-management>

Understanding varroa mites – Dr David Peck; a NY Bee Wellness webinar

www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4ALfq3GT8

MVBA Treasurer Report– September

Checking Account		Total Holdings		Cash On Hand
Beginning Balance Checking Acct Sept 2022	\$ 4,736.41	\$ 4,821.41	\$ 85.00	Beginning Balance Sept 2022
Income				Income during Meeting
Member Dues Paypal/Checks/	\$ -		\$ 25.00	Honey Sales
Honey sales and Reese Apiary Sales	\$ 1,180.00			
Total for Deposit	\$ 1,180.00		\$ 25.00	Total meeting income (cash/checks received)
Total Income		\$ 1,205.00		
Expenses				Expenses
	\$ -		\$ -	
	\$ -		\$ -	
	\$ -		\$ -	
Total Check Withdrawals/Debits	\$ -		\$ -	Total Cashbox Withdrawals
Total Expenses		\$ -		
Cash xfer (Deposit from Cashbox)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	Cash Xfer to lessen Cashbox contents
Ending Checking Balance Sept 15 2022	\$ 5,916.41		\$ 110.00	Ending Cash Balance Sept 15 2022
Monthly total Net change		\$ 1,205.00		
Previous month Net funds		\$ 4,821.41		
Sum balance should equal total holdings (Bank activity +/- Cash Activity)		\$ 6,026.41		This acts as a check to ensure activity = actual balances
MA Total Holdings 15 Sept 2022 (Checking balance + Cash Balance)		\$ 6,026.41		

The Basic Buzz in the Apiary

October

- Prepare colonies for winter
- Begin fall feeding with heavy syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water), if needed
- Unite weak colonies with stronger colonies
- Put on entrance reducers to keep out vermin

November

- Develop & implement your honey marketing program, especially for the holiday season
- Begin late-fall feeding

SEASONAL RESOURCE PAGE

Home-Made version of Honey Bee Healthy (adapted from Beesource)

5 cups water
2 ½ pounds of sugar
15 drops spearmint oil
15 drops lemongrass oil

Heat the water to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in the sugar until dissolved. Once the sugar water has cooled, add the essential oils. Stir until everything is evenly distributed.

This solution should have a strong scent and not be left open around bees.

Cool completely before using.

I store this concentrate in the fridge -label it so that your family doesn't drink it!!

Approx. dosage: 1 tsp per quart of 1:1 sugar syrup for feeding

Marshmallow Bee Fondant

3 bags (10.5 oz) marshmallows
½ c. water
4 pounds confectioners sugar
1 t. Homemade mix from recipe above

Put marshmallows in a microwave safe bowl. Bowl needs to be large because marshmallows will puff up and cause a mess if they overflow. Pour water over marshmallows. Microwave, 20 seconds at a time, until melted.

Carefully remove from microwave. Stir in powdered sugar and Honey B Healthy. Once it is difficult to stir, turn out on cutting board or countertop that has been dusted with confectioner's sugar. Knead in remaining sugar.

Coat the fondant with a light layer of shortening to help keep it moist. Wrap in several layers of plastic wrap.

Sugar Bricks :

While there are many recipes, here are two reputable links:

www.mdasplitter.com/docs/candy.pdf

[How to Make Homemade Sugar Bricks
\(betterbee.com\)](http://betterbee.com)

Protect your Fall Bees - Wasp Traps

