

**March 2024**



**The Miami Valley  
Beekeepers Association  
Newsletter**

**March Speaker**

**Dana Petrillo**

**from Dancing Bee Equipment**

**Topic**

**Propolis and its  
Benefits to Honeybees  
and the Hive**

***Zoom link provided in email***

**Next Meeting:**

**March 4 (Mon)**

**6:30 PM at the**

**Tipp City Public Library**

**or Zoom**

***Editor: Erica Adler***



## 2024 MVBA Board

Jeff Adler – President

Fran Davidson – Vice President

Donna Meade – Secretary

Brian Willis – Treasurer

Dave Collins – Member at Large

George Doviak – Member at Large

## An Opportunity for Members:

We will have a sign up sheet for those interested in being listed on our website as a vendor (e.g. honey, nucs, packages, woodenware, supplies, queens)

## The Buzz in the Apiary

### March

- Continue emergency feeding, if necessary
- Feed pollen supplements or substitutes, if needed
- First quick inspection of brood nest, if weather permits
- Check for and clean up dead colonies
- Clean out entrances and bottom boards
- Attend conferences

### April

- Monitor colony stores, esp. if weather is cold & wet
- Inspect brood nest for laying queen, disease, abnormalities
- Introduce package bees on drawn comb
- Requeen colonies with failing queens
- Reverse brood chambers when weather moderates
- Add supers to strong colonies at maple or dandelion bloom
- Unite weak colonies
- Equalize strength of all colonies

## Set Your Goals for 2024

I'm sure this is a repeat of a prior newsletter article, but it's very pertinent for March: **What are your beekeeping goals this year?** While there are a wide variety of tools and approaches to keeping bees, identifying your goals will help dictate your approach. Check out the following table for examples.

Goal	Expected Result	Approach
Grow your apiary	More hives, more bees	Make splits, catch swarms, buy packages
Honey production	Harvest honey to share/sell	Build strong hives, need honey supers with drawn comb
Nucs / Packages	Produce bees to sell	Early ramp-up (feed), good queens
Queen rearing	Produce queens to sell	Grafting, mating nucs, lots of nurse bees
Maintain current apiary (no growth)	No new hives	Control swarming, sell nucs/packages
Environmental	Help local area, provide general pollination	General maintenance, pest management

When you see advice from a beekeeper in a blog, YouTube video, or Facebook post, you should ask "What is the goal here?" Feeding bees in February implies early ramp-up that can help with multiple goals, but if you're trying to maintain your current apiary size, it'd be best to ignore this advice. It's also good to examine potential downsides to each approach. Feeding in February and March should increase brood production, but can be risky if we get late spring cold snaps, so be prepared to emergency feed so these colonies do not starve.

With your goal(s) identified, you are now ready to choose your approach. This is where the fun happens! Books, internet searches, or social media can provide you with a variety of options, but I recommend talking with local beekeepers to collect a list of proven approaches. This is also where experimentation can lead to a valuable education depending on your risk tolerance and apiary resources. But don't stop there - share your ideas and your results with your fellow beekeepers! That's where the power of a local beekeeping club is truly realized.

Good luck and Happy Beekeeping!

Jeff



# Seasonal Resource Corner

## Winter-Spring Feeding



### 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 every-thing 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 honeebhealthy. Once it is difficult to stir, turn out on cutting board or countertop that has been dusted with confectioner's sugar. Knead in remain-ing sugar.

Coat the fondant with a light layer of shortening to help keep it moist.

Wrap in several layers of plastic wrap.

## Treasurer Report

Brian Willis

Checking Account		Total Holdings		Cash On Hand
Beginning Balance Checking Acct Feb 2024	\$ 5,510.80	\$ 5,660.80	\$ 150.00	Beginning Balance Feb 2024
Income				Income during Meeting
	\$ -		\$ -	Member dues
	\$ -			
Total for Deposit	\$ -		\$ -	Total meeting income (cash/checks received)
<b>Total Income</b>		\$ -		
Expenses				
	\$ -		\$ -	
Check 1482 Party Supplies Cleared Dec 1	\$ (200.67)		\$ -	
	\$ -			
Total Check Withdrawals/Debits	\$ (200.67)		\$ -	Total Cashbox Withdrawals
<b>Total Expenses</b>		\$ (200.67)		
Cash xfer (Deposit from Cashbox)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	Cash Xfer to lessen Cashbox contents
Ending Checking Balance Feb 15 2024	\$ 5,310.13		\$ 150.00	Ending Cash Balance Feb 15 2024
Monthly total Net change		\$ (200.67)		
Previous month Net funds		\$ 5,660.80		
Sum balance should equal total holdings (Bank activity +/- Cash Activity)		\$ 5,460.13		This acts as a check to ensure activity = actual balances
<b>BA Total Holdings 15 Feb 2024 (Checking balance + Cash Balance)</b>		<b>\$ 5,460.13</b>		



# Sample Varroa Plans | Article from Betterbee.com

<https://www.betterbee.com/instructions-and-resources/sample-varroa-plans.asp>

We can't guarantee that these plans will perfectly solve your varroa problems, but they should be pretty trustworthy because they were created by a veterinarian, a Ph.D. in varroa biology, and two Master Beekeepers with decades of beekeeping experience in different parts of the country.

## General Principles:

- Monitor for mites using alcohol wash or sugar shake.
- Keep records of your mite data.
- Assess levels throughout the season.
- Treat whenever mite levels are above 2% infestation.
- Have miticide on hand before you need it.
- Newly purchased bees may have been treated, and require less treatment their first summer.



## Plan for Overwintered Colonies in Northern Regions

### President's Day (February 20):

Install Apivar (1 strip per 5 frames of bees; 4 strips total for most hives). This requires 8 weeks for the treatment, plus at least 2 weeks for the waiting period after you pull the strips out before adding supers by May 1st. You can watch our video on Apivar on Betterbee.com

### Tax Day (April 15):

Pull out Apivar strips

### Mother's Day (May 14):

Test mite levels in all hives OR 10-30% of hives in each apiary. If any hive yields more than 2 mites per 100 bees, treat the entire yard. Treatment at this time of year will likely be two strips of Formic Pro for 14 days (since it is fine to use when honey supers are on the hive) as long as temps are between 50 and 85°F. HopGuard 3 or a single strip of Formic Pro can also be used with supers in place, but won't kill reproducing mites in the brood. You can watch our video on HopGuard 3 here.

### Flag Day (June 14):

Repeat the Mother's Day plan again, treating if needed.

### Independence Day (July 4):

Repeat the Mother's Day plan if you have not treated yet. If treatment is required now, monitor temperatures in your area carefully to find a safe stretch of time to treat with Formic Pro (50 - 85°F) OR HopGuard 3 (52 - 92°F). Even if you've ignored your mites up to this point in the year, checking on mites around Independence Day is a critical chance to prevent a mite catastrophe come fall/winter.

### First week of August:

Repeat Mother's Day plan again.

### Labor Day (September 4):

Harvest the summer honey crop. Check mite levels. Treat with either Formic Pro (formic acid) or ApiLife Var/Apiguard (thymol-based) if mite levels are above 2 mites per 100 bees. If you don't have time to check mite levels, default to treating every hive.

### Once, between Thanksgiving & Christmas:

Treat every colony with either vaporized or dribbled oxalic acid, to clean up lingering mites and knock levels as low as possible for next spring.



## Notes on your first year of beekeeping:

- You will likely be feeding sugar syrup to a new colony for a large part of their first season, especially if the bees need to build comb
- A reputable bee supplier should provide bees with low mite levels, but you won't know for sure until you check your mite levels yourself
- If you are new to beekeeping, ask other (successful) beekeepers in your area what they are doing to keep their bees healthy

## New Beekeepers in Northern Climates

### Mother's Day (May 14):

Test mite levels in all colonies by sugar roll. If any yields more than 2 mites per 100 bees, treat all colonies with a miticide. Treatment this time of year for a new colony will likely be one strip of Formic Pro for 14 days as long as temperatures are between 50 - 85°F.

### Flag Day (June 14):

Test again, and treat if needed as in May.

### Independence Day (July 4):

Test again. If treatment is required, be sure to find a stretch of days under 85°F to treat with Formic Pro (two strips, as long as the colony has grown well) or under 92°F for HopGuard 3 treatment (a tutorial for HopGuard 3 use can be found [here](#)). If you have not done any mite checks or treatment since getting your bees, this is a crucial chance to prevent disaster.

### First Week of August:

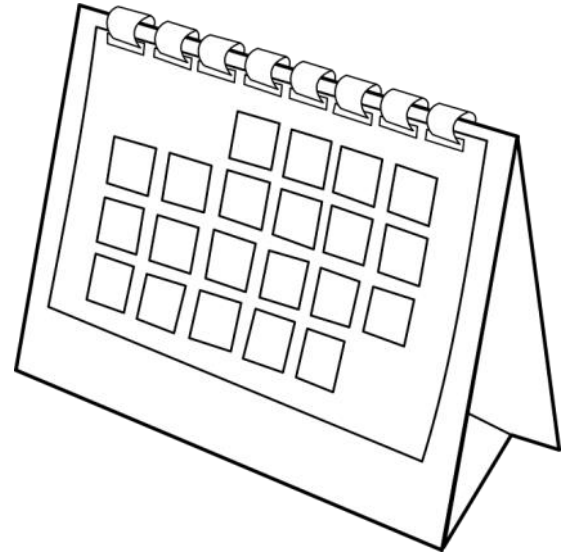
Test again, treating with Formic Pro if mite levels are greater than 2 mites per 100 bees. Be mindful of the maximum daytime temperature before treating with formic acid.

### Labor Day (September 4):

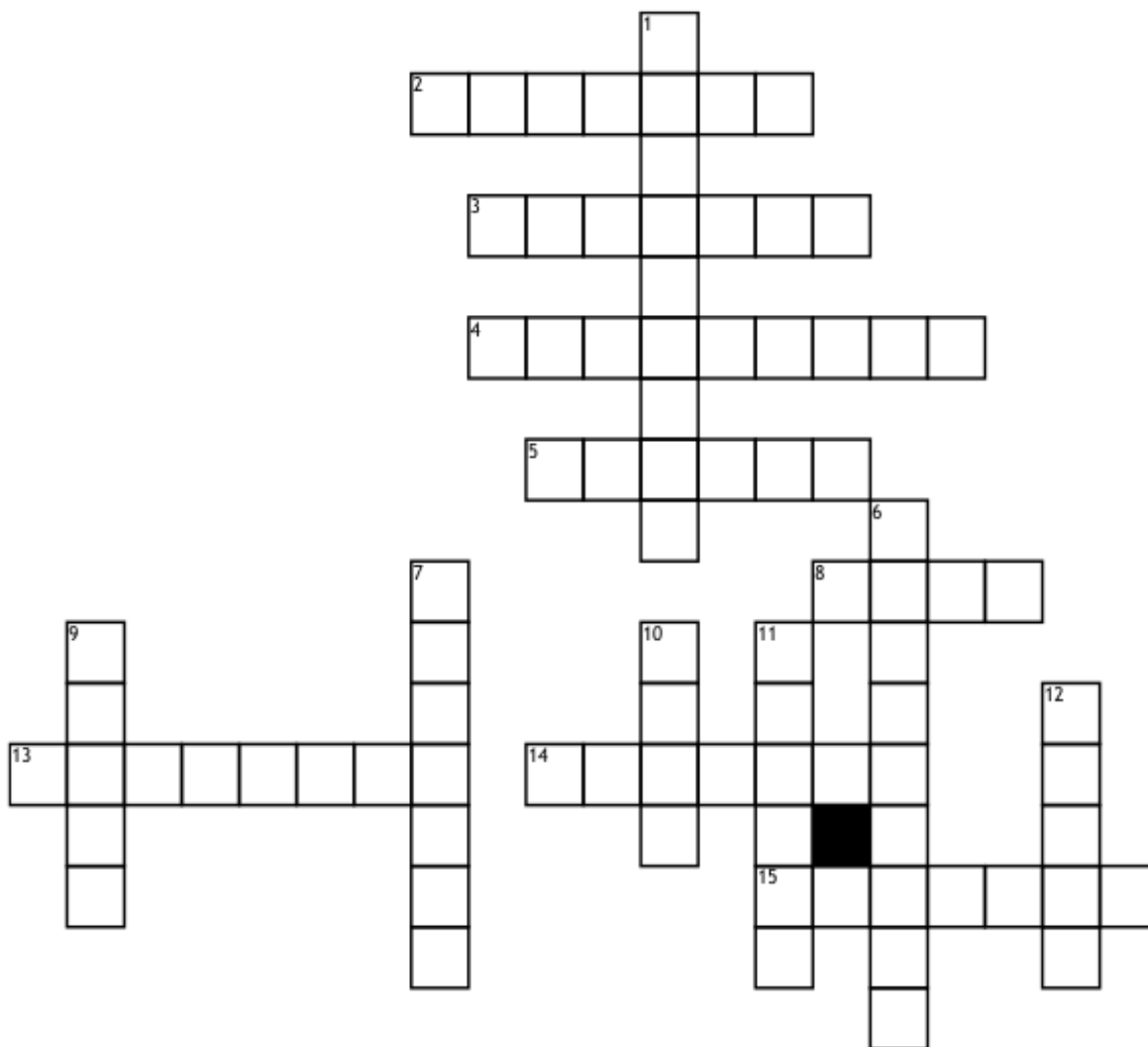
Check mite levels. Treat with ApiLife Var/ Apiguard (thymol) or Apivar (amitraz) if levels are above 2 mites per 100 bees. If you can't monitor, default to treating every hive. Follow the label instructions on whichever miticide you choose.

### Once, between Thanksgiving and Christmas (Suggested):

Treat every colony with dribbled oxalic acid (read label instructions for instructions), to clean up lingering mites and knock levels as low as possible for next spring.



# Beekeeping Fun



## Across

2. Larvae of the Golleria melloncia

3. Two to five frames of comb used primarily for starting new colonies or rearing queens

4. A machine which removes honey from the cells of comb

5. A device in which materials are slowly burned to subdue bees

8. A mass of six-sided cells in which brood, honey and pollen are stored

13. A thin layer of wax used to cover the full cells of honey

14. A box or receptacle used for housing a colony of bees

15. Stealing of honey by bees from other colonies

## Down

1. A brood disease caused by Paenibacillus larvae

6. A female bee who does the majority of the work

7. A ball-like arrangement of adult bees within the hive during winter

9. A large number of worker bees, drones, and the old queen that leaves to establish a new colony

10. A beehive made of twisted straw

11. Colonies, hives, and other equipment assembled in one location

12. The male honey bee