

# Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

News Release MCBA

Vol. 95 Issue 2 – April 2013

MCBA Motto: “Beekeepers Helping Beekeepers”

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## Spring 2013 Calendar of Events

### April

**April 9 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**April 10 – New Beekeepers Class**, 4-H Center, 6 p.m.  
– Bee equipment, feeding, looking for brood, checking the queen

**April 17– General Meeting** in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 p.m. – Dr. Debbie Delaney, Managing Risk in Honey Production: From the Hive to the Pantry

**April 20 – Package Pick-up**, Worcester Honey Farms, 2011 Shearer Road, Lansdale. Pick-up starts at 12 noon; installation class at 2 p.m.

### May

**May 8 – New Beekeepers Class**, 4-H Center, 6 p.m. – Feeding bees, growing the colony, adding brood boxes, swarm prevention

**May 14 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**May 22– General Meeting** in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 pm. – Dr. David Tarpey. This nationally respected honey bee expert will speak to MCBA via internet connection about the African Small Hive Beetle, its spread, negative effects and methods of controlling it. In addition, Dr. Tarpey will review new on-line resources for training and agriculture extension outreach for beekeepers at all experience levels.

### June

**June 11 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**June 12 – New Beekeepers Class**, 4-H Center, 6 p.m.  
– Introduction to Mites and Mite Control

**June 19– General Meeting** in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 pm. – Dr. Vincent Aloyo. Cooking with Honey – Master beekeeper and culinary artist Dr. Aloyo will demonstrate how to use honey effectively as a sweetener in cooking and baking using some of his own recipes, along with a dash of true scientific knowledge.



## Tips and Tidbits – Feeders and Weather By Mark Antunes

In beekeepers' efforts to propagate honey bees, backyard inventors and equipment manufacturers have come up with more gadgets, contraptions, and gizmos to make our hives just a tad-bit better for the bees than you can shake a hive tool at.

Just like the robin returns each spring, Jim Bobb will come back from Georgia with a load of packages to fill the new hives of this year's crop of beginners, and experienced beekeepers who want to expand or replace dead outs. Getting these new bees to flourish in cold early spring weather is a priority - especially for beginners getting the right start. As I write this article on Saint Patrick's Day I am looking out my window at a landscape covered by over 2" of snow with temperatures in the low thirties and a wind blowing in from the northwest. This is not exactly what I had been hoping for. Along with beekeeping I am a vegetable gardener too. Today is the day - I am told - one should plant spring peas. That will not happen in my garden this year nor will I be using top hive feeders anytime soon.

When the weather warms up and the bees break cluster and move about freely, a well designed and properly installed top hive feeder - one that does not allow bees to get in from the outside or drown them inside - will work well. Those two characteristics are critical. In my experience, if they are not accounted for a top hive feeder can be a death trap. I do not like entrance feeders because those put the food further away from

where it is needed in the hive and from where it will be stored. And it is in a more vulnerable location for the colony to defend, so other honey bees and insects can rob the sugar syrup. That just creates more turmoil and collateral death among the bees you are trying to raise.

One feeding method that works well for me in cool weather is a plastic food storage bag with pin holes poked into it that rests on the top bars, shrouded by a raised inner cover. The other is jars of syrup placed on top of the inner cover - either one jar directly over the opening or, for packages on new wooden ware, three or four jars on shims that are 3/8" thick and allow the bees to get more syrup before you have to refill the jars (see photo). Make sure the jars are sealed tight so a vacuum develops in each jar and it does not leak, killing bees.

Either method keeps the food source close to the cluster where it is warm enough for the bees to work up to it and back down into the cluster where it can be shared. Thus, wax is drawn out, and new brood fed. Other methods where the bees need to break cluster just don't work in cool or cold weather. So save those top-hive feeders for May and the summer months. If they are properly designed and installed they work fine when the temperatures warm up.



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## CONGRATULATIONS!! An HPS/MAG Mid-Atlantic Region Grant Has Been Awarded to the Montgomery County 4-H Beekeepers Club

Twice each year HSP/MAG awards three \$500 grants to people or groups that are contributing to the promotion of horticulture and creating a positive ecological impact. Included in the January 2013 recipient group is the Montgomery County 4-H Beekeepers Club for their upcoming work in creating a Pennsylvania certified pollinator garden. We will be able to view the garden at the original Official Bee Garden for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at Morris Arboretum – the site of the PSBA and MCBA summer picnic!



### Swarm season will soon be here!

As I write this, the snow is coming down. However, don't be fooled by the below normal temperatures and spring snow! Your bees are preparing to swarm. But before the swarm occurs, make sure your bees don't starve. Brood rearing has started, and your colony is consuming lots of stores in order to maintain brood rearing temperature (about 93 F). With our continued below normal temperatures, our bees are not able to forage on a regular basis and are in great risk of starvation. Check your bees frequently to make sure they have enough food.

However, in a couple of weeks (sooner than you think), you will have to start swarm control procedures. Some of my hives are already raising drones! Drone production is a necessary first step down the path to swarming. As soon as we have a

60 degree F day, reverse your brood boxes. As Mark Antunes discussed at his March 20<sup>th</sup> presentation, crowding is a major swarming trigger. Over winter, the bees have moved to the top of their hives. Reversing the brood chambers relieves congestion by giving the colony more room above them. Be alert to when your colony needs more boxes. The population of some races (e.g., carniolans) increases very quickly. If you are not paying attention, the colony will quickly become over crowded, resulting in a swarm. Remember that sealed brood will emerge as adult bees in 10 to 12 days after the bees put on a waxed cap. One side of a deep frame holds about 3000 pupa whereas one side of a medium frame about 2000 pupa. So when you observe frames of sealed brood, think about crowding with those soon to emerge bees. Keep the brood nest 'open' by removing frames of honey (to an upper box) so that the queen has plenty of room to lay eggs and add extra boxes before the hive becomes crowded. The 'Goldilocks' principle comes into play: we need to give our bees room, but not too much or the Small Hive Beetles may overwhelm the colony.

Mark also discussed a variety of swarm control and prevention measures. He mentioned removing frames of bees and brood to relieve crowding and to prepare a nuc. In addition, swarming behavior can be aborted by use of the Snelgrove procedure (<http://www.bbka.org.uk/local/barkston-ash/started/artificial-swarm~print.shtml>), Pagden procedure (<http://www.barnsleybeekeepers.org.uk/pagden.html>) or Demaree method (<http://www.honeybeesuite.com/demaree-demystified/>). Once you see eggs or larvae in the queen cell, be prepared to institute your choice of swarm control procedure. You will have less than 4 days to prevent the swarm from leaving. So make use of this time to prepare. Swarms are coming soon, ready or not!

Contributed by Vince Aloyo  
[www.vincemasterbeekeeper.com](http://www.vincemasterbeekeeper.com)

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## What We Know About the Genetics of Unmanaged Honey Bee Populations in the United States

Deborah A. Delaney, Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor Entomology & Wildlife Ecology University of Delaware*

Friday April 12, 2013, 7:00 PM, Room 114 Mandell Hall,  
Delaware Valley College



Dr. Delaney teaches and conducts research at the University of Delaware. Her research includes the evolutionary biology of honey bees, population genetics of honey bees in the United States, genetic characterization of unmanaged honey bee populations and pollination ecology. Deborah is also an experienced beekeeper. She has run her own small honey business called "What's the Buzz Apiaries" and has worked as a queen breeder both for commercial beekeepers and at Washington State University.

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## Mite Fighter Management

Warren Graham, of the Chester County Beekeeper Association, attended a recent MCBA meeting to share his personal, highly effective hive management system with us. Warren manages approximately 100 hives with very few losses, and believes it has to do with his aggressive battling with varroa mites year round. Warren commented that while there are many negative factors in our environment that conspire to undermine our efforts to keep our colonies healthy and alive, the single greatest threat to their well being is the varroa mite and the diseases it transmits. I am in agreement with that theory, and after listening to Warren's methodology - coupled with the success he has achieved in using it - it is hard not to be a believer in his approach. Warren has a no-nonsense approach and makes no claim that he has created a magic bullet. When listening to his plan, I was trying to connect the dots to other beekeepers' management techniques that I have read about at one time or another. After sleeping on it and reviewing my notes, it suddenly all came into focus, and I realized he had developed something special.

Warren has created an enhanced, hybridized system of the best of what is out there. His system can mitigate mites without creating super mites in the process. He uses Oxalic acid dribbles when the bees are brood-less in the winter, applying Randy Oliver's guidance for dosage/strength. He does a variation of Mel Disselkohn's plan of brood cycle breaks via scheduled self-requeening of colonies that breaks the mites' breeding cycle, and splits, which limit the mites' ability to multiply and aid the bees' ability to limit them as well. And for overwintering, he uses a variation of Walt Wright's Nectar Management theory/hive configuration, with tweaks to meet his specific goals, AND reduce cost at the same time. In addition to those core elements, he favors the use of powdered sugar dusting, applied in a weekly cycle, for four weeks in succession. In closing, Warren emphasized the need for beekeepers to periodically monitor each hive's mite loads during the bee season, via sugar shakes, to stay ahead of mite loads that could reach levels that are detrimental to the colony's overall well-being.

In my opinion, Warren's unique plan is not only effective for keeping mites in check in his own hives, it is a valuable doctrine for any beekeeper whose bees have exposure to critical varroa mite predation in their apiaries. If Warren was to document his management system, season-by-season, and publish it in a small paperback, it would be an instant classic!

Contributed by Scott Famous

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## SAVE THE DATE AUGUST 10, 2013 AN EVENT TO REMEMBER

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association (MCBA) will be hosting the 2013 Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association Annual Picnic on August 10, 2013. The Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS) is also holding their annual conference in the area, at West Chester University, on August 5-9. MCBA will invite all EAS attendees to the PSBA picnic. EAS is expected to draw beekeepers from all over the Eastern US, Canada, the Caribbean, and the world to the Delaware Valley and we hope that many local beekeepers will also attend the picnic. MCBA has chosen an extra special picnic venue - the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania. The Morris Arboretum is the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of PA and caters to the family-friendly interests of children and adults. In addition to guided tours of the gardens, sculptures and water features, the arboretum offers the Tree Adventure, Garden Railway, Horticulture Center, Miller's Cottage & Grist Mill, etc. The Arboretum is conveniently located, has excellent facilities and will offer several guided tours, without additional cost, to attendees. The Arboretum also has a large apiary, the Langstroth Bench and honey bee library collection. Please visit the arboretum's website for more information and video 'tours' at [www.business-services.upenn.edu/arboretum/index.shtml](http://www.business-services.upenn.edu/arboretum/index.shtml). This event will replace our annual MCBA picnic. It is potluck and as always it is free to MCBA members and their families. Come help us welcome our visitors to the area. We need your help to make this event a success. Please consider volunteering for one of the following: parking, greeters, set up and clean up, pamphlet editor or pot luck coordinator. Contact Priscilla at 215-643-2418 or [cillab@earthlink.net](mailto:cillab@earthlink.net) to sign up.

## MARKETPLACE



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**To advertise in Marketplace: If you have beekeeping-related products to sell or services to offer, please send your advertisement to the newsletter editor at: [News@montcobeepers.org](mailto:News@montcobeepers.org)**  
**In order to promote or advertise beekeeping classes or products and services in the MCBA newsletter or on the MCBA website, you must be a member in good standing.**

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**For the Latest Delaware Valley College Bee Course Offerings – See attachment!**

## **Southeast Pennsylvania SPRING PACKAGES**

**Available for Pickup Saturday, April 20\*.**

(\* Actual time & date depends on weather. Check [www.pabeekeeper.com](http://www.pabeekeeper.com) for up-to-date arrival times.)

Order your packages now for pickup Saturday, April 20\*. At 2:00 P.M. on the day of pickup, see a demonstration on installing package bees. Conveniently located in the exact center of Montgomery County near Valley Forge, Norristown, and Lansdale turnpike exits. Package includes 3-pound workers with Italian queen. For more information or to download a package order form, visit [www.pabeekeeper.com](http://www.pabeekeeper.com), email [packages@pabeekeeper.com](mailto:packages@pabeekeeper.com), or call 610-584-6778.

Worcester Honey Farms, 2011 Shearer Road, Lansdale, PA 19446

## Montgomery County Beekeepers Association Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are applied on a calendar year basis. January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>

New membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing membership \_\_\_\_\_

MCBA DUES \$10.00 per \*household per year \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*PSBA DUES \$20.00 for one person per year or \$25.00 per household per year \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Household = 2 adults and all children living at one address.

\*\*PA State Beekeepers Dues are recommended in order to encourage research on bee health, and promote efforts to dissuade local township and boroughs from restricting beekeeping. You will also benefit from the 10 annual state newsletters and information sharing.

Mail to: MCBA PO Box 203, Hatfield, PA 19440 or renew online at [www.montcobeekkeepers.org](http://www.montcobeekkeepers.org)

### News Release MCBA VOLUME 95 ISSUE 1 January 2013

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#### MCBA OFFICERS and Executive Committee Members – 2013

President	Mark Antunes	honeyhillfarm@verizon.net
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Exec Comm Mem	Harold Jenkins	
Exec Comm Mem	Vince Aloyo	vincent.aloyo@gmail.com
PSBA Rep	Harold Jenkins	
Public Speaker Coordinator	Scott Famous	famous55@verizon.net

**MCBA WEBSITE!**

[www.montcobeekkeepers.org](http://www.montcobeekkeepers.org)

Check out the MCBA website for news updates and items of interest. Pass the address to anyone you know that may be interested.

**July 2013**

**July 9 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**July 10 – New Beekeepers Class** – Harvesting Honey

**August 2013**

**August 5-9- EAS**, West Chester State University, West Chester, PA

**August 10 – PSBA Picnic & MCBA Picnic**, Morris Arboretum, 100 East Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**August 13 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**August 21 – New Beekeepers Class**, Colony Evaluation

**September 2013**

**September 10 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**September 11 – New Beekeepers Class**, Fall management and over-wintering

**September 18– General Meeting** in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 pm., David Hackenberg, the always entertaining PA commercial beekeeper who moves thousands of hives from PA to FL, CA, MA, NY and back will talk about the current status of commercial beekeeping and the impact industrial agriculture has upon it. He was the first to sound the alarm about CCD and has been in the forefront of the effort to restrict the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in agriculture.

**October 2013**

**October 8 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**October 16– General Meeting** in the Maple Room at the 4-H Center, Creamery, PA, at 7 pm., Jim Bobb. The Big 6, Cape Bees and Africanized Bees. Chairperson of EAS, past PSBA president and vice-president, past MCBA president and world traveler Jim Bobb will speak about his trip to South Africa.

**November 2013**

**November 2 – Annual Banquet**, Plains Mennonite Church, 50 West Orvilla Road, Hatfield, PA, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**November 12 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**December 2013**

**December 7 – Holiday Potluck Party**, to be announced

**December 10 - Executive Board Meeting**, Lansdale Public Library, 301 Vine Street, Lansdale, PA at 7 p.m.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The advice provided in this newsletter is the relevant writer's opinion and should only be taken as a guideline. Always seek several answers to your questions and review professionally written resources. The articles and advertisements in this newsletter may not represent the general views of the MCBA or its membership.