APRIL 2023

MCBA NEWSLETTER

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

DEREK PRUYNE

Spring has arrived, fellow beekeepers! While it seemed to come early this year, we did experience some cold weather in March that likely escalated the risk of colony starvation. In my small apiary, a few colonies were on the cusp of exploding and were it not for some last-minute emergency feeding could have quickly succumbed to the up and down forage conditions.

I try not to speak in absolutes, but with each passing day the risk of starvation decreases, and a new apicultural phenomenon comes into focus: SWARM SEASON. I just read reports of our first local swarms (and found some charged queen cups in my strongest colony this week!).

With more and more steady nectar sources coming online, it is a good time to consider adding supers or implementing your swarm management strategies of choice. It is also a good time to get your swarm traps mounted in hopes of an early-season score!

Don't forget - our county is represented by many "swarm catchers". If a swarm is issued from your apiary that you can't (or don't want to) catch yourself, please visit our MCBA page HERE for a list of swarm catchers. As always, we recommend "cut-outs" be performed by licensed and insured professionals.

Here's to a prolific spring nectar flow!

THIS ISSUE:

GENERAL MEETINGS

April 27

7:00PM - Montco 4H Center and Zoom

Main Presentation

Dr. Christina Grozinger

Penn State University

Pheromones and Cooperation and Conflict in Bees

Christina Grozinger is the Publius Vergilius Maro Professor of Entomology and the Director for the Center for Pollinator Research at Penn State. She is a Fellow of the Entomological Society of America and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and received the 2021 NAS Prize in Food and Agriculture Sciences. She received her bachelor's degree in chemistry and biology at McGill University, and her master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard University. Grozinger uses an integrative approach – from genomics to ecology – to study health and social behavior in bees.

Mini Presentation

Greg Lehman

MCBA President; Kara Jo Skin Care and Bee Farm

Queen Castles

Greg will be discussing how he utilizes queen castles for queen rearing and how to introduce those queens into hives

Montgomery County 10-Day Forecast

(www.weather.com)

Thu 06	82°/46°	PM Thunderstorms
Fri 07	61°/36°	Mostly Cloudy
Sat 08	54°/34°	Cloudy
Sun 09	59°/35°	Sunny
Mon 10	63°/39°	Mostly Sunny
Tue 11	70°/44°	Partly Cloudy
Wed 12	77°/52°	Mostly Sunny
Thu 13	82°/54°	Sunny
Fri 14	83°/57°	Mostly Sunny
Sat 15	82°/58°	Mostly Sunny

What it means:

Swarm season is upon us! With warm daytime temperatures in the extended forecast, we have reached a point in the season where routine hive inspections are much easier to accomplish.

As focus shifts from starvation prevention to swarm management, be sure to check your colonies are queen right, and balance resources as needed.

With more and more nectar/pollen available in the field, you can be checking for swarm cells, making splits, and mounting swarm traps!

EDUCATION WITH MCBA

2023 QUEEN REARING AND CELL GRAFTING CLASS

It's not too late to register for the 2023 Queen Rearing and Cell Grafting Class! But please remember this class is capped at 12 participants due to the nature of the material and hands-on session. This advanced course offers a two-session theory class (April 13th and 20th) followed by a hands-on class (April 29th). For more information and registration, click HERE.

2023 SPECIAL INTEREST CLASSES

May 18th, 2023

Topic: All about Nucs

Location: 4H Center located at
1015 Bridge Road, Collegeville, PA 19426

Instructor : Michael Awckland

Time: 6:30PM-9/9:30 PM

-What is a nuc?

-Why do you need one?

-How do you make and use them

Register Here

June 20, 2023

Topic: Queen Basics/ rearing (not Queen grafting)

Location: 4H Center located at
1015 Bridge Road, Collegeville, PA 19426

Instructor: Michael Awckland

Time: 6:30PM-9/9:30 PM

-Different ways to raise them

-Tools used for raising queens

-How to raise them, without skill

Register Here

Individual topics open to MCBA members and guests. Cost is $25 per person for members, per session; $35 for non MCBA members, per session.

Sessions will be 2.5-3 hours each. Register and pay in advance below. Classes can accommodate 30-35 spots in reserved classrooms.

A minimum of 12 students must be met for class to proceed.

MASTER BEEKEEPER PROGRAMS

Regina Rhoa, MCBA Vice President

2 years ago, I started my journey to become a Master Beekeeper with the University of Florida. At the time, only one other person in the MCBA had enrolled in the program. As the mentorship chair, being on several MCBA committees and talking to members, I found out that we currently have about 6 people from MCBA enrolled in various master beekeeper programs. MCBA has only 2 Master Beekeeper, Vince Aloyo and Keith Jardine. I am lucky to say that Vince has been a great mentor and friend over the 7 years that I have been involved with the club and served on the board. He even got me involved with PSBA, which I now serve as the Secretary. Margaret Zittel obtained her EAS Master Beekeeper certification several years ago but has sadly moved to California.

When deciding to start a master beekeeper program, I did some research and talked to other Master Beekeepers on the options available.Each program has different requirements as far as coursework, testing requirements, travel, and costs. In addition, each person has different learning styles, whether learning better by reading (books vs. presentations), seeing or doing. I find I am a better learner by seeing presentations instead of reading a technical book. I am also a doer. I love to get into my hives and analyze. I also love to help other people, thus running the mentorship program. I also really liked Florida's requirement to do outreach activities. I have recently finished the advanced level and am now moving onto the Master level. I hope to be complete in the next year or so.

The EAS Master Beekeeper program is probably the most popular in this geographical area, but also one of the toughest. All the testing is done in person at the annual EAS conference and the only thing to prepare you is a list of suggested books to read in advance (too boring for me). The success rate of passing all 5 parts of the testing on the first time is about 10%.You can come back each year and take the parts you failed, and a lot of people must come back multiple years to pass.I think eventually I may do the EAS program. Not that I will need to once I finish the Florida program, but if you know me, you know I am an overachiever. I think it is a feather in your cap that you can do it. It is a very highly respected accomplishment.

I have summarized these programs in below table.

MASTER BEEKEEPER PROGRAMS
(cont'd)

Univ/Org	Coursework	Practical/Outreach	Cost	Website
Cornell Univ	Online	Onsite -Written exam -15 minute oral presentation -Field work practical	$899	Cornell Master Beekeeping Certification Program (link)
Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS)	Self Study via books	Onsite at EAS conference -Written exam -15 minute prepared oral presentation -10 minute unprepared oral discussion on any topic -Field work exam -Laboratory exam	$100	EAS Master Beekeeping Certification Program (link)
Univ of Florida	Online (3 parts- Apprentice*, Advanced, Master) *May test out of apprentice level by taking exam	All levels- video submission of hive activities, online exams Advanced/Master –Public service credits (teach, write articles, volunteer) -Advanced- 10 credits -Master- 20 credits	Apprentice $250 ($50 exam only) Advanced- $300 Master- $300	UFL Master Beekeeping Program (link)
Univ of Montana	Online (3 parts- Apprentice*, Journeyman, Master) *May test out of apprentice level	Journeyman -quizzes & microscopic exam Master- research & technical report	Apprentice- $325 ($60 exam only) Journeyman- $430 Master- $495	UM Master Beekeeping Program (link)
Oregon State Univ	Online (3 parts- Apprentice, Journey, Master) -Mentor assigned	Apprentice- Online exam, education points, mentor signed field worksheets Journey- Online exam, 12 guided study assignments, in person lab and practical, 30 public service credits Master- written critique of research article, scientific research project, 100 public service credits	Apprentice- $300 ($60 exam only) Journeyman- $350 Master- $350	OSU Master Beekeeper Program (link)

The MCBA has become a great organization and has grown immensely since I got involved with the club 7 years ago taking Mark Antunes and Jim Bobb's beginner class (yes, I took 2 my first year). Mark Antunes saw my enthusiasm and convinced me to join the board (you can't say no to Mark). The Board of Directors (currently 13 people) have taken the club to new heights since I joined 6 years ago. The board is a very hard-working group of individuals that give a lot of their personal time volunteering to the organization. I would like to see the MCBA become a premier club with several Master Beekeepers teaching and providing outreach to our communities.

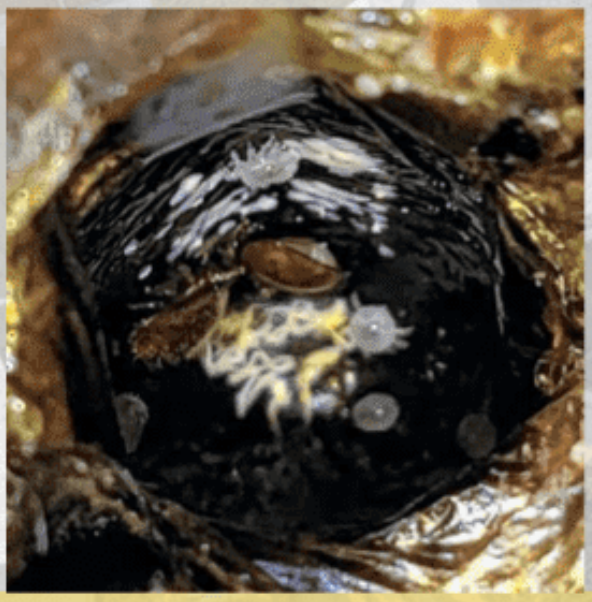
BIP LOSS AND MANAGEMENT SURVEY

SURVEY IS LIVE
April 1st – 30th!

BEE INFORMED

BIP Loss & Management Survey:
Monitoring Colony Losses Since 2008

Your participation is **vital** for informing beekeepers, researchers, policy makers, and the greater public on colony management and loss trends.

Management Topic for 2023:

We have shortened the survey to focus on a single management topic each year, revisiting topics every few years. This year, the focus is on:

Pest & Disease Management Practices

Separate questionnaires are available for small-scale and commercial beekeepers.

Take the survey at beeinformed.org!

Be included. Be involved. Bee informed. beeinformed.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

MCBA members - would you like to get involved in the community? Honey bees are a subject of great interest, and our club boasts a tremendous collective of honey bee (and pollinator) experts. If you would like to share your knowledge, please be sure to check out the recently-updated volunteer page on our website HERE. Please note you must be logged in as this is a members-only page (can be found under the MCBA Members Only tab)

Bee Informed Partnership
Queen Breeding and Genetic Diversity Panel

Bee Informed Partnership is sponsoring a panel discussion on queen breeding and genetic diversity. Featuring Dr. David Tarpy, Dr. Marla Spivak, and Dr. Garett Slater, this free Zoom event is scheduled for Monday April 10th at 6:30PM (you must register in advance - click HERE)

THE BEGINNERS' CORNER

Fellow beginners - it looks like we have finally hit the long-awaited spring season. Of course, we have already had plenty of inspection-worthy days. But the spring nectar flow and colony build-up is upon us.

If you have overwintered bees - congratulations! We may not be completely out of the woods, but with dandelions and other major nectar sources becoming available, barring unforeseen circumstances, you have made it through winter. And if you are just getting started, you are likely anxiously awaiting your nuc pick-ups and package installations.

In this 'beginners' corner', I thought I would talk about some very basic elements of hive inspections. If you are beyond your first year, much of this may already exist in your bank of knowledge. However if you are in your first season with bees (or were somewhat hands-off in the past), hopefully you will find this useful.

Inspection conditions:
This is probably obvious, but unless you *must* get into your hive for a specific reason, you should plan your inspections during ideal conditions. The nicer the weather, the nicer the bees (usually). First and foremost, brood can become chilled at temperatures near/below 50F. I prefer to inspect closer to 60F and above. If you must inspect in cooler conditions, be sure to work quickly, carefully, and do not expose frames for longer than necessary. Avoid inspections during very windy conditions. Anecdotally speaking, bees tend to be a bit more docile on sunny days versus cloudy weather. Lastly, I like to inspect between roughly 10AM and 3PM. That isn't a hard limit, but within that timeframe a fair percentage of the field force is out foraging. That means a less crowded nest to navigate.

What to look for:
One of my primary goals for every inspection is to be certain my colony is queen right. **This doesn't mean you need to see your queen**. In fact, there are relatively few times you should seek out the queen (there are exceptions). Generally, if you are seeing healthy brood and **eggs** you can assume your queen is alive and doing her royal duty. You should be looking for a healthy pattern of brood. Is the brood in solid, uniform patches? Can you see plenty of healthy 'C-shaped' larvae? It takes time to learn what to look for on each frame, but the difference between a healthy patch of brood and pock-marked brood pattern is relatively easy to notice once you see it. Finally, while this list isn't comprehensive - you should see plenty of pollen and nectar/honey stores in areas of the frame that surround the brood. Assessing this can be subjective (tap into your mentors if needed), but light boxes and excessive empty comb is no good as we coast into the season. It doesn't hurt to feed as needed.

Take notes/keep a journal:
In case you didn't catch that... take notes/keep a journal! There is a lot to observe when you open up a hive. You may need to take corrective actions. You may see something unusual that requires a follow-up on your next inspection. You may have multiple colonies where all these details become difficult to keep straight. The bottom line is that keeping a log of this information will not only aid in your learning experience, it will also go a long way in your overall hive management success. Don't leave these things to memory! At some point you will be grateful you have notes to reflect upon.

Honey Vanilla Pound Cake*

Ingredients:

- 2 sticks butter (softened, not quite room temp)
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 4 eggs (room temperature)
- 2 TBSP honey
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 2 cups cake flour, sifted
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp baking powder

Directions

1. Mix butter and sugar in stand mixer for 3-5 minutes until smooth
2. Combine eggs, honey, vanilla, lemon zest (no need to mix)
3. Once butter/sugar mixture is smooth, slowly add egg mixture one egg at a time with mixer running
4. Add flour, salt, and baking powder to sifter; sift together
5. With mixer on low, slowly add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients
6. Mix until combined, but be careful not to over-beat
7. Grease (butter) baking tin and add parchment paper to bottom
8. Bake mixture at 350F for 50-60 minutes

*Barefoot Contessa: Modern Comfort Food
Click HERE for video instruction