



FEBRUARY 2023

MCBA NEWSLETTER

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

GREG LEHMAN

Thank you to all who have renewed your memberships! Utilizing membership software these past few years has been vital to the success of this club and has helped us manage record high memberships each year. But like with any technology, it may also cause some confusion. If you know of a member that isn't getting communication or can't login to the website - it's probably because the software views them as "inactive" because their dues were past. Have them email MontcoPABees@gmail.com and we can reactivate their membership so they can get back up and running.

All of our communication (new classes, wax dipping, meeting info, bulk buys, queen cells, etc.) is sent to "Active" members (aka members in good standing) and we don't want anyone missing out because they were confused about signing in or didn't know what to do. We have done our best to manage the folks who mail checks to our PO Box and you should be squared away too, but doing everything online really helps us volunteers with time management and record keeping.

Thank you all who received this email because you must be in good standing! Looking forward to another awesome year and hope you're prepared for the spring season since it's right around the corner!!

CHEERS,
GREG

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GENERAL MEETINGS

February 23

7:00PM - Montco 4H Center and Zoom

Main Presentation - Dr. David Tarpy
NC State University

Coming out of Winter - Early spring is not only the most tenuous time for colonies and beekeepers, it is a very busy time for the bees. Understanding the biology of the bees during this time helps beekeepers minimize winter losses, maximized honey production, and succeed in the following year.




Mini Presentation - George Balock
How to Assemble Woodenware

Looking Back

In January, we welcomed Dr. Keith Delaplane from the University of Georgia to discuss "Pollinator partnerships among bee species. How one bee species can affect the pollination efficiency of another species." To examine this topic in more detail, consider picking up a copy of **Crop Pollination by Bees, Volume 1**, a recently released 2nd edition by Dr. Delaplane (be sure to look for the 2nd edition, as it has been updated with current research/information).

We were also fortunate to have our state inspector Jeff Eckel discuss the state inspection program and the importance of registering your apiaries. Learn more about the program [HERE](#), and register [HERE](#)

Montgomery County 10-Day Forecast (www.weather.com)

Wed 08	51°/31°		Partly Cloudy
Thu 09	53°/49°		Showers
Fri 10	56°/37°		Mostly Cloudy
Sat 11	43°/26°		AM Clouds/PM Sun
Sun 12	48°/29°		Partly Cloudy
Mon 13	54°/36°		Partly Cloudy
Tue 14	52°/38°		Partly Cloudy
Wed 15	55°/45°		Showers
Thu 16	58°/46°		AM Showers
Fri 17	55°/33°		Showers

What it means:

Following a brief polar vortex to kick off the month of February, the extended forecast shows unseasonably warm temperatures through the first half of the month. This potentially signals an early uptick in queen activity (brood rearing) as well as foraging/hygienic behaviors from the workforce.

At this time, it is critical to check on stores/emergency feed in your hives. Increasing colony activity during a time when field resources remain low is a recipe for starvation.

EDUCATION WITH MCBA

2023 BEGINNER BEEKEEPERS' CLASS

Whether you are new to beekeeping in 2023, struggling to find success in your apiary, or just wildly interested in these fascinating invertebrates, the MCBA Beginner Beekeeping class is a great place to learn the basics with confidence. Beginners - don't forget the first class is February 7th! Registration for 2023 has now closed, but you may click [HERE](#) for class information and the 2023 agenda.

2023 QUEEN REARING AND CELL GRAFTING CLASS

Following its success in 2022, we are excited to offer the Queen Rearing and Cell Grafting class again in 2023! This advanced course offers a two-session theory class (April 13th and 20th) followed by a hands-on class (April 29th). Please be aware that due to the nature of the material and hands-on segment, this class will be capped at 12 participants. For more information and registration, click [HERE](#).

2023 SPECIAL INTEREST CLASSES

While details are being finalized, please be on the lookout for announcements regarding 2023 'Special Interest' classes. These are designed to be single-session classes that will aim to tackle specific and/or advanced beekeeping topics.

HONEYBEES IN THE NEWS

Ground-Breaking Vaccine Gets USDA Approval

If you have been keeping honeybees for any amount of time, you have undoubtedly heard of American foulbrood (AFB). A devastating bacterial pathogen, AFB has the potential to decimate apiaries, is highly contagious, and produces spores that can persist in a hive/on equipment for decades.

In extraordinary news, the USDA has granted approval of the world's first honeybee vaccine - against AFB. Produced by Dalan Animal Health, this breakthrough technology offers protection against one of the most feared honeybee colony ailments and also opens the door for honeybee health innovations in the future.

Perhaps even more surprising than this seemingly out-of-the-blue announcement is the news on its availability. Given its immediate conditional approval, this vaccine will be deployed this season. However, it must still pass state-level regulatory requirements (according to Dalan, the goal is to roll out additional state registrations this April/May - you can sign up for their newsletter at the website below for monthly updates).

For more information, click the images below to visit Dalan's website or view the article from Bee Culture.



LAWN CONVERSION OPPORTUNITY



WPC & DCNR Watershed Forestry Funding Lawn Conversion PLUS - *Statewide* Program Description

Lawn Conversion Program Description

Through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), via the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), funding is available for lawn conversion projects throughout Pennsylvania.

Funding is to be used on shovel-ready projects converting presently maintained lawn to actively managed upland forest or perennial native meadow. Meadow establishments are primarily implemented outside of the riparian area (300-ft or further away from a waterbody) but may be planted within it upon DCNR and WPC review. Upland forest plantings are implemented outside of the riparian area; plantings 300-ft or closer to a waterbody are considered riparian forest buffers and must utilize a different funding source.

WPC & DCNR Lawn Conversion PLUS Funding Information

1. Funds are available for lawn conversion projects on land across Pennsylvania.
2. Funds will be distributed to the Implementation Partner upon project approval at a rate of \$5,000/unique upland forest acre or meadow acre planted.
3. Additional funds for additional project costs will be considered via the **Additional Funds Justification Form** on a case-by-case basis. WPC and DCNR reserve the right to deny any additional funds request.
4. The **Funding Contract** must be signed between the Implementation Partner and WPC before funds will be distributed.
5. Applications are accepted from partners on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted.
6. All plantings will be subject to an annual on-site review by WPC or DCNR staff to verify planting survival and address maintenance concerns for the duration of the grant term.
7. All upland forests or meadows planted through this initiative must be reported to DCNR.

Eligible Project Sites

Lawn Conversion projects must occur on actively maintained lawn and other non-agricultural turf greater than or equal to 0.5-acre. Turf, or lawn, is an area of maintained exotic cool-season grasses making up a yard on a residential, commercial, school, or other property and has been maintained at less than 5" high for at least the last five years. Pastures, cropland, or sites with more than 30% existing overall canopy are ineligible for this program. Other instances may exist that make a project ineligible for this funding, such as slopes greater than 15% or compacted soils, and DCNR will evaluate all projects to determine eligibility. Multiple contiguous properties may be combined into one project to meet minimum acreage required by the program, but each property must have its own landowner agreement and establishment plan.

Eligible Costs (not limited to)

- Contractor fees or other labor costs
- Site preparation and maintenance activities
- Herbicide applications
- Soil testing and appropriate soil amendments
- Tree and shrub stock (except ball-and-burlap)
- Tree protection materials (tubes or other shelters, stakes, etc.)
- Seed, carrier (rice hulls or clay kitty litter), and weed-free straw mulch
- Supplemental or replacement plantings

LAWN CONVERSION OPPORTUNITY



WPC & DCNR Watershed Forestry Funding Lawn Conversion PLUS - *Statewide* Program Description

Upland Forest Planting – Guidelines

Planting Guidelines:

- Tree and shrub plantings 300-ft or further away from a waterway
- 150-200 stems per acre planted
- Minimum of three different native woody species approved by DCNR
- 70% planting survival by year five (5)

Expectations:

- Plant trees and shrubs appropriate for the soil conditions, physiographic region, and surrounding forest compositions.
 - The end goal for upland forest planting is to establish forested conditions with vertical structure and potential for natural regeneration. Mowing is permitted several times per year to aid tree and shrub establishment. After establishment (typically after 4-5 years), mowing should cease to allow for natural regeneration processes to create natural forest understory conditions.
- Fertilization of the planting area is not permitted.

Meadow Establishment – Guidelines

Planting Guidelines:

- Planting and sustaining a perennial meadow
- Dominated by perennial native forbs and grasses
- Seed mixes approved by DCNR prior to ordering
- Planting is established with a diversity of desired native forbs and grasses by year five (5)

Expectations:

- Choose forb and grass species appropriate for the soils, hydrologic conditions, and physiographic region. We recommend conducting a soil test during the planning and design process.
- The Implementation partner should communicate to the landowner that while the meadow may benefit from establishment mowing, it cannot be completed with a traditional lawn mower. Establishment mowing should be no lower than 8-inches.
- For the duration of the landowner agreement, the meadow must be maintained as a diverse community of desired native forbs and grasses, with flowering plants expected for spring, summer and fall seasons for the most benefit for pollinators.
- ~~The meadow will remain~~ in a native meadow state and be maintained to arrest succession (e.g., mowing, woody plant removal, invasive plant removal, controlled burns, etc.).
- Fertilization of the planting area is not permitted.

Implementation Timeline:

Ideally, allow for one year of pre-planting preparation prior to seeding the meadow. For example, if you expect to plant in Spring 2023, start the necessary outreach, paperwork, and preparation in the Spring and Summer of 2022, prepare the site in late Summer and Fall of 2022, and make final preparations prior to planting in Spring 2023.

THE BEGINNERS' CORNER

Fellow beginners - welcome back to the first 'beginners' corner' installment of 2023! If you are entering your first year of beekeeping, good luck! If you are overwintering bees for the first time (or have struggled in the past), this is a critical time of year to check on your bees' stores and emergency/insurance feed. **Starvation is a common cause of colony loss, especially during periods of warm weather when forage resources are low** (exactly the kind of February we appear to have on deck).

With that brief note out of the way, I wanted to discuss one of the most exciting aspects of beekeeping, especially as we come out of winter. I'll refer to it as "**bloom awareness.**"

As you navigate your beekeeping journey, I would wager my 2023 beekeeping budget that you are likely to undergo somewhat of a transformation. You will begin to notice things happening around you that you may have missed in the past. The first blooms of spring! What a sight. Suddenly the ground and trees alike come to life with pollinators. You'll begin to observe different shades of pollen patterning the porches of your hives and wonder "what lucky flowers did those come from?" You may even find yourself slowing down on roadways as a particular bloom within your apiary's 2 mile radius catches your eye (eyes on the road!!!). As you graduate from season to season, you will begin to correlate seasonal blooms/conditions as 'indicators' of what may be occurring in your colonies.

An excellent resource produced by Cornell University titled "Beekeeping Calendar for the Northeast" can be found [HERE](#). Or you can click [HERE](#) for a downloadable pdf. This guide contains month-by-month breakdown of seasonal conditions (including blooms), hive activity, and suggested beekeeping activity. Keep in mind that upstate NY is typically a few weeks behind us in SEPA!

COOKIN' WITH HONEY

Cooking with honey isn't especially difficult. It can readily be used to add a dash (or a heap) of sweetness to most dishes, marinades, dressings, etc. But as a sugar replacement, there are a few things to consider for the best results! Here is a guide written by Vince Aloyo to get us cookin' in 2023!

Using Honey in Cooking Vincent Aloyo

It is easy to substitute honey for table sugar (sucrose) if you remember the difference between sugar and honey. Honey is a sticky liquid containing about 18% water, whereas sugar is dry. To compensate for the extra water present in honey, reduce the volume of other liquids by $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for each cup of honey used. For recipes without other liquids, add 2 tablespoons of flour to compensate for the extra liquid in honey. Since honey will stick to your measuring device, it is best to coat the inside of your measuring cup with oil or spray with cooking oil spray, thus allowing easy removal of the honey.

The principal sugars in honey are glucose and fructose, sugars that react differently to heating than does sucrose (table sugar). This different response to heat results in the more rapid browning of foods containing honey than of foods containing table sugar. To compensate, reduce the cooking temperature by 25F.

Honeys derived from different flowers have different flavors. Use a honey whose flavor enhances your food. If you want the taste of the honey to predominate, use a robustly flavored honey, whereas if you are adding honey mostly as a sweetener, use a mild flavored honey.

Lastly, honey has an acidic pH (about 4), whereas sugar is neutral. The acidity of honey may enhance the flavor of some dishes, but if less acidity is desired, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of baking soda can be added for each cup of honey.

By remembering these differences between honey and table sugar, you can easily substitute honey for sugar in your cooking-and have a baked product or other dish with a more interesting flavor, texture or keeping quality!