



MARCH 2023

MCBA NEWSLETTER

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

GREG LEHMAN

Hey Everyone, happy almost SPRING!

With the beekeeping season fast approaching we also see a huge jump in volunteer opportunities in our community. Mentors are still needed (special thanks to Regina Rhoa for all her hardwork coordinating that) along with various organizations looking for speakers and education. On our website there is a 'Volunteer Opportunities' page in the Member's Only section. This is where you can find requests.

Right now there are three new posts for folks seeking help from our club. Schwenksville Elementary throws an Earth Day celebration and they're looking for a beekeeper to join, Pennypack Farm and Education Center is looking for a speaker to present a program to their community on beekeeping basics, and the Hatboro Rotary club is looking for a 15 minute talk on bees at one of their weekly meetings.

As beekeepers, I feel strongly that we all need to be environmental stewards and ambassadors for honey bees and beekeeping. This means doing our part in the community to spread positive messages about beekeeping, pollinators and native plants...but that doesn't mean everyone should be a beekeeper or better put, being a beekeeper doesn't mean you need to have honey bee hives (something that always surprises during my presentations).

Please check out those opportunities on the website and let me know (montcopabees@gmail.com) if you have set something up so I can update the website (and maybe brag about you to the club). Let's all show Montgomery County why this club is so great! If anyone would ever like to give the club a premade presentation that we could provide our members for opportunities like this, we'd love that as well.

Cheers Everyone, Happy Beekeeping
Greg

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GENERAL MEETINGS

March 23

7:00PM - Montco 4H Center and Zoom

Main Presentation - Graham Kingham
Devon, England

Drones are More Important Than You Might Think!

Graham Kingham is a retired mechanical quality engineer who keeps a few hives in Devon, England. He started looking down the microscope 18 years ago at yeast and bacteria in his beer. To expand his interest further he took the British Bee Keepers Association's microscope exam and has since continued to explore the fascinating world of the honeybee through the lens. As a result of this he has published three books on bees: **The Honey Bee Drones: Specialists in the Field**, **Honeybees: A Hive of Information**, and **Honeybee Anatomy Brought to Life**. All contain lots of colored and lined images to help people to understand more about bee-related matters.











Mini Presentation

Because Mr. Kingham is presenting from England, the main presentation will begin promptly at 7PM. An open discussion period prior will replace the usual mini presentation.

Looking Back

In February, we welcomed Dr. David Tarpy of NC State for a very timely presentation on "coming out of winter." A key aspect of coming out of winter is understanding honeybee nutrition and how to navigate what can be a precarious time of year for beekeepers. For a deep dive on honeybee nutrition, click this downloadable pdf produced by the Australian Government: **[Fat Bees Skinny Bees: a manual on honeybee nutrition for beekeepers](#)**

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

Fri 03	44°/40°		PM Light Rain
Sat 04	48°/33°		Cloudy
Sun 05	53°/31°		Partly Cloudy
Mon 06	54°/38°		Partly Cloudy
Tue 07	58°/31°		Partly Cloudy
Wed 08	47°/26°		Partly Cloudy
Thu 09	45°/29°		Partly Cloudy
Fri 10	49°/32°		Partly Cloudy
Sat 11	47°/32°		Rain/Snow Showers
Sun 12	50°/30°		Partly Cloudy

What it means:

With an influx of pollen throughout a relatively warm February, queens are undoubtedly in brood-production mode. In healthy colonies, you are likely to find all stages of brood, and many beekeepers are also reporting instances of capped drone brood.

While more forage resources like red and silver maple are becoming available, we are not out of the woods of winter quite yet. We still have some cold weather ahead, so preventative measures against starvation should still be taken.

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

SWARM MANAGEMENT (and how it closely ties with spring management)

Dr. Vince Aloyo and Mark Antunes

April 3

6:30PM-9:30PM

Click [HERE](#) for additional details and registration!

2023 BEGINNER BEEKEEPERS' CLASS

(Registration Closed)

Class #2

Tuesday, March 7 - 6:00PM-9:00PM

Class #3

Tuesday, April 4 - 6:00PM-9:00PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

SPRING 2023 WAX DIPPING

There are two wax dipping events scheduled for March 2023. Please note that the first date is for **General MCBA membership** and the second date is for **first year MCBA beginners' class participants**. For additional information and signup:

WAX DIPPING GENERAL MEMBERS

MARCH 11, 2023
(SIGNUP CLOSED 3/9)

WAX DIPPING BEGINNERS CLASS

MARCH 18, 2023
(SIGNUP CLOSED 3/16)

BULK RESOURCES - POLLEN PATTIES

In case you missed it, there are still pollen patties available for purchase through the MCBA bulk resource purchasing program (Robert Brooks)

- Ultra Bee high protein pollen patties (15% protein)
- \$2.50 each (must purchase min. of 2 for even change)
- ~180 individual patties left for purchase

If interested, please email the MCBA bulk resource email: mcbabulkresources@gmail.com

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Every beekeeper knows that the learning curve for beginners can be quite steep. This year, we are very fortunate to welcome a LOT of new beginners to our beginners' class and community. Have you been successfully keeping bees for >2 years, and are you willing to lend a hand to help a newbie(s) along? If so, please review the new **2023 Mentorship Requirements** document, and reach out to Regina Rhoa at reginabeelady@gmail.com

HONEYBEES IN THE NEWS



Metabolic Pathway Associated with Winter Colony Losses Identified

The US Agricultural Research Service and a team of Chinese scientists have identified a key metabolic pathway strongly associated with winter colony loss in honey bees. This "signaling" pathway is involved in the synthesis of SIRT1, a protein from a family of proteins that help regulate cellular lifespan, metabolism and metabolic health, and resistance to stress. The research showed that colonies exposed to a "cold challenge" demonstrated substantially lower levels of SIRT1 and higher colony mortality rates.

What does this mean for beekeepers? According to the published research and ARS article ([HERE](#)) it is possible that therapeutic strategies could be implemented to mitigate annual colony losses, such as application of a SIRT1 gene activator (SRT1720) to up-regulate the production of this protein.

To read the full study published in December 2022 in the Journal of Advanced Research, click the article title below:

Mediating a host cell signaling pathway linked to overwinter mortality offers a promising therapeutic approach for improving bee health

[Yi Zhang](#)^{a b c 1}, [Andrew Liu](#)^{b 1}, [Shao Kang Huang](#)^{b d}, [Jay D. Evans](#)^b, [Steve C. Cook](#)^b, [Evan Palmer-Young](#)^b, [Miguel Corona](#)^b, [Mohamed Alburaki](#)^b, [Ge Liu](#)^e, [Ri Chou Han](#)^a, [Wen Feng Li](#)^b, [Yue Hao](#)^{b f}, [Ji Lian Li](#)^f, [Todd M. Gilligan](#)^g, [Allan H. Smith-Pardo](#)^g, [Olubukola Banmeke](#)^b, [Francisco J. Posada-Florez](#)^b, [Ya Hui Gao](#)^e, [Gloria DeGrandi-Hoffman](#)^h, [Hui Chun Xie](#)ⁱ...[Yan Ping Chen](#)^b  

THE BEGINNERS' CORNER

We are quickly approaching the most exciting time of year... spring beekeeping season! Whether you are taking year 1 to observe and learn, buying bees for your first time, or are new to overwintering your bees, the honey bee-fueled adrenaline rush that accompanies hive inspections will be here before we know it!

I sometimes struggle to come up with content for this section. Not because I don't have a lot to say (ask anyone who makes the mistake of asking me about bees), but because you are getting a lot of great information from a lot of great places - your mentors, a beginners' beekeeping class (hopefully!), and other much more seasoned beekeepers than myself. Beyond that, there are just so many styles, preferences, techniques, etc that often diverge in theory yet arrive at a similar point of success.

That said, as we near more favorable conditions for hive inspections (or nuc/package installations), I wanted to share a more birds-eye-view recommendation that is an underlying requirement for your long-term success: **use your first year to become as comfortable as possible inspecting your colonies.**

Uh... pretty obvious right? Maybe and maybe not. Inspecting colonies can be intimidating! Before experiencing it yourself, it is hard to imagine what it's like with thousands of bees flying about, hustling and bustling across frames, walking across your fingertips, and occasionally delivering a painful little reminder that even your best intentions can be misinterpreted.

But you mustn't become overwhelmed to the point of dread. Inspecting your colonies should be fun! Each time you open a hive, you open the door for a learning experience. I continue to be amazed at how often I see something for the first time. Beyond your own learnings, routine colony inspections ensure that your colonies are on the right track (or offer an opportunity to take corrective action if they are not).

At some point, you may hear of a distinction between "bee havers" and "bee keepers". Honey bees are fascinating, and I could envision a world where anyone would want to "have" bees. However, "keeping" bees is a commitment and a responsibility. Inspections are so important - not only to your educational journey, but also to the well-being of your colonies. As you find your rhythm, you **will** become more and more comfortable working your hives with calm and focus. Year 1 (or 2 or 3) is the best time to immerse yourselves. You'll make mistakes! You'll get stung! And some "failures" are entirely out of your control! (This is nature after all). But you'll also come to realize that a hive inspection is not a chore - it's an adventure!

COOKIN' (AND DRINKIN') WITH HONEY

Cocktail, anyone?

-Honey Simple Syrup-

It doesn't get much easier than this. If you like the occasional cocktail (or mocktail), this is a great way to sweeten up your drink without the excessively sugary mixers or boring old simple syrup. For multiple servings, simply mix warm water and honey at a 2:1 water to honey ratio. Add gentle heat if needed to dissolve the honey.

-Liquid Gold Rush Cocktail-

4 oz water + 2 oz honey (combined)

3 oz bourbon whiskey

2 oz fresh lemon juice

Directions: combine all ingredients in cocktail shaker. Fill with ice. Shake vigorously (about 30 seconds), and strain into cocktail classes
2 servings

On-the-Go

-Peanut Butter Energy Bites-

Always on the run without time for a meal? These ultra-easy energy bites are a great on-the-go snack to keep you going throughout the day.

2/3 cup creamy peanut butter

1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

1 cup old-fashioned oats

1/2 cup ground flax seeds

2 TBSP honey

Directions: combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Place in refrigerator for 15-30 minutes. Roll into ~12 bites and store in refrigerator.

(www.chefsavvy.com)