



April 2022



A Note from the President

Greg Lehman

I can't help but remember my wife, Kara Jo, and my first beekeeping season. It's not a good memory: nervousness quickly turned into overwhelm. Because we kept hearing that packages sell out before the spring, we had placed an order in January with a large Kentucky company that Google directed us to. We followed the tracking, and watched it stop at a distribution center in Louisville where it stayed for 2 weeks. Those bees arrived dead of starvation. It was a disaster! We managed to kill all our bees before we even became beekeepers. What a kick in the you-know-where.

That first experience, coupled with many others, made us seek out the help of MCBA members. It was their kindness and generosity that inspired us to get more involved. (Shoutout to our first mentor, Chris Mancinelli). That first year we learned the most valuable lesson: you can't become a successful beekeeper without a supportive community and a willingness to ask for help.

Although it wasn't the Kentucky bee folks' fault...I have despised out-of-state package bees ever since (a feeling that has only been strengthened over the years). However, stronger than this dislike, is my love for local. I really do. Working for a small brewery and running a small skin care company is a daily reminder of how powerful our local community can be. I think everyone should know where their food (and drink! and skin care!) is coming from - just like I think we should know where our bees come from.

Our club has a section on the website where you can find MCBA members who sell bees. I'd love for all those folks that buy packages every year to buy local. Purchase a nuc that came from an overwintered hive and maybe next year you'll be able to split that hive and provide someone else with local bees! I'm not encouraging this for my own good - as you won't find my information on that webpage - I just feel passionate about us all working together and **know** this is a huge step in making healthier bees.

Speaking of healthier bees - getting certified to legally sell bees was super easy - we did it last year. Shoutout to our inspector, Jeff Eckel, who couldn't have been better. (You can google "PA Apiary Inspection Program" to find out more on that.)

Best of luck this season and don't forget...plant native plants! And put up swarm traps!

What's ahead:

Wed 06	57°/46°		AM Rain
Thu 07	53°/43°		Rain
Fri 08	57°/41°		Partly Cloudy
Sat 09	53°/37°		Mostly Cloudy
Sun 10	50°/36°		Partly Cloudy
Mon 11	66°/50°		Mostly Sunny
Tue 12	75°/53°		Partly Cloudy
Wed 13	69°/54°		Mostly Cloudy
Thu 14	73°/54°		Partly Cloudy
Fri 15	61°/44°		Showers

www.weather.com

What it means:

With the latest cold snap behind us, it feels we are truly on the cusp of spring. At this point, you've likely already inspected many of your colonies to assess remaining stores and queen status.

Beekeepers' attention is quickly turning from overwintering to swarm management/prevention and everything else that comes with spring!

Education with Montgomery County Beekeepers' Association

Queen Rearing and Cell Grafting Class with Scott Famous and Dr. Vincent Aloyo

- This program features a two-session **theory class** taught by Scott Famous (April 14 **AND** April 21 from 7:00-9:00PM) and one **hands-on** session taught by Dr. Vincent Aloyo (May 7 9:00-11:30AM **OR** May 7 1:00-3:30PM)
- Must attend both theory sessions to participate in the hands-on class
- Registration is currently OPEN but limited to 24 participants
- For more info and to REGISTER: <https://montcopabees.org/page-18102>

Beginners Class with Mark Antunes

- Class #3 – April 19 – 6PM at the Montgomery County 4H Center
 - <https://montcopabees.org/New-Beekeepers>
 - Registration closed

Intermediate Class with Dr. Vincent Aloyo

- Class #3 – April 27 – 6PM at the Montgomery County 4H Center
 - <https://montcopabees.org/IntermediateCourse>
 - Registration closed

Get Involved!

As MCBA continues to grow and develop new initiatives, we would love to see membership involved in as many ways as possible. Here is a great way to get started if you would like to take on a more active role:

- Visit our webpage at www.montcopabees.org and login
- Click the user icon near the top of the screen, and then click “View Profile”
- Click “Edit Profile”
- You will now see a list of committees/activities you can assign and save to your profile. This will allow us to send emails specific to your interests and create opportunities for you to jump in, help out, and share your ideas!

Members – please also keep an eye out on our website for a members-only volunteer page that is set to go live in the coming days!

General Meetings

April 28, 2022 (7PM)

Mini Presentation: Scott Famous

- Understanding the QC genetics and diversity, its importance, and what is offered through the QC Program
- This is part 4 of a 4-part 'mini' series specific to queen bee education

Main Presentation: Christopher J. Cripps, DVM

- Honeybees and Veterinarians
 - In 2017, the FDA changed a lot of the rules for antibiotic use in food-producing animals. Honey bees are food-producing animals, and they occasionally need antibiotics to treat disease. While antibiotics for bees used to be available over the counter, they now require an order from a veterinarian. The veterinarians and the beekeepers are now in an "arranged marriage" forged by the FDA and its antibiotic reforms. We will spend some time explaining how the two can work together to make things better.
- Chris Cripps started to keep bees while earning his Boy Scout Merit Badge in Beekeeping. While earning a Bachelor of Science degree at Cornell University, he took beekeeping classes that included laboratory sections. While earning his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at The Ohio State University, he worked as a bee inspector for Franklin and Delaware Counties. After graduation, he moved to Greenwich NY where he worked as a food animal veterinarian for 17 years while keeping bees as a sideline hobby. In 2012, he bought Betterbee, a beekeeping supply business. He has taught classes and works with customers to help diagnose and correct problems that come up with their bees. He is a Past President of the Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Association and a member of the New York State Apiary Industry Advisory Committee. He helped organize the Honey Bee Veterinary Consortium. He wrote the chapter "Veterinary Regulations" for Honey Bee Veterinary Medicine and co-authored the chapter "Honey Bees" in the 3rd edition of Invertebrate Medicine.

Some Takeaways:

- In January, we kicked off the new year with Dr. Juliana Rangel of Texas A & M University (Honeybee Wax Pesticide Contamination and its Impact on Queen Physiology and Reproductive Health). Dr. Rangel also passed along a terrific resource for additional beekeeping education: the At Home Beekeeping Series through the Alabama Extension beekeeping team. This is a webinar series offered the last Tuesday of every month. For more details: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/bees-pollinators/at-home-beekeeping-series/>
- If you missed the March meeting with Michael Palmer (Brood Factories), check your emails for the Zoom link! Michael also shared a GoFundMe for a wonderful cause supporting school children in Oaxaca, Mexico. To learn more and donate: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-the-school-children-of-oaxaca-mexico>

Season's Bee Things

Early spring and what to expect

As the calendar turns from March to April, we beekeepers find ourselves at the intersection of what can be a challenging time of year to navigate. In one colony we might observe low weights and decide to add supplemental sugar (remember, starvation is a common occurrence this time of year). And in another, we might already be thinking about swarm management/prevention.

While we have experienced a taste of spring, the latest cold snap is a reminder how volatile this time of year can be. In March you likely noticed a high volume of pollen coming into your hives. Thanks to maple trees and some other early-season blooms, queen activity/brood production in healthy colonies is picking up rapidly.

Keep an eye out for dandelions! Dandelion bloom is a great seasonal indicator that the bees will have a steady income of resources, and we can officially celebrate our 'overwintered' colonies. Within just a few short weeks (or days?) you may be checking swarm traps, making splits, adding supers, or all of the above! Good luck!



A Plug for Pollinators

We members of the MCBA take pride in our sustainable and ethical approach to beekeeping. A huge piece of that is the acknowledgement that we are first and foremost stewards of our environment. That means carrying the torch and being on the frontline to support our native PA pollinators and native pollinator habitats.

This is a great time of year to start thinking about the small things each of us can do to support our native pollinators. Check out the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy Native Plant Sale:

<https://www.perkiomenwatershed.org/native-plant-sale> – Pre-orders run April 18 thru May 2.

Another good resource for native plants: www.prairienursery.com.

This site has tremendous selection tools to meet a wide range of growing conditions. My favorites were New England aster and red milkweed!

Montgomery County Beekeepers' Association of Pennsylvania (MCBAPA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Our membership consists of individuals who are both commercial and hobby beekeepers. The MCBAPA encourages and promotes active involvement within our community and our organization. Membership is open to an individual who is a beekeeper or has an interest in beekeeping, and who wants to promote honeybee health.

Our Mission: *Providing educational outreach to the public, supporting fellow beekeepers and working to promote sound beekeeping practices and honeybee health*