



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION of Pennsylvania



October 2022

House (Bee)keeping

The fall season (and apparently all the rain we didn't get this summer) has finally arrived! That means we are full steam ahead in our winter preparation. Best of luck to everyone ensuring those mite loads are down and hive weights are up! A few housekeeping items to kickstart this month's newsletter:

- **Fall Banquet:** Registration for the Fall Banquet is now open! The event will take place on November 12 once again at the Variety Club Camp (2950 Potshop Road; Worcester, PA 19490). For full event details and registration, visit: <https://montcopabees.org/event-4940309>
- **Bulk orders:** Big thanks to Robert Brooks for all the effort researching, securing, and coordinating bulk orders. Current status:
 - Fondant – Sold out – another order may be considered if there is large enough interest
 - Hive wraps - \$12 / each (18" x 75") – B&B Honey Farms – very few remaining – shipping date is currently TBD
 - Contact Robert with questions/inquiries at robertbrooks04@hotmail.com
- **Beginner/Intermediate Class:** Congratulations to the participants who completed the 2022 Beginner and Intermediate courses! And as always, a huge thank you to the instructors (Mark Antunes and Dr. Vincent Aloyo) and the volunteer coordinators for providing another year of top-notch beekeeping education.
- **BeeWorks, LLC Open House:** Our friends up the road at BeeWorks, LLC are holding an open house on Sunday October 30 from 1:00PM-4:00PM with a hive winterization presentation by Mike Awckland at 3PM. For more information contact Jayne Howe (215-429-8094), Mike Awckland (267-377-6410), Jon Kutzner (215-932-1051) or BeeWorksLLC01@gmail.com. Click [HERE](#) for event details.

What's ahead:

Mon 10	66°/40°		Sunny
Tue 11	70°/46°		Sunny
Wed 12	68°/55°		Mostly Cloudy
Thu 13	64°/48°		Showers
Fri 14	58°/40°		Sunny
Sat 15	61°/41°		Sunny
Sun 16	62°/45°		Partly Cloudy
Mon 17	52°/36°		Showers
Tue 18	50°/36°		Partly Cloudy
Wed 19	53°/40°		Partly Cloudy

www.weather.com

What it means:

Nothing signals the looming onset of winter quite like the first frost (experienced in some parts of the county early on the 9th).

You are likely noticing the annual eviction of drones (adults and pupae). Now is the time to make sure your hive weights are up and to really start thinking about your winter configuration strategy.

General Meetings

October 27, 2022 (7PM)

Mini Presentation: Scott Famous

- Using Fondant for Winter Feeding

*Main Presentation: Dr. Robyn Underwood

- Which bees are best: Testing the performance of commonly available honey bee stocks for Midwestern and Northeastern beekeepers
 - There are many different stocks of honey bees available for purchase, but little work has been done to objectively compare their performance when kept in the same place using the same management protocols. This study compared 5 lines of bees kept in PA and IN to determine how they differ in performance.
 - Dr. Robyn Underwood received her BSc in Entomology and Applied Ecology from the University of Delaware and her PhD in Entomology from the University of Manitoba. As an Assistant Research Professor, her research program focuses on honey bee health and practical beekeeping considerations. Specifically, she is studying the impacts of honey bee colony management (COMB) and queen origin on colony health and productivity. Her ongoing projects include experiments that assess the practical implications of different types of beekeeping philosophies (conventional, organic and treatment free), performance of honey bee queens from various genetic lines, and how different types of feed impact honey bee health. These ongoing projects have been extramurally funded (totaling almost \$1.5 million) and have generated several extension product outputs. She has been part of the creation of several extension articles and webinars, and is working on editing and updating Penn State's Beekeeping Basics book, Penn State's Beekeeping 101 online course as questions arise, and is planning many more activities, including intermediate and advanced beekeeping content and the creation of a web application to help beekeepers diagnose and respond to parasites, pests and pathogens in their hives. Her research and extension aspirations work hand in hand. Conducting scientifically sound research projects to study beekeeper-applied questions is critically important. Bringing the results of the projects to the beekeepers through extension products then improves the industry while making beekeeping a more successful venture.

***NOTE:** The October General Meeting will be presented both in person and available via Zoom. However, a recording for this month's session will not be available. Please join us and don't miss the opportunity to get those questions in!

Looking back:

If you missed the September General Meeting, check your email for the recorded zoom link (sent September 29th). This session featured a mini presentation on beekeeper personality factors and hive management behaviors (Dr. Gregory P. Shelley) and a main presentation on thermoregulation and ventilation (Master Beekeeper Bill Hesbach).

- Hive insulation and ventilation strategies are an oft discussed (and occasionally argued) aspect of beekeeping. Mr. Hesbach's presentation is a very timely discussion on this topic as we prepare to implement our winter configuration. This could be a classic case of beekeepers intervening to the detriment of the bees (despite best intentions) particularly as it pertains to ventilation. Check out this recording while you have the chance!

At-Home Pollinator Projects

Sourcing Native Seed

I'm not sure there is a group of people more in tune with the environment than beekeepers. While many of us may focus on our beloved honeybees, there is also a collective acknowledgement that native habitats, and thereby our native pollinators, are in a state of peril as human activity continues to encroach on native green spaces.

As such, many beekeepers (and non-beekeepers) make a concerted effort to enhance their gardens with pollinator-friendly plant life. Of course, transplanting live plants from nurseries provides the best opportunity for uptake and instant gratification. The alternative approach is simply sowing seed! However, one should exercise caution when purchasing these seed mixes. **A significant number of "wildflower mixes" contain varieties of plants that are either nonnative regionally or are exotics altogether.** While planting these mixes is undoubtedly well-intentioned, it is important to think beyond nectar and pollen. Many native plants also serve as **host** plants, meaning they are required (sometimes with extreme specificity) for the reproductive cycle of native insects. When in doubt, a quick analysis of the product label (bag contents) and a Google search can lead you to your answer, but below is a great reference for some variety options perfect for our native Pennsylvania pollinators:

Example Upland Dry Site Pollinator Seed Mix

This mix is designed to provide season-long pollen and nectar resources on any sunny, dry upland site.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	% OF MIX	SEEDS/ FT ²	LBS/ AC.	BLOOM TIME
Golden Alexanders	<i>Zizia aurea</i>	1%	0.6	0.15	Early
Wild blue indigo	<i>Baptisia australis</i>	0.2%	0.12	0.24	Early
Ohio spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i>	2%	1.2	0.41	Early-Mid
Smooth penstemon	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	9.8%	5.88	0.14	Early-Mid
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	1%	0.6	0.02	Mid‡
Butterfly milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	2%	1.2	0.75	Mid
Common milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	0.5%	0.3	0.19	Mid
Dotted mint	<i>Monarda punctata</i>	13.5%	8.1	0.24	Mid
Partridge pea	<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	1%	0.6	0.4	Mid (A)
Purple coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	9%	5.4	2.03	Mid
Virginia mountain mint	<i>Pycnanthemum virginiana</i>	10%	6	0.07	Mid
Wild bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	15%	9	0.31	Mid
Cup plant	<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>	0.5%	0.3	0.52	Mid-Late
Marsh blazing star	<i>Liatris spicata</i>	1%	0.6	0.26	Mid-Late
Gray goldenrod	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	3%	1.8	0.08	Late
New England aster	<i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>	4%	2.4	0.1	Late
Wrinkleleaf goldenrod	<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	3%	1.8	0.08	Late
Big bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	5.5%	3.3	1.03	—
Indian grass	<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	5.5%	3.3	0.82	—
Little bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	12.5%	7.5	1.63	—
TOTALS		100%	60	9.46	

Dry Site Pollinator Seed Mix Notes:

1. Bloom Time comments: ‡ = Short-lived biennial, (A) = Annual

Example Wetland Pollinator Seed Mix

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	% OF MIX	SEEDS/ FT ²	LBS/ AC.	BLOOM TIME
Golden Alexanders	<i>Zizia aurea</i>	2%	1.2	0.3	Early
Virginia spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>	1%	0.6	0.15	Early–Mid
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	1%	0.6	0.02	Mid‡
Culver's root	<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	8%	4.8	0.03	Mid
Great blue lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	8.5%	5.1	0.03	Mid
Purple coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	8%	4.8	1.8	Mid
Swamp milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	1%	0.6	0.37	Mid
Wild bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	8%	4.8	0.16	Mid
Blue vervain	<i>Verbena hastata</i>	8%	4.8	0.14	Mid–Late
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	8.5%	5.1	0.11	Mid–Late
Cup plant	<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>	0.5%	0.3	0.52	Mid–Late
Joe Pye weed	<i>Eutrochium fistulosum</i>	6%	3.6	0.23	Mid–Late
Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	4%	2.4	0.05	Mid–Late
Wingstem	<i>Verbesina alternifolia</i>	2%	1.2	0.36	Mid–Late
Grassleaf goldenrod	<i>Euthamia graminifolia</i>	5%	3	0.02	Late
New England aster	<i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i>	5%	3	0.12	Late
New York ironweed	<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>	3%	1.8	0.26	Late
Big bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	9%	5.4	1.63	—
Fox sedge	<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	6.5%	3.9	0.13	—
Tussock sedge	<i>Carex stricta</i>	5%	3	0.07	—
TOTALS		100%	60	6.52	

Wetland Site Pollinator Seed Mix Notes:

1. Bloom Time comments: ‡ = Short-lived biennial.

These tables were taken from the **Conservation Cover for Pollinators – Pennsylvania Installation Guide** by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, The USDA, and the NRCS. This article offers a tremendous amount of detail on site preparation, planting methods, variety selection, and other details around planting native Pennsylvania plant species. For the full article, click the following link:

https://www.xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/15-025_02_XercesSoc_HabitatInstallGuide_Pennsylvania_ConservationCover327_web.pdf



The Beginners' Corner

Derek Pruyne

Welcome back, fellow beginners! While we still have a little bit of season left, things are certainly winding down in the apiary. If this was your first season with bees, I hope you had a great experience and have healthy colonies as we inch closer to winter. As you probably learned even in your first or second season, a year of beekeeping can offer a lot of twists and turns and 'decision trees'. "OK, I saw this, what should I do now?"... "OK, I tried this, now how long do I wait to see if it worked?"... "Hmm, how do I want to approach this?"... So many decisions to make! Although a bit slower, this time of year is no different. So, for this section, I just thought I'd briefly discuss some of the things you can be doing with your hives right now while there is still a bit of season left.

- **Feeding:** Temperatures are dropping pretty quickly. If you haven't already, you should be switching off your **1:1 sugar** solution and feeding **2:1 sugar syrup** (sugar to water by weight). The bees are now in storage mode, and the heavier syrup allows them to readily store this honey substitute without expending excessive resources. The extended forecast over the next few weeks still looks pretty favorable.
- **Hive Configuration:** Reduce excess space by removing extra supers. This can be a bit tricky and may be worth a conversation with your mentor, but it is best to remove hive bodies/supers that will not help the colony through winter. In other words, you must ensure the bees have enough stores for winter, but partially full or empty frames lead to potential problems.
- **Hive Configuration:** Remove queen excluders if you haven't already. There is no need to restrict queen movement at this point in the season. If an excluder is inadvertently left on over winter, the queen can be separated from the cluster resulting in colony loss.
- **Hive Configuration:** Locate your mouse guards (or purchase if you need to) and prepare to install. Colder temperatures will begin forcing critters into cozy spaces.
- **Equipment storage:** If you have frames in storage (with built comb), it can't hurt to inspect them if you have the time. Drawn comb is precious to beekeepers (and of course, the bees), and small hive beetle and particularly wax moth larvae can destroy large volumes of good comb in a hurry. Ideally you would have frozen pulled frames for 3 days prior to storing in a tightly sealed container, but these pests have remarkable persistence.
- **Mite management:** If mite control is part of your beekeeping strategy, the general consensus is that we are a bit late in the season to effectively control mites and promote healthy winter bees. However, I think there is a great argument that doing something (even if late) is better than nothing at all. For example: last year my fall formic treatment was flat out ineffective. About this time of year, I initiated a series of oxalic acid vapor treatments and eliminated a sizeable population of mites. My colonies all made it through winter, and I can't help but attribute some of that success to this 'rescue' application. We still have some good season to play with, so don't hesitate to pick a nice day for another mite check.



Don't panic! This time of year drones are being evicted – you will likely see adult and pupa corpses around your hive entrances

MCBA – Committee Spotlight

In this section, we'd like to call out the hard work of our club's committees! Behind the scenes, we have board members and general club members that work their beehinds off coordinating events, activities, and other services, and their (volunteer) efforts should be recognized!

This month, a huge thank you to the **General Meetings Committee** and meeting participants!

- Jeanne Gable (Committee Chair)
- Vincent Aloyo
- Mark Antunes
- Denise Ranucci
- Justin Shiffler
- Roger Thomas
- Derek Pruyne

Throughout the year this committee spends time searching for and securing speakers to fill out an excellent program of educational and practical general meetings. 2022 showcased some of the best speakers in the industry, and the 2023 program is already shaping up to be another great one! If you're a member of MCBA, you likely know Jeanne and her involvement with... basically every committee. Jeanne deserves a special shoutout here for locking down all these speakers, often over a year in advance.

If you would like to participate as a member of this committee or just offer up some topics and/or feedback, please reach out to the club! While many speakers are planned well in advance, we are always looking for input on how to best serve our membership.

Calling all Presenters!

It may be hard to believe, but the main program for our 2023 general meetings is filling up fast! However, we are looking for "Mini-Presenters". Hopefully you are familiar with the format of our general meetings, but we really enjoy kicking off each session with a 15-30 minute "mini". This could include anything beekeeping or pollinator related! If you are interested in leading a discussion or sharing some cool material, please let us know!

Cookin' with Honey

While people get into beekeeping for a number of reasons, it's a pretty safe bet that most (if not all) beekeepers love HONEY. I continue to be fascinated by the subtle variations – both in color and flavor – that occur throughout the season.

It's a fair argument to say that honey is best enjoyed in its purest form: raw, unfiltered, unpasteurized, undoubtedly any time. But honey as an ingredient is rather versatile with a tendency to elevate even the most basic recipes!

Glaze it

Asian Honey Glaze

- (3) TBSP butter
- (2) tsp olive oil
- (2-4) minced garlic cloves
- (1/2) cup honey
- (3) TBSP water
- (3) TBSP soy sauce
- (1) TBSP sriracha sauce
- (2) TBSP lemon juice
- (1-2) tsp fish sauce (optional)

This is a recipe I use all the time. To be honest, I pretty much always just eyeball it, and you have plenty of freedom to adjust to your preferences. This glaze is perfect for a fresh filet of salmon, shrimp, or even as a drizzle over some roasted green beans. For a delicious salmon recipe, click [HERE!](#)

Dip it

Honey Mustard

- (1/3) cup Dijon mustard
- (1/4) cup honey
- (1/4) cup mayonnaise
- (1) TBSP lemon juice (or apple cider vinegar)
- (1) tsp sriracha (or ¼ tsp cayenne pepper)

It doesn't get much simpler than this honey mustard recipe. Perfect for grilled/fried chicken, pork, or a Philly favorite – the soft pretzel. Consider adding some olive oil ½ TBSP at a time to thin this recipe out and a few pinches of parmesan for a delicious salad dressing.