

the Norfolk Bee

APRIL 2023 • NORFOLKBEEES.ORG

NEXT CLUB MEETING

APRIL 3, 2023
7:30 to 9:00 pm

**Hybrid
In-person
and on Zoom**

400 Main Street
Walpole, MA



Dear Club members

Bee School is almost finished! One more class and we will have about 70 new beekeepers embarking on this incredible journey. A big thank you to all the mentors that stepped up. I think the new beekeepers are in good hands. It was a fun class, with a lot of great students. I'm excited for them all.

One thing I would like to encourage is that club members try and do hive dives. You can put out a notice to the Google group email and encourage beekeepers to come and watch you inspect your hives. There is nothing like learning hands on. This is something I would like to have our club do more. It is a great experience for all involved.

Also, a reminder that the NCBA Queen Program is in effect. You must get a coupon from Kevin Keane, prior to buying your queens. Please go to the website or click on this [link](#). We are working closely with Wetlands Apiary and Northeast Bees in Franklin. They will be sending out notices when queens are available.

Good luck this spring. Lets pray for a good spring and summer with lots of nectar flows and just the right amount of rain!

See you Monday night.

Tony Lulik
(The Bee Man)

American Foulbrood is here

by Ed Szymanski, Cornell MB 2022

At the Mass Bee Spring meeting in Topsfield, Kim Skyrin did his customary "state of the state" talk, summarizing MDAR activities in 2022.

Did you know that there were 14 cases of American Foulbrood (AFB) in Massachusetts last year? And one of them was here in Norfolk County?

AFB is the most serious disease to affect our bees. Why do I say that? A few facts:

AFB is a brood disease, colonies can be severely weakened by an AFB outbreak (but that's the least of your worries)

AFB is a bacterial disease. The bacteria

creates spores which carry it and spread it. These spores can travel between colonies on equipment, beekeeper tools, and although adult bees are not affected by the disease. The spores can be carried from colony to colony by drifting and robbing bees, including those from neighboring apiaries within foraging distance.

AFB spores can live 50 years or more. Some think they can live forever, although that is not proven. They can live on woodenware, tools, clothing, etc. So, AFB can lurk in a pile of old equipment and can then be transmitted when that equipment is moved from one hive to another or one

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The Eastern Apiculture Society (EAS) Conference is coming to Massachusetts!

Monday, July 31, to
Friday, August 4
in beautiful Amherst, MA

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News from the Landing Board

The April 3rd Meeting Agenda

Don't let mites ruin your hives this year Hive health is critical to ensuring a honey crop and to surviving a winter. Success in September starts in April and May. Join us as our resident mite slayer and Master Beekeeper, Ed Symanski, discusses the latest thoughts on mite control and hive health.

A look ahead... Future Meeting Agendas



May: David Peck, PhD Betterbee's new Director of Research and Education will join us for a very deep dive into varroa-resistant - or at least varroa-resistant - bees. Dr. Peck spoke at the Mass Bee Spring Conference (see article below). It'll be great to have him at our meeting.

June: Appetizers and socializing!

Mass Bee 2023 Spring Conference

A roundup of conference speakers

by Marian Szymanski

Dr. David Peck: Varroa Mites

- The size of the varroa mite population in a honey bee hive lags behind the size of the honey bee colony. The populations of both will equalize in the late Summer/early Fall. This is why every bee keeper's goal must be year-round mite control to prevent high mite counts at the end of the Season!
- Varroa mites are spread through five methods of transmission:
 1. Vertical Transmission- swarming
 2. Horizontal Transmission- robbing, drifting, & covert robbing
 3. Indirect Transmission- varroa can be found on flowers & other surfaces (Very

uncommon)

4. Non-Natural Transmission- moving frames from one hive to another, sloppy bee keeping in general
5. Seasonal Transmission- identical exteriors on all hives, hives too close together, frequent dearths

• Solutions:

1. Have a Varroa Mite Management Plan by Spring-time.
2. Over time (several hundred years) honey bees and varroa mites, through a series of counter-adaptations, will reach a stable evolutionary equilibrium. Careful breeding can help our bees to catch-up to the mites and their many adaptations. Breeders should be selecting for mite

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Mass Bee 2023 Spring Conference Roundup

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resistance, hygienic behaviors, and survival rates. Russian bees are already being bred for these characteristics.

3. Robbing Screens- Not only should you be using robbing screens in your own apiary, but you should also give some to your bee keeping neighbors, to prevent the possibility of horizontal transmission mite through “mite bombs” and robbing.

Dan Conlon

Russian Honey Bees

Russian honey bees have co-existed with varroa mites for over 140 years and have co-evolved in their adaptations. Russian honey bee hives typically have 50% fewer mites, and those mites are often not breeding. Russian hives can live normal lives with a 10% mite infestation. Fewer mites hatch in Russian hives.

The Russian Honey Bee Program

started with 360 lines of Russian bees, breeders have selected 17 lines, the best lines, to work with and maintain. Russian honey bees typically exhibit:

1. Less robbing and less drift
2. Smaller colonies
3. High honey production
4. Create their own “brood-breaks” dependent on pollen and nectar availability
5. Swarming potential which can be managed by making nucs and apiary equalization.

Seanne Clemente

Self-Medicative Behavior in Bees

Self-medication describes the behaviors of an animal who deliberately chooses to eat specific plant chemicals to treat a medical condition that they have developed. This behavior is very common in nature.

There is ample evidence showing that honey bees seek out and consume

specific plant chemicals found in local nectars and pollens. Specific varieties of pollen help the bees respond to parasites and pathogens. The honey and propolis found in hives also contains many medicinal plant chemicals.

Sunflowers, thyme, basil, black locust, and turtle-head flowers have all shown to provide medicinal

compounds to honey bees. Planting a variety of trees, flowers, and flowering herbs can offer our honey bees a “Bee Pharmacy” close to home!

Dr. David Peck

Extended-Release Oxalic Acid

Oxalic acid is an organic acid, naturally found in honey bee hives. It is a miticide which kills varroa mites by entering their bodies through their feet as they move about a treated hive. Oxalic acid only kills phoretic mites – it cannot penetrate the wax cappings. It is not heat-dependent or heat-limited.

There is only one brand of oxalic acid approved by the EPA, “Api-Bioxal”. It can now be applied to hives with their honey supers on. It should, however, be applied to hives when they are brood-less as it cannot enter the capped brood cells. Oxalic acid can legally be applied by: vaporization, dribble, and spray.

Several States have approved a 2EE recommendation (EPA) that allows bee keepers to use an extended release oxalic acid product. This product consists of pads/cloths soaked in a glycerin/oxalic acid being placed on top of the brood frames and left in place for 2 to 2 ½ months. This method will NOT lower high mite counts, instead, it may MAINTAIN already low mite counts and thus, should only be used when mite levels are below 2%.

In Massachusetts, we are not legally able to use this treatment. Mass bee keepers are urged to contact the EPA to request further testing and action on the potential availability of this treatment.





Board Meeting Minutes 3/20/23

NCBA BOARD MEETING

MARCH 20, 2023

7:04 to 8:04 pm

Attending:

Tony Lulek
Dana Wilson
Ed Rock
Roger Q. Hill
Jenna Tibbetts
Stephen Greene
Ed Szymanski
Greg Rushton
Kevin Keane
Laura Davis
Alla Ostrovsky
Mike Passmore
Branda Younie
Paul Daniels

President's Update – Tony Lulek

- Queen Program – Kevin Keane is pulling together a survey of folks who have taken advantage of the program.
 - o Emphasize using the coupons
 - o Several requests have already come in for queen coupons
- There is a company suing us for using a web-based image database.(\$1500 exposure)
- Applicant for Jan Daniels grant
 - o Boy Scout Eagle Scout project – raised beds / irrigation / labeling / website to promote garden and pollinators – requesting \$500. The scout has a significant number of volunteers involved. There is an apiary at the community farm and the produce is used for CSA as well as food insecurity. There are also significant (125) individual resident plots
 - o Paul felt Jan would support this type of project
 - o Motioned and seconded to approve this grant – Vote Approved (2 abstained)
- We had 14 cases of American Foul Brood (AFB) in MA...including one case in Dover. We need to be very careful of exchanging used equipment.
 - o We need to push our members to register their hives with the state... MDAR would have informed nearby beekeepers of the risk if registered.
 - o Add note in the newsletter about registering your hives.
- Promote MASSBee field day

Vice President's Update – Mo

- Nothing new here

The Board of Directors Meeting is the third Monday of each month.

It's held at 7:00pm via a Zoom Video Meeting.

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

- EAS should open registration late April 2023

Treasurer Update – Stephen

- Bank balance \$42,235.34 as of 3/20/23
- Financials accepted

Recording Secretary: Minutes – Ed R

- Amended meeting notes accepted

Corresponding Secretary – Kevin Keane

- Newsletter deadline 3/30/23
- Next club meeting 4/3/23

Committees:

- **Programs** – Ed S and Marion
 - o Possible
 - April – Ed S. Doing talk on Mites
 - Exploring Dr. Eck at Better Bee for a possible follow-up Mite presentation
 - Confirming NCBA Club Meeting June 5th meeting...with shared appetizers at Aggie Cafeteria
 - Jen Jett – EpiPen use in May (short overview)
- **NCBA Intro to Bee School** – Tony and Dana
 - 92 new bee school members
 - Going very well
 - Final 2 classes are in-person only
 - 3/21 is Mentor night, Archie A is doing a queen raising session, Hive Dive demo...and the class is slowly

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- wrapping up
 - And we're adding an August class that will be Prepping for Winter and Q&A for their first few months
 - **Intermediate Bee School** – Ed & Marion
 - o Starting March 1st, 2023
 - o 3rd class – Single Brood Box Management – Steve Repasky
 - o Note to NCBA membership that sessions are still coming up and you can still sign up for these sessions
 - **Extractors** – Brianda Y
 - o New Extractor purchased and delivered - will be sent to the
- Sherborne location
 - **Library** – Michael Simone
 - o No update
 - **Door Prizes** – Kara S
 - o No Update
 - **Website** – Greg
 - o Nothing new
 - **Membership** – Facebook – Google Groups - Rose & Deb
 - o Membership down a bit this year (\$1300) vs prior year
 - **Bee Apparel** – MaryBeth Noonan and Maureen Harrington
 - o Tony is asking Mary Beth to do another round of orders
 - **Calendar Committee** – Jenna Tibbetts

- o Everything updated for March
- o Adding Spring changes
- **Nominating Committee**
 - o Nothing new
- **Scholarships and Grants** - Lara Davis
 - o Also update with NCBA Master Beekeeper Scholarships & Scholarship for Queen Program (Kevin K. handles this)
 - o For Norfolk Aggie – we're voted and approved 2 x \$1,000 scholarships
 - o For NCBA student scholarships - we'll be pushing applications for these.
- *Meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM*

American Foulbrood is here

(continued from page 1)

yard to another, or when a “dirty” hive tool is used in another hive.

There is no cure for AFB. In Massachusetts, the only acceptable “treatment” is the burning of all equipment affected, bees and all.

In some states, equipment like hive boxes can irradiated or scorched with a flame, but it hardly seems worth it.

So, an AFB outbreak in your yard can destroy your entire operation and maybe your neighbors' apiaries as well. An AFB outbreak in your neighbor's yard can affect your yard. It is important that neighbors be notified ASAP when this happens.

About that Norfolk County case last year – why didn't you hear about it when it happened? Probably because your apiary is not registered with MDAR. When a case is reported all registered apiary owners within a couple of miles are notified.

So what can we do about this? There are several ways to protect your

precious bees from this affliction:

Register your apiary with MDAR. It's easy to do, just [click here](#) and fill out the form. You won't be charged or taxed by the state. The primary reason for registration is so MDAR can inform apiary owners of disease outbreaks.

Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of AFB disease and look for it when you inspect. If you suspect AFB, close up the hive and contact MDAR immediately. Don't go in to your other hives with those tools or gloves until you know if it is in fact AFB. A club meeting about disease may be in order; it is part of the Intermediate Bee School program.

If you go to your mentee's apiary to help them, don't bring your tools or gloves. If you must wear gloves, bring disposables and dispose of them after use.

Do not transfer equipment from one owner to another or one apiary to another without having it inspected by MDAR. *This is very important.* I

see people selling or giving away old equipment, and beekeepers, being frugal, jump right on it. If it's a complete hive or a nuc, or boxes with frames of comb, it's easy enough to have them checked for signs of AFB. Even deadout hives from previous years will have scale in the cells that will indicate the presence of AFB. But if its empty boxes, bottom boards, covers, etc. that bees were in contact with, AFB spores could be there and cannot be seen. Is it really worth taking a chance for the price of a hive box?

-If you are buying a nuc, which will obviously include frames of comb, feel free to ask if these colonies have been inspected.

You may think that 14 cases in the whole state of Massachusetts isn't a big deal. What if it was the beekeeper down the street from you or your buddy who gave up because their bees died, and they gave you those boxes full of drawn comb?

Which Witch Hazel?

Witch Hazel is the *earliest* and *latest* sources of pollen for honey bees. Which is it? - and how on Earth is this possible?

Turns out that there are two varieties of Witch Hazel. *Hamamelis virginiana* is the late Fall Witch Hazel and *Hamamelis vernalis* is the early Spring blooming variety (the “*vernalis*” should be obvious).

The Fall Witch Hazel grows 12-15 feet tall, and in Autumn it's leaves turn a bright yellow to orange. Spring Witch Hazel can be smaller (6 to 10 feet).

One could be forgiven for thinking this tree was the official tree of Salem, Mass. - gruesomely cashing in on the pain and suffering of innocent people back in 1692. But the unsatisfying answer is that “wych” or “wyche” is from the Middle English and means pliant

or flexible. The Middle English seemed to have a knack for using words that never made it into today's lexicon. Makes one wonder how the Middle English ever communicated with each other. Nevertheless, those Middle Englishers were right; the tree does have very pliant branches. In fact, these pliant branches are the preferred choice of dowzers to locate water.

The tree blossoms seem unfazed by freezing night temperatures, and the tree has an amazing, spicy fragrance. And most importantly, the tree provides critical sources of pollen for bees in the two times of the year when it is scarce and most desperately needed.

The Witch Hazel tree is one of the few American medical plants approved as an ingredient in non-prescription drugs by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.



EAS MA 2023

July 31 – Aug 4, 2023



68th Annual Short Course and Conference*

University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA

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- Dr. Samuel Ramsey
- Dr. Judy Wu-Smart
- Dr. Cameron Jack
- Dr. Tammy Horn-Potter
- Paul Kelly
- Dr. Tom Seeley
- and more...

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**Watch for Updates on the EAS Website:*
<https://easternapiculture.org/conference/eas-2023/>



2023 Nucs & Queens Available

NortheastBees.com

Archie Acevedo ■ Franklin Massachusetts

Nucs and Queens are our specialty. Nucs are the easiest way for beginners to establish new hives. We don't cut any corners.

The nucs that we sell you are the same as those that we produce for ourselves.

All of our nucs are Massachusetts raised and overwintered in our Medway, and Franklin bee yards. These are *not* southern-raised nucs. All queens have been reared from our overwintered northern stock and are better adapted to the New England climate. Each year our breeder stock is tested through a winter prior to grafting.

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