

The Norfolk Bee

APRIL 2025 • NORFOLKBEEES.ORG

NCBA APRIL Activity

The NCBA Meeting will be APRIL 7th at 7PM.

This is a ZOOM-ONLY Meeting

Steve Repasky, and a timely talk on "SWARMS".

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Dear Beekeepers and Club Members,

Spring is almost upon us. We will be sending out a survey to NCBA members asking if your hives survived the winter. According to MDAR it was a particularly harsh winter for bee hive survival, so we wanted to see how our members fared.

Join us for **Monday, April 7th's** timely presentation by Master Beekeeper Steve Repasky on **SWARMING!** This presentation will be ZOOM only. Alla Ostrovsky will send the Zoom-link a day or two before the meeting.

Finally - Mark Your Calenders - May 5th is the NCBA Spring Plant Swap! We'll also have Bob Hickey & Carolyn Holmes from Wetlands Apiaries presenting **QUEEN REARING**. This meeting will finish up with social time - club members sharing plants / seeds / food / refreshments and good stories. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Enjoy the blooms that are coming and keep an eye on your hives - make sure they make it through these final wild weather days of April.

See You Soon,
Your NCBA Board

April 7th NCBA Meeting - ZOOM-Only

WHO: All NCBA Members are invited

WHAT: Steve Repasky - "SWARMS"

WHEN: April 7th from 7PM - 9PM

WHERE: Only on ZOOM

WHY: Healthy honeybee colonies want to reproduce. It's a natural behavior that propagates the species. But, can this behavior be managed

- to benefit the honeybees, the beekeepers, and maximize honey production?

- Steve Repasky will take a look at Honeybee Swarm Biology, and share beekeeping best practices to be alert to swarming behavior, prepare for swarming, and control the honeybee's natural behavior to benefit your apiary and honey production



Spring is Coming - In winter surviving strong hives beware of SWARMS!

April 7th Speaker

Steve Repasky

A second-generation beekeeper, Stephen Repasky is a nationally recognized speaker, author and consultant from Pittsburgh, PA. He is a certified Master Beekeeper through the Eastern Apicultural Society and is the past-President of the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association, past president and co-founder of Burgh Bees, and a former member of the Board of Directors for the American Beekeeping Federation. He is also an active member of the PA Queen Bee Improvement Project and is a member of the Penn State Center for Pollinator Research Advisory Board and the Pennsylvania State Apiary Advisory Board. Stephen manages approximately 200 colonies (mostly as single brood chambers) in western Pennsylvania and is involved in honey production, queen rearing and the selling of nucleus hives each spring and summer to those interested in starting or expanding their own beekeeping adventure!



He also manages the apiary program at Pittsburgh International Airport where there are nearly 100 colonies used in honey production, research studies and queen production. Pittsburgh International is home to the largest apiary program in the country located entirely on airport property.

Stephen had his first book published by Wicwas Press in 2014 entitled "Swarm Essentials" and can be found teaching beekeeping classes and workshops in the Pittsburgh area and presenting lectures on a variety of beekeeping topics at local clubs and many regional and national conferences around the United States.

Recordings will be saved for future viewing when allowed by the presenter.



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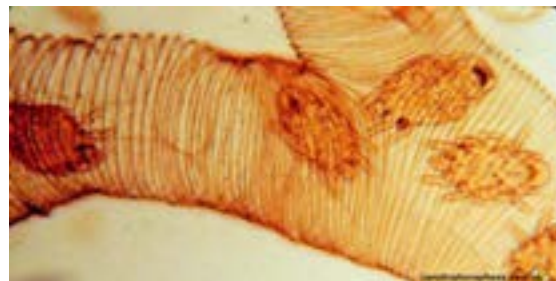


Special Alert from MDAR Regarding Tracheal Mites

Thanks to Greg Rushton for sharing a report from MDAR and Kim Skrym about an occurrence of Tracheal Mites in the Norfolk County area. Here's some background on Tracheal Mites.

History

Tracheal Mites (*Acarapis woodi*) were first discovered in 1919 on the Isle of Wight in the English Channel and were originally believed to be the cause of Isle of Wight disease



which caused great colony losses. The Federal Honey Bee Act of 1922 was passed primarily to prevent spread of these mites into the United States.

In 1980, tracheal mites were discovered in Mexico, about 200 miles from the Southern U.S. border. USDA, APHIS, in cooperation with the Bioenvironmental Bee Lab at Beltsville, conducted a national survey for tracheal mites from 1980-82. Mite survey results were negative with samples collected from 4,400 apiaries.

On July 3, 1984, tracheal mites were first detected in the United States from bees sampled from a commercial beekeeping operation in Weslaco, Texas. Mites spread quickly throughout the U.S. by the movement of migratory beekeepers, sale of queens, packages and nucs.

Symptoms

Tracheal Mites infest Honeybee spiracles, and reduce their ability to take in oxygen from the surrounding air.

No one symptom characterizes a tracheal mite infested colony. Tracheal mites are believed to shorten the life span of adult bees, affect flight activity, and result in a large number of crawling bees that are unable to fly. The wings of mite infested bees are often disjointed with the hind wing projecting 90° from the axis of the body. However, absence of these symptoms does not necessarily indicate freedom of mites.

Infected colonies may not develop normally and may exhibit symptoms of dysentery and an excessive swarming tendency. Often, however, severely infested colonies typically appear normal until their death during the winter. Colonies are most affected during winter confinement and early

spring like a stress disease. Mite infestations are at a maximum in the spring when the population is composed of primarily older bees.

A recent NCBA Member's colony exhibited signs of colony death over winter, and presented as a poisoning. The state inspector sent bees from the hive off to be tested and the results came back as Tracheal Mites.

TREATMENT

Grease Patties

This is a natural option that includes two ingredients that a lot of households will have on hand. Combine one part vegetable shortening or oil with two to three parts sugar to make a paste-like mix. Shape it into patties, just like a burger. Place one patty on the top bars of the brood chamber – this should last around one month.

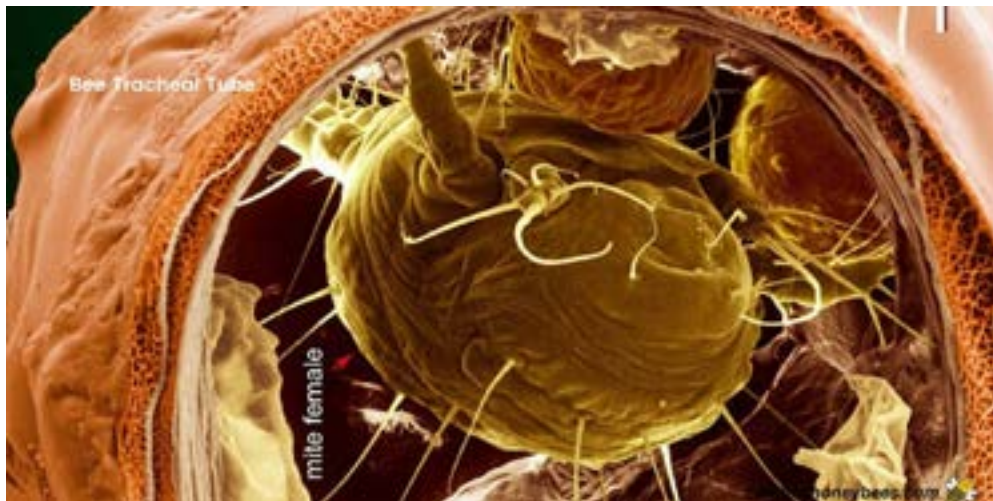
When a bee feeds on the patty, a layer of oil will eventually cover its whole body. The grease interrupts the mite's lifecycle as they can no longer climb onto the bee or cling to its hair. Eventually, the mites die as they can't attach to new host bees.

Menthol

Fifty grams (1.8 ounce) of crystalline menthol should be enclosed in a 7" x 7" plastic screen bag or equally porous material and placed inside a colony for 20-25 days. Menthol placed on the top bars is the preferred method of treatment provided the daytime temperature does not exceed 80 degrees F. During hot weather, the menthol should be placed on the bottom board of the colony. There should be no honey supers on the hive during the treatment, and the menthol should be taken out of a colony at least one month before any anticipated flow. Before using menthol, read and follow the approved label carefully.

ReQueening

If the Tracheal Mite infestation is caught soon enough, Requeening is the colony is an option.



Resources:

<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/beekeepers/fact-sheets-publications/tracheal-mite-honey-bee.html>

<https://extension.psu.edu/a-quick-reference-guide-to-honey-bee-parasites-pests-predators-and-diseases>

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/northeast-area/beltsville-md-barc/beltsville-agricultural-research-center/bee-research-laboratory/docs/tracheal-mite/>

https://ecrotek.com.au/blogs/articles/tracheal-mite-and-disease-symptoms-treatment-and-prevention?srsId=AfmBOorz9Pyv85_zlan5D2snhTJ2zyo4ELVcEFEJYVnQZqnKUpUzr50z

<https://beeaware.org.au/archive-pest/tracheal-mite/#ad-image-0>

<https://ag.umass.edu/resources/pollinators/honey-bees/education/umass-extension/bee-workshops>

The NCBA Board of Directors Meeting is the third Monday of each month.
It's held at 7:00pm via a Zoom Video Meeting.

All NCBA members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**NCBA
BOARD
MEETING**

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

7:00 - 8:23 PM.

Attending:

- Mohamad Khalil
- Greg Rushton
- Dana Wilson
- Brian McCafferty
- Alla Ostrovsky
- Mike Passmore
- Carolyn Holmes
- Michael Simone
- Ed Rock
- Kara Sullivan
- Archie Acevedo
- Tony Lulek
- Paul Reilly
- Amy Musante

ALL ARE INVITED

Please remember that all NCBA members are welcome at each and every NCBA Board Meeting. As a matter of fact - we encourage as full a participation by our membership in the Board and Committees as possible.

Board Meetings are typically held on the third Monday of each Month. Just e-mail Tony Lulek and he will send you the Zoom Link for the meeting.

**NCBA Board Minutes
March 17th, 2025**

Vice President's Update – Mo

▫ **Ag Day – We need to thank Evan at Boston Honey Company for his donation of 60 pounds of honey. Brian will write a note, Mike will email a thank you.**

Treasurer Update – Brian

▫ **Check for \$1000 sent to the Aggie for the scholarship.**

▫ **Brian sent Board members the monthly financials today. Financials are reconciled as of February 28, but the bank balance is today's. Financials were voted on and accepted.**

▫ **Bank balance and details are available to members by contacting Brian.**

Recording Secretary: Minutes – Mike P

▫ **Minutes from the previous Board Meeting were voted on and accepted.**

Corresponding Secretary – Ed

▫ **Newsletter items due to Ed by Friday for publication early next week.**

▫ **Mentor Meet-and-Greet is on the 25th, but it's too late now to make the newsletter.**

Committees:

▫ **Programs – Alla**

o **April – Steve Repasky has confirmed his talk on Swarms April 7th.**

o **May – Bob Hickey and Carolyn Holmes will talk on Queen Rearing & we'll host our annual Plant & Seed Swap.**

o **That's all we have scheduled until after the summer break.**

▫ **Beginner Bee School – Ed/Dana/Brian**

o **Coming up on the 8th week of Bee School.**

o **We would like to add a section on pollinators, but there may not be time for it. Greg said that Kim of MDAR might like to squeeze in 5 minutes on tracheal mites.**

o **Alla mentioned that it would be nice to have that 5-minute bit at our next club meeting on Tracheal Mites - who seem to**

o **be making a resurgence in MA.**

▫ **Intermediate Bee School – Brian**

o **We have 49 enrollees**

▫ **Extractors – Brianda**

o **Nothing happening per Brianda message to Mo.**

▫ **Library – Michael S**

o **Nothing to report except that we need to update the list of books in the library.**

▫ **Door Prizes – Kara**

o **Nothing new per Kara email to Mo.**

▫ **Website – Greg**

o **Swarm page is up and functional but needs a better logo. Needs testing by the appropriate Board members.**

▫ **Membership – Facebook – Google**

o **Groups - Dana**

o **We have 518 members, 442 are renewals and 76 are Bee School attendees.**

o **Beginner Bee School requires NCBA**

membership, but Intermediate only requires membership in any MA club to attend.

▫ **Bee Apparel – Brian/Deb**

o **Brian found a company in Rhode Island that can provide service through a link on our website. Tony said that is the way we've done it before. Although we'd like to get apparel as soon as possible, we decided to wait until we have a new logo.**

o **Brian will email a graphic artist that he knows.**

▫ **Calendar Committee – Greg**

o **No changes to the calendar recently, but this weekend Greg will look for updates.**

▫ **Scholarships and Grants - Brian**

o **The app is on the website, and all email will go to Brian.**

o **Old Business:**

▫ **Bylaws – Michael S.**

o **Michael has received comments on the circulated document from Mike P and emailed suggestions from Brian. Michael will fold those into a revised document and re-circulate to the Board.**

(Continued on page 6)

(continued from page 3)

- o Alla suggested adding a clause to permit meetings in the summer.
- ▣ **MassBee Fall Meeting – Ed**
- o Placeholder venue is the Natick Elks Club, and they have our \$200 deposit. Tony has been there for functions and considers it perfect for our needs.
- o Billy Crawford from WMass will find speakers.
- o Brian volunteered to handle food service for morning, coffee, lunch, and afternoon snack.
- o MassBee has a list of the usual vendors, but we're free to suggest others.
- o Ed R will reach out to Ed S. with our updates and for more information.

New Business:

- ▣ **Pollinator Project – Brian**
- o Brian will send an email to the club about this new project at the Capron Zoo in Attleboro, both a pollinator program and a beekeeping training center, and a great resource for the club. The project needs participation from the club if it is to survive.
- o Brian intends to have a Hive Dive on March 22nd to examine the dead-out hive and the survivor hive.
- Paul from MDAR has already been out; this would be a re-enactment of the autopsy.
- o Archie suggested that we use the Demaree method here rather than split and will send Brian some information on the process.
- ▣ **Speaker Fees – All**
- o We discussed speaker fees for the club and our schools. We decided to raise our award for NCBA club member speakers to \$200 to match the award given to non-NCBA club members. The change was voted on and approved.

- ▣ **Policy Document – Brian**
- o In the past Brian has suggested a repository for policy decisions and procedures. Perhaps something on our Google Drive. Tony will share an example with Mo.
- ▣ **Bristol Buzz Line – Brian**
- o Brian asked if we should consider a monthly Q&A Zoom for NCBA like Bristol County Beekeeper's Association.
- o Tony suggested we may want to do it in partnership with Bristol.
- o Greg will contact Mike Delaney at Bristol, and Brian is available to coordinate if needed.
- ▣ **Survival Survey – Mo**
- o Mo wants to survey members on their survival rates and numbers. He'll target April 1 st .

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM



MARK YOUR CALENDER ALERT!!

April 7th - NCBA Meeting

7-9PM - ZOOM ONLY
**Steve Repasky will
present "SWARMS".**

Starting April 11th - MDAR Honeybee Education Days

See details on page 7.

May 5th NCBA Meeting

7-9PM - IN PERSON
**ONLY at the Norfolk Aggie HS
Cafeteria**
**Bob Hickey and Carolyn
Holmes will present QUEEN
REARING. Also NCBA will
host our ANNUAL SPRING
PLANT EXCHANGE &
we'll finish the night with
Refreshments / Socializing.**



Check out the MDAR State Apiary Days in 2025...starting April 11th and running through October 10th.

Honey Bee Education Days at the State Apiaries 2025

University of Massachusetts
Agricultural Learning Center Farm
911 North Pleasant St
Amherst, MA 01002

Bristol County Agricultural High Sch.
Standish House Admin Bldg
28 Center St
Dighton, MA 02715



Join the MDAR Apiary Program Team at the State Apiaries to get a tour of live honey bee colonies, hands-on demonstrations related to colony management and exposure to the latest information on how to best sustain bee health in the Commonwealth. Events will be held rain or shine. Free and open to the public, no registration required.

Attendees should wear closed-toe shoes, pants and long-sleeved shirts. Protective beekeeping gear will be provided (limited supplies available), if needed.

Fridays from 1 to 3pm

April 11th - Post Winter Evaluation & Spring Prep
May 9th - Spring Management

Saturday June 14th Bristol Only
MassBee Field Day - register at MassBEE.org

July 11th - Pests, Parasites & Pathogens
August 15th - Summer Management & Fall Prep
Sept. 12th - Bristol Only - Honey Extraction
Event 10am -2pm

Oct. 10th. - Winter Prep





NCBA'S FIRST BEEKEEPING EVENT AT CAPRON PARK ZOO

NCBA is launching our first **Pollinator Education Project in conjunction with the Capron Park Zoo** in Attleboro, MA. Working with Zoo Director John Wright, the NCBA will be placing two hives at the zoo with plans to use this location as:

-a Pollination & Pollinator & Public Education site for "beekeeping at the zoo"



-a centrally located (Attleboro) beekeeping training site for NCBA Member Events
-a beekeeping training site for NCBA Bee School & Intermediate Beekeeping students

We are looking for NCBA volunteers to help maintain the new colonies, and run public education

presentations on Sunday afternoons at the zoo. The goal is to have a core group that will work together to make this project a success.

We spent Saturday, March 22 looking through the dead-out hive and refurbishing the hive stand for the vibrant hive. We also had a chance to talk with over 50 Zoo visitors about pollinators and beekeeping.

Please contact Brian McCafferty (BrianFMcCafferty@outlook.com) if you are interested in helping, want to gain experience in setting up an apiary, establishing new bee colonies, and present to the public.





AgDay at the MA State House - 2025

Carolyn Holmes coordinated a group from MassBee and NCBA and represented Beekeepers across the State of Massachusetts, sharing information about pollinators and beekeeping as well as a bit of honey with our state legislators. *(photo above - from left to right) Ed Symanski, Mary Duane, Ashley Randle (MDAR Commissioner), Carolyn Holmes, Alla Ostrovsky and Mike Passmore (Photo Below left - Students from Woodside Academy Montessori School) (Photo below right -Ed Symanski, Kathy Gasparro, Carolyn Holmes, students from Woodside Academy Montesory School)*

Supporting this effort with Honey Jar Labels and more were Kathy Gasparro and her students from Woodside Academy Montessori School. A special THANKS to them all for supporting this great day.



NCBA SPRING Volunteer Opportunities+

The following are opportunities for you and your family to engage with your club members and support beekeepers across the state.

Open Board Committee Positions

1- NCBA Bee Apparel - NCBA has developed and sold Club logo'ed hats, shirts and apparel to club members. If you're interested, please volunteer to join the "Apparel Committee".

2- Scholarships and Grants

- NCBA offers a wonderful set of scholarships for students of NCBA members pursuing environment related degrees, scholarships for NCBA members who are pursuing Master Beekeeper certification, and the Jan Daniels Scholarship for an educator who is developing "honeybee related" educational materials for their students. Contact Mo Khalil (MohamadKhalil@gmail.com)

3 - Delegate to MassBee

NCBA needs to have a club member regularly attend the MassBee meetings - Contact Mo Khalil (MohamadKhalil@gmail.com)

4 - The NCBA Zoo Crew

Come get involved in NCBA's Pollinator Project at the Capron Park Zoo in Attelboro. We need volunteer beekeepers to maintain the two hives and interact with Zoo visitors about beekeeping and Pollinators. Contact (BrianFMcCafferty@outlook.com)





2025 Nucs & Queens Available

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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.

Our "nucs" are 5-frame mini-hives comprised of a marked queen, her daughters, pollen, nectar, and honey.



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Boston Honey Company Nucs

We are offering our standard nucs for the 2025 season, these come with established queens, 5 frames, and a jester box. All our nucs are inspected by the state bee inspector and our nucs are guaranteed by us. Our Queen stock is grafted from Breeder Queens raised and selected by Mike Palmer of French Hill Apiaries.

Five frame Nuc with unmarked queen. Bee stock is a mix of Carniolan/Buckfast and (POL-LINE) Italian stock. Minimum of 3 frames sealed brood (avg. 4), all 5 frames drawn out. No frame exchanges. All Nucs come in Jester plastic corrugated boxes that are reusable.

Standard Pricing is : \$215.00
All Club Members use code: "ClubDiscount"
Club Price 5 Frame Nuc: \$205.00

A special Thanks from
MassBee and NCBA
to Evan for donating a
5-Gallon Pail of Honey
for AgDay 2025

Quantity Discounts are available for group purchases:

Buy 10+	\$15.00 OFF
Buy 20+	\$20.00 OFF
Buy 50+	\$25.00 OFF



We also offer bulk honey for those who are looking to supplement their honey crops if they had a short year. We have our Northeast wildflower honey available in 5 gallon buckets for only \$270 at \$4.50 per pound!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me using my info below and I'm more than happy to share more information about our bees, beekeeping practices, quick lessons on how to install a nuc, a package, and more.

Best,

Evan

Email: evan@bostonhoneycompany.com
Phone #: 774-217-0000



Bee Keeping Online Resources

•**American Bee Journal** - Beekeeping Resources, Research and Articles - <https://americanbeejournal.com/>

•**American Beekeeping Federation** - Membership Organization with great resources and educational opportunities - <https://abfnet.org/resources-for-beekeepers/>

•**Auburn University Extension** - Agriculture and Beekeeping related webinars and resources - <https://www.facebook.com/LawrenceCountyextension/>

•**At Home Beekeepers Series** - Auburn University Extension Service - <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/bees-pollinators/at-home-beekeeping-series/>

•**Bee Conservancy** - Resources for beekeepers & supporting Pollinators - <https://thebeeconservancy.org/10-ways-to-save-the-bees/>

•**BeeCounted** website accesses all the broodminder data (you don't need the sensors) rolling in so you can see nectar flow in your geography <https://beecounted.org/map>

•**BetterBee** Beekeeping supply vendor with some nice "how to videos and resources- <https://www.betterbee.com/instructions-and-resources/home.asp>

•**Bee Informed Partnership** Beekeeping Blog - <https://beeinformed.org/blog>

•**Cornell University Beekeeping Courses and Resources** - <https://ecornell.cornell.edu/certificates/beekeeping/>

•**Dadant** Beekeeping supply vendor with

some nice "how to videos and resources- <https://www.dadant.com/learn/>

•**Eastern Apicultural Society** - Membership organization for beekeepers in the Eastern United States - resources, education, conferences and research for beekeepers - <https://easternapiculture.org/>

•**Honeybee Health Coalition** - resources and education for beekeepers - <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/focus-on-forage/>

•**Honeybee Net** - a great resource presented by NASA at the Goddard Space Flight Center website - <https://honeybeenet.gsfc.nasa.gov/Honeybees.htm>

•**Honey Bee Suite** - a neat online resources of articles, blog posts and - <https://www.honeybeesuite.com/>

•**Mann Lake Blog** news, information, and beekeeping techniques - many product related - <https://www.mannlakeltd.com/blog/>

•**Massachusetts Apiary Program**, hive inspections, information, support - <https://www.mass.gov/apiary-program-honey-bees>

•**Massachusetts Beekeepers Association** - Resources and Programming for MA Beekeepers - NCBA is part of the state organization - <https://www.massbee.org/>

•**Norfolk County Beekeepers Association** - <https://www.norfolkbees.org/>

•**North Carolina State University Apiculture Program** - Resources, Educational Opportunities and Data to inform your beekeeping <https://www.ncsuapiculture.net/>

•**North Carolina State University Apiary Lab** Beekeeping resources, videos, and more- <https://www.ncsuapiculture.net/>

•**Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center** - Hosts monthly Zoom workshops on a variety of topics on pest management in beekeeping - <https://www.northeastipm.org/ipm-in-action/the-ipm-toolbox/bee-breeding-and-ipm-for-better-pollinator-health/>

•**PennState Extension** - Beekeeper and Pollinator Resources - <https://extension.psu.edu/insects-pests-and-diseases/pollinators/beekeeping>

•**Planet Bee.org** - Resources about pollinators, pollen providers, and bee friendly plantings - <https://beescape.psu.edu>

•**Pollinator.org** is a resource for ecoregional planting guides for pollinators - <https://www.pollinator.org/guides>

•**Randy Oliver's Scientific Beekeeping** website - research, resources, and data to inform better beekeeping - <https://scientificbeekeeping.com/>

•**University of Massachusetts Bee Lab** - Pollinator Resources - <https://ag.umass.edu/resources/pollinators>

•**University of Minnesota Bee Lab** - featuring the work of Marla Spivak and others - data and research to inform your beekeeping - <https://beelab.umn.edu/>

•**USDA Bee Disease Diagnosis 60+ page PDF** - <https://www.ars.usda.gov/is/np/honeybeediseases/honeybeediseases.pdf>

•**USDA Bee Disease Diagnosis Service** - <https://www.ars.usda.gov/northeast-area/beltsville-md-barc/beltsville-agricultural-research-center/bee-research-laboratory/docs/bee-disease-diagnosis-service/>

•**USDA National Agricultural Library Apiculture and Beekeeping** resources - <https://www.nal.usda.gov/animal-health-and-welfare/beekeeping>

•**Washington State University Honeybee and Pollinator Program** - Resources and new research for beekeepers - <https://bees.wsu.edu/>

It is my hope to have NCBA members "YOU ALL" share any online Beekeeping references and resources you know if...and continually update this list as a once-a-month reference for all members.

Thanks in advance for sharing any resources you have that are your "Go To's" for beekeeping.

Thanks to Mark Bittinger for the Planet Bee and Bee Counted web sites

Ed Rock