

# the Norfolk Bee

MAY 2022 • NORFOLKBEEES.ORG

## NEXT CLUB MEETING

**MAY 2, 2022**  
7:30 to 9:00 pm

### Hybrid In-person and via Zoom

An email will be sent with a meeting invite. This will include a meeting ID # and a password.

In advance of the meeting, please download and install the free Zoom app to your computer, phone or tablet. If this is new technology for you, perhaps you can do a test meeting with a friend.

<https://vimeo.com/616977404>

For those joining in-person, show up at the Norfolk Aggie  
400 Main Street  
Walpole, MA

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*“Da da da da DA dum,  
Da dada da dum  
DA, da da DA DA Dum  
Da dada da dum...”*

- Lyrics of Pomp & Circumstance

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Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

Spring is definitely here. The bees are buzzing, flowers are blooming and we had snow and hail on Easter Sunday. And it's 51 today. Spring in New England; there is nothing like it.

We have a lot of stuff going on this month. Our first in-person meeting since March of 2020. Looking forward to seeing those that are coming to Norfolk Aggie and those who are joining us on Zoom. We will be continuing the hybrid model for the foreseeable future.

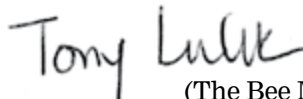
We are restarting the Queen program where the club will be subsidizing the purchase of locally raised queens in order to improve our genetic stock, increase our apiary, and bring down our mites with VHS queens.

Our new NUC program is just getting underway. We will have our first meeting on Monday and will get back to you all with the details.

And we have elections for the new slate of officers. The new slate, as published in the last newsletter, will be duly elected at the May meeting. We will have some positions open on the committees, so if you are interested in getting involved this is a great way. I will talk more about this at the May meeting.

And historically the May meeting is our plant raffle. Please bring bee friendly plants and seeds to be raffled off. There will be plenty of door prizes for both those attending in person and those on Zoom.

Here's to a happy Spring,

  
(The Bee Man)

## Intro to Beekeeping graduates 80

Congratulations to the Bee School graduates (and new NCBA members), who finished their fascinating 10 week course on April 5th. Although they have completed a course, they have actually only started a journey.

Several graduates were already beekeepers but wanted, and appreciated, the educational foundation Bee School provides.

Assuming each graduate establishes one hive, their 80 new queens may give Norfolk County about 4,800,000 new honeybees this summer. Flowers all across the county are smiling. Just think of all the pollen these extra hives will sequester; Claritin sales in Norfolk County will plummet!

Special thanks to Dana Wilson, Tony Lulek, and Ed Rock for all their work to make Bee School a success.



# News from the Landing Board

## The May 2nd Meeting Agenda

**May: Pollinator Garden** Whilst most gardeners choose plantings for shape, color, and interest, beekeepers garden with an additional agenda. Nectar load, pollen, timing of blossoms, and an anticipated honey crop are all part of the equation. Join us for our first hybrid meeting - at the Aggie or via Zoom - to learn how to make your gardens bee-friendly. 63 members have signed up! And, speaking of gardening, the May meeting is the traditional NCBA Plant Raffle Bring seedlings, cuttings, or seeds for the Raffle table!

## A look ahead... Future Meeting Agendas

**June: Go to Mass. Field Day** Pre-Covid, NCBA had a Club Social in the month of June (anyone remember Rocky Woods?). But this year we suggest that members go to the Massachusetts Beekeepers' Associates Annual Field Day. The big event will be on Saturday, June 11, from 9:00-3:30 at the MDAR State Apiary, 911 North Pleasant Street, in Amherst, MA.

**June 6th Meeting:** At the Aggie and via Zoom

## NCBA Board Officers to be elected

The NCBA Nomination Committee puts forward the following Candidates for Club Officers. This slate of officers will be approved at the May meeting:

President.....	Tony Lulek
Vice President.....	Mohamad Kahlil
Treasurer .....	Stephen Green
Recording Secretary .....	Ed Rock
Corresponding Secretary .....	Kevin Keane

*Other committee positions that are not voted on, but you should know work very hard on the Board are:*

Programs .....	Ed Szymanski
Intro to Bee School.....	Tony Lulek and Dana Wilson
Intermediate Bee School .....	Ed and Marian Szymanski
Extractors .....	Brianda Younie
Librarian.....	Michael Simone
Door Prizes .....	Kara Sullivan
Website.....	Greg Rushton
Membership/Facebook/Google .....	Rose Thornton and Deb Spielman
Bee Apparel .....	Lauralyn Smith
Calendar Committee.....	Jenna Tibbetts

All NCBA members should know that they can attend Board meetings throughout the year. Their participation in Club events would be appreciated.

### NCBA BOARD MEMBERS

2020-2022:

#### PRESIDENT

Tony Lulek

#### VICE PRESIDENT

Dana Wilson

#### TREASURER

Stephen Green

#### RECORDING SECRETARY

Edward Rock

#### CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Kevin Keane

#### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Carin Cohen, Joel Richards,  
and Jenna Tibbetts

### NCBA BEE SCHOOLS:

#### INTRODUCTORY SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Tony Lulek

#### INTRODUCTORY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Dana Wilson

#### INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Ed Szymanski

#### INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Marian Szymanski

#### NCBA TECH GURU

Greg Rushton

#### APPAREL

Lauralyn Smith

#### DOOR PRIZE/RAFFLE

Kara Sullivan

#### HOSPITALITY

Rose Thornton and Carin Cohen

#### EXTRACTORS

Brianda Younie

#### MEMBERSHIP/FACEBOOK/GOOGLE

Rose Thornton

Deb Spielman

#### LIBRARIAN

Michael Simone

#### PROGRAMS

Ed and Marian Szymanski

# NUC Program ramping up

One of the most interesting and clever ways to get multiple queens through winter and establish big spring hives, is to create late-season nucs, à la Michael Palmer. Late season nucs are created in late July or early August. Brood frames and nurse bees are placed in double nuc boxes, given a newly mated, high-quality queen, and then they prepare themselves for winter.

In late winter, the nucs pivot towards spring and grow to meet the approaching season. By mid-April they are ready to be placed into deeps - and may even provide a honey crop - while spring nucs may be just getting established in mid-June.

NCBA sees late-season nucs as an promising way to create sustainable beekeeping in Norfolk County. We are looking to create a system in which members are taught how to make and take care of late-season nucs - and then the Club will help to sell them to Bee School graduates the following Spring.

Members who successfully raise late-season nucs will get a fair market value for their nucs, all while learning

## NCBA Library will be in-person at the May meeting

In the “before times”.... before Covid, the NCBA library would be available in person, and for the May meeting, it will be again!

Arrive early and browse the 190 books and 30 DVDs in the collection. NCBA Librarian, Michael Simone, is looking forward to seeing real beekeepers and showing them real books!

## Membership Update



As of mid-April there are 582 members in the NCBA.



how to make money from their bees (an important component of sustainable beekeeping). Bee School graduates will get quality, northern-raised bees and avoid bringing in southern-raised bees to Norfolk County (another component of sustainable beekeeping).

Eventually the Club would like to raise enough nucs (about 100) to satisfy the Bee School demand, but for this pilot year, expectations are far more modest.

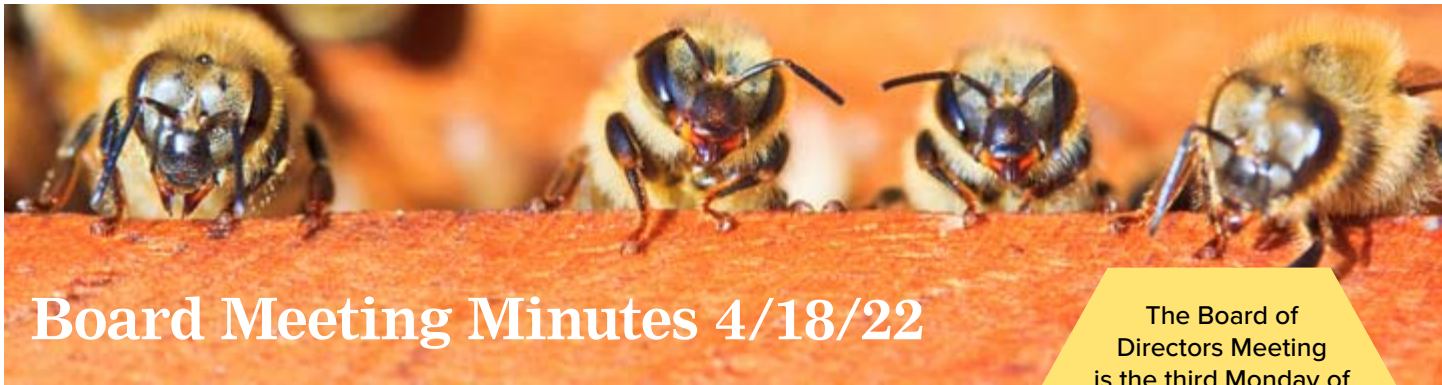
With a price point expected to be just over \$200.00, the opportunity to make money this year is considerable. An investment in expertise and hardware will pay even better in subsequent years.

The Club will host a nuc-making class in May at Archie Acevedo’s apiary, Northeast Bees at XXXX. We will be practicing on early spring nucs, so we will understand the drill at the end of July. All members who want to try this, should plan to attend.

To assist with the initial ramp-up of equipment, NCBA will help fund and supply the double-nuc boxes and the high-quality, northern-raised, varroa-resistant queens. In return, participants will agree to care and treat the hives as appropriate. In early spring, the hives would be inspected by the Club.

So, get your smokers ready. 2022-2023 could be the year your beekeeping jumps to the next level!





# Board Meeting Minutes 4/18/22

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.

## NCBA BOARD MEETING

**APRIL 18, 2022**

7:09 to 8:00 pm

### Attending:

Tony Lulek  
Dana Wilson  
Stephan Greene  
Ed Rock  
Michael Simone  
Joel Richards  
Ed Szymanski  
Greg Rushton  
Jenna Tibbetts  
Deb Spielman,  
Laura Davis  
Kevin Keane

### President's Update – Tony L

- Scholarship Committee –
  - 2 core scholarships – Norfolk Aggie Scholarship(s) and NCBA Scholarships
  - Dana and Ed Rock will help with the Scholarship committee, Laura Davis will chair.
  - Norfolk Aggie High School Student Scholarship (NCBA typically provides (2) \$1500 scholarships
  - NCBA Member Student Scholarship – Award stays at \$1000 per awarded applicant.
- Queen program
  - The survey data was inconsistent for conclusions, so we may need to do further analysis
  - We'll continue the program another year.
- Jan Daniels Memorial – folks donated \$880 to NCBA
- We're preparing to develop splitting and developing nucs so that NCBA members can generate new bee populations for club members.
- Mo Khalil will be nominated as the club Vice President
- Encourage club members/board members to host hive dives and invite folks to observe over the summer. (advertise on the NCBA google group)

### Vice President's Update – Dana

- Nothing new.

### Treasurer Update – Stephen

- Bank balance \$46,641.75 as of 4/18/2022
- Norfolk Aggie Check sent out

- Three financial reports accepted.

### Recording Secretary: Minutes – Ed R

- Meeting notes accepted

### Corresponding Secretary – Kevin Keane

- Nothing new – new newsletter material due 4/22/22
- Notes to highlight in the upcoming Newsletter
- Add a set of notes about how the May 2nd meeting's Plant raffle and Seed exchange will work.

### Committees:

- **Programs** – Ed S and Marion
  - May 2nd, 2022 Club Meeting will be in the Aggie Cafeteria (over 50 club members have said they'd attend in person. Looking for a Plant/pollinator presentation.
  - NOTE that we'll have a Plant and Seed raffle at the May meeting
  - June meeting – Suggesting folks go to Mass Field Day – and NCBA will just hold a June evening meeting – we'll anticipate a hybrid meeting in June.
- **Intro to Bee School** – Tony & Dana
  - Everything completed – class sessions all archived on website as vimeo files
  - 80 people/families graduated April 5th
  - We had a significant group of folks

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Varroa Mites: The best time to control them is now

by Ed Szymanski

I publish a similar article every year. I really feel that everyone needs to understand why mite control is so important to the survival of our bees, and our neighbors' bees. I don't think everybody fully understands yet.

So please read this, even if you have read it earlier articles. I firmly believe that you can't fix something until you know how it works. We all need to understand this well before we set out to do something about it.

It's never too early to start thinking about getting our bees ready for winter. In fact, we're always getting our bees ready for winter. The key is having them healthy and well-nourished before the winter bees are raised.

I continue to see posts and hear questions asking "Why did my bees die? I treated for mites" and "Why does it matter what parts of the bee Varroa mites feed on?" and "When is the right time to treat for mites?" The answers are related - It's all about getting our mites and viruses under control before the winter bees are raised. We start thinking about it now, not in August.

You may be somewhat familiar with the idea of "fat bees" – the workers that live for an extended period of time and carry the colony through the winter until spring when new brood can be raised. Honey bees have "fat bodies", sections of tissue in the abdomen which act in a similar way to our liver and also store fat, glycogen, proteins and enzymes. In the summer, the fat bodies are small or nonexistent in workers, but in the early fall when natural pollen supplies are getting short, a new batch of workers are raised - workers with enlarged fat bodies,

and these are the workers that will live through until spring. We call them "fat bees" or "winter bees".

The secret is a compound called Vitellogenin, which resides in the bees' fat bodies. Vitellogenin is a glycolipoprotein, having properties of a sugar, a fat

and a protein. I'm not going to get too technical, I'm not a scientist. I do know that it has some very important qualities. It serves an immune system function. It acts as an antioxidant that prolongs the bees' lifespan. And, it allows nurse bees to make royal jelly even when there's no natural pollen available. You can see that this bee "fountain of youth" (Randy Oliver, Fat Bees, pt. 1) plays a critical role in raising healthy winter bees.

Dr. Sam Ramsey proved that Varroa mites feed on the fat bodies of the bee rather than the hemolymph (blood). Varroa populations tend to maximize in August/September – when the winter bees are being raised! The Vitellogenin stores in the winter bees are compromised by the Varroa mites feeding on them. Lower Vitellogenin levels shorten the lifespan of the winter bees, so colony populations dwindle in the late winter, and, since the nurse bees' ability to make food for the new brood is compromised, there are few new bees being added to the population, right when they need it.

This is very important! Perhaps that explains how your bees died – they seemed to be making it through January, no Varroa collapse occurred – you thought they were going to be ok, but the population decreased because the compromised winter bees were dying too early, and new brood wasn't being raised fast enough, until the population got so small, they weren't able to keep the cluster warm.

"They were doing fine until that March cold snap killed them". But, you see, the cold did not really kill your bees, the mites did! When you understand this, you understand why mite control is so important.

This teaches us is that our Varroa mite levels must be under control by mid-to-late August. Testing should be done monthly, starting in May, and treatment should occur when mite loads reach a threshold that you have decided on. Most people use 2% (6 mites in a 300 bee sample, with an alcohol wash). How can you know when to treat if you don't know your mite load?

Personally, Marian and I have modified our testing and treatment regimen to take this all into account. You have

*(Continued on page 6)*



## WEATHER FORECAST

Milder and seasonable weather expected for most of the month, except when there is cooler weather. There will be some rain. And some sun. Nights will generally be darker than the days.

(Continued from page 5)

to think these things through, and take it very seriously. If our testing hasn't told us to treat by the end of August, we are going to treat to get the mite load down as the queen is starting to lay the eggs that will become the winter bees. We like to use the formic acid product (MAQS or Formic Pro), because it is the only treatment that gets under the cappings to kill the mites in the brood where they are reproducing. Killing the mites reproducing in the brood is critical. If you only do a late treatment, without knowing what your levels were, you may kill a bunch of mites, but it's a false sense of security because your winter bees are already compromised.

A late fall Oxalic Acid (drip or vapor) treatment helps to knock down the winter mite population. This helps because phoretic (on the bees) mites can live through the winter, just waiting for that spring brood so they can start

reproducing again.

We will continue to test, observe, and make decisions based on those results and will never keep bees strictly by the calendar. It just doesn't work. Things are always changing, and we need to be aware of what's happening in our colonies at all times.

As summer comes, remember to monitor your food stores. Pollen and nectar can be short in August/September, just when your bees need the best possible nutrition they can get. Food shortages may cause queens to suspend laying, and if she doesn't recover in time, the winter bee population will be decreased.

Let all of your beekeeping activities have the same goal in mind - **HEALTHY WINTER BEES!**



## Host a Hive Dive this season!

Host a hive dive this season! ...and attend a hive dive this season! For hosting, it's a great way to demonstrate your expertise; for attendees it's a great way to learn, plus one get more hive-hours without having to subject your bees to

additional intrusions.

For hosts: several days before your hive dive, advertise the time and place on the NCBA Google Group.

## Preliminary results of the NCBA Queen Program

The headline of this article should be, "*Very Preliminary results....*" as our sample size is small, and there was less than 100% response to the survey. So with those caveats, and a giant grain of salt, here are two interesting takeaways.

1. Requeening is tricky. Requeened hives are still susceptible to multiple varagries and many respondents indicated that their hives perished due to storms, robbing, rodents, supercedure, or queen injury.

Given all these factors, the Northern-raised, Varroa-resistant replacement queens had a survival rate of 63%. Not great.

2. But interestingly, when excluding those factor, and just looking at hive deaths due to varroa mites, the

survival rate of hives with a Northern-raised, varroa-resistant queen was 95.4%. Impressive.

The survey also asked how many times the participants tested their hives for mites. The average was 2.26 times.

When asked how often their hives met the threshold for treatment, the average was 1.10 times, or 48.8 percent.

Again, these are preliminary results. Don't become giddy and think that we've found our way to the treatment-free Promised Land.

This season we will repeat the NCBA re-Queen program. We hope to get more participants, and richer data.

To all those who responded to our survey, thank you!



## More News from the Landing Board

### NCBA Student Scholarships

The club offers two scholarships. One is for NCBA members college-bound students. The scholarship is for \$1,000. Members and their students should apply online. The other scholarship is for a Norfolk Aggie High School student. NCBA typically provides (2) \$1500 scholarships.

### May Meeting in person

Still plenty of room at the in-person May meeting. Originally, we feared the facility would be overwhelmed, but it turns out it's capacity will accommodate our group. As we go to "press", 63 members have indicated that they will be attending in person.

### NCBA has a Scholarship Czar

Congratulations and welcome to Laura Davis who has volunteered to coordinate our many scholarship programs (Norfolk Aggie College Scholarship, Club Members' College Scholarship, Club Members' Cornell Master Beekeeper Scholarship, and the Subsidized Queen Program).

### NCBA Queen Program returns!

The NCBA Northern-Raised, Varroa-Resistant Queen Bee Program will return this season. Coupons will be available by the end of the month. Participants will be requested to report back on mite tests, the number of treatments needed, and winter survivability rate.

(Board meeting minutes, continued from page 4)

who already had bees – but felt the class was a real valuable contribution

- **Intermediate Bee School** – Ed & Marion
  - In week #4 and everything is good
  - Class on Mites coming this week
- **Extractors** – Brianda
  - No updates
- **Library** – Michael Simone
  - Now up to 3 library requests online that Michael has responded to...
  - First Physical set up will be May 2nd – Make sure to have a blurb in the newsletter about the physical library will be OPEN FOR BUSINESS
- **Door Prizes** – Kara
  - Online Prizes (gift cards)
  - Also, lots of hive materials that were gifted to the
  - Stephen Greene will bring the raffle tickets
  - We'll have the raffle tickets ready to sell for the plant raffle
  - \$1 a piece

- **Website** – Greg
  - Queen rearing scholarship – add line on the form for which class they want to take and how much it costs (Wetlands, PennState, ...). The club will subsidize 50% of the class cost for scholarship winners.
- **Membership – Facebook – Google Groups** - Rose & Deb
  - 582 members (members and bee school folks)
- **Bee Apparel** - Lauralyn
  - Nothing New
    - Reminder to be at the May meeting with Apparel for purchase
- **Calendar Committee** – Jenna Tibbetts
  - Jenna will be updating this week
- **Nominating Committee**
  - Nominees will be read at the May meeting and the slate will be voted upon.
- *Meeting was adjourned at 8:00PM*



**HANDS ON!**  
**Generative**   
**BEE SCHOOL**  
 QUEEN REARING SERIES



**WEEKEND 1**  
 All Cohorts Together:  
**MAY 27<sup>TH</sup>-29<sup>TH</sup>**



**WEEKEND 2**  
 Cohort 1:  
**JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup>**  
 OR  
 Cohort 2:  
**JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup>-26<sup>TH</sup>**



**WEEKEND 3**  
 Cohort 1:  
**JULY 8<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup>**  
 OR  
 Cohort 2:  
**JULY 15<sup>TH</sup>-17<sup>TH</sup>**

**WEEKEND 4**  
 All Cohorts Together:  
**AUGUST 5<sup>TH</sup>-7<sup>TH</sup>**

**REGISTER HERE:**  
<https://forms.gle/kxQs4XQ9aCch5xf7>  
 Email [INFO@THEYKEEPBEES.COM](mailto:INFO@THEYKEEPBEES.COM) for more information.



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 2022-2023  
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 your beekeeping  
 jumps to the next level!




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**Board** Built as one piece instead of two separate pieces for stability. They are made with galvanized 1/8" screen and white plastic slide-in tray to count mites. Glued and screwed together for long lasting durability.

**Slatted Racks** Completely assembled, glued and nailed. This gives the bees more room in the hive on rainy days and when they are all in for the night making them less likely to think about swarming due to crowding.

**Supers** Made out of pine; with pre-drilled finger joints, and handles cut into boards, comes unassembled. Deep, Medium and Shallow available.

**Inner Cover** Ventilated, wooden inner cover.

**Outer Cover covered with Tin** Made from 3/4" exterior plywood, completely assembled, glued and screwed. Cover comes with tin cover to protect from outdoor elements.

**Complete Hive Setup** Includes screened bottom board, two deep supers, 20 frames with wax foundation, inner cover and outer cover.

**Hive Frames—Deep, Medium, and Shallow** Wooden frame, made out of pine, held together with 10 nails. (Does not include wire or foundation).



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**Package Bees & Nucs 2019**

We have *three* delivery dates for packages this spring. Multiple pick-up locations and delivery available for convenience!

5 Frame Nucs available in deep frame and medium frame options.

Pick-up expected late May!

**Hive Starter Kits**

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