

# Sandusky River Valley Beekeepers Association



May 2020

srvba.ohiostatebeekeepers.org

## Upcoming Events

- **Monday, May 4th 7:00 pm**

Cancelled due to recent events with the Coronavirus.

- **Monday, May 4th 7:00 pm**

**Online [Zoom](#) Presentation—while practicing social distancing**

**Speaker:** Jeannie LaPierre Saum from BEEpothecary

**Topic:** Health benefits of bee pollen, venom and propolis. How to harvest, clean and use these value added products. BEEpothecary has great products backed up by actual research. Check out their website at <https://beepothecary.wordpress.com/> (**more information to be sent before the presentation**)



## Message from the President

Hey SRVBA members,

I hope everyone is safe and healthy, and getting into your hives when weather permits. As I sit and type this it's 27 degrees here at home today. Although it's sunny, they are calling for snow showers this afternoon with accumulating snow in the next couple of days. This crazy Ohio weather, and yet we still sit home and wonder when this viral pandemic is going to be over. It's been a hard spring but this will get better. We need to be patient.

Again this month I find it necessary to cancel our May bee meeting. Even though the virus curve is starting to level out, my decision is because of the social distancing regulations. We all need to continue to do our part. Stay safe and stay home to prevent spread of the virus.

Enough doom and gloom! Now about our bees, May is the start of swarm season. Like everyone says, "when the dandelions start to bloom swarm season is underway." It can start any day, so please keep an eye on your hives. Make your splits and give the Queen plenty of room for brood.

I've heard a few Beekeepers say they have put honey supers on with Queen excluders to give the bees more room. The reason for swarms is that the queen runs out of room to lay eggs and though putting honey supers on with Queen excluders isn't going to prevent swarms, it's important to get a jump on swarm season to help prevent it.

Check for swarm cells at the bottom of your frames and remember there is a difference between a queen cell and a queen cup. It's a natural thing for bees to make queen cups, but it's up to the queen if she wants to lay an egg in it to start a queen cell. Check the inside of the cup, if you see an egg or white royal jelly the bees are in swarm mode. Do not cut cups out if you find them, and remember on day nine the cell is capped and it takes only sixteen days for a queen to emerge.

Make splits by putting those frames with swarm Queen cells in new boxes. Add an empty brood box on top of your original box giving the Queen more room to lay her eggs.

Check your yard often to catch clusters of bees that might have already swarmed. Swarms will only stay around for a short period (maybe a day or so). Once the scout bees find a new location they will convince the swarm to leave.

# Message from the President (continued)

When I find a swarm in my yard I will sit and study the swarm looking for the Queen. The Queen doesn't care for the sunlight, as I'm sure you've noticed watching a queen on frame. She will always run on the underside of the frame since she doesn't care for the light.

I will study the shaded side of the swarm. I have a queen catcher clip ready, and if I see the queen I'll catch her and put her in the box. Keeping the Queen in the clip for a day or so, the bees won't leave the box since the queen can't leave.

I understand you can't always sit and study the swarm looking for the queen. Just make sure you catch the Queen or the bees won't stay in the box. Make sure you put drawn comb frames in your swarm box and give them honey frames for food, if you don't have any honey frames, remember to feed, feed, feed! Use sugar syrup at a 1 to 1 ratio. Make their lives as easy as possible so they want to stay in their new home.

May is an active month for our bees so stay with them, inspect them often, feed if the weather's going to be bad, and enjoy the bee yard.

Tom Rathbun , President SRVBA

## Chasing Feral Honey Bees—Part 1

*By Dwight Wells, Permission granted by Dwight Wells*

Some of the most interesting projects on honey bees get started with the “rubbing of elbows”, when beekeepers and researchers meet in the halls between presentations at bee conferences! Such was the impetus for an on-going project here in Ohio and several contiguous states, initiated by beekeeper Dwight Wells, Master Beekeeper, of Ohio and current OSBA Top of Ohio Regional Director.

Back in 2011, Dwight met Dr. Greg Hunt of Purdue University at the HAS conference and saw his first mite under a microscope. That experience and conversations with Dr Greg Hunt and Dr Brock Harpur of Purdue University and Dr. Tom Seely of Cornell University, was the catalyst for the action-research project Dwight has developed with several researchers and land-grant universities facilitated by Dwight Wells, connects researchers, universities and many local bee clubs and beekeepers in Ohio and surrounding states, doing action research together.

Many pockets of feral honey bees which exhibit naturally-developed mite-biting behavior have been located in Eastern and Southern Kentucky, South Eastern Indiana, West Central Pennsylvania and West Central Ohio. The focus of this cooperative project is to capitalize on the mite-biting traits of these feral honeybees by swarm trapping them and introducing their genetics into the bee populations in locally kept apiaries. The ultimate goal is to improve the genetics of our kept bees so they can naturally combat the varroa mite with their own defensive behaviors.



Photo used from [ResearchGate](#) article: Washboarding in Feral Honey Bees, *Apis mellifera*: Observations at Natural Hives Published by James F. Taulman, Independent Researcher

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316625159\\_Washboarding\\_in\\_Feral\\_Honey\\_Bees\\_Apis\\_mellifera\\_Observations\\_at\\_Natural\\_Hives](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316625159_Washboarding_in_Feral_Honey_Bees_Apis_mellifera_Observations_at_Natural_Hives)

# Chasing Feral Honey Bees—Part 1

## (continued)

Various teams, enlisted by Dwight in several different states, have 500+ swarm traps set out, catching swarms in remote locations where these mite-chewing feral bees exist. Dwight travels extensively visiting local bee clubs, to teach the protocol of swamp trapping feral bees, based on Dr. Tom Seely's research, and enlist beekeepers to participate in this impactful project. Since the start of this project, they now have several bee yards that have not been treated for varroa for 7 years, with bees keeping varroa mites controlled through their own mite-biting behavior.

The tasks in the project, "Working with Mite Biting honey Bees and Varroa" consists of:

- Chasing and swarm trapping feral honey bees
- Using sustainable genetic technology
- Making 48-hour queen cells
- Using DM3 microscopes for chewing behaviors, plus other behaviors that help control varroa
- Instrumental insemination between several states
- Overwintering nucs with mite-biting bees

Many facets of this project being carried out by both beekeepers and researchers. The collaboration between these two groups will help build healthy gene pools in our honey bee populations.

Based on the work of the past 24 months, stakeholders in this project will hold several workshops and presentations in the coming months at Purdue University, Kentucky State University Central State University (Ohio) and OSU OARD, Wooster.

- Late April - 48 Hour Queen Cell Class Plus Swarm Trapping updates at Pikeville, KY.
- Mid May - at OARDC Wooster OSU with Central State University
- Mid June - 48 Hour Queen Cells at the Annual Field Day at Purdue University, Indiana
- Early July - Heartland Apicultural Society (location TBA)
- Early August - Annual Heartland Honey Bee Breeders Cooperative Insemination Fest at Purdue University

There are several related projects being developed, working with Dr Brock Harpur at Purdue University. Brock recently replaced Dr Greg Hunt who retired last year. As the projects mature into working models, Dwight will keep us updated in future articles.

Several local Ohio beekeeping clubs are beginning to work with Dwight and this group of researchers on the feral bee project and several others. Your local beekeeping association could be involved, too! Stay Tuned! We need you!

Check them out on FaceBook at Chasing Feral Honey Bees. For information about participating in this important project, contact Dwight Wells at [dwells85@woh.rr.com](mailto:dwells85@woh.rr.com)

# Dwight Wells' Feral Bee Trapping

Permission granted by Mr. Wells

## Swarm Trap Info

- Volume of trap – 10 gal
- Entrance size – 5” slit x 1.2”, any axis
- Direction of Entrance - south if possible
- Height of Entrance – 5 feet off ground min.
- Position of Entrance 1” off bottom of trap
- Combs in Top super – Min. 1 old black comb –
  - Fill remaining space with frames of wired wax foundation
- Use conventional Langstroth equipment
  - Eight frame deep super – min. volume
  - 10 frame super has the perfect volume considered by the swarm scout bees (41 liters = 10.8 gallons)
  - Five over five swarm trap = 41 liters
  - Top Box – full of frames
  - Bottom box empty
  - Permanent attached bottom – consider bee space
  - 8 frame deep equip – min
  - Entrance is min 5” slot ½” any axis
  - Hole facing SE
- 1 – 2 frame of black old comb – no honey in it
  - Baited with lemongrass oil
  - Locate comb near hole with pheromone ½” above the entrance
- Smearing old beeswax and propolis inside anew trap will help attract Swarms scout bees

# Dwight Wells' Feral Bee Trapping (continued)

## Swarm Trap Info (continued)

- Paint the trap a dark color – (dk green or brown)
  - Attractive to swarm scouts
  - Scouts inspect the trap for several days before swarming
  - Blend into surrounding area
  - Prevent vandalism of trap
- Water tight top cover
- Entrance should be crossed with two nails to keep birds out of trap

## Swarm Trap Placement

- Locate trap entrance min. 5 ft. off ground
  - 2/3 ft. has also worked
- Previously inhabited traps more attractive to bee than new ones
- Over time, certain trees or locations will become known to be more attractive than others
- Older areas of towns will provide more swarms than most other areas
- Older tree lots
- Traps placed near or on ground or on top of buildings get hot
- Traps should be placed in partially shaded areas
- Not in sun
- Edge of woods is excellent
- Near a river or stream is a good location
- Away from prevailing winds
- Place sign on hive that it is part of a project to find good bee stock
- Put up traps April 1, Remove by Sept. 10
- Swarm trap line must be checked every 2-3 days

# Dwight Wells' Feral Bee Trapping (continued)

## Swarm Trap Placement (continued)

- If swarm is found in trap, after removing, wait 5 days, then replace with new baited trap
- Traps should be min. of 500 ft. apart
- Traps are effective for radius of 1 mile
- Feed all swarms for 2-6 weeks min.
  - Both protein and carbs
  - Feed late swarms until they are balanced and sustainable (add resource workers if needed)

## Location

- Read Honeybee Democracy – Tom Seely
- Remember where you have found feral colonies
- Think like scout bees
- Along fence rows in shade
- Lone tree in shade
- Deep woods
- Edge of Woods
- In urban area
- Older areas of town.

## Experience Info

- Set traps at least 2 weeks before swarms are expected
- Bee foragers notice trap entrances while foraging for pollen and nectar
- Most land owners that we had swarm traps on became involved in the project. Some sched the traps daily and called/texted if activity.
- We try to remove swarms early in the morning or after dark, to get the field bees. Prevented the “left behind bees” from competing with new scout bees

# Dwight Wells' Feral Bee Trapping (continued)

## Experience Info (continued)

- Swarms like to move into the traps quickly
- Have observed scouts from two different mother colonies fighting at the entrance of the trap
- Document your Swam trap locations
- Last year's most number of swarms caught in one trap was 9
- Several traps caught multiple swarms.
- After a swarm is in the trap for 10 days, the weight of the trap will be difficult to handle by one person
- Mount a 1" x 6" length of board onto the side of the trap with 3 carriage bolts, then mount the board onto a tree with a strap
- A double 5 frame nuc, taped together makes a good swarm trap
- A smear of lemongrass near the front of the entrance will attract the scouts.

## Swarm Trap Tool Kit

- Record Keeping System
- Swarm traps
- Screen bottom boards
- Varroa easy check alcohol mite wash system
- Smart phone
- Brood minder temp and humidity system
- Colony feeding system
- Treatment system
- Isolated Feral Swarm Yard Location
- Test for survival behaviors
- Microscope (chewing behaviors)
  - Camera if possible – small portable microscope

# Classifieds

## Packages & Nucs – Tom Rathbun/Southridge Apiary

Package honey bees for sale.  
Please message Tom for more information.  
Pickup only, Northern Ohio (Clyde, Ohio)

## Overwintered Nucs & Ohio Queens

Linda Miller - [oneoldbroadwithhives@gmail.com](mailto:oneoldbroadwithhives@gmail.com)

Linda will have overwintered Ohio nucs  
Probably in early May—\$160  
Ohio Queens as soon as weather permits. \$35



## Mann Lake Ltd. Honey Extractor for Sale

6/3 Frame Motorized Extractor – Purchased New – Lightly Used Fall of 2019 (Only)  
110 Volt – Variable Speed – Model HH – 200  
Stainless Steel Tank with Honey Gate  
6 – Frame Shallow Frame Radial  
3 – Frame – Medium or Deep Frame  
Paid \$689.95 Make Offer  
Contact [Tom Reineck](mailto:Tom.Reineck) or Call 419-680-6685 (Leave Message)  
E-Mail: [tmmtr74@gmail.com](mailto:tmmtr74@gmail.com)

## Cherry City Honey Woodenware – Tami & Gary Wylie

Cherry City Honey stocks and sells new bee hive equipment from our barn. Due to our location in the Clyde-Bellevue area, it's approximately a one hour drive to the nearest bee equipment supply store. This drive is inconvenient, time consuming and expensive. Also, online orders from distant suppliers often require purchase of larger quantities to obtain fair pricing and shipping/freight rates for new equipment are expensive.

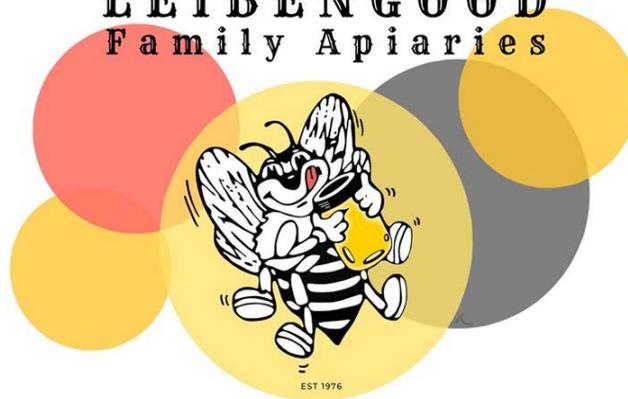
We stock bee equipment you'll most likely need. Our bee hive boxes and equipment is of the highest quality and comes already assembled and ready for you to paint before use. The equipment is available for pick-up only. We don't ship because the high shipping rates makes new bee equipment unreasonably costly. We can arrange for local delivery in the Bellevue-Clyde area. We accept cash or credit cards for payment.

Please compare our prices and consider us for your bee hive equipment needs.

Click on Link for Price List [Cherry City Farms 2020 Equipment Price List](#) (also attached to this newsletter email)

# Classifieds (continued)

## LEIBENGOOD Family Apiaries



### 2020 BEE PACKAGES

- Italians - \$120
- Russians - \$125

#### Tentative Pickup Dates in Clyde, OH:

- March 25th
- April 8th
- April 22nd
- May 6th

✉ 7653 N. SR 101  
Clyde, OH 43410-9618

☎ (419) 355 - 7223

🌐 Ohio-Bees.com

📘 @LeibengoodFamilyApiaries

📷 @LeibengoodBees



Chris Carroll  
419-541-7410

**\*\*SELLING\*\***

- Hive with a 10 frame brood box with lid and bottom board or pallet.
- Bees and laying queen included.
- 8 drawn frames
- internal hive feeder.
- Asking \$165.00 each.
- Available mid April-May1st, weather pending.
- Limited supply, taking orders now!

