

Sandusky River Valley Beekeepers Association



October 2021

srvba.ohiostatebeekeepers.org

Upcoming Events

SRVBA October Field Day (October Meeting)

- When: Saturday, October 9, 2021 at 10am
- Where: Cherry City Honey, 1000 County Road 312, Bellevue, Ohio 44811 (Gary & Tami Wylie's residence)
- Demonstrate preparing sugar boards for supplemental winter feeding.
- Demonstrate making winter and spring pollen patties.



Photo courtesy of Southeastern Indiana Beekeepers Association

Message from the President

Hello SRVBA Members!

October, where has the year gone? It seems like we just started the beekeeping season and now we're winding down and getting the girls tucked away for the winter. The closing of another season.

On Sunday, September 19th, the club held its annual picnic at Dr. Stone's place in Fremont. We had 45+ members attend and this year we had quite a few families bring their young children to enjoy the day. It was really nice to have the chatter and the festivities they brought to the table.

The kids and a few adults enjoyed the pool time. Members cooked the burgers and dogs on the grill. Gary Wylie led with a prayer for the thanks of gathering. Like always, there was plenty of food shared by everyone and the weather was perfect for a picnic.

A huge thank you to Dr. Mike and Brennan for opening their home to the club for a fun filled day.



Join Sandusky River Valley Beekeepers Association:

1. Fill out membership form

<http://srvba.ohiostatebeekeepers.org/>

2. Mail form to: SRVBA, c/o Tami Wylie, 1000 CR 312, Bellevue, OH 44811

SRVBA Annual Picnic



***Fellow-
ship***

Fun



Food

Message from the President (continued)

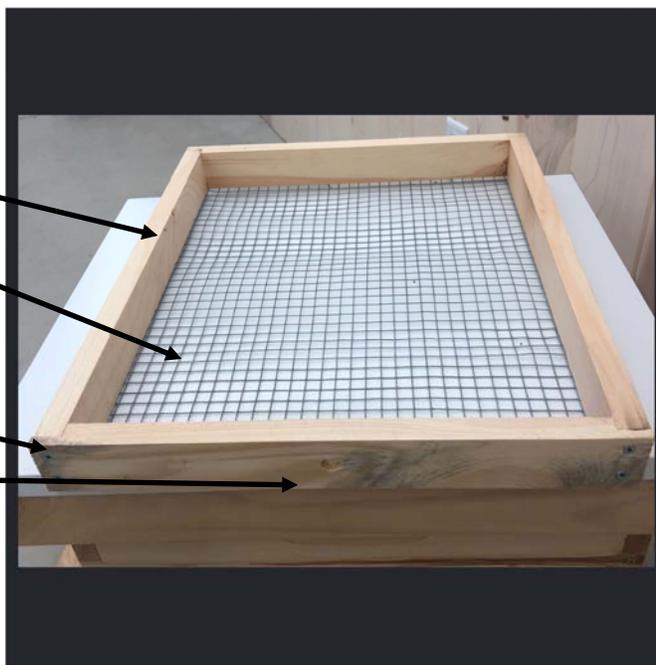
SRVBA OCTOBER FIELD DAY

The SRVBA October club meeting will be held on Saturday October 9th starting at 10:00 am. The meeting will be a field day at Cherry City Honey located at 1000 County Road 312, Bellevue, Ohio. The day will be taught by members of the club on how to prepare sugar boards for supplement winter feeding. We will demonstrate making the sugar boards along with making winter and spring pollen patties.

It is important to make sure your hives have plenty of food stores for the winter, up to 100 pounds of honey for a strong double deep hive. By placing a sugar board over top of your hive, it's an added insurance that bees have a food source, and it can be inspected throughout the winter for added stores, if needed. Any sugar that's left in the Spring can be diluted into a sugar water syrup and fed to the bees.

Cherry City Honey has new sugar board frames available at special purchase price (\$10.00 for club members, while supplies last).

- 8 or 10 frame size
- 1 7/8 inch depth
- Metal hardware cloth
- Reusable year after year
- Frame made from pine wood
- Stainless steel screws
- Vent hole
- Sugar not included



I hope to see a nice turn out for this day.

field

At the Field day, we will also be passing out bear bottles to be filled with any honey you might have, to donate to local food pantries in our areas. The bears to be passed out will be recorded and are expected to be brought to the November meeting filled, to be labeled and then given out to members to take to their local food pantries. We've done this for several years, except for last year because of Covid. I hope we can meet at the Church in November, but if not, we'll make other arrangements.

Message from the President (continued)

UPCOMING OFFICER ELECTIONS

Another thing to think about is elections of club officers for the 2022 year. All four Executive Officers and the three Director positions will be voted on during the December meeting.

Like I mentioned in the September meeting, I will not be running for President, and the Secretary position will also be open. So please think about yourself or any of the club members that you would like to nominate and have it submitted to the club Secretary (Linda Miller) by or at the November meeting.



OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

We hope to have a Christmas party in December this year. If anyone has any ideas on a venue to hold it please let me know. We believe we have a caterer for the event. A date has not been discussed yet.



Message from the President (continued)

IN THE HIVE

Hopefully, everyone has treated their bees for Mites, checked for a laying Queen, removed their honey supers, and are getting their mouse guards on. Extra things that can be done like wrapping your hives with items like roofing tar paper, or Epilay, and putting sugar boards on for added food storage. The sugar boards are added insurance for available food storage.



Tom Rathbun
SRVBA President

The sugar board is placed over the top brood box just under the inner cover. The sugar board is filled with a sugar mixture or fondant. The sugar boards are also a nice place to put winter or spring pollen patties.

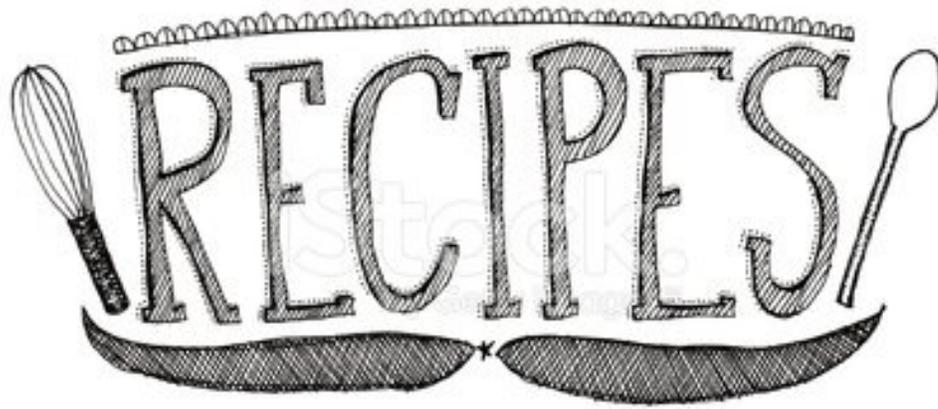
Any sugar that is left in the sugar boards in the Spring can be diluted in hot water and fed back to the bees.

I mentioned the use of sugar boards, since we will be having a club field day on Saturday October 9th, at Gary and Tami Wylie's residence, to demonstrate on how to prepare sugar boards.

Please stay safe and enjoy the bee yard!

Tom Rathbun

President SRVBA



Winter Crabby Patties:

4 lb cane sugar

½ lb AP-23 protein supplement

½ lb of HFCS (high fructose corn syrup) or WATER (enough to get a sticky consistency that it will not fall out of the bag)

Mix the ingredients well, then place the mixture in a zip lock bag, place two small wood pieces in the bag this is so the bag will not collapse on the bee, place directly over the bees, cut a hole between wood pieces to allow the bees to enter the bag.

High Protein Spring Patties

5 lb - cane sugar

1 ⅓ cup of cold water

1 ⅓ cup of apple cider vinegar

3 oz olive oil

¼ tsp electrolytes & vitamins

1 tsp ascorbic acid (Fruit Fresh)

2 tsp HBH (Honey Bee Healthy)

Mix the above ingredients and then add:

4-cups of Ultra Bee

4-cups of brewer's yeast

Mix well, bees like it soft but not oozes between the frames.

Put a ball of it between two sheets of wax paper and roll it out to about ¼ inch thick

Stahlman Beekeeping Notes

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If we look back to Issue # 26, I wrote, "Thus, if we look at the life cycle of the honey bee we will notice that brood-rearing slows or ends completely by late summer and fall. Some races of honey bees in the United States such as Italian bees are very broody – which means the bees will continue to raise a large number of bees even when stores are low. The bees that survive generally will reduce brood rearing as food sources become unavailable. The bees depend upon stored honey in the summer just as they do when the winter season begins."

It makes no difference where you keep bees. Long winters can be handled by honey bees even at -50 below zero and short winter seasons such as exist here in Raleigh which allows honey bees to fly more often during the winter –allowing the bees to consume more honey stores. Beekeeping technique has to be adjusted accordingly by those who manage (keep) a hive of bees.

One can observe a lot about their honey bees by opening a hive and doing a quick check. It really doesn't take much time to size up a hive of bees but it must be done.

- It is not necessary to see the queen. That takes time!
- Do you see drones in the hive?
- Do you see honey being stored in the hive?
- Do you see eggs, larva, and capped brood?

I often visit bee hives of friends and students. I observe a number of things that they do not see.

- Eggs are hard to see. A tip: Take a magnifying glass to the bee yard with you. Hold a frame up so no shadow obstructs the bottom of cells. Carefully look for young larva and eggs just at the edges of capped brood.
- Two conditions generally can be observed at this time of the year.

- 1) Bee populations – hives are either very strong or they show signs of decline.
- 2) Hive beetles or Varroa mite populations are growing stronger.

Hives that are strong generally have: good nectar and pollen resources, a good queen, and ample room for surplus honey storage.

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Hives that are weak generally have:

- 1) A weak queen (I think this is the number one issue with weak hives.)
- 2) Lack proper foraging opportunities.
- 3) Have disease problems.
- 4) Lack of good management by the beekeeper! (In my opinion the second major issue with a hive's survival).

Let me share a good example of not inspecting a hive of bees on a regular basis:

I follow a number of posts on beekeeping sites: New beekeepers especially post items and ask questions. Bee schools come no-where near to being the complete answers to what it takes to become a beekeeper. Getting into beekeeping is easy - no certification requirements. In fact, some bee suppliers will sell equipment to beginning beekeepers without a concern for their success. The failure rate for those beginning to keep bees is high.

This is a picture I took from a Facebook post:

It took some time for the wax moths destroying this hive to develop. It is a great example of what wax moths can do to a hive.



Had this hive been inspected earlier when it had bees, this problem could have been avoided. As it is, this hive is no longer of much value. The frames and wooden ware may be salvageable but the comb is destroyed.

To keep bees requires attention, effort and time!

The frames indicate that at one time this hive had a good population of bees because the foundation in the frames was completely drawn out and not that long ago. Note the age of the frames shown (pretty new). This hive died out during mid-summer!

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Bee schools should be longer than a day or two. Many are one day affairs covering just the basics. Class sizes should be small - allowing the student to interact with the instructor. Bee clubs/associations can provide mentoring services for hands-on-experiences in a club bee yard. Schools affiliated with State Beekeeping Associations provide additional benefits to students.

Is this the best time to start beekeeping? Those who have some wisdom will wait! Those wanting to become beekeepers have all winter to read bee books and visit web sites. Package bees and nucs are usually not available until spring.

Early this year one of the individuals I mentor had issues over worms in their hives. We can find roaches, ants, and other bugs in a hive of bees. I have put together small vials of alcohol with examples of things to look for in hives.

Wax Moth Larvae

Small Hive Beetle Larvae



New beekeepers need to know what to look for – most schools will talk about problems in a bee hive but so many people are getting into beekeeping without the background, or knowledge to succeed. Taking a bee school is a basic step into beekeeping but it does not solve problems new students will encounter as they keep bees. Any bee school offering instruction only on spring start up is doing a disservice to its students. Beekeeping includes bee management techniques for summer, fall and winter.

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Any hive of bees being managed must have frequent inspections! **Now is the last chance a beekeeper has to save a hive before winter sets In.**

It is not the time to buy a hive of bees! I would guess that a hive has a 50/50 chance of survival till spring if being bought now. The same goes for making a split at this time of year.

Over the next few issues, I will share thoughts on saving a hive in trouble. Strong hives for the most part still require mite treatment and some inspections just to make sure hive populations will be large enough to support the early egg laying by the queen in late December or January. Remember it takes a bee population to maintain a brood nest temperature of 92 °F. A hand full of live bees can not do that in January.

Let's start with Food. It has been quite a year in many parts of the U.S. Some areas have too much water and then others have no water at all. It has been dry here in Raleigh with 90°F. days one after another. An occasional rain helps a bit but most of my grass has died. I am watering my garden and house plants daily.

These conditions set up an unusual honey bee activity with serious consequences for any hive unable to defend itself. And feeding a weak hive may be asking for serious trouble.

If your bees have not experienced robbing, it is most likely because:

- You have a very strong hives of bees – they may be the robbers.
- You have been feeding your bees so they do not become robbers.
- Your bees are in a location with flower resources abundant enough to provide for the hive's nutritional needs.

It is rather easy to determine if hives are in dire need of food. Set a small pan in an open area and put a cup of sugar in it. Pour a little water over the sugar - it is not necessary to put so much water in the pan that bees will gather and drown. Hungry bees will find your pan of sugar quickly. During spring, food sources are very abundant but in late summer the situation is reversed.

The cycle of life on this planet determines how individual species survive. In nature the strongest most powerful will have the best chance of survival. The weak unfortunately do not.

Honey bees need care just like a cat or dog. I have been feeding a flock of birds two 40 lb. bags of bird feed a month in the two feeder stations I have. I notice that the variety of birds change with the season. Some are here all the time and others show up and then leave.

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I have a friend that spent over \$1,000.00 on a vet bill for a dog this year. He had a hive of bees with problems. I asked how much he would pay for a bee doctor to visit his hive? He thought I was the bee doctor who would work for free. After all, the dog was a member of the family. Honey bees just don't get considered as members of the family.

Most of us consider a bee hive as a box full of wild insects. It is more complex than that! The insect (the honey bee) is unique. It produces "things" we as humans use! They are not mosquitoes, wasps, hornets or yellow jackets. Thus, we have seen over the last 20 years a movement called "Save the Bees."

The commercial beekeeping business in the United States is in decline – who can make a living selling honey for \$2.36 a pound? The number of hobby beekeepers has increased tremendously. Some are selling their honey for as much as \$1.00 an ounce! Many are unsuccessful keeping a hive alive but for a short time! Some areas are so over populated with beekeepers that a hive that produces 30 pounds of honey is considered good.

Colony losses in the United States are reported for each year. Most figures report 30-50% losses while some beekeepers lose 100%. Already, the Wake County Facebook pages have postings of complete loss.

We are moving into the season that will determine if we have bees in the spring or not. Time is critical. Time does not stand still. Each day that some important management issue is not done – time is lost. That day is gone. **As I write this, there are only 109 days until Christmas!**

If we consider the brood cycle of a honey bee to be 21 days, that means a queen laying eggs will have only 5 brood cycles left in this year. If a hive is short of bees because of the laying pattern of the queen, that hive is in real trouble.

Some bee population points:

- The egg laying of a queen honey bee will continue to decline toward winter. Weather will play a very important role in determining what goes on inside a bee hive. Weather has been warm or warmer than normal all across the U.S. Winters are unpredictable! Honey bees depend on fall flowering plants to store enough food for winter.
- The population in a bee hive will be reduced each and every day new brood is not added to the bee population. Bee population loss is natural and is to be expected.

Many of the bees currently in the hive will be dead by Christmas time - the average life of a honey bee-- 40 days or so.

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Young bees being raised at this time must be healthy. Body fat is especially important. Some of these bees will survive into February before they die.

Honey bees do not hibernate. They must have food available at all times. It is important that a hive provide a cluster of honey bees to keep a brood nest warm. Only the egg laying ability of the queen can produce the eggs necessary for a hive to survive.