

MARCH 2015



St. Clair Beekeepers Association

Bee Buzz

Monthly Newsletter of the St. Clair Beekeepers Association

Special points of interest:

- 1st day of Spring
March 20th—
Hooray!
- Feed Feed Feed
- Get ready!
- Swarm list
- Register your hives
- Send recipes

Our Next Monthly SCBA Meeting Is...

Friday, March 27 beginning at 7:30 pm

The meeting will be held at the

Madison County Farm Bureau Building

900 Hillsboro Street

Edwardsville, Illinois

Bring your beekeeping questions and a snack to enjoy. Anything made with honey is always welcome

Have a Look and Lend a Hand

We have had a few warm days and more on the way. Hopefully when we had that great weather (one day the area was at 80 degrees!) you had a chance to peek inside the hives. So what are the bees doing right now? The queens are starting to lay. You should be seeing some larger brood patterns in the hives as they are able to spread out more over the brood with the warmer weather. If you watch the entrances to the hives, you'll see the bees have already found some sources of pollen to bring in and start feeding the larvae. Don't think that just because they've got all of this activity going it's safe to let them be. They could be on their very last stores. Check their food level by lifting the back of the hives checking their weight. You'll need to start putting 1:1 syrup on the hives soon. If it is warm enough, try to move a frame of honey closer to the cluster (do NOT split up the brood) so if we get a cold snap, the food is accessible. After a few weeks of warm weather the hives will begin really taking off. Spring is their natural time to being swarming as well, the less crowded they are, the more likely they're going to stay. They're building up for the big spring honey flow and you want to make sure you have lots of healthy and well fed bees.

Check for signs of diseases. Coming out of winter many hives will have dysentery, this is not unusual. However if it is excessive, they may have Nosema and may have to be treated. Small Hive Beetle adults can be seen with the bees. Crush the pests, or install beetle traps to help reduce their number before they start multiplying. Watch for mites and get your treatments in quickly. You cannot have chemicals used for pest treatment on the hives when you put on your honey supers. Get them healthy early, those black locust trees and clover will be blooming before you know it!



Presidents letter to the membership March 2015

Hello Everyone:

February's meeting was a huge success with 77 in attendance. Kenny Schaefer and I finally locked the doors at 9:50 p.m. After the meeting was over the Bee Talk went on and on. I would like to thank everyone who came and shared their thoughts and experiences for the benefit of all.

I would also like to give a heartfelt thank you to Carol Richards for coming all the way from Hillsboro, MO and demonstrating wax purification.

Spring is coming fast. Soon it will be time to plant flowers. Here's a list of a few flowers bees really like.

Borage	Catmint
Lavender	Anise Hyssop
Sedum	Crocus
Calendula	Foxglove

Summer meetings are also coming fast. Hosts are needed for the May, June and July meetings. In the past the host would furnish the meat with everyone else bringing everything else. This year I am happy to report that the host will be reimbursed for the purchase price of the meat (up to \$100.00).

This year's Beginner's Beekeeping Class is again a sellout. We have 102 registered and regretfully, we had to turn ten away.

Three complete bee hives have been donated to the club. Two of the three will be raffled off at the beginner's class; the third will be given to one of the club members in August. Each month a member who attends between now and August will receive a ticket at no cost. In August the winning ticket will be drawn. The more you attend the better your chances will be to win a complete hive worth about \$300.00. Good luck to everyone.

Our thanks to Jason and Mariam Weaver from Prairie Profile, and to Kevin Wilke for their donations (one complete hive each.)

In closing, don't miss this month's meeting, Friday, 27 March at 7:30 p.m. at the Edwardsville Farm Bureau. Ken Kloepper and Ken Schaefer, along with Ray Chapman, will be speaking to spring maintenance.

Hope to see you there. As always, if I can help in any way, feel free to call.

Billy

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Set up of a new hive—It's all about location, location, location

Beehives can't just sit on the ground. Your woodenware will get wet and warp. Bugs mice and other critters have easy access to the hives and their treasure. Skunks and other bee chomping predators can have a field day. A good hive stand has to be able to support the weight of at least 250 pounds per colony. It has to be able to withstand the weather, so regular painting and maintenance is needed. The hives have to be level. A very slight tilt towards the front of the hive is acceptable, what you don't want is the hive tilting towards the back so that moisture gets trapped inside the hive when the bottom is closed. Large concrete patio blocks are often used as a base. Get those level and build up from there. If you will use screened bottom boards, you need to make sure your stands have good airflow that can get underneath the hives. This helps the bees keep them cooler in the summer. Bearding bees are unemployed bees.

The direction that your hives face is important. You want the entrance exposed to the south or southeast, keeping the bees better protected from the north and west winds. A natural windbreak can make a huge difference in the winter. Planting tall grasses or fences on this side of the hive may just be what gets your bees get through the windy winter sub zero nights.

Are your bees in full sun? Partial shade? Hives in the shade all day may make it better for the beekeeper (July in a bee suit is HOT) but this also is where the hive beetles thrive. Hives located in full or mostly sunny sites tend to have a lower hive beetle population.

Check your local ordinances if you have a new location in mind to make sure bees are allowed and any restrictions that are required.

Bees need a nearby water source. Not everyone has the luxury of having a pond 20 feet from the hives. If you have 3 neighbors with pools nearby, you had best set up a close source of fresh water for the bees right away. Bees need lots of water, don't underestimate this.

All of the wooden parts of the hive (exteriors) need to be painted to help protect them from the weather. The bees don't care what color they are, sometimes a coat of paint can give a bit of camouflage and have them blend in to the background.

Register your hives with the state. If you are moving bees across county lines, you will need a moving permit.

Deadouts - The ones that did not survive....

Don't leave a dead hive sit. Close it up. Try to determine what was the cause. Starvation? Disease? Too small to keep warm through the winter? Don't know? Take lots of pictures, show it to other beekeepers. Freeze the combs to kill off the eggs and larvae of pests. Clean out the dead, scrape out the slimed or motheaten areas. If you don't suspect disease, use the drawn combs to boost other hives that need help. Don't let these hives get robbed out because if it was diseased, you've just let the rest of your colonies become infected. Be a beekeeper, not a be haver!

Swarm List

Vickie Piel is getting the last few names on the soon to be published Swarm list. If you want to be on the list, please email or call her. You must be a current club member to be on the list. If your name was on the list in the past, you must let her know you still want to be included. Cut off is 4-1-15. email beesrgr8@att.net with any questions.

Recipe Request

We had some AMAZING food at the February meeting. I know there were a few recipes that were going to be sent to me so I could put them in the newsletter. My email is katken7@yahoo.com and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. P. S. Newsletter submissions always welcome!

Processing Beeswax

Carol Richards gave a presentation at our last meeting about processing bees wax. She sells bees wax in small quantities as that is what her customers needs are. (Know your consumer!) Her customers use the wax for cosmetics, chapstick, soap, lotions, furniture polish, sewing, quilting and carpentry. She only uses the cappings from her honey extraction. This gives the lightest colored wax. You can pick up pots pans sieves, etc at garage sales or resale shops. Use this equipment for wax melting only (aka don't take the best pots out of the kitchen, you've been warned) Melt the wax with water, at least 2 cups. The wax will float to the top. Do not boil. Let it cool. The slag, or slumgum will be at the bottom of the wax, some of it mixed with the water. Cut this off of the bottom. Melt the wax again. If it was really dirty wax you may want to do this a couple of times to really clean it out. (that's why she uses just cappings, much cleaner) Once most of the slag is out melt it one more time and filter through cotton cloth and a sieve. She holds the sieve and pours it directly into her molds at this step. Under the molds she puts waxed paper or glossy sheets of newspaper (speedy cleanup tip for drips/spills) If you want to clean your equipment, use boiling water. Do NOT pour this water down the sink, use a spot in the yard.

Carol doesn't let anything go to waste either. Water that rinsed the wax, she feeds back to the bees. Cloth that was used as the last filter is cut up and now a great fire starter.

Picture: top left pan inside a pan, double boiler setup, bottom pan has water, top pan has wax and water.

Top right: bucket of wax cappings saved up

Bottom right: water that wax was melted in, has honey from cappings fed to bees.

Middle left: Strainer with cloth for filtering

Bottom Left: Mold that has 1 ounce beeswax ready to pour. No need to spray , they pop right out as mold is flexible

