



BEE BUZZ

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From the President....

Bee Club Members,

It was great to see so many members and we had a couple of new visitors join the club. We had a great presentation on cutouts from Johnny Murdock and Johnny and I tagged teamed NUCs and Packages. The Public Address was horrible at the meeting. We are looking into purchasing a system that is more reliable and interface into Facebook so online members can hear the meeting. In person meetings are always better than online due to the interaction within the room but we can make it better.

Hopefully by now you have your hives in a spring time configuration and the colonies are thriving. They should be bringing in pollen and nectar by now. It was nice to listen to Bob Binnie a couple of weeks ago and I learned a lot. It would be nice to have more participation from club members on the Fireside Chats but understand we all have a lot to do. The Fireside Chats are over until October when we will start them up again. We also started the New Bee Corner to coach/field questions from new beekeepers. This will continue until 1 May.

The St Clair Beekeepers Facebook page is shutting down and we will have two pages on Facebook.. The new one is a business page that serves as the public facing page so non-members can ask questions via instant messages or get information about the club and meetings.. The member page along with an application called SLACK will serve as the primary means of club communications online. This allows the board the opportunity to focus on content instead of policing the Facebook page we have today. I ask for your understanding as we improve communications within the club.

Your hives should be swarming in a couple of weeks so get those NUCs ready so you can capture the FREE bees. Nothing better than free bees. Have fun in your hives over the next couple of weeks and let bees be bees.

Tim Schartung
SCBA President

OLDTIMERS' WAY

By Ken Schaefer

Spring Cleaning:

In years past, the annual cleaning of bottom boards was stressed in books and at meetings. Bees are good housekeepers and normally do a good job of removing debris from the bottom and entrance. Winter winds blow cappings and other debris to the rear of the bottom board. If the hive is not tilted forward, water enters and forms clumps of debris which the bees are not able to remove. These clumps make for ideal living quarters for moths, beetles, mites and ants. For I and others who use screen bottom boards it's a simple matter of pulling out the tray and scraping it. However, this cleaning must be done regularly, as the bees cannot get down through the screen to clean off the tray.

Black Locust:

Many of you probably have hives where your bees are within flying distance of black locust trees. The locusts are tall trees, with some thorns, and usually grow in large groves. The tree produces large clusters of white blossoms. The locust blooms in early May and are closely followed by the blackberry bloom. Locust honey is water clear and mild flavored. Unfortunately, at the time the locust blooms we often have a cold, wet period, causing the blooms to drop off. The old timers referred to this as "blackberry winter". In anticipation of a good bloom, I have my hives well supered up as I can expect 2-3 full shallow supers per good hive. The honey locust can easily be confused with black locust. The honey locust has clusters of long thorns on the trunk, and long seed pods. The pods produce a sweet, sticky, honey pulp. Hence the name. The honey locust does have a short bloom season and produces very little nectar. In years past, farmers would have honey locust trees in their pasture because the cattle like foraging on the sweet pods. Black locust is an extremely hard wood, rough on saw chains, and burns like coal. Black locust fence posts will last for more than fifty years in the ground.

Bee Activities at Various Temperatures

100°F Ambient air: all brood rearing stops colony needs water to cool hive	57°F Clusters form
91-97°F Wax secretion	50°F Brood rearing stops Workers cannot fly
93-94°F Nest temperature of eggs and young bees	42°F Bees cannot move - muscles are not warm enough
85°F Broodless winter cluster	40°F Bees die if left alone
68°F Queen does not fly	-40°F Bee cluster dies
61°F Drones cannot fly	Source The Beekeeper's Handbook ,4th edition

February Membership Meeting...

Johnny Murdock gave presentation about capturing swarms and doing cutouts . Below are some pictures of his presentation. Our club president, Tim Schartung, gave a presentation on how it install nucs and packages of bees in a hive.



St Clair Beekeepers Swarm List Procedures

One of the most enticing benefits of joining the club is the have access to catching swarms by adding your name to the swarm List. The swarm list has served this club very well over the years. Social media has allowed all members to communicate quickly but has also allowed non-members the ability to receive the notification about swarms. This has caused issues because non-members essentially are hijacking the club's hard work for their own use. Non-members who are allowed to catch swarms may cause the club a black eye because we have people representing the club who are not members. It is in the best interest of the club and it's members to keep swarm notifications within club communication's channels.

The following rules are now in effect for Swarms.

The official location of the swarm list is on the St Clair Beekeeper Association Web Site at <https://stclairbees.com/bee-removal/>

- You must be a member in good standing to be added to the swarm list
- Each Member can add 10 zip codes (cities) to the swarm list to allow for more member to be called
- If a board member is called about a swarm we will advertise the swarm in two locations on social media:
 - Slack
 - Facebook: Member Page for St Clair Beekeepers Association
- Please keep swarm notifications within the club. This allows for all members the opportunity to catch a swarm.
- If you receive a call for a swarm and cannot catch the swarm please be respectful and notify another club member or place the post on the club's social media locations.

To be added to the list you need to go to <https://stclairbees.com/swarm-signup/> and complete the form. The status of your membership will be checked and your name will be added to the Swarm list and posted on our website within 3 days.



BEE INFORMED SURVEY ...It's time again to rally and support the bee-keeping community! We are formally requesting the help of every beekeeper: you, your neighbors, your bee club and all the beekeepers you know.

The survey is open and accepting responses from April 1st to April 30th 2022. Please take a moment to submit your response to help us continue to inform about impacts to honey bee colony health. Visit beeinformed.org/take-survey to join in the effort, learn more, and take the survey!

Meeting Dates for 2022....

Below are the meeting dates for 2022. They are subject to change.

April 29th - -Location to be determined watch for email or check website

May 22nd - 1st Outdoor Meeting – Scheve Park, Mascoutah, IL.

June 26th - Outdoor meeting location, Katelyn Hentrich's Apiary

July 31st - Outdoor meeting location TBD

Aug 28th - Outdoor meeting 6 Mile Museum, 3279 Maryville Rd, Granite City, IL

Sept 25th - Outdoor meeting location, Rich and Darla Perkins, Freeburg

Oct 28th - St Clair Count Farm Bureau, Belleville

Nov 18th - Madison County Farm Bureau, Edwardsville

Dec – no meeting

If anyone would like to host the July 31st meeting at their apiary please let

Program Director, Marc Mayhew, know.

WE ARE GROWING...

Welcome these new members that joined the club in February and March.

Cheryl Allen, Eric & Karen Bollinger, Brian Brown, John & Diana Forehand,
Tom & Lisa Gibson, Melisa Grueninger, Christopher Hay, Stephen Heflin, Lisa
Henricks, Leah Jones, Mike Lovsey, and Keith Scruggs.

Observation Hive at Pere Marquette Visitor Center...



On Saturday, March 19th, the club officers visited the observation hive at Pere Marquette Visitor Center to deliver the training hive and work on the entrance to the OB Hive. Unfortunately we lost the colony, but this gave us a good opportunity to upgrade the entrance from outside the building. The upgrades made will make it easier in the future to maintain the hive.

Above: l-r Tom Cairns, Tim Schartung, Charity Davis-Woodard, and Frank Dorris look at frames from the hive. Right: Katelyn Hentrich and Charity Davis-Woodard look at another frame.

The plan is to install a new colony of bees when a local nuc becomes available this Spring.

If you're ever at Pere Marquette State Park be sure to check out the OB Hive and the training hive.



A MESSAGE FROM APIARY INSPECTOR

The Bees and Apiaries Division at Illinois Department of Agriculture has its regional apiary inspectors back to work for the 2022 season. I'm scheduling apiary inspections in Madison County. As you might have noticed, I'm not emailing you from my Illinois Department of Agriculture email address, but from this gmail address of mine. This is because I'm using a google mail merge feature, something that I can't use with my .gov account. I tried this mail merge technology last fall and found it a much more effective way to schedule apiary inspections than with phone calls.

Though it's early in the season, my inspection calendar is filling up fast. I plan to visit Madison County on Mondays, some Tuesdays, and some Fridays. What would be a good day for you?

ALSO! I decided to create a quick google form about hive overwintering in my region. If you visit this link, you can contribute to my understanding of the percent of local hive losses. Here's the link. <https://forms.gle/Jpi1EjAS76TnD8HW8>

Thank you very much! I hope you are well! Feel free to text me if you would like (texting is better than calling, thank you). My phone number is (510) 285-7879.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Eleanor Schumacher
Apiary Inspector
Illinois Department of Agriculture

March Fireside Bee Chat....

March 16 2022 at 7:00 pm

Very Special Guest Presenter: **Bob Binnie**, co-owner of Blue Ridge Honey Company

Bob has been involved in beekeeping for 40 years, starting in Oregon and working commercially in 10 states before establishing his business with wife Suzette in Northeast Georgia. Through their business they retail and wholesale honey, pollen, beeswax products, nucs and queens. Bob maintains bee yards in Northeast Georgia, South Georgia and western North Carolina, and yet makes time to generously share his knowledge through speaking engagements to bee clubs and at educational events nationwide as well as making many videos to illustrate his and other beekeepers' methods of managing bees. With his easy, down-to-earth style Bob excels at communicating the practical aspects of beekeeping along with his significant understanding of the science of apiculture.

Don't miss this opportunity to welcome Bob and let him know how much we appreciate his making time to join us for a [Fireside Chat](#). There will be plenty of time for questions, so come prepared to ask and learn from a Master!

Registration for this event is required and is open to non-members. You may register from the members only Face Book page or from a link on our website.



A Little Bee Humor

Q: What is a bee's favorite classical music composer?

A: Bee-thoven!

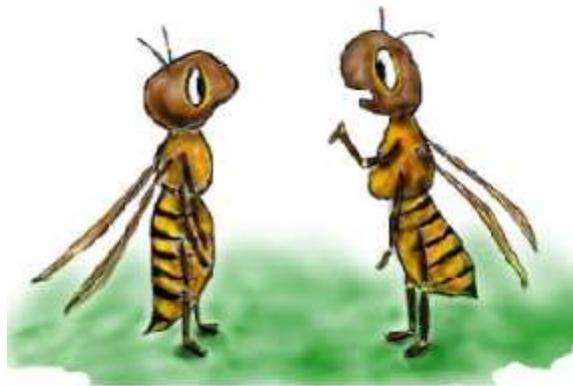
Q: Who writes books for little bees?

A: Bee-trix Potter!

Q: Why did Jimmy's parents scream when they saw his grades?

A: Because he had a bee on his report card

<http://jokes4us.com/animaljokes/beejokes.html>



Okay new guy, it's time to go get fresh nectar and pollen. You won't have to eat leftovers much longer.

New Bees Corner

You may be asking yourself - I picked up my NUC now what do I do? How do I make 1:1 sugar syrup? How often should I check on my bees? Why can't I keep my smoker going? What are these little black bugs and how do I get rid of them? Bring your questions and no question is too simple.

The club is starting a new weekly ZOOM meeting called the New Bees Corner. This program is designed for people that have been keeping bees for less than threes. Aim. For the next 9 weeks we will meet on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm for one hour. These sessions will be an open Question and Answer session. Attend them all or whenever you can.

ZOOM in and stay as long as you like. Be sure to have a pen and note paper handy.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84847034027?pwd=RHpmZnJSZG9OYklNcolZODJnTXE1QT09>

Meeting ID: 848 4703 4027

Passcode: newbees

To listen on your phone

Dial +1 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 848 4703 4027

Passcode: 9744641

Be Sure to save this invite since it can be used for the remaining meetings.

Around the Bee Yard

- Inspect twice this month for congestion, queenrightness, diseases, and mites
- Monitor for queen cells to prevent swarming
- Divide strong colonies or requeen if planned;
- Install package bees;
- Remove all drugs four week before main nectar flow
- Check for adequate stores.
- Unite weak colonies
- Set out swarm traps
- Here is a link to an excellent article about preventing swarms

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56818659c21b86470317d96e/t/5f6377800bc35c48bb2bc95a/1600354289754/Milbrath-article_April2020_Feb27-335PM.pdf

Russian Scion - Русский отпрыск

By Richard Perkins and Dennis Hessel

The Russian Scion is said to be a basic beekeeping tool in Russia. Most often they are used in your apiary to catch your bees that have swarmed or it can be used to attract a swarm that is passing by in search of a new home. It is used to attract a swarm of bees before they find a new cavity to call home. It provides a resting place for the swarm instead of a tree, birdbath, side of a house, etc..

Supplies you will need –

- 5-gallon bucket with a lid
- Window screen or burlap
- 3/8" Screw eye 4 1/2" long
- 2 pieces of 2x4 or 4x4 inches long
- 2 pieces of plywood 1/4" – 1/2" thick 6 1/2" square or diameter of the inside of your lid minus 1"
- 50 – 100 feet of rope
- Not pictured—
- Bees wax – old brood comb best or slumgum the leftovers after melting down comb
- Plywood



Tools you will need

- Drill
- 1/4" drill bit
- Hand saw
- Ruler
- 4 1" screws
- Screw Drive
- Staple gun
- Not pictured -
- Something to melt beeswax in and a brush



How to make –

1. Measure the distance from the lip of the bucket to the bottom. Subtract 2 inches from that measurement and this is the length your 2x4 or 4x4 need to be. Cut your 2x4 or 4x4 to length. If your bucket was 11 3/4" you would cut the board to 10"
2. Drill a 1/4" hole in the center of the bucket lid.
3. Drill a 1/4" hole in the center of the plywood. To find the middle draw a line diagonally from corner to corner and where the lines cross is the middle.
4. Drill a 1/4" hole in the center of the end of the 2x4 or 4x4. Use the same procedure in step 2 to find the center.
5. Place a piece of the plywood on the top and bottom of the bucket lid and screw the eye screw through the plywood, bucket lid, and plywood into the end of the 2x4 or 4x4.
6. Wrap the 2x4 or 4x4 with the window screen or burlap and staple it in place
7. Rub the post with slumgum, that black stuff left over when your melt down comb, or melt down comb and while still a liquid, liberally, brush it on the screen or burlap.
8. Tie the rope to the eye screw. Your Russian Scion is ready to deploy.



Finished scion with wax coated board and cotton ball with lemon grass



Scion (lid) with rope attached to eye screw and pulley



Lower scion with swarm into waiting bucket

How to deploy

1. You want to place the scion in a location where you have seen swarms gather in previous years or in your apiary to catch your bees if they swarm.
2. Staple a cotton ball with some lemongrass oil on it to the plywood on the bottom of the lid.
3. You can hang a pulley with the rope from your scion threaded through it or you can throw the rope over a strong branch. The pulley will make easier to raise and lower your scion.
4. You want your scion to be 6-9 feet above the ground when it is hanging.
5. Hoist the scion up to the location and secure the end of the rope.
6. Check your scion frequently, at least twice a day. The idea is that rather than wait for a swarm to find your bee trap, you grab them between homes. A swarm leaves the hive, and they go to a temporary location (usually the same place as previous swarms). You put the scion on there to entice them and give them a nice smelling landing pad.
7. Once a swarm gathers, you gently lower the scion (via the long rope and pulley) into a 5 gallon bucket. Seal the lid tightly to keep the swarm inside the bucket.
8. Transport to the hive you want them in, and then dump or introduce the bees into their new home. It is recommended to have drawn comb and some with honey and pollens stores is even better
9. Once you have the bees in the new hive, you will close up the hive for 24-48 hours to make sure they establish and have lost the desire to fly away. You can redeploy your scion again.
10. After 24-48 hours, you can open the hive so the bees can take cleansing flights and get used to their surroundings.
11. After a week you can inspect the hive and see if you have a laying queen and how the colony is getting along

The Beekeeper's Calendar -**APRIL** by David Burns, Master Beekeeper

APRIL AND THE BEES: Now the bees are almost fully operational. There will still be a few cold snaps, especially in early April, but by the last two weeks, the weather is good for bees to rapidly expand and to even start bringing in more and more nectar and pollen. The queen is laying well now. The hive is expanding.

APRIL AND THE BEEKEEPING: Keep feeding! Feeding helps the bees build up. No supers are on your hive yet, so their intake of sugar is not going into your honey product. You are just feeding to help the hive off to a great start. Keep the pollen patties on top too. Remove entrance reducers.

April can be cold and wet which means that your bees may have limited opportunities to fly out for food. So you must continue to inspect the hive to be sure they have enough food stores. Also, inspect your hive for any abnormalities. You want to see a solid brood laying pattern from your queen. If not, consider replacing her now!

Reverse your brood chambers! This is extremely important as it gives more space for the queen to lay. Simply take the top deep brood chamber and place it on the bottom board and place the one that was on the bottom on top.

If your bees are no longer taking the sugar feeding, discontinue, put supers on, as the bees will now begin to collect dandelion nectar and nectar from Maple trees, Locust trees and other early Spring flowering plants and trees.

This is a great time to equalize your hives. You may have to combine weak hives with strong ones. Even though I know better, every year I seem to become too compassionate toward a struggling hive, and try to nurse them back to health. Last year, I successfully did just that with one hive, but another hive bit the dust in September after I nursed them along all year. It is usually not worth it. It is costly to spend too much time on a struggling hive. It takes money and time to requeen the hive and to continue to work it. It would be far better to combine it to another hive if it is disease and pest free. After all, a weak hive is an invitation for pests and disease. Strong hives chase away pests and disease. So, your weak hive could spread disease to all your other hives. Don't take the chance. Keep your hives strong.

[Beekeeping in 2021: The Beekeeper's Calendar Of Important Events \(basicbeekeeping.blogspot.com\)](http://basicbeekeeping.blogspot.com)



St. Clair Beekeepers Association

Promoting interest in bees and beekeeping in Southern Illinois.

Email: stclairbees@gmail.com

The purpose and function of the St. Clair Beekeepers Association is the promotion of interest in bees **and beekeeping by such means as encouraging...**

- Good beekeeping practices
- The utilization of bees for pollination of agricultural crops
- The dissemination of information about bees and beekeeping

NEXT MEETING DATE

Our next membership meeting will be held indoors on Friday, April 29th, at 7:00 pm. The Madison County Farm Bureau is being remodeled and is not available. The location for the April has not been determined at publication time. We are trying to get a meeting place near Edwardsville. Watch for an email update.

