

SWEET TALK

The newsletter of the Greene County Beekeepers Association

BEE Aware-- Odds and Ends:

Bill Starrett

A question that is commonly asked this time of the year is, "Is there anything I should be doing for my bees right now?" I have been popping the lid of hives periodically for the last 6 weeks to determine if they were alive and also to determine the location of the cluster if they were alive. During an occasional warm day beginning in December I made a point of walking through the apiary to see which hives showed activity and were taking cleansing flights. That gave me an opportunity to check the hives which showed no activity by blowing a puff of air down through the inner cover hole. If they were alive they quickly buzzed and came up to investigate the disturbance. Even in cold temperatures a puff of air will cause the bees to buzz so I know if they are alive.

Because the bees are beginning to raise more brood now that the days are getting longer they will be consuming lots of food. The extreme cold we have been experiencing will also put a burden on the honey supply because they will use more to gener-

(Continued on page 3)

**The Place to Bee on
Tuesday, February 17th
7:00 p.m.**

Welcome Back!

Agenda

Introductions
Sign-up Lists:
Refreshments
Swarm (for club members only)

Guest Speaker:
Terry Lieberman-Smith

Topic
Winter Beekeeping

GCBA 2015 Board Members:

President:	Dan O'Callaghan
Vice-President:	Chuck Roach
Secretary:	Patti Procnuiar
Treasurer:	Tom Davidson
Communications Director:	Terry Lieberman-Smith
Webmaster:	Dan O'Callaghan
At-Large:	Sam Bernard
	Fran Davidson
	Carol Locker
	Dave Locker



President's Letter

Dear Beekeepers-

As I write this the first week of February 2015, the media is reporting that Punxsutawney Phil is predicting six more weeks of winter weather—not a forecast a beekeeper wants to hear! In February, bee colonies that have survived thus far are already trying to build-up their population in preparation for spring. The beekeeper's 'busy' season is about to kick-off. Anecdotal reports are that, so far, colony survival rates are pretty decent. If your bees have survived thus far, you did something right last Summer and Fall...BUT...there is a lot of Winter left, so don't relax yet. Late-Winter and early-Spring are critical times in the hive. Brood-rearing is underway and both pollen (protein) and honey (carbohydrates) are being consumed rapidly. Check your bees! If you're not sure how to check or what you're checking for, you need to attend the first Greene County Beekeepers Association Meeting-- If you DO know what you're looking for, come to the meeting at share the knowledge!

February 17, 2015 kicks-off the GCBA meeting season, and we plan on providing 10 months of timely topics, fellowship, and support for beekeepers of all experience levels. We are making a few minor changes to the meeting format in an effort to focus less on 'club news' and more on bees and beekeeping. One of these changes includes adding a 'pre-meeting' time from 6:45-7:00 PM for open discussion or selected topics primarily of interest to bee-ginners. The "official" start time will remain at 7:00 PM. A typical meeting format will be a very brief (around 15 minutes) business meeting, followed by a "Bee-Short" presentation of around 30 minutes dedicated to a timely subject related specifically to beekeeping activities. After the refreshment break (don't forget to sign up to bring snacks), we will have a main speaker. Some speakers will be GCBA members, and we are also scheduling some outside experts through the season. As always, we are looking for suggestions for speakers and topics that YOU would like to hear.

Over the last few years, the GCBA has grown in membership, and we now have a number of beekeepers of differing experience levels and interests. This is great for bees and beekeeping, but it can be a real challenge to meet the needs of all members during a general meeting. One of the goals of the "pre-meeting" phase is to hopefully get experienced and inexperienced beekeepers together for open discussion. This is an attempt at a mini mentoring program, with a hope that it will grow. One of the most popular 'project' activities last year was the apiary visit project. Fran Davidson agreed to coordinate this again this year, so any member interested in visiting other member apiaries or hosting a visit should see Fran. We are also going to once again establish a mentor/mentee list. If you have any ideas or suggestions for other special projects, please let us know what you think at the first meeting!

A couple of reminders: 1. GCBA has a Website (www.gcbeekeepers.com) which primarily provides static information of interest to all, and a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gcbeekeepers/>) where members can openly discuss beekeeping-related topics, ask questions, etc. 2. The GCBA is YOUR local association—please be actively involved, and let us know what we can do to make the GCBA and effective and valuable resource for YOU!

Dan O'Callaghan



Bee Aware (Continued from page 1)

ate the heat that is necessary to maintain cluster temperature. If the cluster is large enough it will be able to keep in contact with sufficient honey to enable them to survive the periods of cold. If the cluster is too small they will probably perish during these extreme cold periods because they are unable to generate sufficient heat to keep the cluster alive. If dead hives still have honey in them it can be used to supply the live hives that may be in need of additional food.

When the cluster reaches the inner cover they are about to run out of food and need something immediately or they will starve to death. Because the cluster only moves up they will not retrieve honey on warm days that the cluster has bypassed. For those hives where the cluster is touching the inner cover I have either put a super of honey on them which I had stored for this purpose or from a dead out, or I laid sugar bricks on top the frames of the top box with an empty super around them. Last week even two story 5 frame nucs had survived and I'll be able to use them to replace hives which have died. It's tragic to have hives survive this long and then die due to starvation but it can happen unless we are vigilant and check the food situation even during cold weather.

The Thrifty Beekeeper

Gasoline prices may be coming down, so chasing around on swarm calls may not be quite as exhausting on the wallet, but many other costs of beekeeping are on the rise. Bee-ing thrifty doesn't have to be stressful, if anything, saving money, and repurposing items can become a challenge filled game. You don't have to sacrifice quality while playing the game.

For instance, one of the big box office supply stores was having a 25% rewards back on all purchases. It costs nothing to become a "member". Since I am a member, they send me extra coupons (a ream of paper for 1 penny!). During these types of sales you can purchase Sharpie pens (mark your woodenware), pens, notepads (record-keeping is a must), blank labels (if you print your own), blank business cards (if you print your own), etc. Let's say you spend \$100 for a year's worth of office supplies. You will get \$25 in rewards points the following quarter to spend, and if you bought a giftcard for the store during a 4X gas points at Kroger you would be getting 40 cents off per gallon of gas, AND if you purchased the gift card with a credit card that offered 1% cash back, that's another \$1. So all in all, the \$100 you spent would be reduced to \$68. That's a 38% savings. Not bad!

Beekeeping intervention to feed bees is time consuming, not as healthy for the bees as a natural diet, and costs money. Why not provide them a variety of nectar and pollen producing plants? Trees are one of the earliest providers of pollen for our girls. Most counties are selling tree "whips" through their Soil and Water Departments. The prices are pocketbook friendly, and the investment has long-term payback for both our honey bees and other pollinators...aside from having diversity in your own backyard. Encourage your neighbors to plant, and help spread the food oasis. Montgomery County is even offering Milkweed, Joe Pie, and Indigo!

If, however, your hive's pantries are running low, don't presume they will be hale and healthy when the dandelions bloom. Investing in emergency food now will pay dividends in your hive's survival.



Ninebark Flowers

Get Your Gardens Ready for Blooms

<http://www.miamiswcd.org/2015%20Tree%20Order%20emailing.pdf>

<http://www.co.greene.oh.us/DocumentCenter/View/286>

www.fedcoseeds.com

<http://www.montgomeryswcd.org/>

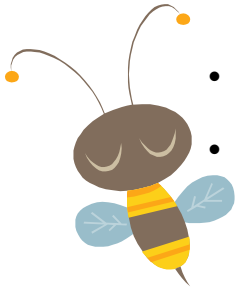


Need a local bulk source seeds? Saunders Seeds in Tipp City 937.667.2313

The Basic Buzz in the Apiary

February

- Check colonies for honey stores.
- Continue emergency feeding with frames of honey, fondant, or dry sugar, if needed.
- Continue to prepare equipment for coming season.
- Clean up dead colonies.



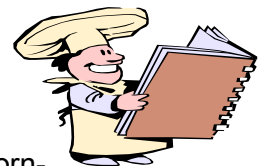
March

- Continue emergency feeding, if necessary.
- Feed pollen supplements or substitutes, if needed.
- First quick inspection of brood nest, if weather permits.
- Check for and clean up dead colonies.
- Clean out entrances and bottom boards.
- Attend conferences

Made at Home—The Recipe Corner : Valentine Honey Sugar Cookie

2 sticks butter
3/4 c. sugar
1/4 c. honey
1 1/2 t. vanilla extract
1 egg

1 egg yolk
3 c. flour
1/2 T cornstarch
2 t. baking powder



Beat sugar and butter until fluffy. Beat in honey, egg, yolk and extract. Sift together flour, cornstarch and baking powder. Add to honey blend and mix until flour is incorporated. Place cookie dough in plastic wrap and chill for at least 1 hour.

Roll out dough to a 1/4 inch thickness on a floured surface. Cut out shapes Place on a parchment paper lined cookie sheet (a greased cookie sheet will turn out oily cookies). Bake at 350 for about 7 minutes. Cookies will puff up slightly.

Cool. Decorate

GCBA Minutes November 18, 2014

30 members attended. There were no new members present.

We ate at 6:45. At 7:30 Dan called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and reminded them that there is no meeting in Dec. or Jan.

The first order of business was the election of officers for the coming year. Nominated and elected President: Dan O Callaghan. Nominated and elected Vice President : Chuck Roach. Nominated but declined Secretary, Rose Pelzl, No other nominations were placed before the membership.

Nominated and elected Treasurer: Tom Davidson. Nominated and elected Board At-Large members, Carol Locker, Dave Locker, Sam Bernard, & Fran Davidson with Bill Starrett continuing as consultant.

Dan returned to the open position of Sec. Patti Proconiar put her name in for the nomination and was unanimously elected followed by a hearty round of applause.

Dan thanked everyone but asked for suggestions for the coming year. Pat O'Callaghan suggested that we try to gather a collection of bee photographs from the membership that we might be able to put on a calendar or compile into something of interest to the membership. Chuck Roach said that he had appreciated all the suggestions and hands on projects through out the year that he had found useful in his apiary and hoped that line of presentation would continue in the new year!

Dan adjourned the meeting at 7:38.

At this time, someone asked about how to find GCBA on Facebook. Discussion followed. Then someone else wanted to know about the affects of neonicotinoids on bees. It was noted that so far, there is no conclusive evidence that neocics are causing the bees problems. Further discussion followed and Dan mentioned that the Canadian Beekeepers are suing the chemical companies and it will be interesting to see how the courts rule.

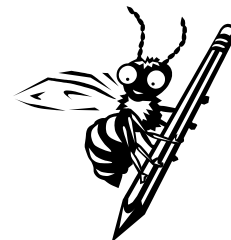
Treasurer's Report GCBA Board Meeting GCBA 2015 Budget– Expenses

2015	Income	2015	Expense
Dues	1185	Dues	0
Sales	58	Sales	0
Gift Items	145	Gift purchase	100
Class	525	Class	420
H Harvest	<u>556</u>	H Harvest	500
Total	2469	4 H	550
		PO Box	54
		Insurance	468
		Picnic	100
		Speaker fees	100
		Thanksgiving dinner	<u>50</u>
		Total	2342

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance 1 January 2014	\$3423.30
Balance 31 December 2014	\$3648.50
Balance 1 February 2015	\$3648.50

Staying Ahead in the Hive



FEBRUARY

- 17 Tues GCBA 1st Meeting of 2013!
- 28 Sat Indiana Bee School

MARCH

- 6-7 Fri/Sat: Tri-County Beekeepers Association Workshop in Wooster:
- 17 Tues GCBA Meeting
- 28 Sat SWOBA Beekeeper Conference (*Sold-Out*)

Remember to register your hives:

http://www.agri.ohio.gov/public_docs/forms/plant/Plnt_4201-002.pdf

Greene County Beekeepers Association Membership Form 2015

Membership dues are \$15 per calendar year

Membership benefits include:

- Monthly meetings (exp. For Dec/Jan) with educational speakers
- Monthly e-zine with beekeeping articles and other features
- Discount on American Bee Journal magazine
- and more!***

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Make checks out to: **Greene County Beekeepers Association**
and Remit Payment to:

Greene County Beekeepers Association
Tom Davidson
10131 West National Road
New Carlisle, OH 45344