



## APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

**Will Bees is pleased to announce** that we will have a member meeting on April 21 at 6:30 pm at the Will County Farm Bureau. Due to covid building protocol, the meeting will be limited to 23 attendees. We are welcoming those that are interested to register by April 14th by completing this Google Form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScGO68goA3y97TFzazAGTRSZyhfWE2UD4drglg76EOjyid9gg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScGO68goA3y97TFzazAGTRSZyhfWE2UD4drglg76EOjyid9gg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

For those that are unable to join us in person, we will be posting a meeting reminder later in the month with a Zoom link.

Our planned agenda includes:

- Meeting the new board members
- Audience Q and A
- Tips to installing your new bee packages
- Opportunities to returned overdue library books as well as pick-up reserved books

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to [info@willbees.org](mailto:info@willbees.org).

### April Things to Think About:

- Did you register your hive with the state?  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Pages/default.aspx>
- Package bees begin to arrive, will continue to arrive for the next 6 weeks
- Dandelion bloom is beginning. Marks the start of swarm season.
- Place supers and queen excluders on. Check for varroa mites and treat as needed.

### Swarm Prevention by *Wayne Dailey*

This month, we discuss Swarm Prevention, or at least trying to reduce swarming. First, we need to discuss the WHYS of swarming. Swarms occur when the hive has grown to the point where the queen is unable to spread her pheromone throughout the hive. This pheromone gives the colony a sense of calm. When this pheromone becomes scarce, it stimulates the worker bees to build cells in the vertical position along the bottom edges of the frames. The queen lays an egg in the cell, and the workers feed the larvae with Royal Jelly continuously. Royal Jelly is highly nutritious and stimulates the reproductive organs to grow. Days later, a virgin queen emerges, and the current queen will take roughly half of the bees from the hive and move to another location.

So, to prevent swarming, the bees must be made to feel that there is plenty of room to grow in the hive. This is most easily achieved by adding supers to the hive. Another method is a walkaway split. It is accomplished pretty much as one would expect. Once you have determined that a swarm is imminent (ex. drone laying by the queen, queen cups or cells), inspect the hive to make sure the upper and lower brood chambers are roughly equal in bee population as well as brood, including both larvae and eggs. Remove one of the brood chambers to a new location. The new brood box location will need to be closed up for at least 48 hours, allowing most of the bees to reset their GPS. Placing a small tree branch in front of both the old and new locations will cause most of the remaining bees to reset their GPS.

At this point you have two choices. You can let the bees do their thing and raise a new queen, which will take some time or, you could purchase a mated queen from your favorite bee supplier, thereby shortening the entire process. If you choose to install a mated queen, you must make 100% sure that the hive is queenless, and any queen cells in the brood chamber are removed before installing the mated queen, as it may be killed by the workers.

There are several methods for swarm prevention, but this one is easier than most. For other swarm prevention methods and tons of information on this and many other beekeeping topics, we have a very extensive lending library in the Club. Current Club members are allowed to check out books and videos for their reading and viewing pleasure. Additionally, there are many beekeeping sites on the Internet such as <http://scientificbeekeeping.com> or <https://www.beesource.com/>

Remember, the only dumb questions are the ones you didn't ask. Feel free to consult with more seasoned beekeepers, and be a mentor to newer beekeepers. Have fun and good luck with your bees this season!

### **Outstanding In Their Field** by *John Kiefner*

It is spring and soon it will be time for farmers to head to the field and start another year. For over 6 months grain prices have rallied higher, to prices that have not been seen for quite a while. Purchases of corn and soybeans for export to China have rebounded at the same time as production has faltered in Brazil and Argentina. Prices for commodities have rallied and farmers are anxious to plant while the prospects look good for profitability.

It was about 50 years ago that a similar scenario was unfolding with Russia when the Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, told the American farmer to plant fencerow to fencerow. Butz even told farmers to "get big or get out". Butz felt that as farmers became more productive and efficient, food prices would decline for everyone.

I am not old enough to remember a time when most farms had a diverse mix of crops and livestock. Pastures used to dot the landscape, and they supported the livestock raised on many farms. Those livestock actually became our food. I think it is now safe to say that the #1 livestock in Will County is horses. I do not think anyone is eating them.

For many years now there has been a very tight supply of hay grown in our area. Will hay acres shrink if farmers prefer to plant corn and soybeans on the lure of higher profits? What will other farmers plant? What should I plant?

On my own farm, will I still plant sweet corn, pumpkins and hay? Or will I be lured to go “all in” on corn and beans? Is there enough land for a few other crops? To be truthful here, it would be a lot less hard, physical work if I never planted pumpkins, sweet corn and hayfields ever again. Is it all about making money?

For myself I think that may have been true in my earlier years. Have I softened or become financially secure? I now enjoy the scattered patches of pumpkins and yellow clover on my farm. I have planted sunflowers for enough years now that I have finally learned how to do it successfully, without the patch becoming a weedy mess. A couple of days ago I spread 3# of yellow blossom sweet clover seed on a small field hoping to frost seed the area to become a vibrant patch of flowers for the honeybees later this summer.

My grain drill is already hooked to the tractor and ready to plant more hay fields. I have been asked to plant sunflowers and pollinator patches for neighbors. For the second year in a row I will be assisting with food plots for wildlife.

I think I may follow the advice of Secretary Butz and indeed plant “fencerow to fencerow.” It should be duly noted that Secretary Butz never stated exactly what crops should be planted, or who should eat the crops that I grow.



### **Congrats to the Swarm Box winners:**

Dan Sergeant, Jim Blough, Bill Gray, Julie Larsen, Scott Mancke, Gary Fuqua, Michelle Burns, Carl Schultz, Russ Hook, Jerry Stechmiller, David Mustgrave, Frank Zelko, Robert Enright, Nina Wajda, Shino Koshy, Keith Meiser, Brandon Price, Michelle Gattuso & Beau Douglas Wright

We look forward to posting the pictures of the mounted traps in future newsletters and also hearing about the swarms that are caught!

*Thanks again Catherine!*

## Education Offerings:

If you missed the **Illinois State Beekeepers Association Winter Deadout Virtual Workshop** from March 19th by Dewey Caron, it was recorded. The link is presently posted on the ISBA website (<https://www.ilsba.com/>) for a couple of weeks. If you missed anything or want to hear something again - go check it out.

## Auburn University and Lawrence Co Alabama Extension Office:

Is hosting LIVE speaker events on several Thursdays, at 7:30 pm Eastern Time. To view the events, try this Zoom link: <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838>

- April 16: Learning from Pandemics, Dr. J. TSURUDA (U. of Tennessee)
- April 30: Queen Management Essentials, Dr. J. RANGEL (Texas A&M)
- May 14: Bee and Parasite Biogeography, Dr. K. DELAPLANE (U. of Georgia)
- May 28: What's Killing Honey bees, Dr. J. ELLIS (U. of Florida)

**ISBA Summer Meeting Southern Region** is June 12, 2021 in Rend Lake, IL. Speakers will include Dr. Jim Tew and Dr. Jennifer Tsuruda. Watch ISBA website (<https://www.ilsba.com/>) for updates

## We NEED Your Help!

We are looking for people to help contribute to your monthly newsletter:

- Feature articles that you'd like to write
- Review of a book or article in a journal you read
- A good website
- An educational opportunity that you are aware of
- Pictures that you'd like us to share

Basically, anything interesting! If interested, please email [willbees-board@willbees.org](mailto:willbees-board@willbees.org)

**Library:** The lending library is a rich resource available to all of our members. Please visit our catalog of books, videos and even candles molds at: <https://willbees.libib.com>

**Reminders:** If you are in need of an extractor or educational material for presentations, please see the website for current locations.

## Board Members

President: Patrick Schab

Treasurer: Patricia Costion

Vice President: Alexander Parks

Secretary: Michelle Gattuso

Directors: Wayne Dailey (1), Keith Meiser (2), Dave Meyer (3)

*Awareness, Cooperation, Education, Support*



Will County Beekeepers Association c/o Will County Farm Bureau

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