



May 2021 NEWSLETTER

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

May Things to Think About:

→ Did you register your hive with the state?

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Pages/default.aspx>

→ 1st week of May: End of dandelion bloom. Beginning of a short dearth. Continue feeding to maintain brood rearing.

→ 2nd week of May: Beginning of a 6 week period that is a good time to make queens from your best survivor stock.

→ 3rd week of May: Beginning of main nectar flow. Make sure honey supers are on and discontinue feeding production hives.

There may be a delay in this schedule with the later arrival of your bees due to the super freeze in the south earlier this year.

NOTE TO NEW BEEKEEPERS: Make sure there are lots of fresh water sources around your yard.

Farmers Weekly Review Article by Nancy Kuhajda from April 22, 2021: "Are you a Lawn Ranger? Check with the bees...Pollinator Friendly Lawn Practices." Hard copies are available at the Farm Bureau. (<https://www.willcfb.com/farmers-weekly-review>)

Did everyone get their monthly mailing from the Illinois State Beekeepers Association? If not, please email to let us know (willbees-board@willbees.org).

In-Person Meeting News...

It was great to see people in person and virtually at our April 2021 meeting. If you were unable to attend the meeting, click on the link below for a brief summary of what occurred

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z4de3NRCvnNL4LKQvxbvFJhPwxPgdFU/view?usp=sharing>

We apologize for the delay starting the Zoom meeting. We are changing the start time of the meetings which caused some confusion. Thank you for your patience!

Our Next Meeting will be Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 6:30 pm (doors opening at 6:00 pm).

Use this link to the Google Form to reserve your spot! A link for the meeting will be sent out later in the month.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeATpTIDYmgvu2Y6II5zoamHKuNArovHhC2Uya0j_WPN2eYYQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

The Color of Pollen by *Keith Meiser*

It is fascinating to me that on the first warm days of spring, even with snow still on the ground, the honeybees somehow find flowers and bring back pollen. When I first started keeping bees (a very long time ago), I would search for blooming flowers that could be the source, but I would usually be frustrated at either not finding anything blooming or finding a few crocuses pushing through the snow but no honeybees. After a few years I finally realized I was looking in the wrong direction - down instead of up.

Many of the earliest pollen sources that honeybees visit are trees. Most often it is difficult to even see the flowers as they are small and not colorful or fancy. Just like pushing up the sap that is made into syrup, maple trees start to bloom as early as February so that the whirling seeds can mature in time to clog your gutters later in the season. Willows and elms also bloom very early. The bees, of course, find anything available.

Most non-beekeepers only know that bees collect nectar to make honey. Honey certainly is important; it is the bees energy source to heat the hive in the winter, the fuel to power them to the flowers to collect more, the raw material the bees needed to make beeswax to build the combs, and the enticement for most of us to get into beekeeping. What is equally important to all that the bees do is pollen. It is literally what the bees are made from. In their efforts to collect pollen for the colony, they have also become arguably the most important insects on the planet.

Honeybees are especially efficient pollinators because they usually only visit a single species of flowering plant on each trip. The pollen that sticks to their down-like hairs is transferred to a flower from

the same type of plant that it came from to fertilize the blossom, also providing the cross pollination that is necessary to many important crops to produce seeds. For example, apple blossoms only receive pollen from other apple trees, which makes the honeybee both efficient and valuable.

If you notice the pellets of pollen the honeybees return with, each bee has only one color of pollen. Other bees may have a different color from a different pollen source, because each bee is dedicated to the species of plant they collect from. And they collect far more pollen than we appreciate. A strong colony may collect in excess of 100 pounds of pollen throughout the season, although they consume most of it promptly. Significant quantities are stored in the cells near the brood for periods of scarcity or bad weather. This allows the bees to raise next year's workforce during the late winter and early spring.

I wish I could identify the pollen sources by their distinctive colors but I have found that color alone cannot positively identify the plants that produced the pollen. There are hundreds of plants that honeybees rely on for their food and many have pollen with very similar hues. Enjoy the rainbow of colors of the pollen stored in the combs as you inspect your hives and think of the millions of trips your bees made to gather their bounty.

[List of Northern American nectar sources for honey bees](#)

[List of pollen sources for honey bees](#)

Oxalic Acid Treatment for Bees by Wayne Dailey

This month we discuss Enemy Number One of honeybees. The Varroa Mite. It is the biggest killer of the Western honeybee, and is known by its proper name, the Varroa Destructor. It is an external parasite that feeds on honeybee adults as well as larvae within the hive, feeding on the fat cells. The mite also causes several known diseases, not the least of which are Deformed wing virus and varroosis.

So, let's discuss one method of varroa control within the hive. Oxalic Acid is a white crystalline powder that is colorless when mixed with water. It is found naturally in leafy greens, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds. It is sold in concentrated form as wood bleach.

Methods of introduction into the hive area include sublimation (i.e. vaporization) and drip method. Vaporizers are simply that: they heat the oxalic powder to a point where it vaporizes, or sublimates (transfers from a solid to a vapor without becoming a liquid first). The vapors travel throughout the inside of the hive, cooling and converting back to a powder on the surfaces within the hive.

The drip Method is simpler in that the acid is mixed with warm water, placed into a syringe, and slowly squirted between the rows of frames. Enough mixture is made so that all brood cell frames are treated. Honeybees are sensitive to oxalic acid vapor and droplets, but to a lesser degree than the mites.

Oxalic acid will only kill phoretic mites that is, mites that are within the hive. The acid has minimal to no effect on mites located inside the capped larval cells. Therefore, repeated treatments are generally required. One treatment per week for 3 weeks is usually adequate.

Lastly but and definitely not least, we need to discuss the potential effects of oxalic acid on the human body if mishandled. Oxalic can cause irritation of the skin, or worse. Gloves, long sleeve shirts (bee suit is acceptable) and an organic acid mask are a must when handling concentrated Oxalic Acid. This article is intended to be a high-level overview, and more specific instructions regarding the handling of Oxalic Acid are available online. Make sure to read and understand all safety guidelines and product labels before using.

Remember, the only dumb questions are the ones you don't ask. Feel free to check out the myriad of books and videos in the WCBKA library for additional information. Remember beekeeping is as much an art as it is a science.

Beecabulary by Pat Costion

Monthly words for thought. Bring your answers to the May Meeting whether in person or by Zoom.

1. Bee Glue
2. Melittology
3. Supersedure



Bee Advocate by Pat Costion

Eileen Koran, shown above, is working towards her Eagle rank in the Scouts BSA program (Troop 454). To become an Eagle Scout, she must make a project that has a long-lasting benefit to the community. Eagle projects are completely non-profit and are dependent on donations and fundraising.

For her Eagle project, she is planting a pollinator garden at Arroyo Trails in Channahon, IL. Her goals through her project are to support the pollinators/ecosystem, and also raise awareness about the importance of pollinators to our local community.

She reached out to Will County Beekeepers for a donation and we gave her a bag of prairie seed.

Mentor-Match

Are you an experienced beekeeper who would like to share your knowledge?

Are you a new beekeeper who would like to have a go-to person?

If either of these describe you, we would like to attempt to match a mentor to a mentee. Please fill out this Google Form.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScaytrP6KIs_rVzExcjLDLhVFpxX1j8NwrF63hPSnwMTS_rKQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

We will make a list (which will be available online for the people who would like to participate) of beekeepers who would like to make a connection to other\ beekeepers. If you need assistance with this, please reach out to Michelle Gattuso (michellegattuso@yahoo.com).

Where did those swarm boxes go?

Jim B - Batavia



Shino K - Homer Glen



Brenda & Carl - Plainfield



Education Offerings:

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>

- 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)

Prior session recording are available on this FaceBook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/LawrenceCountyextension/>

University of California Cooperative Extension

The University of California Cooperative Extension-San Diego County offers a 3-module long beekeeping course that is always free. There are training videos and a quiz that is 10 questions long. Overall the course should take about 30 minutes to complete. This course is advertised as helpful to beginning beekeepers as well as a way to keep up-to-date for annual training for established beekeepers.

https://ucanr.edu/sites/sandiegobees/Online_Beekeeping_Course/

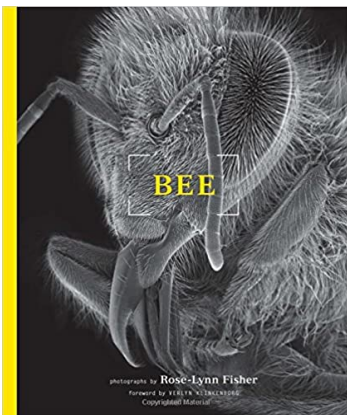
The Ohio State University

Beekeeping and Honey Bee Biology, Part 1

In collaboration with [iTunes. The Ohio State University](#) created a program that consists of 139 videos all about bees and beekeeping. This program is completely free and is available through the iTunes U app on iPads and iPhones. This program goes in-depth about the biology of honeybees and queens.

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

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>



“Bee”

Photographs by Rose-Lynn Fisher

Forward by Verlyn Klinkborg

This is a photobook of bees taken under a scanning electron microscope so you can really see the bees up close! Each incredibly detailed photo has an informative caption to learn or refresh your memory about bee biology and vocabulary.

Michelle Gattuso

Board Members

President: Patrick Schab

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Directors (years remaining on term): 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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