



THE BEE SPACE



Will County Beekeepers Association
Est. 2011

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR NEXT MEETING:

March 20, 2024 at 7 pm
Will County Farm Bureau
100 Manhattan Rd
Joliet, IL 60433

FEATURED TOPICS:

- Reading “dead-outs”
- Bee vacs
- Product review: Pollen Patties
- Register to win a bee package! *See below for info.*

THIS MONTH IN YOUR HIVES

MARCH

- As temperatures are warming up, consider feeding 1:1 sugar syrup and placing in pollen patties
- Check for mites and treat before putting on supers

APRIL

- Check for mites and treat before putting on supers
- Begin weekly checks looking for signs of swarming
- Continue to feed 1:1 sugar syrup
- Consider checker boarding or other swarm prevention techniques
- Super-up (when bees cover 7 of the 10 frames, add a super)



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HIVE

Additional information regarding your hives for March and April was kindly provided by John Leibinger for both veteran and new beekeepers.

[Chores of the Month – March](#)

[Chores of the Month – April](#)

SPECIAL APRIL MEETING RAFFLE – WIN A BEE PACKAGE!

It's that time of the year... the great package raffle! Open to paid members only, tickets may be purchased at our March and April meetings for only \$5 per ticket or 5 tickets for only \$20. Our drawing will be held at our April meeting. Members do not need to be present to win.

A big “thank you” to Meyer Bees for the package donation.





BY FRAN MILLER

Drawn comb is like gold.

There's gold in those hills... or hives... in the form of drawn comb. Beekeepers "prospect" for drawn comb to use when starting a new hive (to give the queen a place to lay) or for use within swarm traps or even "checkerboarding" to help prevent swarms. While it may not look like gold to many, it does to your bees.

But having bees draw comb has been a challenge, much like panning for gold. I thought I could just put a frame of foundation in and the bees would draw it out. Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't. Why? Was it the queen, the workers, the foundation, or something else?

My first learning was that bees draw out comb when *they* need it, not when *I* need them to.

Understanding the process of how beeswax is made along with what the ideal conditions are for wax building helped me understand how to get my bees to draw comb.

The Process

When worker bees are between 12 and 18 days old their wax glands are fully developed and ready for wax building. According to *Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping* by Dewey M. Caron and Lawrence John Connor, "Beeswax is produced in four pairs of specialized wax glands on the underside of the worker abdomen. The wax scales are laminated and white when secreted. Using their legs, including the spine on the middle pair of legs, bees pass wax scales to their mouthparts. There, they add saliva and manipulate the scales into a pliable form." "Wax secretion and comb building are high priority tasks after swarming and when a colony is building new comb (as in package colonies and newly made nuclei)." In a mature colony, the need for beeswax is generally low, so not all workers capable of producing wax do so.

The Conditions

Comb building is highly dependent on the environment. It takes 6 pounds of honey to produce 1 pound of wax. That's a lot of resources. If we want our bees to draw comb we have to help them by creating ideal conditions, when the environment is not. Dr Meghan Milbrath of Michigan State University outlines the following conditions for optimal comb building.

Lots of carbohydrates

Wax building uses a lot of energy. For every pound of wax produced, bees will use about 6 pounds of honey. This means bees need to have constant feed. A heavy nectar flow is best but in the absence of a good flow you can feed a 2:1 syrup. The most important thing is to keep the feeder full. Don't make the mistake of feeding occasionally and refilling once it's empty. Use a large feeder so the bees can take the feed in quickly.

Warmth

Bees need warmth to work wax into comb. When needing to draw comb make sure there is always foundation above and directly adjacent to the brood nest. As soon as that comb has been partially drawn, it can be moved to the outside of the box and another frame of foundation added in its place.

Good timing

Bees are only likely to draw comb when they are in a period of growth. If it's too late in the season, the bees will not touch the foundation, even when there is plenty of food. A better strategy would be to give the bees a mix of foundation and drawn comb early in the season to ensure foundation is drawn as quickly as possible.

The attention of the bees

Many times bees will not recognize a box full of new foundation as part of their hive. They won't touch it. They'd rather fill up the brood nest rather than start drawing wax in the new box. Have you ever experienced this when putting on a new super of foundation? I have. One way to help manage this is to make sure to not use a queen excluder. Bees will not draw foundation through a queen excluder. Another way would be to 'seed' or 'prime' the box of foundation by bringing up at least one frame of drawn comb. Usually this can be done by taking a frame without brood and putting it in the outside position of the upper box. Even one frame of drawn comb in a new box will help the bees take interest in the new box.

A large population

Good comb production NEEDS A LOT OF BEES that can afford to spend time making comb. The proportion of bees available to do this work changes throughout the time of year. Caring for brood is always a priority. As a result, the number of bees available for house duties depends on the population. In a strong hive, the ratio of bees to brood may be 3:1 where small colonies have a 1:1 ratio. BIG colonies have plenty of workers to spare for comb production. If you want to maximize wax production, add foundation to big colonies right after swarm season, make sure they have lots of incoming food and make sure their foundation is above and close to the brood nest.

A lack of drawn comb can limit your success and growth. Whether you want to expand the number of hives you have or rotate out old frames, keeping drawn comb on hand will set you and your bees for success.

So yes, drawn comb is GOLD!

BEECABULARY

Time to expand your bee vocabulary.

Bring your answers to our next meeting to earn a tasty treat and to impress your fellow beekeepers!

Apiary

Dividing

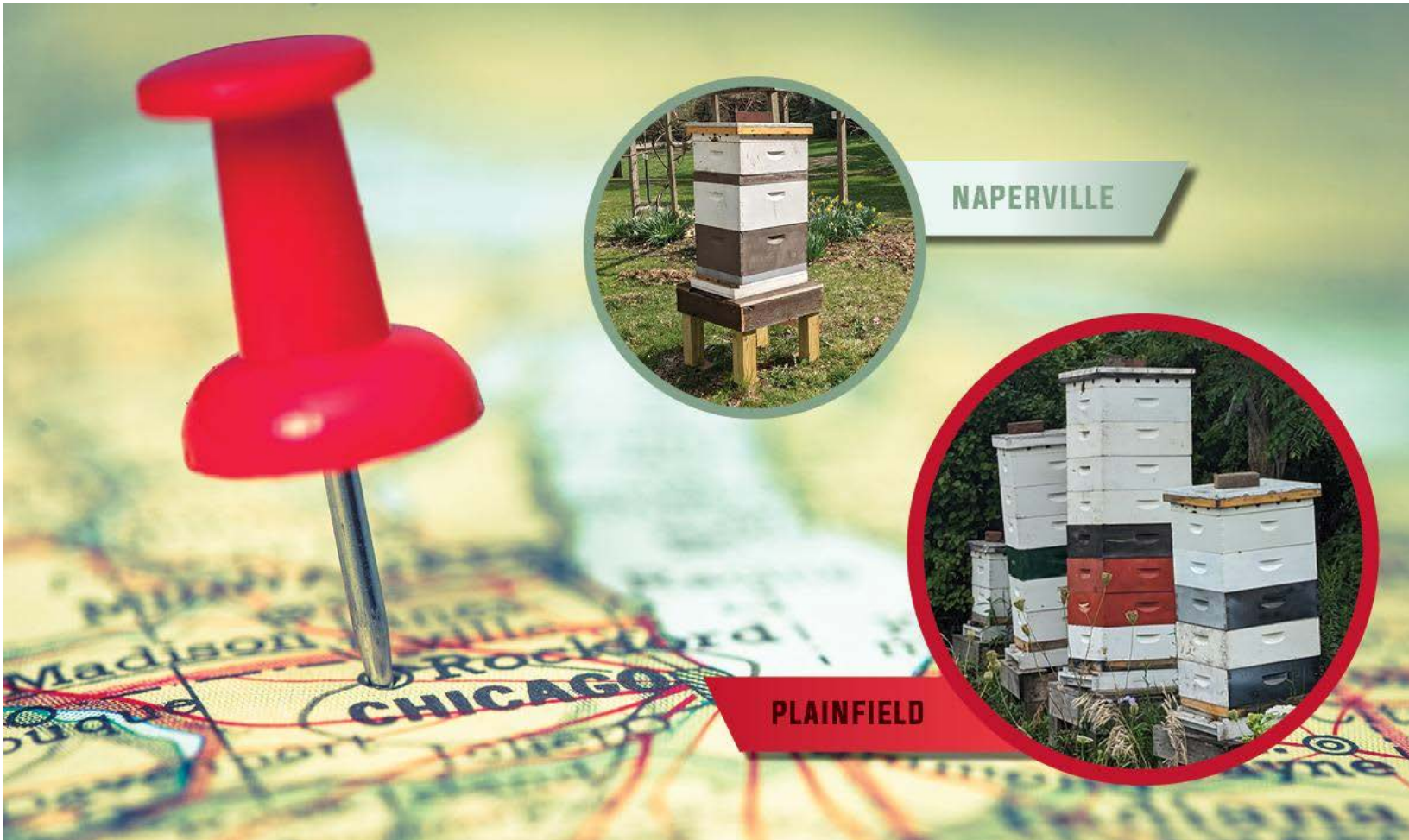
Pheromones

Drawn comb

Secondary swarm

Play flights





BY DENNIS WISNOSKY

Location, Location, Location

Like everything else in honeybee farming there are multiple best practices for where hives should be physically placed. Sun, shade, orientation to the compass, in the backyard, in the middle of a field – WHERE?

I have 2 experiences both with the same four hives. The first was on a 3 acre lot that was half turf grass and half old growth trees – mostly Oaks. The honeybees had many choices to gather nectar and pollen. The hives were on the South side of the house and shielded from the West wind by pine trees. There was a creek nearby and I had multiple bird baths with flowing water. Over 3 years there was almost no honey production. I did not use pesticides on my property but all of my neighbors applied pesticides liberally and the Mosquito squad was quite active several times a year. I gave up there.

The second experience was on a 10 acre conservation easement property with a 3 acre lake. I moved the supers to this property and placed them behind a windbreak of native Viburnum. My maintenance process was the same as on the suburban property. Local farmers apply pesticides and herbicides on surrounding properties. My girls are at least 100 yards from the nearest field. At this property the bees have performed spectacularly.

The engineers say that correlation is not necessarily causation. But, I am going with the idea that the girls are much much happier in the country than they were in a neighborhood.

RANDY OLIVER TICKET RAFFLE!

Here's your chance to spend a few hours with the legendary Randy Oliver. We are raffling off 2 tickets to attend his class, entitled, *"The ins and outs of practical beekeeping."* The class is being hosted at the Garfield Park Conservatory on Sunday April 28th at 10am-4pm. Open to paid members only. Tickets are available at our March and April meeting for only \$5 or 5 tickets for only \$20. Drawing will be held at our April meeting. Members do not need to be present to win.

A big "thank you" goes to Marcin Matelski of the Garfield Park Conservatory for the donation.

This month's recipe was provided from www.honey.com.

Crunchy Honey-Yogurt Breakfast Parfait

Servings: 2

Provided

1 large - banana, sliced, divided
1/3 cup - honey, divided
1/2 cup - plain yogurt, divided
1/2 cup - crunchy granola, divided
1/2 cup - blueberries, divided

Step 1

Reserve several slices of banana and a few blueberries for garnish.

Step 2

Layer 1 T honey, 1/4 of the pre-sliced banana, 2 T blueberries, 2 T yogurt, 2 T granola, 1/4 of the sliced banana, 2 T blueberries, 2 T yogurt, 1 T honey and 2 T granola in a parfait glass.

Step 3

Repeat for second parfait.

Step 4

Garnish with reserved banana, blueberries and a drizzle of honey..



Send us your favorite recipe with a picture of your creation at info@willbees.org!

Mark your calendars

DON'T MISS OUT ON UPCOMING WILLBEES MEETING GUEST TOPICS!

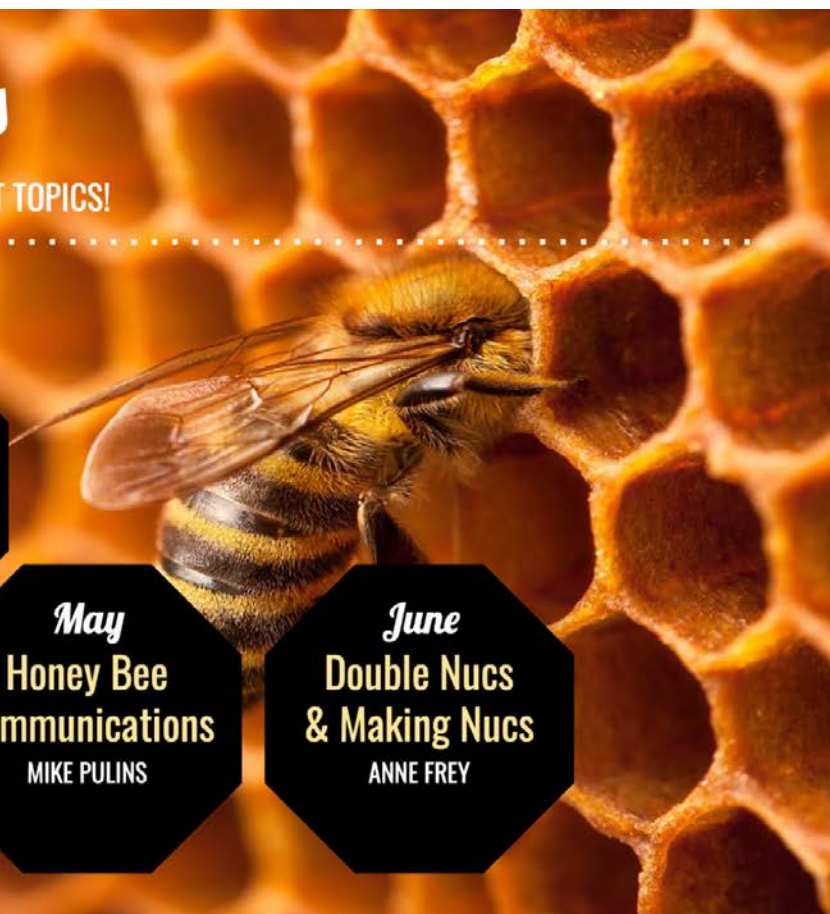
March
Dead Outs
DAVE MEYER

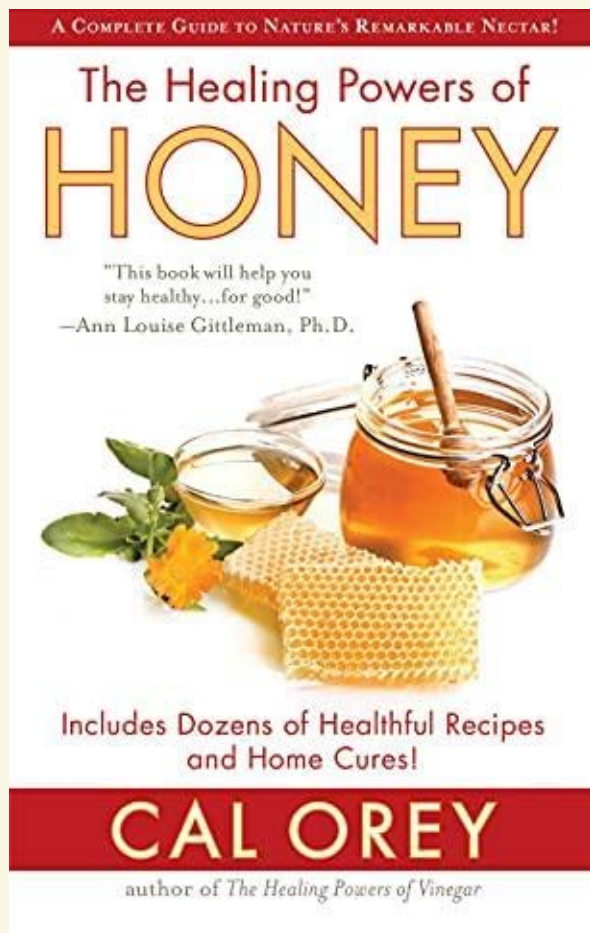
May 11
Field Days
Bee Install
BEAU WRIGHT

April
Bee Venom
GEORGIA KARRAS
BEE PACKAGE
RAFFLE

May
Honey Bee
Communications
MIKE PULINS

June
Double Nucs
& Making Nucs
ANNE FREY





BOOK NOOK

The Healing Powers of Honey

By Cal Orey

Kensington Books, 2011, 416 pages,

\$5.00 - \$25.00 online

Reviewed by Dennis Wisnosky

Cal Orey has made a living as an author of books, essays and other ruminations generally in the “how to” genre. Curious about the name Cal Orey, writing mostly about foods, I searched — her real first name is Denise. Orey may or may not be her real last name.

She has been, and is, a prolific and successful author. This book is really a chronicle of how she has lived her life – as a “free spirit” wandering up and down the West Coast before settling in a cabin in Tahoe with her various animals. The book is as light heartedly entertaining as it is heavy with well researched

information about honeybees, honey, beekeepers, current and way way past – 6000BC, and especially the uses for honey. Perhaps honeys would be a better term because she over exhaustively describes 30 types that she has tasted among the “300 unique types of honey available in the United States.”

She describes honey as “Nectar of the Gods” an “Ancient Elixir” with the power to fix or cure or stave off any real or imagined ailment, or at least make one feel better after its consumption in one of the literally hundreds of ways that she details, beginning in the chapter “Honey You’re Amazing”. What about healing power? The number one choice is Manuka honey from New Zealand — Page 38. Sorry Dave.

Of course, we have all heard why a honeymoon is a honeymoon. But, what about, “Not tonight honey” in the section “Lackluster Libido”. Honey as an aphrodisiac was new to me. Maybe it is because it is a quick picker upper.

As readers of my reviews know I am big on pointing out obvious errors and inconsistencies — substantial or not. She says be careful with queen bees because they can sting many times with their barbless stingers. This is true, but my research says that they don’t. She writes about becoming a vegetarian as a teenager but then gives us honey meat recipes that she “just loves.” And this one I was surprised about – decrystallize honey in a microwave. She cites the National Honey Board. I verified that the NHB does say this is a choice – OMG.

Perhaps the most interesting parts of this book are the little stories that she embeds. Here is one in the chapter “Busy Bee Workers.” “I come back to the orange grove occasionally, and it never fails to remind me, not of idyllic hours spent with a gentle breeze wafting through fragrant orange blossoms and the musical hum of millions of happy bees accompanied by a Mozart concerto playing on my truck stereo, but the lifting of 100 pound boxes of honey in 100 degree weather in coveralls soaked with sweat while scores of angry bees registered their objection to my intrusion by inflicting numerous stings on any exposed skin or pinning wet coveralls to flesh.” Retired Beekeeper. Sound familiar?

I do recommend this book and I would like to meet this person. If you check it out of the WillBees library be aware that I dog eared many pages.

Our Will Bees lending library offers a vast selection of books and videos for you to enjoy. Be sure to check out a book at our next member meeting.

Lad and Dad

THIS MONTH'S BEE ADVOCATES ARE LONG-TIME WILLBEES MEMBERS JAMES AND RICHARD ETIENNE

James and his dad Richard began keeping bees 10 years ago when they noticed a lack of bees to pollinate their vegetable garden and fruit trees. James said, "When I was a kid, before weed killer you couldn't walk barefoot in the yard and not step on a bee. So, for the 1st year I made a horizontal hive and tried to capture a wild swarm." Unfortunately for James, that did not workout ... you have to have



bees to catch bees. "I found out about Will Bees and joined the club, bought my first package and in that 1st year my garden improved." Things continued to go right as he moved into his second year. His bees overwintered and jumped into action pollinating his fruit trees in early spring, resulting in a juicy crop. James said, "Dad liked the improvement I was having so we split a hive and we put it at his house. After the 3rd year we increased to around 6 hives and had friends starting asking for honey. We came up with the name "Lad and Dad" and now we have around 20 hives in 4 locations around the Channahon area." James also catches swarms and helps a tree service to remove and save bees from trees they cut down.

We love to feature you within BeeSpace! Please send us a photo and a couple paragraphs about you and beekeeping.

WILLBEES WEARABLES ARE COMING IN MARCH!

Thanks to all of our members that placed orders for WillBees wearables. We have met our minimum order and our items are currently in production. Your order will be ready for pick-up at our March meeting ... just in time for the beginning of the bee season. Thanks again.



UPCOMING EVENTS

ATTENTION: WILLBEES NEEDS YOU!

We need your help to spread the news about honeybees and all that they do for us!

The Will County Beekeepers Association is working to spread the news about honeybees at some upcoming community events, and we need your help. You are knowledgeable about honeybees and we need you to share your knowledge.

Please mark your calendar for the events listed below. These events are family friendly, so bring the entire family. Bring your bee suit, veil, tools, and your knowledge, to speak with community members about honeybees. There will not be any sales of products, but simply, a knowledge share.

The events are:

Saturday, April 27, 2024: Bolingbrook Arbor Day Celebration

75 Briarcliff Road, Bolingbrook
11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Saturday, April 13, 2024: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Fes.

The event will take place at Romeoville Library, 201 Normantown Road, Romeoville, IL
10:00 am – 4:00 pm

[Click for more information](#)

Wednesday – Sunday, August 21-24, 2024: Will County Fair

The Fair is located in Peotone, IL, just east of Route 57. The event will run in conjunction with the Will County Farm Bureau. [Click for more information](#)

There will be more information available about these events. Please sign up to help wherever you can. For more information or questions, contact info@willbees.org

ON-GOING ED

The Chicago Honey Co-Op has beekeeping classes coming up in the summer.

Classes in June and July are hands on at our apiary for beginning beekeepers. If you have a hive now or just want some more experience before you take the plunge, this class might be good for you.

Visit their [website](#) for more information.

15th Annual Bee Forum at Garfield Park Conservatory - 2 sessions

Saturday April 27th

Randy Oliver will lead a hands-on class that will cover topics ranging from disease identification to queen and colony health assessment to maximizing honey production. There will be 2 classes offered, each lasting 90 minutes and mostly covering the same topics.

Visit their [website](#) for more information or call 815.280.1555 to register.

Sunday April 28th, 10am-4pm

"The ins and outs of practical beekeeping with Randy Oliver"

Randy Oliver is probably the most recognizable beekeeper in the world right now and GPCA is excited to have him back in Chicago this year. If you're a beekeeper then you know how incredible beekeeping can be, but you also know how incredibly frustrating keeping bees can be. Randy's goal during the presentation will be to help beekeepers understand why bees behave the way they do and apply that to their daily beekeeping.

Visit their [website](#) for more information or call 815.280.1555 to register.

Joliet Junior College — Basic Beginning Beekeeping I with Jim Lindau

This course is meant for people who have had little or no experience with honey bees but are interested in learning how to properly set up and maintain a honey bee apiary. The class is presented as a combination of classroom presentations and hands-on experience in the apiary. Each class will cover new information so it is recommended students attend each class. The course has been split into two parts to coordinate with the JJC Spring and Summer Course Catalog offerings. Classes are scheduled for Saturday mornings from 8:00 until 12:00.

Visit their [website](#) for more information or call 815.280.1555 to register.

ISBA Annual Summer Meeting, Effingham, IL

June 22-24

Crossroads Beekeepers Association will be hosting the ISBA Summer meeting at the Effingham Events Center. Two of the confirmed speakers are Greg Rogers, North Carolina Beekeeper and David Burns, Illinois Beekeeper

[Please visit](#) for more information.

Breakfast with the Bees hosted by James Konrad

The Fox Valley Beekeepers Association extends an open invitation to all beekeepers to join them via Zoom for a group chat every Saturday at 7:30am Central Time. Guests are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to various topics that relate to the season. Please email James at james@jamesgardenbees.com for more information.

Worth the watch: 47 Million Bees

'47 Million Bees' is the story of biologist Paola Vecino and her work to preserve the native Iberian honey bee in Spain. Paola has spent her life studying and working with bees and now heads up the 'Smart Green Bees' project. Please [click here](#) for more information.

ODDS & ENDS

Hive Raffle Winner

Congratulations to new WillBees member, Joe Cirillo. He had the lucky winning ticket for our 8-frame full hive set-up. We wish you the best as you start your beekeeping journey!

The Golden Spoon Award

As we get set for the upcoming year, keep your sights towards the end of the season to enter the Prestigious Golden Spoon Award honey competition, held in our member appreciation meeting in November. See our past winner on our brand new award plaque as you enter our member meetings.



Meyer Bees Bee Packages

3 pound bee packages with a queen are available through Meyer Bees. Multiple races are available: Italian, Carnoliain, Russian, Saskatraz. Nuc and queens are also available. The Meyer Bees beekeeping supply showroom in Minooka is open 6 days a week, Monday through Saturday. For details please contact WillBees member Dave Meyer: dave@meyerbees.com, or 815-521-9116 or visit their website at meyerbees.com

Don't forget to register your hives for free with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Insects/Bees/Documents/beekeep.pdf>

Swap Meet

Let's all start going through our existing equipment and think about donating it to new beekeepers. Items may be things you originally may have used and replaced or have more than you need. At a future meeting we will all bring these items and raffle things off. More details in the future. We could use a captain for this project. Please reach out to the board if you can help.

Share what you know

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
- An educational opportunity that you are aware of
- Pictures that you'd like us to share
- Recipe using honey you would like to share

Please email willbees-board@willbees.org with anything you'd like to share today.

Update your calendar for our upcoming WillBees meetings:

Wednesdays at 7pm:

April 17, May 15, June 19, August 21, September 18, October 16, November 20

BOARD MEMBERS

Patrick Schab, President

Dennis Wisnosky, Vice President

Susan Gregory, Treasurer

Fran Miller, Secretary

DIRECTORS (years remaining on term):

Keith Meiser (2)

Beau Wright (3)

Jim Moleski (1)