

# THE BEE SPACE



WILL COUNTY  
BEEKEEPERS  
ASSOCIATION

THE PUBLICATION OF WILL COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION • MAY / JUNE 2024

## PLEASE JOIN US FOR NEXT MEETING:

**May 15, 2024**

**6:30 pm: Queen marking session**

**7:30 pm: Meeting starts**

Will County Farm Bureau

100 Manhattan Rd

Joliet, IL 60433

## FEATURED TOPICS:

- Honeybee communications
- Hands-on queen marking practice session
- Q&A
- July picnic details

## THIS MONTH IN YOUR HIVES

### MAY / JUNE

- Continue feeding bee package installs until they no longer take sugar water
- Check for mites and treat before putting on supers
- Set-up and bait swarm traps
- Add additional supers when 80% of the frames are full
- Monitor strong hives closely for swarming traits such as swarm cells
- Check brood pattern to determine if the queen is healthy
- Supply a water source heading into summer to help the bees cool their hives in the heat
- Consider performing splits to expand your apiary and to avoid swarming

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HIVE

Additional information regarding hives management for May and June was kindly provided by John Leibinger. Click to download.

[Chores of the Month – May](#)

[Chores of the Month – June](#)



## SPECIAL MAY MEETING RAFFLE – WIN A HONEY SUPER!

Just in time for the upcoming nectar flow, Willbees is raffling a 8 or 10 frame honey super with frames and foundation for only \$5 per entry or 5 for \$20. Raffle open to paid members only. Tickets will be offered at the May meeting and pulled at the conclusion of evening. *Must be present!*





BY SUSAN GREGORY

## To Exclude Or Not Exclude, That Is The Question

*The excluder, (whether you refer to it as a honey excluder or a queen excluder) was invented in France by Abbe Collin in 1865 according to the book *The Beekeepers Bible; bees, honey, recipes and other home uses* (2011; Abrams; New York).*

The excluder is a screen that is slotted with spaces large enough for worker honey bees to fit through, but too small for the queen to pass. Excluders are available in metal or plastic. Ideally, the excluder is placed between the topmost hive body and the bottommost honey super, ensuring that the queen never lays eggs in the frames that will be filled with honey, according to *Homegrown Honey Bees*, by Aletha Morrison (2013).

Elbert R. Jaycox writes in the book *Beekeeping in the Midwest* (1976), that the excluder confines the queen to one part of the hive and prevents her from laying eggs in honey supers. At times, the queen may create a narrow brood nest up the center of the hive. Eventually, the queen is forced down as honey is stored in the comb of the upper supers. Excluders can save time and effort in beekeeping to prevent brood in honey supers. If used, excluders should be placed above the first super ahead of the nectar flow to allow the bees to become accustomed to passing through it.

Additionally, Morrison goes on to indicate that bees will not draw out comb above an excluder. It is also advised to not trap drones above the excluder. An inner cover with a notched opening in the rim can serve as an escape route for the trapped drones.

A random survey conducted on the Will County Beekeepers Facebook page, queried followers on the use of excluders. Despite the notion that the Facebook page has over 2100 followers, responses were received from 15 individuals. Fourteen respondents indicated that they used excluders. One follower indicated that the use of excluders was not necessary, in that the use of 2 deeps and 2 honey mediums prevents eggs in the honey mediums. The responder indicated that excluders cause traffic jams, ultimately slowing the process in the hive.

The answer to the question, To Exclude or Not Exclude, well, ... that is up to the Beekeeper.

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BY JIM MOLESKI

## Super Timing!

*The optimal time to add honey supers is during the spring and summer when the colony is experiencing strong growth and the likelihood of swarming increases.*

It's recommended to follow the 7/10 rule, which suggests adding a super when the bees have utilized seven out of the ten frames in the current boxes. This ensures that the bees have enough space to continue their work without feeling overcrowded, which can lead to swarming.

### **Oh no! I'm out of supers.**

No worries. If equipment is limited, it's indeed possible to extract honey from the supers you have and then reinstall them. Early spring honey, although lighter in color and not as robust in flavor compared to later harvests, is still a delightful product of your beekeeping efforts. It's a testament to the hard work of the bees and the careful management by the beekeeper.

### **Stay ahead of them.**

Remember, each colony is unique, so it's important to monitor your hives and make decisions based on their individual progress and needs. Regular inspections and understanding the local nectar flow are essential in making timely decisions about super addition.



**SAVE THE DATE:**

## *Summer Picnic*

**Beer, Burgers, Bingo and Bees, What Could Be Better?**

We are pleased to announce the WillBees picnic is returning for members and family members. Meyer Bees of Minooka, IL has kindly offered to host the event.

**Please mark your calendars for July 21, 12 noon to 5pm.**  
*Details to come. Note, there will not be a July member meeting.*







*This month's recipe was found at [Midwest Living](#). While the name doesn't sound all that pleasing, the reviews give it 3.5 stars. Please give it a try and let us know what you think ... better yet bring your pie to our next meeting so we can all try.*

## Honey Vinegar Pie

### Provided

1 9 inch unbaked pie shell  
1 vanilla bean\*  
½ cup heavy cream  
½ cup butter\*\*  
¾ cup sugar  
2 tablespoons white cornmeal  
¼ teaspoon kosher salt  
3 eggs, lightly beaten  
¾ cup honey  
2 teaspoons cider vinegar  
Flaky sea salt  
Unsweetened whipped cream

### Step 1

Preheat oven to 450°. Prick pie shell with a fork. Line pastry with a double thickness of foil. Bake 8 minutes; remove foil. Bake until golden, 6 to 8 minutes more. Place on a baking sheet; set aside. Reduce oven temperature to 365°.

### Step 2

Slice one vanilla bean lengthwise; scrape out seeds with knife. Place bean, seeds and cream in the top of a double boiler. Steep over low heat 20 minutes. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl; discard vanilla bean.

### Step 3

Place butter in the double boiler and melt over medium heat; set aside to cool 5 minutes.

### Step 4

In a large bowl, combine sugar, cornmeal and kosher salt. Stir in melted butter. Whisking rapidly, slowly pour in eggs, followed by the vanilla cream, scraping bowl to get all the vanilla specks. Finally, add honey and cider vinegar.

### Step 5

Place pan with the pie shell on the center oven rack. While continuing to whisk, slowly pour filling into pie shell. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, rotating pan twice. The pie is done when the middle is golden brown, puffed and springy; the edges are set; and the pie has a firm jiggle when gently shaken.

Let cool for 3 hours on a wire rack. Serve with flaky sea salt and whipped cream.

## BEECABULARY

***Time to expand your bee vocabulary.***

*Bring your answers to our next meeting to earn a tasty treat which will surely impress your fellow beekeepers!*

*Queen cup*

*Pupa*

*Stinger*

*Waggle dance*

*Solar wax melter*

*Observation hive*





# BOOK NOOK

**Queen Bees is a 2021 American romantic comedy film directed by Michael Lembeck.**

*Reviewed by Dennis E. Wisnosky*

In my house the big boss does not tolerate movies with sex or violence. WHAT IS LEFT? Dogs, Airplanes and Honeybees. I think that I have exhausted all Amazon Prime movies including dogs and airplanes that are not in war. When our grandkids visit – they live in California, “Not another dog movie, grandpa”. So recently I searched for honeybee movies on Amazon Prime. None that were ‘included’ were appealing. Netflix showed 10 including a season of a comedy entitled “Man Vs Bee”. It was not renewed for season 2.

I chose “Queen Bees”. [View the trailer.](#)

It is not about honeybees or any kind of bees at all. But it is warm and hilariously entertaining. I had no idea what it was about. It is a bit slow to start. An elderly widow – Ellen Burstyn, is clearly entering the realm of difficulty living alone. She eventually agrees to a one month trial at a senior living facility. How could that be funny, or even entertaining?

It is funny throughout. A scene by Loretta Devine that she says was totally off script is gut bustingly funny. Blasts from the past include James Caan – the father in Elf. Ann Margret, Jane Curtin and Christopher Lloyd – the professor in Back to the Future. The grandson played by Mathew Barnes adds more than a touch of warmth.

When Helen – Ellen Burstyn reluctantly matriculates to the Pine Grove retirement community she is determined to live in solitude for the month that it takes to renovate her house from the kitchen fire that she started. She is soon drawn out of her shell by a clique, just like high school, of other women who are known in the establishment as the “Queen Bees”. They don’t exactly run the place as much as do their best to make their golden years platinum with pot, booze, cards, foiling a mugger, and yes – men. That is where a bit of intrigue sets in when Helen finds out that the man interested in her is being paid by management to be interested in her to entice her to stay. He falls for her, not the money and we are left with a happily ever after ending.

By the way, Google Bees and you will find the Bee Gees. Those of you who have learned CPR may know that the song [“Stayin Alive”](#) is taught as the compression beat. I learned it during my rescue diver training. A bigger mystery is how Barry Gibb could still do the Falsetto part well into 6 decades. That voice left me in the middle of my sophomore year in high school chorus. And, I left the chorus.

*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.*



## Laughing at Bees.

THIS MONTH'S BEE ADVOCATE  
IS MIKE PULLINS

My adventures in beekeeping began seven years ago, when my now-mentor Rick Gougis messaged me one winter evening encouraging me to take up beekeeping. (He knew that I was an avid perennial gardener in my little home in Romeoville.) I laughed at the idea at first, chiming back that I live on less than a quarter acre lot surrounded by houses—how on earth is this even a possibility... or safe, for that? Yet he pressed on, insisting that those concerns are a non-issue, so I arranged for a coffee night at Starbucks to hash out this crazy idea.



Rick explained the basics to me over coffee, and I began to get a little curious. Yet before I would go and shell out a few hundred dollars (at least!) for equipment toward a commitment I didn't even know I'd enjoy, I asked if I could spend a season with him being his "apprentice" on his backyard hive inspections in order to get a feel of it. He was happy to get an extra set of hands for his hive inspections. In the meantime, I borrowed a bee biology book from him and spent the rest of the winter reading and studying. Long story short, it didn't take long for me to "get the bug." During that first summer, I decided that the following year I'd take on beekeeping in my yard. As I made that decision, my cousin in the region got word of my upcoming plans; she then contacted me with the news that she wished to donate her entire supply of hives and equipment, informing me that she retired from the hobby when her husband (and beekeeping partner) tragically passed away. It now became my mission to not only manage bees for the love of the insects and nature, but also to honor her late husband's memory by carrying on his passion in my yard.

I now have four to five colonies in my backyard. I really wanted to stick with two, but the demands for my honey became so high that I needed to expand in order to keep people supplied until at least Christmas each year! With all the highs and lows of keeping bees for six years, I find it so rewarding and meaningful to get away from it all, observe, and make plans to keep them as healthy as possible. As I occasionally walk through my nearby forest preserve, I'm always excited to see my foragers working the woodland flowers and goldenrod, integrating with the ecosystem and sending word to their fellow workers about their discoveries.

# Mark your calendars

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

*May 11*  
**Field Days  
Bee Install**  
BEAU WRIGHT

*May*  
**Honey Bee  
Communications**  
MIKE PULINS

*May*  
**Queen Marking  
Hands-on**  
DAVE MEYER  
6:30

*June*  
**Double Nucs  
& Making Nucs**  
ANNE FREY

*July*  
**Summer  
Picnic**  
JULY 21

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ATTENTION: WILLBEES NEEDS YOU!

The Will County Beekeepers Association is working to spread the news about honey bees at several community events, and we need your help. We are looking for several volunteer members to join us at the events to share what you know! We are also looking for another member to join the awareness committee to help coordinate our events.

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 knowledge to share.

Visit our booth at the following events:

#### **Will County Fair**

**Wednesday – Sunday, August 21-25, 2024**

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 Sue Gregory, WillBees Treasurer at [susangregory418@gmail.com](mailto:susangregory418@gmail.com)*

#### **WillBees Field Days**

**Saturday, May 11 at 10am – 12pm**

Beau will be leading our first Field Day event at:

*Plainfield Township Office  
22525 W Lockport Street  
Plainfield, IL 60544*

We will be discussing 3-4 hive types in addition to transferring 1 or 2 colonies from Beau's home apiary to this new educational apiary. The location is in a low area that does get wet, so it is advised to wear appropriate footwear. Please note that protective gear must be worn and a Waiver & Assumption of Risks Agreement form must be signed.

# 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.

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## **SWOBA – Southwestern Ohio Beekeepers Association**

Looking to learn more? SWOBA is pleased to have the following free webinars:

Sun, Aug 25 (7:30 PM – 8:30 PM)

**Mrs. Grace Kunkel, MS.**

[Register here](#)

Sun, Sep 29 (7:30 PM – 8:30 PM)

**Mr. Dewey Caron. Ph.D.**

[Register here](#)

Wed, Oct 30 (7:30 PM – 8:30 PM)

**Mrs. Michelle Flenniken, Ph.D.**

[Register here](#)

Sun, Nov 17 (7:30 PM – 8:30 PM)

**Mrs. Rebecca Melton Masterman Ph.D. Meeting**

[Register here](#)

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## **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.

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## **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](mailto:james@jamesgardenbees.com) for more information.

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# ODDS & ENDS

## **Meyer Bees Bee Packages**

3 pound bee packages with a queen are available starting at \$130 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](mailto:dave@meyerbees.com), or 815-521-9116 or visit their website at [meyerbees.com](http://meyerbees.com)



### **Way to represent!**

A big thank you to Keith Meiser and Pat Roberts for representing WillBees at STEM Fest. The event was held at the White Oak Library and had a record turnout of 2,188 attendees, probably due to WillBees being present.

### **And the winners are ...**

We are pleased to announce that at our March meeting Dominic Egizio, Jane Bushong and Joe Ardolino had winning tickets for the Beekeeping event with Randy Oliver, while Karen Kay won the bee package raffle. Congratulations to all the winners.



### **Pat Costion – Honorary Membership**

We are awarding Pat with an honorary membership for the years of service she provided as a WillBees board member. Thank you Pat, and we hope to see you throughout the year!

### **Epipen – Play it safe and save**

Looking to get an Epipen at a reduced cost? Please [visit here](#) to see if you're eligible.

### **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.

**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.

### **Service animals and pets at monthly member meetings**

WillBees welcomes all leashed service animals to our monthly member meetings. We are asking members to not bring other animals. Thanks for your cooperation.

### **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

Please email [willbees-board@willbees.org](mailto:willbees-board@willbees.org) with anything you'd like to share today.

### **Update your calendar for our upcoming WillBees meetings:**

Wednesdays at 7pm:

May 15, Jun 19, Aug 21, Sep 18, Oct 16, Nov 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)

