

THE BEE SPACE



WILL COUNTY
BEEKEEPERS
ASSOCIATION

THE PUBLICATION OF WILL COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION • NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2025

PLEASE JOIN US FOR NEXT MEETING:

November 19 at 7 pm
Will County Farm Bureau
100 Manhattan Rd
Joliet, IL 60433

FEATURED TOPICS:

- The Golden Spoon Honey Competition
- How to judge honey
- Elections
- **Free Pizza!**

THIS MONTH IN YOUR HIVES

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

- Pull all remaining supers, harvest and store them using a repellent to protect against moths
- Provide final mite treatments
- Place candy boards on top of the upper brood box for emergency feedings
- Add insulation to hives and close off open screen bottom boards
- Make sure mouse guards are secure
- Keep an eye on hives over the winter to make sure entrances are clear and not clogged with dead bees.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HIVE

Additional information regarding hives management for November/December was kindly provided by John Leibinger. Click to download.

[Chores of the Month – November](#)

[Chores of the Month – December](#)



It's back, the Golden Spoon award!

ARE YOU READY TO BE A WORLD CLASS HONEY CHAMPION?

Honey tasting is back and here's your chance to show off how well your bees did. At our November meeting, bring a small unmarked jar of your best honey. If your fellow beekeepers choose yours, you will be awarded the prestigious Golden Spoon Award plaque!





BY PATRICK SCHAB

Honey, a gift from the heart.

As we head into the holiday season, something struck me when I was thinking about gifts. Something so obvious that it almost seems silly, considering I've been a beekeeper for 10 years.

They say that a homemade gift is one from the heart. Well, how about a nice jar of honey? I already have regular customers who buy honey for gifts, and they said the recipients start asking well in advance of the big day. So I know it's appreciated.

As a kid growing up, I wanted the same stuff that all the other kids wanted... video game cartridges, slotted race cars, radio-controlled cars, model airplanes, and whatever the latest trendy item was. As a kid, getting gifts was a time of hoping and wondering what a good boy gets after a full year of waiting. After all, as a kid, I didn't have money to buy anything... My toy happiness was completely in the hands of my parents. My parents always threw in a few oddball gifts that they thought I would enjoy, but my crooked smile said otherwise. So let me say this, if I got a jar of honey as a kid... that wouldn't have given me much Christmas cheer.

Fast forward 45 years, as an adult, I think that would be a pretty sweet gift, knowing it was from an actual local beekeeper.

As an older middle-aged man, "wanting stuff" isn't really a thing. If I wanted something during the year, I don't wait like when I was 6 years old. Because of that, I don't provide a "wish list," and because of that, I've been on the receiving end of some pretty interesting gifts, like a shiny and silky disco shirt from my brother, and a shoe buffer from my mother-in-law. That crooked kid smile came back one more time. Considering I only wear dress shoes at funerals and weddings, and those are far and few between, I never used that... or the disco shirt.

But when my brother made me a CD of several bands that I liked, that meant something.

Several years ago, after presenting at one of our meetings, a gentleman came up to me and handed me a dozen eggs from his chickens. Now that was cool.

I guess to me, a gift from the heart, knowing that there was effort beyond going to the store and spending a few bucks, really means something. I know my brother spent time combing through his

music library to find just the right songs for that CD... and that gentleman... I'm sure keeping chickens is no cakewalk. So giving up a dozen means he gave up the rewards of a lot of effort.



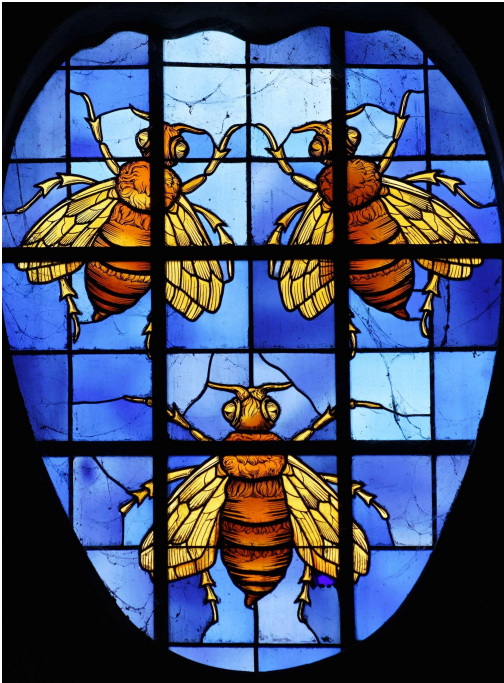
Giving honey as a gift goes way back, well before any of us were around. Not just as a "nice thing to do," but for its value... when honey truly was something of great value. What amazes me is that in Ancient Egypt, honey was considered so valuable that it was often given as tribute to pharaohs and used as payment for taxes. It was also placed in tombs as a gift for the deceased to enjoy in the afterlife—jars of honey have been found in Egyptian tombs that are still edible after thousands of years.

In ancient Greece and Rome, honey cakes and honey itself were traditional gifts to the gods, left at temples and altars. Romans also gave honey as wedding gifts, as it symbolized fertility and

sweetness in marriage. The term "honeymoon" may have originated from the tradition of giving newlyweds a month's supply of mead (honey wine).

During Medieval Europe, honey was a prestigious diplomatic gift between royalty and nobility because sugar was extremely rare and expensive. Monasteries that kept bees would present honey and beeswax candles as valuable gifts to visiting dignitaries and church officials.

The consistent theme is that honey's rarity, preservation qualities, medicinal properties, and natural sweetness made it a luxury item symbolizing wealth, thoughtfulness, and good wishes across virtually every ancient culture.



Today, we can go to any grocery store, pick some up, and not think of it being rare or precious. But our honey... that is truly a different matter. We put our heart and soul and a whole lot of work into every drop, for a few pounds every year, which means the honey we harvest is of great value. It really is no different than granny spending days on crocheting a blanket as a gift to a newborn grandchild.

So, giving honey is a gift from the heart with great value. We all know the effort that goes into making honey, even for our bees. After all, it takes a million flowers to make one pound of honey. It takes us 10 months of managing them to harvest that one pound. Giving that as a gift means you're giving a piece of all your hard work to make someone happy... and that's pretty sweet.

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!*

*Eusocial
Drift
Retinue*

*Retinue
Nectar Robbing
Hygroscopic*





This holiday recipe comes from [Just a Pinch](#). According to the website, they are more a dunking cookie with a nice mellow honey and spice flavor.

German Xmas Honey Cakes

Cookie

1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup molasses
3/4 cup brown sugar (packed)
1 large egg
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest, grated
2 3/4 cups flour (sifted)
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon, ground
1 teaspoon cloves, ground
1 teaspoon allspice, ground
1 teaspoon nutmeg, ground
1/3 cup chopped nuts
1/3 cup citron, cut up (optional)

Icing ([Recipe](#))

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup confectioners' sugar

STEP 1

In a small pan, mix honey and molasses and bring to a boil. Once to a boil, take off the heat. Once cooled, stir in brown sugar, egg, lemon juice and lemon zest. Mix well.

STEP 2

Sift together and stir in flour, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, allspice and nutmeg mixing well. Mix in chopped nuts, and cut up citron (if you prefer). Form dough into a ball, wrap well with plastic wrap and chill overnight.

STEP 4

You are going to work the dough a little at a time as you want to keep the remainder chilled while you are working a portion. Lightly flour your surface and use a small amount about baseball size (be sure to put the rest of your dough back in the fridge). Roll out 1/4 inch thick and cut into oblong 1 1/2 x 2 1/2 inch pieces.

STEP 5

Place 1 inch apart on a greased baking sheet. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until when touched lightly, no imprint remains.

STEP 6

While cookies are baking you will want to make your glazing icing. Boil together sugar and water to 230 degrees. The liquid should look almost like a thread when drizzled. Remove from heat. Stir in confectioners sugar. (When icing gets sugary, reheat slightly, adding a little water until clear again.)

STEP 7

Brush hot icing thinly over cookies the minute they are out of the oven. Then quickly remove from baking sheet. Cool and store to mellow.

Send us your favorite recipe with a picture of your creation!



BY CHARLOTTE ANDERSON

Beeswax Uses: Home, Beauty & DIY

Beeswax is one of nature's most impressive gifts. It is made by honeybees to build their home – but we humans have come up with some awesome uses for beeswax too. In this guide, I'll share my favorite ways to use beeswax around the house, in the kitchen, shop, garden, and even for DIY beauty. for every facet of your life.

As a beekeeper, I tend to have a lot of excess wax on hand. This natural wax is special – beeswax is only made by bees. It is a renewable resource with thousands of applications.

PRACTICAL USES FOR BEESWAX IN THE HOME

I always say – a bit of raw beeswax is a terrible thing to waste. No, seriously – it is a remarkable versatile medium to work with. You can mix it with other waxes or oils – or melt it and shape into new creations. This makes it a perfect substance to use for many home applications.

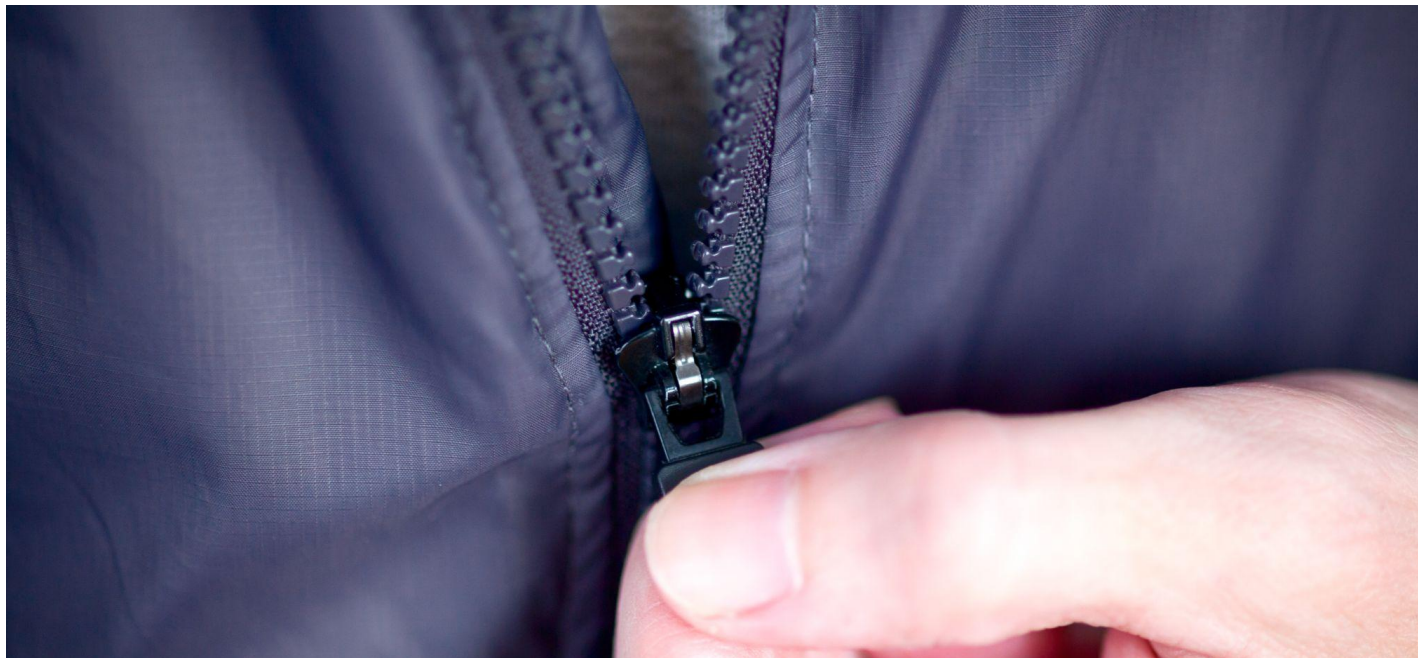
Making Beeswax Candles

For all candle lovers, the [benefits of beeswax candles](#) are very appealing. They burn clean and for a long time. Maybe it's time to melt some wax and learn [how to make beeswax candles](#). It is not hard to do and you can use many different types of molds and techniques.

Lubricate Sticky Wooden Drawers

Do you have a problem with sticky drawers? No, seriously. I am of course referring to the pull out drawers of your wooden furniture. Take a small block of wax and rub it on the runners of the bottom of the drawer. This should provide enough lubrication to permit the drawer to slide easily.





Make Zippers Less Sticky

Do you have a favorite coat with a zipper problem? Sticky zippers can be so annoying. One of my [beekeeper suits](#) is prone to having a difficult zipper. When this happens, I use a small piece of wax to rub along the teeth of the zipper. Works like a charm and it will work for your favorite coat too!

Make Natural Furniture Polish

Creating a furniture polish has been one of the most popular uses for beeswax for hundreds of years. You can make your own with this [beeswax furniture polish recipe](#). It is quick and easy to make. Make sure your wax is free of dirt etc. before you begin.

DIY Air Fresheners

Do you enjoy fragrant wax melts? Avoid the nasty chemicals present in many commercial varieties. You can make your own all [natural beeswax melts](#) using essential oils to freshen up any room. A variation on melts-combine two renewable waxes together in these [scented beeswax and soy tarts](#). The use of essential oils or fragrance oils opens the door to many possibilities. These [DIY herbal wax sachets](#) are just right to freshen up a small space and so easy to make. They can be very pretty too with the addition of dried flowers.

HELPFUL BEESWAX TIPS FOR THE KITCHEN

Beeswax has been used for hundreds of years in canning and preserving food. Traditionally, once the jam or jelly was finished – a thick coat of wax was applied directly over the food. This helped prevent spoilage. I still do this if I have a 1/2 jar of jam and don't want to bother with the lid. (I must admit that I also put it in the refrigerator because I am not as fearless as Grandma was in her day.) More uses:

Beeswax Food Wraps

Our culture is finally getting the message about our exorbitant use of plastics. Instead of adding to our ever growing landfills, consider [making your own reusable beeswax wraps](#). Reusable food wraps and help save you money and help you produce less waste.

Homemade Spoon Butter

Give your wooden utensils a spa treatment with this recipe for [homemade beeswax spoon butter](#). This "spoon" or wood butter is a great way to protect all the wooden implements in your kitchen. You can use it on cutting boards too.

Natural Non-Stick Coating

A small amount of wax can be rubbed inside your favorite frying pan or sauce pan. The pan should be slightly warm to aid in wax transfer. Buff gently and you will have an all natural non stick surface for cooking.

Easier Grill Clean Up

Use warm beeswax for a quick rub on your grilling rack (before using it). A light coat of wax here works to avoid a messy buildup of food residue. Do not do this with the grill fired up – beeswax does have a flash point.

HANDY SHOP & GARAGE BEESWAX HACKS

Consider keeping a small block of beeswax in your garage or shop. We keep a small block of wax in our shop near the wood screws. Trying to insert a wood screw into a hard piece of old wood can be difficult even with an electric drill driver. Rubbing the tip of the screw over the wax block makes the job a lot easier. You can do even more:

Waterproofing

One of the often overlooked uses for beeswax is as a water-proofer. Do you have an older pair of work boots? Maybe they still have a little use in them but they leak in rainy weather? I hate wet feet! Melted wax may be the answer and help you get a few more steps out of those boots. Use [beeswax for waterproofing](#) for old hiking boots and keep your toes dry.

DIY Natural Fire Starters

If you enjoy backpacking or camping, you can easily make simple light-weight fire starters. Brush melted wax onto small squares of cardboard. Let cool and pack. These are easy to carry, don't take up much space and will help you start your next fire – anywhere. Another quick way to start your campfire – DIY [homemade beeswax fire starters](#) – you can even give them as a gift as the pine cones are so cute!

BEESWAX FOR NATURAL BEAUTY & WELLNESS

The natural properties of beeswax make it such a great ingredient for cosmetics and beauty recipes. [Using beeswax for skin](#) care is nothing new as it has been used as such for centuries. In fact, you can make your own [DIY face moisturizing cream with honey and beeswax](#) and many more projects.



Making Beeswax Lip Balm

Honestly, it is so easy to [make beeswax lip balm](#), everyone should be doing it. Just add 2 other ingredients to achieve the perfect consistency and your lips will be smacking with joy. When I create lip balm, I normally add [Palm Oil](#) and Sweet Almond Oil. Then, you can pour the warm liquid into [tubes or lip balm pots](#)! You can add a few drops of peppermint essential oil if you wish to give your lip balm a buzz.

Soothing Cracked Heels

Human skin and beeswax recipes are a match made in heaven. The moisturizing properties of this natural wax help soothe itchy, dry skin and promote healing. [Make your own beeswax balm](#) and soothe those cracked heels-especially in Winter. You can add some [magnesium flakes](#) if you wish (optional). Rub the cream on your heels at night and put on a pair of socks.

Body Butter Recipe

Ready to treat yourself to a special all natural moisturizing experience. Here it is – the only [body butter recipe with beeswax](#) you will ever need. This lavender scented recipe produces a luxurious whipped body butter. However, if you like the lighter feel of homemade lotion, [make your own](#)

[beeswax lotion](#). It is exactly what you need when your skin wants some extra attention. And, for a portable moisturizer that is fun to use, you can try these [DIY beeswax lotion bars](#). They are adorable when made in the [bee theme silicone molds](#).

Natural Salve Recipes

Beeswax a major ingredient in many salves, creams and ointments. From promoting healing for burns to preventing infections, you can create a natural soothing product. This easy [DIY honey burn salve](#) is a breeze to make and nice to have on hand for minor burns and scrapes. Containing aloe it is very soothing. Another great herbal salve to make is [calendula salve using beeswax](#) and infused calendula oil.

Looking for a natural product that may help achy joints and sprains? [Herbalist recommend dandelion salve made with beeswax](#) and infused oil. It is so easy to make and inexpensive too! Finally a use for all those little yellow flowers in the yard.

FINAL THOUGHTS

These are just a few of the ways to **use beeswax in your home**, shop, garden or hobbies.

Master Beekeeper, [Charlotte Anderson](#) shares her love of all things honeybee. Her mission is spreading awareness of the importance of honey bees.

BEE ADVOCATE

On the call

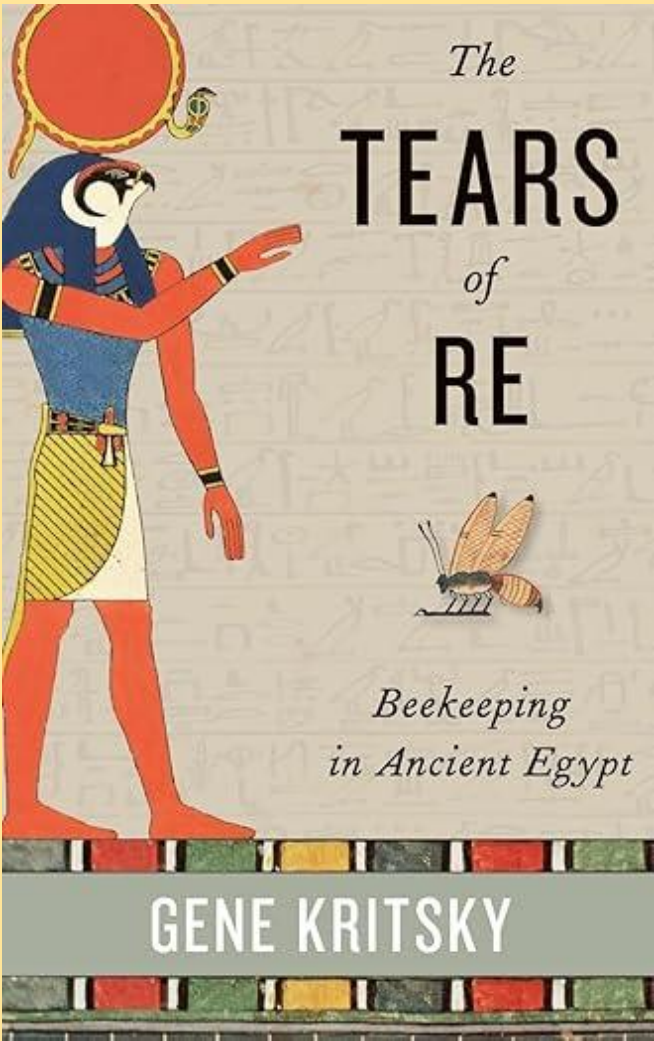
THIS MONTH'S BEE ADVOCATE IS JOE ARDOLINO

Joe wears several hats for our club, in addition to managing his 4 hives. For the last year, he's served as our VP, providing valuable insights during our meetings. He has given several presentations at our member meetings, including one on swarm traps. He's even stepped in multiple times to lead our meetings when our president is out of town.





But Joe has really shined as "the man on the other end of the phone line," fielding calls about swarms, cut-outs, and other bee-related issues from our communities. Not only does he answer the calls, but he's also hopped on his motorcycle to visit homes and help evaluate bee situations. He is genuinely concerned and eager to help anyone who calls. Joe's VP term ends this year, but he's made a lasting impact on our group. Thanks, Joe!



BOOK NOOK

The Tears of Re: Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt

By Gene Kritsky, Ph.D.
Reviewed by Julia Copeland

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Gene Kritsky's *The Tears of Re: Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt*, published by Oxford University Press. This concise 133-page volume deserves a permanent spot in every beekeeper's library, as it thoroughly documents the oldest evidence of beekeeping through reliefs, artifacts, and hieratic writing found in Egyptian pyramids, tombs, and temples.

The book traces beekeeping's evolution from honey-hunting to hive management, exploring how ancient Egyptians used honey and beeswax for edible, medicinal, and religious purposes. The title references Egyptian mythology, where the sun god Re's tears became honeybees upon touching earth—a belief deeply embedded in their culture.

Kritsky, a Fulbright Scholar who photographed most of the book's images during his 1981-82 travels to Egypt, guides readers chronologically through Egyptian dynasties from the Neolithic Period (5500-3100 BCE) through the Roman Era (30 BCE-337 CE). The text reveals how beekeeping was central to Egyptian economy and society, with honey serving as "liquid gold"—a commodity used for barter and trade before currency existed.

Highlights include detailed analyses of beekeeping reliefs showing stacked horizontal hives, beekeepers smoking hives, removing honeycomb, and processing honey. The book documents titles like "Chief Beekeeper" appearing on amulets and scarabs, indicating the high social status of beekeepers. Eight pages of full-color photographs showcase remarkable artifacts documenting apiculture's evolution.

Kritsky concludes with chapters on honey's economic value, its healing properties, and its religious significance in mummification practices and afterlife offerings. For beekeepers interested in the ancient roots of their craft, this meticulously detailed book offers a fascinating journey through apiculture history without leaving home.

Read the full review by clicking [here](#). Thank you Julia for your review!

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.

ON-GOING ED

UPCOMING CONFERENCES and WEBINARS

Sustainable Beekeepers Guild of Michigan ([view website for details](#))

November 20th, 2025 6:30PM EST

Bob Binnie, Looking to the Future with Resistance Breeding

December 10th, 2025 6:30PM EST
Chris Baldwin, Successful Treatment Free Beekeeping in a Migratory Operation

January 15th, 2026 6:30PM EST
Dr. Jeff Harris, The Reliability of SMR/VSH Scoring

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 breakfastwithbees@gmail.com for more information.

Worth a Read

[Bee and butterfly numbers are falling, even in undisturbed forests](#)

Bee and butterfly numbers are falling, even in undisturbed forests

[Beekeeping Today Podcast](#)

The podcast for the latest beekeeping news, information and entertainment for today's beekeeper. Hosts Jeff Ott and Becky Masterman bring you interviews and commentary helping you become a more informed and knowledgeable beekeeper.

ODDS & ENDS



The Golden Spoon Award

Did you harvest some really tasty honey? Then enter the Prestigious Golden Spoon Award honey competition which will be held during our member appreciation meeting in November. See our past winners on our brand new award plaque as you enter our member meetings.

Meyer Bees

The Meyer Bees beekeeping supply showroom in Minooka is open 5 days a week 10am - 4pm closed Wednesday and Sunday. 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>

Varroa mite management tools

Randy Oliver's Varroa Model on the Web

This tools helps the beekeeper plan treatment options in order to avoid colony “crash” in the off-season. <https://chickab>

Honey Bee Health Coalition Mite Management Tool

<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroatool/>

Share what you know

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

- Review of a book or article in a journal you read
- An educational opportunity that you are aware of
- 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 for 2026:

Wednesdays at 7pm:

Jan 21, Feb 18, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July picnic, Aug 19, Sep 16, Oct 21, Nov 18

BOARD MEMBERS

Patrick Schab, President
Joe Ardolino, Vice President
Craig Theimer, Treasurer
Fran Miller, Secretary

DIRECTORS (years remaining on term):

Keith Meiser (0)
Beau Wright (1)
Felicia Akman (2)

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