



WILL COUNTY
BEEKEEPERS
ASSOCIATION

THE PUBLICATION OF WILL COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION • MARCH / APRIL 2026

PLEASE JOIN US FOR NEXT MEETING:

March 18, 2026 at 7 pm
Will County Farm Bureau
100 Manhattan Rd
Joliet, IL 60433

FEATURED TOPICS:

- Reading “dead-outs”
- State of the Union (Beekeeping) - Chad McGinnis
- 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 bee 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. 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 donating the bee package.



Welcome Spring

BY Keith Meiser



*Spring is (almost) upon us.
Time to get ready!*

You can be forgiven for thinking the pressure is off now that the bees are flying and by now they are likely bringing in bundles of pollen to feed the new larva. I know I do. The reality is that our workloads are about to accelerate.

First, this is the dangerous time when otherwise strong colonies suddenly and unexpectedly die from starvation as they wager all of their stores to build population to take advantage of the spring flowers. Without unduly disturbing them, check for reserve honey (I like to lift the bottom at the back of the hive to determine how heavy it is). Emergency feeding may be necessary with sugar syrup, or in a pinch, just bulk granulated sugar

(refined white sugar, no partially refined “healthy” sugar that contains indigestibles that will kill them).

Rather than open them up now to check for brood (and possibly chill them inadvertently) you can get a hint of the activity by watching the bees that are foraging. If there are a lot of bees flying AND many bringing in pollen, I would be confident the colony is queenrite and there are plenty of tiny mouths to feed. On the other hand, if another colony is weakly flying and not collecting much if any pollen, there may be a problem with their queen. Unfortunately it is still far too early to replace the queen or let them raise their own from a donated egg.

Now is the time to plan your year and beekeeping needs. It takes time to order and assemble equipment, and prepare your used equipment for the honeyflow. As soon as you are certain that the bees have survived or you have replenished some casualties, you must prepare to prevent swarms. By the time you notice queen cells, the workers have already decided that they will swarm. You don't want to get a panicked call from your neighbor that there are MILLIONS OF BEES hanging at the top of a tree and have to scramble to collect equipment to catch them. It generally takes some drastic measures to prevent a swarm at this point, especially if you want to harvest some honey from them.

It is a good time to do some reading and other educational activities. Take advantage of WillBees resources and get all you can from attending our meetings. Check our calendar (<https://willbees.org/events/>) for hands-on Field Days at members' apiaries. We have a wealth of knowledge amongst our members and a lot of timely information in our upcoming meetings. I hope to see you there.

Time to expand your bee vocabulary.
Bring your answers to our next meeting to earn a tasty treat and to impress your fellow beekeepers!

Bait Hive
Hornet
Buzz-run

Scout Bees
Tremble Dance
Nectar Receiver



Honey Pear Upside Down Cake

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

YIELD LD: Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

For Topping:

- 1 - pear (Bartlett or Anjou),
peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 T - all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. - grated orange peel
- 1 tsp. - ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup - honey
- 2 T - course ground cornmeal

For Cake:

- 1 cup - all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. - baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. - baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. - salt
- 1/2 cup - honey
- 1 - egg
- 2 T - butter or pareve margarine,
melted
- 2 T - fresh orange juice

DIRECTIONS

Arrange pear slices in the bottom of a greased 9-inch pie pan. Sprinkle with flour, orange peel, and cinnamon; drizzle evenly with honey.

In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; mix well.

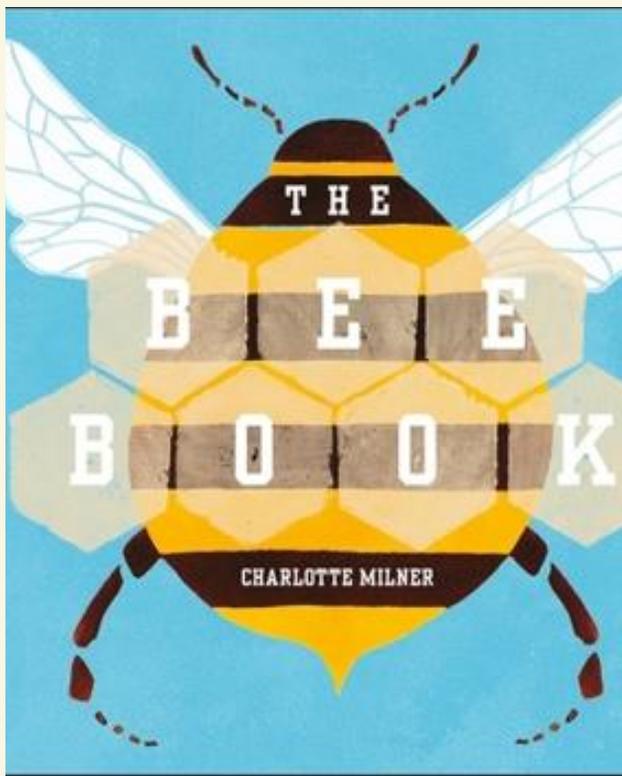
In a small bowl, combine honey, egg, butter and orange juice; mix well. Add to flour mixture, stirring until just blended. Spread mixture evenly over pears.

Top with course ground cornmeal.

Bake at 375°F for 30 to 35 minutes or until browned. Let cool for 5 minutes on a wire rack; invert onto a platter. Serve warm.



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



BOOK NOOK

The Bee Book

By Charlotte Milner

Published by DK, Hardcover – 2018

Part of: Conservation for Kids

\$12.10 Amazon

Reviewed by Pamela Meiser

The Bee Book by Charlotte Milner is an excellent resource for beekeepers who are frequently asked questions by curious neighbors, friends, and family members.

Although written with younger readers in mind, the book serves as a clear, visually engaging introduction to honeybees and the wider world of bees.

Organized in a question-and-answer format, the book pairs concise explanations with vibrant, infographic-style illustrations. Topics include honeybee anatomy, the life cycle from egg to forager, pollination, and the distinct roles of workers, queens, and drones. The visuals make complex ideas easy to grasp and ideal for sharing with non-beekeepers.

Milner opens with an overview of the roughly 20,000 bee species found worldwide, highlighting both solitary and social bees. One memorable example is Wallace's giant bee, native to Indonesia, which can reach 1.5 inches in length and nests in termite mounds—an engaging fact that underscores the diversity of the bee world.

Notably, this is one of the few illustrated books that clearly explains how honeybees survive winter, the mechanics and purpose of swarming, common honeybee predators, and how creating habitat for bees also supports other wildlife.

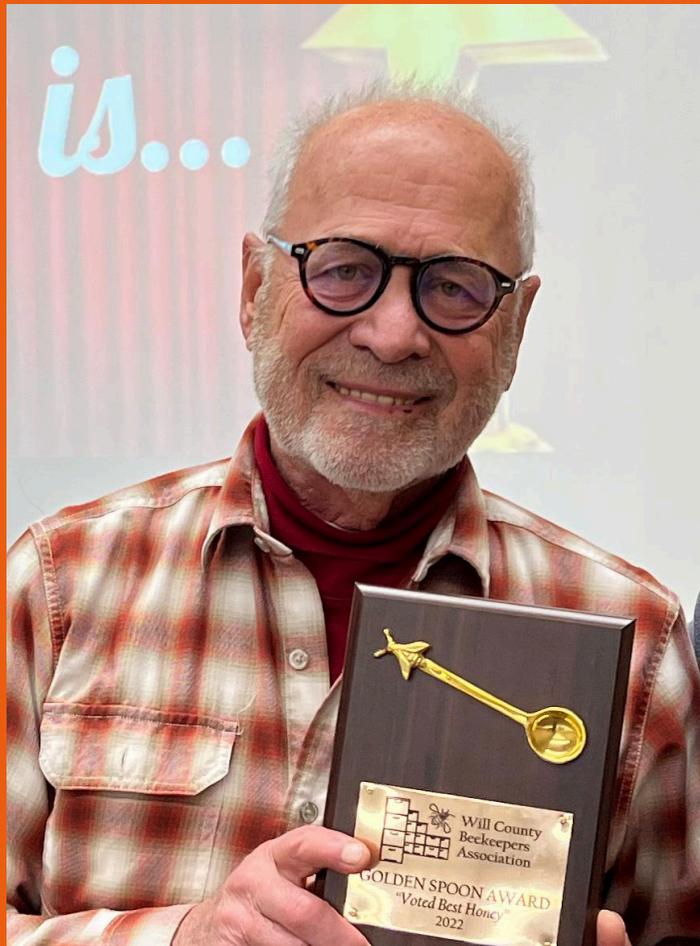
The book concludes with practical suggestions, including lists of seasonally flowering plants, ideas for involving others in bee conservation, and instructions for building homes to attract solitary bees.

Overall, The Bee Book is a well-designed, informative title that beekeepers may find especially useful as an outreach and education tool. I highly recommend it for anyone looking to explain bees—and their importance—to a broader audience.

Pam Meiser, K-5 Teacher Librarian

A bit of Everything!

THIS MONTH'S BEE ADVOCATE IS DENNIS WISNOSKY.



Where do I start? Dennis Wisnosky has been a prominent member of Will County Beekeepers for a few years now, sometimes giving presentations at our meetings and sometimes driving major changes behind the scenes as V.P. and board member. His accomplishments include presentation about his Slovenian hives, numerous articles and book reviews on our Willbees.org website, and a humorous review of a special Korean Propolis Shampoo (with help from his loyal dog Tippy). Dennis was also the winner of our inaugural **Golden Spoon** honey competition!

Dennis has hosted a number of Field Days events at his beautiful 3 acre lake and surrounding prairie in Plainfield IL where we have examined his hives and spent time relaxing and discussing beekeeping with refreshments at his covered pavilion.



Thermal Camera Rental

Check your winter hive status ... without opening them up.

We have a new rental tool for all our members, a thermal camera. For rental information, please contact Fran at fron1522@gmail.com or 815-409-6974.

Mark your calendars

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

March 18
**Reading
"dead-outs"**
Dave Meyers

April 15
**Member
Meeting**

March 18
**Speaker Chad
McGinnis**

April 15
**Package Bee
Drawing**

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 11, 2026: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Fest

The event will take place at Romeoville Library, 201 Normantown Road, Romeoville, IL

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

[Click for more information](#)

Saturday, April 25, 2026: Bolingbrook Arbor Day Celebration

75 Briarcliff Road, Bolingbrook

11:00 am – 2:00 pm [Click for more information](#)

Wednesday – Sunday, August 26-30, 2026: 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

For 2026, Winter classes will be remote via Zoom. The classes will be 4 hours long in 2 - 2 hour sessions on consecutive days and will cover honeybee biology and life cycle, pests and diseases, foraging habits, and beekeeping equipment and techniques.

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

Beginning Beekeeping Classes with Beau Wright

He is offering several Saturday and evening sessions. For more info see [his flyer](#).

Joliet Junior College — Basic Beginning Beekeeping I with Jim Lindau - TBA

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.

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 the watch: Update on the Yellow-Legged Hornet in North America

See how team working to stop the hornet invasion. [Click here](#).

Worth the read: Put some wiggle in your mowing. Bees will love it

Cutting grass in ever-changing curves—rather than straight lines—could boost the abundance and diversity of pollinators. [Click here](#).

ODDS & ENDS

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, Carnolian, 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

Smith Talbot Apiaries

Smith Talbot Apiaries is currently taking orders for 2026 NUCS. The cost is \$165.00 These are 5 frame NUCS with a marked queen. These NUCS are made up of bees that overwintered here in Illinois. We are happy to report we had a GREAT survival rate despite the bitter cold!! If you have a child/teenager interested in beekeeping please call for the discounted price!

Call 708-602-6764

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:

Mar 18, Apr 15, May 20, Jun 17, Aug 19, Sep 16, Oct 21, Nov 18

BOARD MEMBERS

Keith Meiser, President

Anthony Merkel, Vice President

Craig Theimer, Treasurer

Fran Miller, Secretary

DIRECTORS (years remaining on term):

Beau Wright (1)

Felicia Akman (2)

Samantha Merkel (3)