



THE BEE SPACE



WILL COUNTY
BEEKEEPERS
ASSOCIATION

THE PUBLICATION OF WILL COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION • MAY / JUNE 2026

PLEASE JOIN US FOR NEXT MEETING:

May 20, 2026

6:30 pm: Queen marking session

7:00 pm: Meeting starts

Will County Farm Bureau

100 Manhattan Rd

Joliet, IL 60433

FEATURED TOPICS:

- Medicinal Products of the Hive with Emily Mueller (Via Zoom)
- American Foulbrood in Illinois with Chad McGinnis
- Summer picnic discussion

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 RAFFLES – A COMPLETE HIVE

Willbees is raffling a 8 or 10 frame hive with frames and foundation for only \$5 per entry or 5 for \$20. Tickets will be offered at the May 20th meeting and pulled at the conclusion of evening.

Must be present!





Confessions of a queen killer...

This has been an unusual spring this year. Even though I thought the weather would retard the colony development, I was completely wrong. Two of my three colonies survived the winter, but not the ones I expected. The colony I thought was queenless last fall not only wasn't, but they swarmed in early April. I had purchased a package that was to be the source for the observation hive I take to the WillBees exhibits, but due to an error of mine in placement of the feeder, they built comb over the queen cage and she expired (dead queen #1).

The "queenless" hive sort of came to the rescue as I was going to take some combs to populate the observation hive but only found sealed queen cells and no queen. So "go with what you got", I took a frame with 2 queen cells, and that was the display for the STEM Fest in Romeoville.

The "queenless" colony had swarmed and they took over the hive that had died during the winter. I purchased another queen for the package bees and another to take to the STEM Fest to show a queen to the kids, dutifully feeding a drop of water to them twice a day.

The observation hive turned out to be interesting after all as I got to watch the virgin queen shortly after she emerged (but missed the killing of the other virgin). She moved around the combs the first day, the other workers not paying much attention to her, before the weather cleared up for her to fly. A few days later she was just hanging out and the workers were showing her some attention but she hadn't started laying yet. The day of the Bolingbrook Arbor Day outing, she started laying.

The package hive by then had released the 2nd queen and I removed the cage and closed them up. I was still keeping the 3rd queen in the paper bag and watering her and the attendants twice a day. A few days later, some of the attendants had died so I decided since I didn't have an immediate need for her, I would get some nurse bees to replenish the dead attendants and see if anyone needed a queen.

A few hours later after it had warmed up a little, I decided to get a few workers to put in with the caged queen. I first checked the package hive since it was right against the back of the house. I had installed them on empty combs and there was now a fair amount of sealed brood. But something didn't seem right... There was sealed brood, but no larvae or eggs! I searched the every frame (twice) but no sign of the queen (dead queen #2). Frustrated but knowing I had the other queen in the house that could introduce, I went inside to get her. There on the counter next to the sink was the queen cage, The last worker had expired and as I looked closer, the queen was also dead (dead queen #3)!

Not the first queens I have lost but 3 out of 3 is as bad as it gets. But there is a new queen in the observation hive!

- Keith Meiser



Recipe courtesy of Tova du Plessis of Essen Bakery in Philadelphia

Honey Challah

INGREDIENTS

1 cup - water, lukewarm (90-100°F)

3 1/4 tsp. - instant yeast

1/2 cup - canola oil

2 - eggs

6 T - honey

1 tsp. - kosher salt

5 1/4 cup + 3 T - bread flour

DIRECTIONS

Combine yeast and water in the bowl of a stand mixer and allow to sit for 5-10 minutes to activate.

Add canola oil, eggs, honey, bread flour and salt and mix with a dough hook on speed 1 until the dough has started to form.

Increase to speed 2 and mix for 4 to 5 minutes, or until smooth and elastic.

Place the dough in an oiled bowl or container and cover. Leave dough in a warm spot for about 1.5 to 2 hours or until doubled in size.

Turn out dough on an oiled surface and divide in half. Shape each loaf into a three- or four-strand braid. Place on lined sheet pan and cover with plastic or a dishtowel.

Preheat convection oven to 325°F or regular oven to 350°F.

Allow the challah to rise until almost doubled in size. This can take up to an hour depending on the temperature of the room.

Brush the challah with egg wash, sprinkle your favorite seeds on top and bake for about 30 minutes, or until golden brown on top and bottom and the exterior feels firm.

Mark your calendars

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

May 20

**Medicinal Products
of The Hive** with
Emily Mueller
ZOOM

May 17

Field Day
@ Grace and Mark Youell
Apiary

May 20

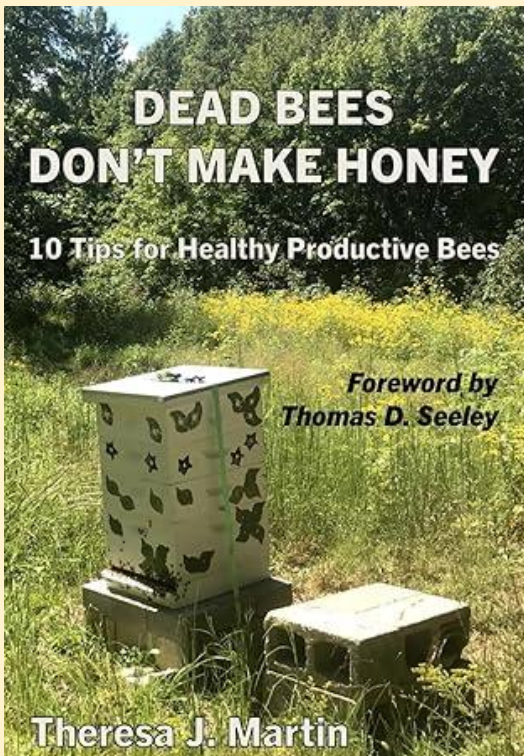
Drone Marking
WITH DAVE MEYER
@ 6:30

June 17

**Member
Meeting**

July

**WillBees
Annual Picnic**
TBA



BOOK NOOK

Dead Bees Don't Make Honey

10 Tips for Healthy Productive Bees

Theresa J Martin - March 2024 [Amazon](#) \$19.99

Reviewed By Dennis Wisnosky

If Thomas Seeley had not written the foreword for this book, I would have dismissed it entirely. As an engineer and a scientist- BS Physics, MS Electrical Engineering and another MS, with 10 years of Honeybee keeping, I still admit to knowing nothing about just about everything – especially about my girls. Though all three of my hives survived this winter – so far. Why and how?

This Beekeeper author seems to know everything. She says as much. She has a survival rate of nearly 100% every year - in Kentucky. She actually says 99%. It could be true. Thomas Seeley apparently thinks so. Her method is consistency. She does the same things over and over and over. She makes constant temperature measurements with the little slide in sensors. I tried that and found it more frustrating than worthwhile. If one must be anal, I think the IR readers are just as accurate and much easier. She also uses hive scales and keeps extensive records. And says learning from these records is the main reason for her consistent results.

She does not do any of the frame rearranging that is popular and people swear by with their own scientific approach and experience. Most of all, she attributes her success to local bees – her own.

She keeps her hives far apart and says that prevents swarms. She elaborately paints each hive and says that helps the girls find their way home. I think it may be the sun. The insides of her boxes are roughed with a grinder up so that girls have an easier time climbing. On this, I dunno again. It seems to me that this goes against another of her principles: that the bees know everything and make their homes just natural. On the other hand, her justification is just that. The insides of logs are rough. And on the other other hand, giving the girls more surface to glue the frames together does not sound like a good idea to me.

After all of what I just said, one would think that I am also panning this book like I did the Bee Bible. Nope, This book has pages and pages of notes and references and excellent photos. Perhaps I was just exhibiting puckishness here. This book is not for every beekeeper. But, it is not picayune. I am donating it to the WillBees Library. And for \$20.00 on [Amazon](#) it is a worthwhile read.

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.

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!

Supering

Apis mellifera

Wax Moths

Festooning

What are these mystery tools:



An Adventure in Beekeeping

THIS MONTH'S BEE ADVOCATES
GRACE AND MARK YOUELL

Grace and Mark Youell, while relatively new beekeepers, have made their mark through participation and service to Will County Beekeepers Association. They are our May/June bee advocates.

Grace and Mark have volunteered at the Will County Fair and hosted



our July Field day last year. This year they will be hosting the May 17th Field Day at their home in Wilmington, IL.

<https://willbees.org/event/field-day-at-youells-apiary-2026/>



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, August 26, to Sunday, August 30, 2026

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 Anthony Merkel.

WillBees Field Days

Saturday, May 17 at 12 pm – 4 pm

Grace and Mark Youell Apiary
34107 S. Rivals Road
Wilmington, IL

At this Field Day we are going to cover general hive inspection, Varroa mite testing and treatment, and an example of winterizing insulation.

Attendees must bring their own personal protective equipment and hive tool.

Disposable Neoprene gloves will be available

A waiver and assumption of risk agreement form must be filled out and signed. A printable copy is available [here](#).

RSVPs are requested (please send to willbeesorg@gmail.com).

ON-GOING ED

Beginning Beekeeping Classes with Beau Wright

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

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.

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

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:

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)