THE MONTHLY PEEK into hive life

NORTHEASTERN INDIANA BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION – FEBRUARY 2024

Our objective is to promote the art and skills of beekeeping in Indiana and throughout the world. By doing so, we preserve and improve the general environment in which we live, assist in providing better crop yield, provide high quality honey, and we do our part to preserve bees.

What's new in the February issue:

- President's Minutes
- New Members
- Loss of a member
- Calendar of Events
- Intermediate Beekeeping School
- Beginning Beekeeping School
- A Peek into Your Hive Life (Pictures from members)
- First Pollen
- A peek into Bees and Soybeans with Reed Johnson
- Stahlman Beekeeping Issue 41 Winter Bees
- Tears of Re: Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt
- Interesting Facts
- List of Officers
- American Bee Journal Subscription
- Bee Culture Subscription
- Places to buy bees, nucs and queens from our members
- Advertisements

From the Desk of the President: *Dr. Chris Lasalle*

February Presidential Minute 2024

Looking out the window I am seeing frozen fog. Very pretty. We may have temperatures up in the 50's later in the week. I will plan a quick oxalic acid treatment if we get that warm. The bees will start producing brood anytime now. Also, this would be a great time to make sure that there is extra food on the hives if they feel light. So far, I am pretty lucky as there are still bees in all of my hives. Some look a little light and are not taking the candy, but I have not lost any hives in the fall. The fall was one of my worst times as the mites were so strong, and I had not adequately treated.

We had a great planning meeting in January and hope you will enjoy the topics for the meetings. Mike Miller will be heading up the discussion on Spring Prep with a panel discussion on any topic related to beekeeping. Bring your toughest questions for the experts. I will be leading up beginner's night at the March meeting. I know I always say it, but bring friends and family as this is the perfect meeting to learn the basics about beekeeping. We will also have demonstrations.

One big difference this year is that we will not be having a meeting in June. Terry has gotten very busy (which is awesome) and he will need the space for weddings and such. May will be our traditional Field Day, and this will again be at Buskirk Engineering May 11th. We have our own Ella Wheeler who has been anointed Honeybee Queen of Indiana. Congratulations to Ella who will be tentatively planning to give a presentation at Field Day.

Ella Wheeler, Honeybee Queen, with one of her subjects.

Another big change is the availability of paying dues for the year online. We will be using "Cheddar Up" for this convenience. This will also be available to pay for lunch on Field Day, Harvest Banquet, as well as Beginning and Advanced Bee Schools. There is a service charge for this. This can be paid by the individual or by the club. Please consider covering this cost as we are trying to make payments as convenient as possible. This will be made available on our website. Again, memberships are only $15 per family. The person paying will have to set up a username and password, but the service can be used

as a guest. We, of course, still will take checks mailed to our Treasurer or at the meetings. Cash is always fine as well.

The Home and Garden show is February 29 – March 3. Teri Fuller-Obrien is heading this up again for us. Please contact her if you are willing to work at the booth for us. At least one year of beekeeping would be good to work the booth. This is where we usually fill up the Beginning Bee School and get people interested in Beginner's Night. Again, the club will cover the cost of admission and parking. Just bring the parking receipt to the next meeting.

The swarm list will again be handled by Rick Stephens. Please give him a call at (260) 610-1040 if you are interested in getting on the list. Please be ready if he calls you to get a swarm as the bees are not patient and will not usually wait for us.

Finally, we will continue to have a Trunk Sale 30 minutes prior to each meeting. Bring anything to sell that you want to get rid of beekeeping wise.

With spring on the way, I look forward to another exciting year of beekeeping.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Paula Urbine
Fort Wayne

Marc Fireoved
Albion

Adam Yagodinski
Monroeville

With the passing of Phil Juengel on November 28, 2023, the NEIBA lost an original member. A beekeeper for over 70 years. Phil remembers attending gatherings before the NEIBA was an organized in 1972. The first published membership list in 1974 included Phil's name. It is possible that he was a charter member.

Phil served as a Director, Vice President, and 8 years as President.

He won many awards at NEIBA fall Honey Products Shows and at Indiana State Fair. Phil was often called on to tell how he produced his prize- winning entries.

In 2001 the Indiana State Beekeepers Association named Phil "Beekeeper of the Year".

Phil and his wife hosted the Field Day twice. At the most recent time he showed us his new extracting set-up. Phil provided extracting for many small beekeepers in the area.

For many years the Juengels marketed their hive products at fall festivals in northeastern Indiana. Other than honey, they had beeswax candles and Carolyn's items for the ladies such as soap, lip balm and hand cream.

Sadly, Carolyn preceded Phil in death on June e, 2023.

Please *save the dates* for these important upcoming events:

February 15 - Thursday, February NEIBA Club Meeting, 7pm @ Classic Café.

Topics:

Spring Prep Panel discussion with Mike Miller

February 29 thru March 3 – HOME and GARDEN SHOW 10am-8pm @Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

March 16 - Thursday, March NEIBA Club Meeting, 7pm @ Classic Café.

Topics: Beginner's Night with Dr. Chris LaSalle

March 11 - Saturday, Intermediate Bee School 9am to 3pm @ Classic Café. (One year of previous experience)

Fee: $65.00 single $75.00 husband/wife Includes: Lunch, Drawing for a Nuc and door prizes.

March 30 - Saturday, Beginning Bee School 8am to 5pm @ Classic Café. Fee: $145.00 Includes: instruction from experienced beekeepers, hive box, bottom board, inner lid, outer lid, frames, foundation, hive tool, bee brush beginner's book, catalogs, lunch, and a one-year membership to the Northeastern Indiana Beekeepers Association. Call (260) 728-2613 to register by March 12th please.

April 18 - Thursday, April NEIBA Club Meeting, 7pm @ Classic Café

Topics:

Nuc hives/Swarm Prevention/Expanding Hives

Double Nucs

Resource Hives

NORTHEASTERN INDIANA BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Intermediate Bee School

Saturday March 16, 2024 9AM to 3pm

CLASSIC CAFÉ

4828 Hillegas Road

Fort Wayne, IN 46818

Individual cost $65 Husband & Wife $75

Includes detailed beekeeping information, lunch, door prizes, and a chance to win a nucleus colony.

This class is for beekeepers with at least one (1) year of previous experience keeping bees.

The class is presented by experienced senior beekeepers from the club.

Registration deadline is March 1. For more information or registration contact:

Mike Miller (H) (260)493-0481 (C) 467-0640

E-mail: Beeman41747@G-mail.com

Beginning Beekeeping School 2024

Saturday March 30, 2024, 8 AM to 5 PM

Classic Café
4832 Hillegas Road
Fort Wayne IN 46818

COST $145.00

Price includes: instruction, hive box, bottom board, inner lid, outer lid, frames, foundation, hive tool, beginner's book, lunch, catalogs and one year membership to the Northeastern Indiana Beekeepers Association.

Class is taught by experienced beekeepers. Assembly/use of beekeeping equipment and how to keep honey bees is explained. A claw hammer, tack hammer and square are needed for the class. Door Prizes/Raffle of bee equipment.

Call 260-615-1863 to register. Payment is due by Wednesday, March 15. Class size is limited.

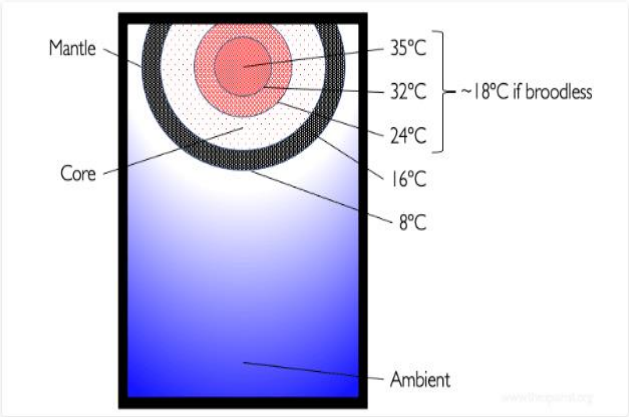
A Peek into Your Hive Life

PLEASE SEND PICTURES OF YOUR HIVES!!!

TO: meanqueenhoneyfarm@gmail.com or reidenbachjp@gmail.com

Winter Cluster

Studies have shown that clustered colonies can survive -80°C for 12 hours, so just a few degrees below freezing is almost balmy.



The winter cluster

First Pollen

For the past 52 years the NEIBA has recorded the earliest date a member has reported seeing bees bringing pollen into the hive. In the coming weeks, as you see your bees flying, watch for pollen being brought into the hive and report the date by calling (leave a message) or texting 260-312-2998 or by email at jnywatch@gmail.com.

Thanks

John Minerd

Honey is the only natural food that is made without destroying any kind of life.

Did you know that bee swarms can generate as much electricity as a thunderstorm?

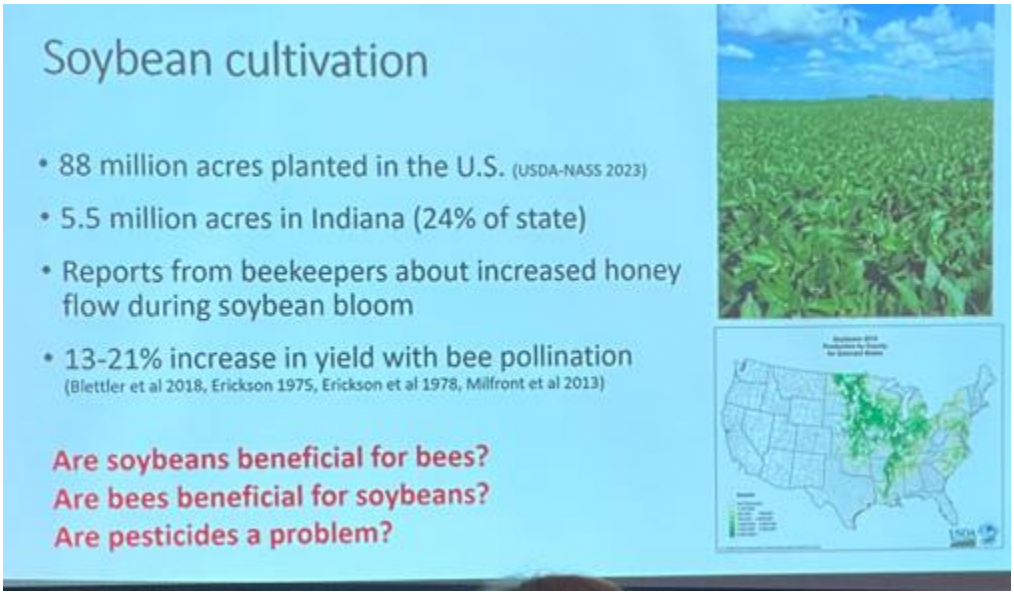
Insects create a charge when flying due to friction in the air. An individual bee's charge is so small that its impact is minor. However, when you multiply it by 12,000+ bees...

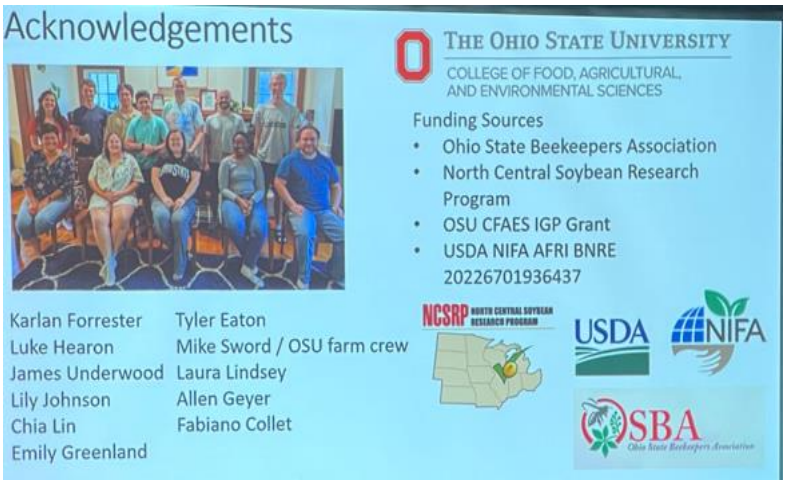
Researchers from the University of Bristol in the UK, have discovered something incredible! While measuring atmospheric charge as a swarm passed overhead, their monitors recorded charges from 100 - 1,000 volts per meter. Where the swarm was particularly dense, the atmospheric charge was similar to that of a storm cloud or thunderstorm.

Honey bees reproduce on a colony level by swarming, usually in spring or when the hive is overcrowded.

Bees and Soybeans with Reed Johnson

At the November meeting Reed Johnson gave a talk on Bees and Soybeans. I have never seen a man more enthusiastic about his work. I'm sure there will be more research coming from him on bees!





Reed M. Johnson, PhD. Reed got his start in research beekeeping as an undergraduate research assistant at the University of Montana. He went on to receive a Ph.D. in Entomology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he was involved in the honey bee genome project. Reed is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Entomology at The Ohio State University in Wooster, Ohio where he teaches two courses: one on beekeeping and the other on pesticide science. His research focuses on determining how bees are exposed to pesticides and the effects that pesticides have on the health of honey bees, with the larger goal of promoting bee health in the context of modern agriculture.

Bees have been viewed as unimportant

Cleistogamy – self-fertilization within closed flowers

Do Bees Gather Honey from Soy Beans?
By Cecil J. Lent, Iowa.

" I believe that after observing these findings it will be readily seen that soy beans are not a honey plant. "

Bees and Soybeans
V. G. Milum, Apiculturist, Urbana, Illinois.

" Since soybeans are self-fertile and do not require insect aid in pollination, it seems reasonable to assume that as with other plants, there should be little, if any, nectar available to attract the bees for the service needed for seed formation. "

Not all soybean varieties are equally attractive to bees

Chia Lin

- Abiotic: weather, soil conditions
- Landscape effects, competing floral resources

- Soybean varieties

2022 POLLINATOR RATINGS IN SOYBEAN VARIETIES

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

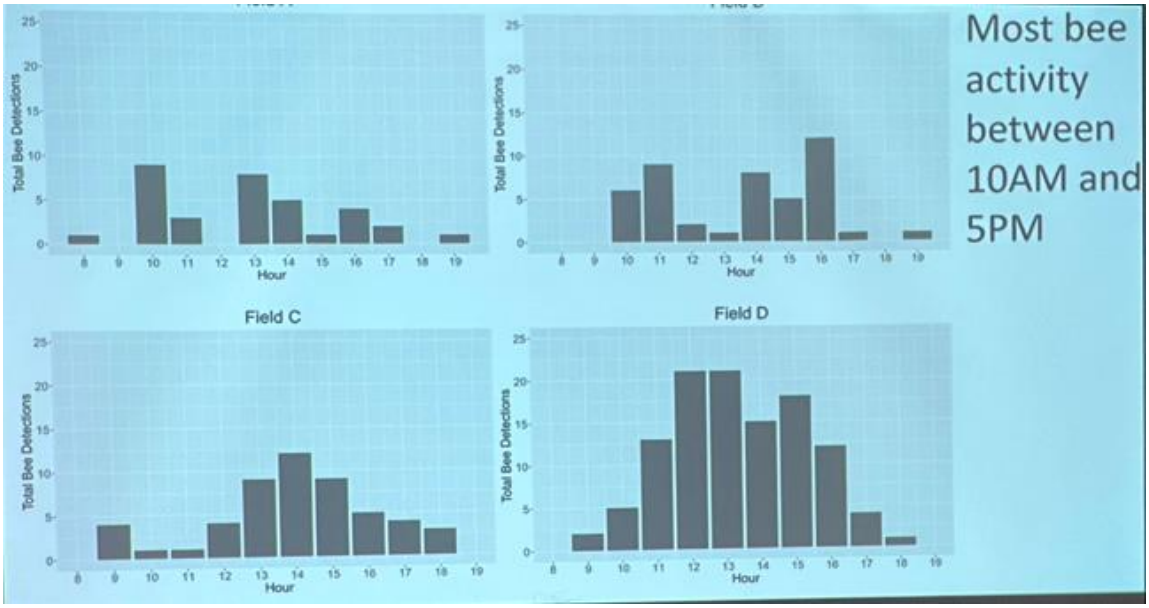
Chia Lin[1], Reed Johnson[1], and Laura Lindsey[2]
[1]Department of Entomology
[2]Department of Horticulture and Crop Science

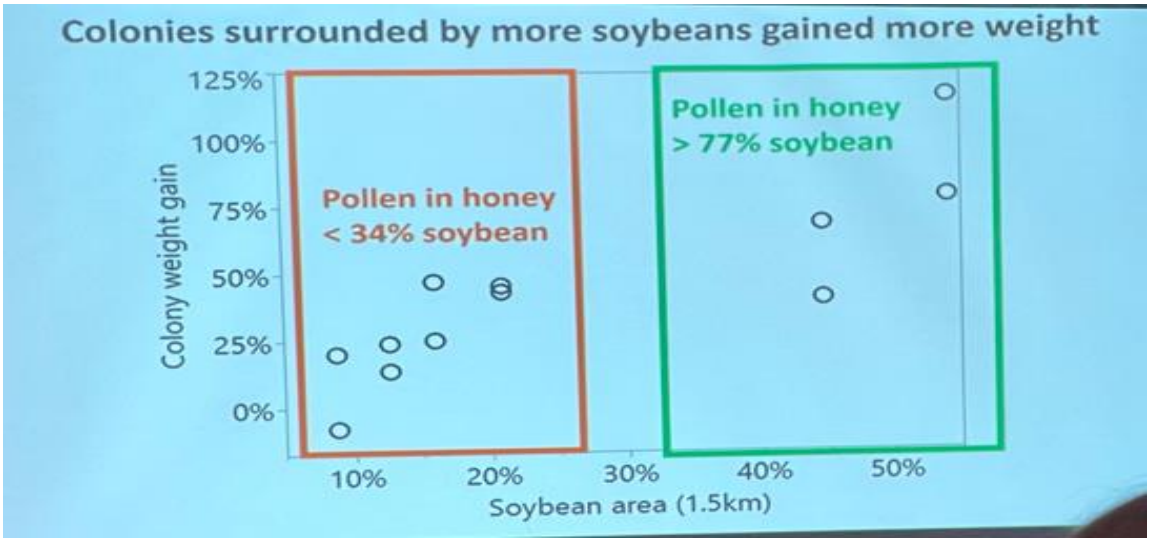
TABLE 1. Bee visitation and floral nectar production for varieties evaluated at the Union County location, 2022.

Variety	Entry RM	Entry Type	Nectar Volume (µL)		Bees Per Minute	
Advanced Genetics, Inc.						
AGI 0725AE	2.5	EN	0.24	**	1.50	*
26CN06	2.6	CV	0.15		0.83	
AGI 1727AE	2.7	EN	0.28	***	1.67	*
2801GL	2.8	LLGT27	0.08		0.50	
AGI	2.9	EN	0.11		2.17	**
AGI	3.2	EN	0.19	*	1.67	*
32CN08	3.2	CV	0.17		1.17	
AGI 0733AE	3.3	EN	0.20	*	1.83	**
AGI 1734AE	3.4	EN	0.10		1.17	
Albert Lea Seed/Viking Corn & Soybeans						
O.2418N	2.4	CV	0.17		0.50	
O.2702	2.7	CV	0.31	***	1.50	*
O.3118N	3.1	CV	0.21	**	2.00	**
O.3418N	3.4	CV	0.17	*	1.83	**
Asgrow/Bayer Crop Science						
AG22XF2	2.2	XF	0.19	*	1.67	*
AG24XF1	2.4	XF	0.14		0.50	
AG25XF1	2.5	XF	0.08		0.67	
AG27XF1	2.7	XF	0.12		0.83	

Previous

https://ohiocroptest.cfaes.osu.edu/soy2022/





Summary

- Soybean contributes to honey production
- Some soybean varieties are attractive to bees
- Yield benefit in attractive varieties?
- Listen for bees soybeans
- Don't apply insecticides during soybean bloom
- Long-term goal: improve the economic efficiency of soybean farming and beekeeping with bee-friendly management strategies

STAHLMAN BEEKEEPING NOTES FOR 2023

Issue # 44 December 2
Published by Dana Stahlman Raleigh North Carolina Email: stahlmanapiaries@aol.com

Bee schools are available for new beekeepers but what about those who have kept bees and have some experience? Learning continues and Planning for 2024 is important. Many advanced topics not covered in bee schools will be a challenge even for the more experienced beekeeper.

Three things I feel I must do each winter – the weather is too cold to work bees. I have put my bees to bed – so to speak and I have time to plan and think about 2024.

- First, Last bee season was challenging. I ask myself what worked and what didn't work?
- Second, what am I going to do differently for 2024?
- What can I do now -- read, build, and pray my bees make it thru the winter.

Every beekeeper should be asking similar questions at this time of the year. Bee schools often do not address many of the issues other than cover basic management.

I try not to be too pessimistic about the challenges facing me. It is never too late to seek answers to questions. Not everything I do results in the expected outcomes. Bee hives die out! Honey crops fail! Bees swarm! That Is beekeeping. I would hope that I have the skill and experience gained over many years to do a better job of keeping bees. But the realistic truth is the challenges facing me trying to keep honeybees alive is no different from what the new beekeeper faces.

There are 5 challenges that each beekeeper faces. No matter where one lives – these factors determine the life of a honey bee colony. It is a fact that times are not what they were 50 years ago. Management of a hive of bees requires more effort than in the past. There was a time when one could set a hive of bees out on the back of a lot and expect the hive to thrive and gather honey for the keeper. Research has been going on in the United States beginning in the 1880's and continues to this day. We can identify problems but we come up with few solutions. In the past, American foulbrood was the most serious problem of keeping bees. Many beekeepers today have never seen a hive with AFB and most likely

would not be able to identify it. It is the reason we have active bee inspection programs in states and rules for moving bees between states. The spread of Varroa mites has taken place and anyone keeping honeybees today must deal with it. Add to that Small hive beetles and future pests – all serve as challenges every beekeeper will face.

Five Challenges:

- Introduced pests and pathogens into the United State. This includes future as well as current pests such as Varroa mites. Anyone keeping honeybees today must find a way to deal with Varroa mites. It is by far the greatest killer of bees.
- Land development, farm management and reduced foraging possibilities for bees.
- Over population of a foraging area due to the number of beekeepers keeping hives within flight range of other colonies. The concentration of honeybee colonies results in the spread of disease as well as loss of food sources required to maintain a colony. Add robbing opportunities for stronger hives to destroy weak hives.
- The extensive use of chemicals and their misuse --both by the general population, farmers and I would also include beekeepers.
- Most Americans have no idea of the higher standards to keep bees used in some European Countries. We use words indiscriminately – Survivor queens and Organic honey. Every queen sold that is alive is a survivor queen and as far as organic is concerned – one may claim they produce organic honey because the bees are not treated with chemicals, but bee gather pollen and nectar. They fly thru contaminated air and gather nectar and pollen exposed to environmental contamination. But the buying public will spend 25% more for organic food than food sold without the organic label. I mention this because when buying bees, there are no guarantees that the purchased bees will be productive and be from good stock. I see year after year beekeepers dealing with failing queens and mites. Sellers have no responsibility for aggressive bees or poorly mated queens. Or early mite detection shortly after hiving a package of bees. If the bees are alive when picked up – no refund or help is usually available a month later when a hive fails. No standard for what a nuc is – a purchased nuc could be frames taken from an existing hive (maybe not even inspected) and given a new untested queen making the nuc nothing more than a risky buy. A nuc like this is not equal to a hive of bees with an established laying queen. I might even add that some nucs are sold with old dark comb. No standard and the buyer has no idea of what they are taking home!

Sorry for getting on my soap box to share some of the risk we all face when buying bee stock.

Did you know that if you are using thin wall hives (Langstroth style hives) you are being "cruel to your bees"? One researcher is out to prove that keeping bees in box hives over the last century is responsible for bee losses.

Cary Orange a beekeeping friend asked me to share my thoughts about research this person had written.

Evidently the factors above were not considered in his research.

Honeybees suffer unnecessarily in human-made hives, study finds: Science Alert. The article was published on November 27, 2023.

The article begins with this statement: Honeybees in man-made hives may have been suffering the cold unnecessarily for over a century because commercial hive designs are based on erroneous science.

The author states: My study shows that clustering is a distress behavior, rather than a benign reaction to falling temperatures.

Specifically, the author indicates modern hive design (commercial thin wall hives) may be considered poor welfare or even cruelty, in light of these findings.

The author says, "My study found cluster mantles act more like a heatsink, decreasing insulation. Clustering is not a wrapping a thick blanket to keep warm, but more like a desperate struggle to crowd closer to the "fire" or die.

He writes: we urgently need to change beekeeping practice to reduce the frequency and duration of clustering. (I did that for a number of years by moving my bees from Ohio to Georgia during the winter season).

The article appears in sciencealert.com written by Derek Mitchell, PhD Candidate in Mechanical Engineering, University of Leeds

Honeybees Suffer Unnecessarily in Human-Made Hives Study Finds Use this to search for the web article.

I am not a mechanical engineer but I would sure say that his thinking and research does not support all I have studied and experienced as a seasoned beekeeper. It should be fully vetted before something like this is published.

My thoughts are based upon what I have observed over many years. The cluster is a dynamic way for bees to survive. Bees in the outer layer move and exchange places with bees in the inner part of the cluster. The only time I have observed bees dead in a cluster is when they die of starvation or a cluster was so small it could not provide the heat required to survive.

I meet with beekeeping friends often. We exchange ideas and discuss goals and share informatuion (not all of us agree on what should be done – knowing that beekeepers have varying options is good.)

My answer to Cary's question:

On Tue, Nov 28, 2023, 3:03 PM DANA STAHLMAN <stahlmanapiaries@aol.com> wrote:

"Something to think about — but science is still looking at the cluster as a whole and according to my understanding -- the bees in the outer mantle exchange places with bees inside the cluster. I have never seen bees have a large die-off unless the entire bee population died of starvation or mites reduced bee health over all.

More research is needed to prove this hypothesis. Something for a young apiary student with sensors, video camera etc. to prove that bees die only in the outer layer. Research done in the 1930's proved an exposed cluster on rare occasion might survive but fell more likely victim to squirrels and raccoons and did not survive due to weather conditions such as rain, snow, and wind.

Sheltered bees do have protection. Thus the key to any species survival is as Freud said -- (sex, food and shelter)."

This is Cary's response to my comment:

Thanks, Dana! Enjoyed lunch with you and our bee buddies yesterday! Looking forward to doing that again soon. ☺ Cary

My thoughts:

Share your thoughts with me and don't be afraid to ask questions. Those questions keep me going.

Beekeepers can move bees inside for the winter – This was common in the early 1900's and it is still being done by commercial beekeepers in the upper Midwest states where the largest number of bee hives are located. Double wall bee hives were developed to protect bees and bees still died. Hive wraps can be bought to provide a hive some protection from cold but does not guarantee the hive will survive.

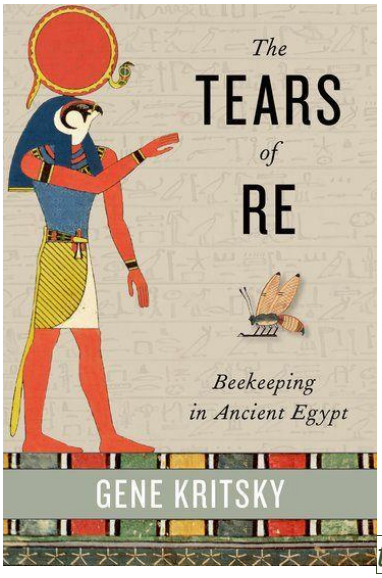
Honeybee losses have increased sharply since the late 1990's. Beekeepers kept bee hives alive – those hives with thin walls with loss of less than 10%. Since the introduction of Varroa mites 40 to 50% losses have become normal and expected. The answer to bee loss is not the man-made thin wall hive! It is directly related to hive management and the continued struggle to find something that will kill the mites but not the bees. Untreated hives face the greatest risk for not surviving a cold winter. I am hopeful that bees will develop resistance to the Varroa mite. Some progress has been made toward developing a resistant strain of honeybee and research in that direction is what will lower hive losses.

Finding a solution for mites, viruses, and pathogens will continue to be a challenge for all of us.

Tears of Re: Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt

- By Mark Patterson
- •
- 23 Jan, 2016
- •

I recently attended a fascinating lecture presented by Professor Gene Kritsky on the subject of Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt. Gene has recently published his latest book 'Tears of Re' which references the Egyptian mythology that the tears of the sun god Ra fell to earth and transformed into Honeybees.



the book front cover

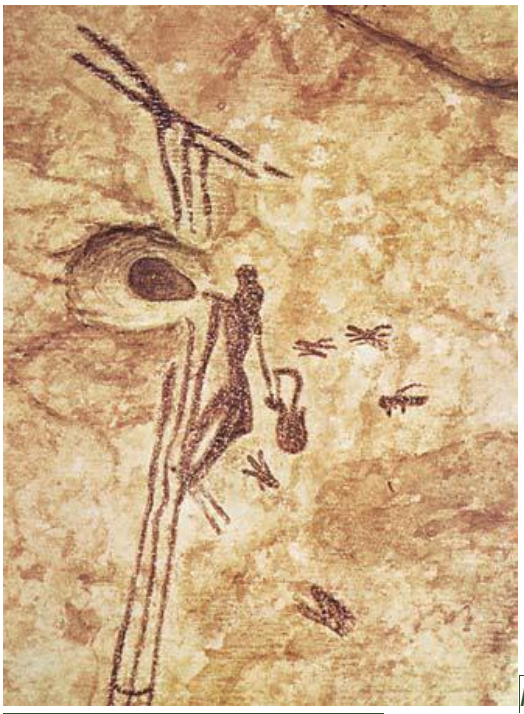
This was a lecture held on the 22nd of January 2016 by the friends of the Petrie Museum University College London department of Archaeology.

Dr. Kritsky is Professor and Chair of Biology at Mount St. Joseph University, Adjunct Curator at the Cincinnati Museum Center, and Editor-in-Chief of American Entomologist.

He received his PhD in Entomology from the University of Illinois in 1977, his MS in Entomology from the University of Illinois in 1976, and his BA in Biology from Indiana University in 1974.

After a lengthy and through introduction by the chair of the friends of the museum, Dr Kritsky's lecture opened with an explanation that the Ancient Egyptians held the Honeybee in high, almost religious regard. Honey bees were believed to rise from the Tears of the Egyptian Sun god 'Ra' or 'Re' and that upon falling from the sky and touching the earth the tears transformed into bees which provided Ra's followers with liquid gold - honey.

Evidence of honey hunting and harvesting is known from as far back as Mesolithic (8000-6000bc) with some of the best preserved examples to be found in Europe. In Spain's Cueva de la Arana rock paintings depict a woman harvesting honey from bees nesting on a cliff face. Such practices are still alive in present day Nepal where young men brave dangerous heights, wearing minimal protective clothing and using flimsy ladders and ropes winch themselves up the cliff face to collect honeycomb. Only the climber's father-in-law and brother-in-law are allowed to assist - the reason being that they are the only men who could not marry his wife and benefit in his death should he fall from the cliff. In these cultures, only respected men held in high regard by their community are permitted to collect honey in this fashion.



Mesolithic cave painting from Spain 8000-6000bc - image taken from the book

The first actual evidence of beekeeping whereby man captured or lured honeybees to nest inside artificially made cavities/hives comes from Bronze age ancient Egypt during the 1st Dynasty around 3100bc.

Early evidence consisted of inscriptions describing bees and how they were kept. By the 3rd Dynasty 2650bc paintings and hieroglyphs depicting bees were more common and more detailed. Some of the best examples from this period can be found at the solar temple of Nuiserre which was built to pay tribute to the sun god Ra.

Ancient Egyptian beekeepers kept their bees in clay or mud pipes approximately 1.2 meters in length and 1/3 of a meter in diameter. These were typically constructed from a bundle of thin sticks, grass and reeds held together by mud which was baked in the hot sun. Once dried and hardened the center of the bundle would be excavated leaving behind a strong hollow artificial log. The ends of the clay logs would be sealed with a ring of timber and held in place with mud cement. One of the ends would include a small opening for the bees to come and go.

The beekeepers would keep a great many of these horizontal hives together in a single apiary. They would be stacked together and earthed up with soil to form a large wall. When it was time to harvest the honey, the keeper would simply remove the wooden ring at one end of the hive and pull out the honeycomb.

When a hive became too full of bees the keepers would remove some combs and bees and transfer them to a new hive - an ancient form of artificial swarming. These ancient keepers understood their bees well and were skilled at mimicking piping queens which they could lure from the hives and then catch and transplant to new homes.

Clay pots containing remnants of wax comb, bees' wings and residues of honey have been discovered from the 18th Dynasty 1570-1546 BC.

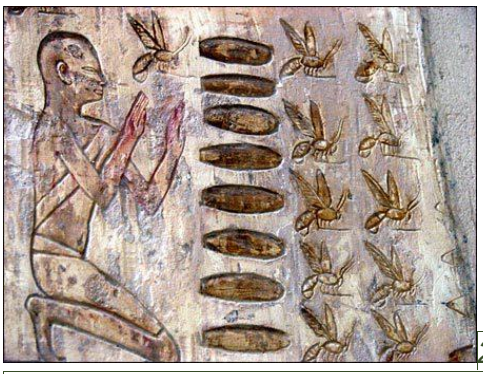
clay pipe horizontal hives are still used today in Egypt and other parts of the middle east 6000 years since they were first used. image by Grossmans Bees

modern day mud horizontal hives in use. If you look closely, you can just make out the entrance the bees use. These hives are still in use today in Iran. Image source Grossmans Bees

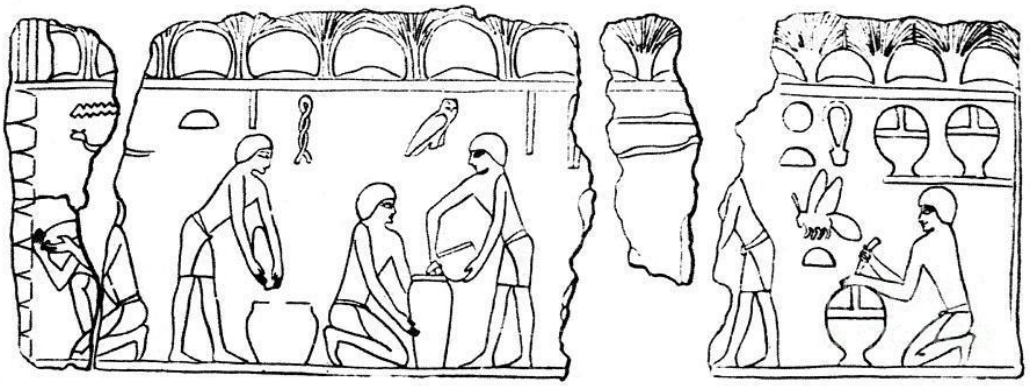
Later on, in the 26th Dynasty 672 BC to 525 BC we find the best examples of beekeeping in ancient Egypt in the form of elaborate Hieroglyphs which describe in detail how honey was harvested from the hives.

Firstly the bees were presented with vessels containing scented offerings which were gently burnt to produce an incense. This was an early form of smoking the bees and would no doubt have calmed the bees prior to opening the hives just as modern-day beekeepers do.

It’s not clear whether or not the ancient beekeepers understood why smoke calmed the bees or if the offering of burning incense was merely symbolic as part of their belief that bees arose from the tears of the sun god Ra. Clearly it must have calmed the bees, and it would have been crucial that it did so since Egyptian beekeepers are depicted never wearing protective clothing. Some paintings and Hieroglyphs show the keeper holding what may be a cloth over their face whilst inspecting the bees but mostly they appear to have no specialist protective clothing. Perhaps they had mastered the art of breeding queens and were able to breed very docile and gentle bees which meant they didn't need cumbersome protective clothing in the hot African sun?



26th Dynasty hieroglyph depicting a beekeeper with their hives of bees. Image from Genes Book



this reconstruction of 26th Dynasty hieroglyph depicts a scene involving beekeepers collecting honey from a wall of horizontal hives on the left, passing on combs to colleagues who are then placing the combs into clay vessels for storage complete with domed lids. Image source Wiktionary.org

There was a strict hierarchy to beekeeping in ancient Egypt. Bees were nearly always kept in or near to religious temples where they were tended by temple beekeepers. These beekeepers were responsible for dividing the colonies to make up new stocks of bees, harvesting the honey and processing the combs so that they could be stored for later use.

Temple beekeepers were supervised by a chief beekeeper who would be answerable to an overseer of the bees and the temple lands. The overseer is not likely to have been a beekeeper himself but would have been familiar with the goings on of the temple beekeepers.

The overseer would have reported directly to the Pharaoh.

The Egyptians used honey and wax in a wide range of disciplines from medicinal use to the manufacturing of cosmetics, wigs and the creation of wax figurines of gods and kings. They probably used propolis for medicinal purposes too though Dr Gritsky didn't specifically mention this.

Honey was an expensive commodity, and its price would have been similar to that of

today monetarily wise.
The Egyptians didn't just produce honey, they also imported honey from all over the ancient world from parts of Africa, the middle east and Europe. There was a thriving international trade in honey which is evident from inscriptions on the clay pots the honeycombs were stored in and from written receipts found alongside containers of combs.

After the 2nd World War Europeans brought the modern langstroth hives to Egypt and attempted to persuade the locals to give up on their 6000 year old tried and tested methods of beekeeping. Traditional Egyptian hives produce very low yields of honey and the incentive to switch to modern box hives was the attractive prospect of greater yields and ease of manipulations.

Unlike western beekeepers the Egyptian beekeepers using modern hives do not add supers for honey storage but instead keep the colonies as single box structures. When the bees become overcrowded, they simply transfer some combs to a new box to multiply their numbers. Because of this the yields gained from modern hives were not as great as had been hoped when the modern hives were introduced.

Until recently there were over 1,000,000 langstroth style hives in Egypt but today there are as few as 7000 colonies living in such hives. Disease, Varroa and problems with imported queens of foreign origin have led to a great many problems for Egyptian beekeepers and the demise of the modern style boxes.

The beekeepers of modern day Egypt are now reverting back to the horizontal clay pot hives of the ancient Egyptians which they say keep the bees more naturally and suffer fewer problems from foul brood and other pathogens.

Clearly the Ancient Egyptians knew and understood their bees well and were able to build not only the great Pyramids - a marvelous feat of engineering technology but they also designed the most enduring style of bee hive the world has ever seen.

26th Dynasty hieroglyph depicting a bee. There are over 500 references to bees, wax and honey in ancient Egyptian writings. the writings of temples were often carved or painted by the same author as evidenced by parametric analysis of the writings. Image from Genes Book.

INTERESTING FACTS ON BEEKEEPING

Some Lesser-Known Inventions of Benjamin Franklin

Wednesday, Sep 30, 2009 by Josh "Livestock" Boruff (@Livestock)

The Crotchless Bee Suit

Franklin briefly became infatuated with the practice of beekeeping, but was troubled by his inability to get up close and personal with his subjects without getting stung. It did not take him long to scheme one of his most useful inventions: the bee suit.

Another of Franklin's lesser inventions: the mechanical blog.

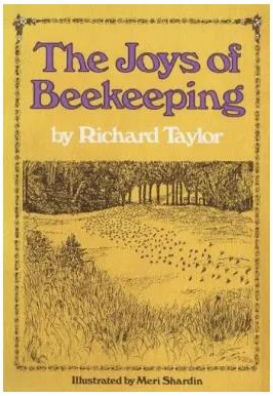
This protective covering included a mesh veil and gloves. Unfortunately, Franklin designed the suit with one fatal flaw. Due to his frequent need to urinate, he elected to make the suit not cover the area surrounding the crotch.

After one particularly bad experience, he shelved his bee suit and instead created the first modern medical catheter. This seemed to solve his urination problem, and gave him a renewed sense of vitality and confidence. Subsequent bee aficionados would later perfect Franklin's design, adding much needed protection to the crotch region.

The Metaphysical Beekeeper

Posted on November 5, 2023 by Ron Miksha

"Woe to the beekeeper who has not followed the example of his bees by keeping in tune with imperceptibly changing nature, having his equipment at hand the day before it is going to be needed rather than the day after. Bees do not put things off until the season is upon them. They would not survive that season if they did, so they anticipate. The beekeeper who is out of step will sacrifice serenity for anxious last-minute preparation, and that crop of honey will not materialize. Nature does not wait."

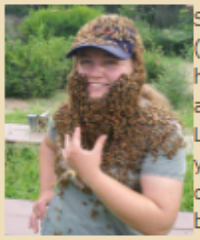


"Sometimes the world seems on the verge of insanity, and one wonders what limit there can be to greed, aggression, deception, and the thirst for power or fame. When reflections of this sort threaten one's serenity, one can be glad for the bees..." – *The Joys of Beekeeping*

Indiana Bee School XXII
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

2024 Bee School will be held on February 24th, 2024 at Horizon Convention Center in Muncie, Indiana. Dr. Judy Wu-Smart and Shelby Kittle will be our Guest Speakers. We'll also have a speaker from Dalan Animal Health to share with us the latest on the vaccine for American Foul Brood.

Dr. Judy Wu-Smart leads the Bee Lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Lab staff and students organize beekeeping workshops and field days, and answer questions about pollinator health and management. Her appointment is 65% extension and 35% research.



Shelby Kittle is a former Nebraska Youth Scholar (2014) and Honey Queen (2018). She currently helps manage roughly 100 colonies for research and teaching at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Bee Lab throughout the past 5 years. Shelby is now pursuing her Master's degree at UNL and her research seeks to 1) better understand how beekeepers can improve overwintering success and 2) identify ways to stimulate comb production for culling old equipment and spring build up. Her goal is to provide information from her research that beekeepers can apply to make more informed management decisions in their own apiaries!

Resources:

Best Management Practices for Hive Health

A Guide for Beekeepers

https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/HBHC_Hive_BMPs_v1.0_reduced.pdf

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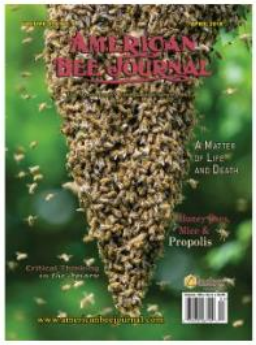

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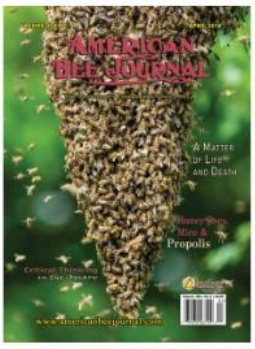

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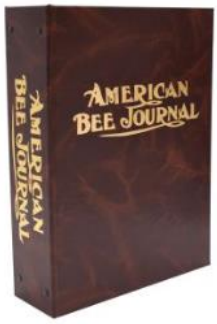

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