



the **BEELINE**

LONG ISLAND BEEKEEPERS CLUB, INC.

Keeping Bees on Long Island Since 1949

**APRIL
2024**

Volume 33
Edition 3

Your Spring Management Toolkit



by our education director
Grace Mehl



Spring is here and the bees are working when the weather cooperates. It is really up and down at this time of year. New packages and nucs should be fed syrup to give them a good start. They don't have many bees to spare to forage, so, the beekeeper is their source of food. Don't let it run out! They really need the carbs to make wax

Visit the club web site at
WWW.LONGISLANDBEEKEEPERS.ORG

Check your account on the website every month to access this newsletter!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

the next meeting

**Sunday, April 28th,
1 - 3pm**
@ Sisters of St. Joseph
Brentwood

SPEAKERS:

Dr. Judy Wu-Smart,
*Impacts of systemic pesticide
exposure on bees*
(See details on page 7)

Grace Mehl
'What's Happening in the Hive?'

upcoming events

Teaching Apiary **May 4**
w/ **Joan Mahoney**
@ Sisters of St. Joseph

Teaching Apiary **May 29**
w/ **Moira Alexander &
Dawn Schmitz**
@ Sisters of St. Joseph

and draw out comb. Keep them growing! When they have 7 to 8 of the first 10 frames drawn, add the next box and keep feeding until they have 2 deeps or 3 mediums (the brood boxes) filled with drawn comb or they stop taking the syrup because they prefer the available nectar. Your goal with a new colony is to set it up for winter, starting now!

Overwintered colonies are a completely different situation than those new hives. But, even within this group, there can be vast differences. Some colonies are booming and need to be managed to prevent the swarming impulse from developing. Other colonies are struggling and need assistance. You won't know what you have unless you get in there and inspect!

The worst is if the colony is dead, obviously. The action then is to figure out why and change your management plan to prevent it from happening again. Next, clean up the equipment and store it securely so it is ready to use for replacement bees, either a split, package, nuc, or swarm. Leaving equipment just standing there invites in wax moths and small hive beetles, who will ruin your comb, which is a valuable resource. Then, when you get bees, they will be once again starting from scratch with new foundation and you will have to spend more money to replace the foundation or more.

Some colonies grow slowly in the Spring. Each colony is different. Race, health and resources all play a part. Feeding some 1:1 syrup can stimulate a colony to grow as it simulates a nectar flow. This can be especially



helpful when there are numerous rainy, cold, or windy days when foraging is not possible, even though there are flowers (Maples, Pussy willows, Deadnettle, etc.) blooming.

Queenlessness this time of year is also a possibility. A queenless hive may be more defensive, or they may be very dull and without any energy. Depends on how long they have been queenless and their nature. Adding a frame of brood is usually the best first step. Seeing what they do with that brood will determine what you do next. In most locations, there are enough drones around for a queen to get mated, or there will be by the time she emerges. You could let them raise their own queen from the donated brood. Often it is a good idea to add another frame of brood in about a week. This brood pheromone keeps the colony stable while they raise their new queen and will provide young bees to feed and care for the new queen and the larvae she will produce. Feeding this hive syrup helps too.

If you can get a new mated queen to put into a queenless hive, that can jump start the process. The colony will grow faster and bigger

colonies make more honey. Putting in brood still helps the hive accept the new queen, but, it is better to put in only capped brood. Otherwise, the bees may try to raise their own new queen. Any and all queen cells must be removed when introducing a new queen otherwise the bees will usually kill the introduced queen and continue raising a queen of their own stock.

Sometimes, there is a queen in a small colony and the queen is just there, walking around and not laying. This may be because the queen is injured or old or another problem. But, more likely it is because there are so few bees to support and feed her, warm the brood nest, and care for the larvae. Adding capped brood and nurse bees to this hive is also the answer. Those new bees emerge and are the nurse bees the hive needs. Be careful not to add more brood, without more nurse bees, than the small colony can keep warm!

Of course, all the above actions depend on you having at least one other colony. This is why it is always a good idea to have at least 2 colonies.

The other side of the coin is the overwintered colony that is healthy and booming. The queen has been laying since January and the population is growing well, in fact, I have already heard of a few SWARMS! These strong colonies must be managed early. If you haven't done an inspection of your colonies, you

are already behind the power curve!

There are several management tools to consider with these strong overwintered colonies. The first is reversing boxes. If the colony has an empty box at the bottom, whether deep or medium, you can take that box (clean it up and scrape the edges etc. if possible) and move it to the top of the colony. If the brood nest extends between two boxes, leave them as they are. You don't want to split the brood nest to the point that the bees can't keep all the brood

warm. That can lead to "chilled brood" and they will later have to clean that dead brood out. That will slow down colony growth in a bad way.

The next management tool is to open the brood nest by moving

empty, but drawn-out frames into the brood nest. You can use frames from elsewhere in the hive to do this, even from the outside of the same box. You can also add another box above the brood nest and take 2 (or more if it is warm and the colony is really strong) frames of brood and move them up into this added box, and take two drawn frames and move them down into the brood nest. This is particularly true if you overwintered in a single deep or 2 mediums. Place these empty drawn frames each between two brood frames so that the order is Empty-Brood-Empty-Brood (called checkerboarding). This "baits" the new box to expand the brood nest into it. I recommend this box be placed above the brood nest as sometimes there will be a top box with nectar and honey on the top of the hive, if it

I can always tell there is nectar coming in as the bees are no longer all over my water source. The thin nectar is giving them all the extra water they need.

has wintered with a honey super on. The added box should be below this box of stores and adjacent to the brood nest. The queen will not normally cross honey and nectar filled frames to lay in a box above. So, if using the new box to expand the brood nest and prevent swarming, it must be adjacent to the brood nest.



Another management tool is making a split or nuc from a strong colony. Timing on this is everything. Taking out the old queen and putting her into a nucleus colony with 2 full frames of capped brood, all the nurse bees on those frames, a frame mostly open for the queen to lay and a frame of honey or mixed nectar and honey and a frame with pollen and all the bees on those frames, is a good way to prevent swarming, and also get a new queen in your big colony. We are in the period of time when this is possible, however, waiting until mid-May is ideal for this. By then, all the bees that will become foragers on the “flow” will have been laid. Removing the queen at that point will not decrease your honey crop. In fact, it may in-

crease your honey production as, while the colony raises a new queen, there will be less new brood to feed. The young bees emerging can become “precocious foragers” since there is no work for them feeding brood. This brood break will also knock down the varroa count some as varroa can not breed without brood. When the

bees make a queen, starting from a brand-new larva, it takes 13 days for the queen to emerge, and another 10-21 days (normally around 14) for her to start laying. Basically, a month of no new eggs.

But, what if the hive fails to make a queen or the queen gets eaten on her mating flight! Well, you still have your old queen in the nuc, laying away. You can give the big colony a frame of egg and larvae and let it try again. In fact, you can support it with brood from this “resource” nuc while waiting for the new queen to start laying. This

way, you still get a NEW queen. Of course, you could combine the nuc back and give them the old queen in a pinch.

Sometimes, the bees just can’t wait for the ideal time for a split and a big honey crop. Case in point, the bees that already swarmed. If the beekeeper had inspected earlier, he/she might have been able to prevent the swarm by taking early action. You have to look often enough (like every 7-10 days in swarm season) to make sure your bees have enough room for the queen to lay, to store incoming nectar. That is part of the art of beekeeping. Not every swarm can be prevented. But, we can try! The earlier you act, the more chance of success!

Your goal with a new colony is to set it up for winter, starting now!

The next thing is putting on supers. Supers should be placed on top when there is surplus nectar coming in. I can always tell there is nectar coming in as the bees are no longer all over my water source. The thin nectar is giving them all the extra water they need. This is another signal to watch for. Of course, they also stop visiting the water as much if you are feeding syrup.

If you intend to use a queen excluder, you should have at least some, and preferably all, drawn comb in the super. Even so, it helps to put a frame of nectar into the super to draw bees through the queen excluder initially. If you aren't using queen excluders, the honey or nectar can act as your excluder as in most cases a queen won't cross the "honey/nectar cap". Supers should be going on soon. Each location is different. The dandelions are blooming here and I have placed some supers. Of course, once the supers go on, any stimulative feeding of syrup should stop so there is no contamination of your honey with sugar syrup. Honey is made from nectar, not syrup. Your goal with a new colony is to set it up for winter, starting now!

I hope this gives you some ideas and guidelines. Every colony is different and understanding what the bees are telling you dictates your actions as a beekeeper. But, you don't know unless you look!



Published by Grace Mehl on April 11, 2024.

the TEACHING APIARY

The teaching apiaries are a great way to get hands-on experience in beekeeping. The sessions are conducted by Master Beekeepers in the club. The normally scheduled classes are mainly for beginner beekeepers, however there is also lots of material for the 2nd and 3rd year beekeeper. Every instructor has different tips and tricks that you can learn.



the next ones:

Saturday, May 4th

Joan Mahoney, teaching

Please email if you will attend at:

saw_whet@hotmail.com

May 29th

Moira Alexander & Dawn Schmitz teaching

Contact Moira if you will attend at:

Ramoi@aol.com

Location:

Sisters of St. Joseph's Honey House
1725 Brentwood Rd, Brentwood, NY

Follow the yellow Bee Meeting signs to the Honey House and meet the instructor there.

The Teaching Apiary hives are to the left of the Honey House.

If you are interested in attending, you must sign up by emailing the instructor for the session. Bring a veil and dress appropriately with long pants and sleeves with closed shoes, as we will be opening hives. There are a few veils available on site for real NEWBEES. The instructors will determine when they have reached a limit for their session in accordance with what they are comfortable with. If there is rain, Sunday will be the rain date for the Saturday session. If both days are rainy, the instructor may opt to have a discussion class inside the Barn. The instructor will notify you if a change in the schedule is necessary, so **provide contact information such as a cell phone when you sign up for easy access/contact.**

• the next meeting •

Sunday, April 28th

Location: Sisters of St Joseph,
1725 Brentwood Road, Brentwood, NY 11717

Time: 1 - 3pm (Doors open at 12:30pm)

The meeting will take place in Building #2, which is the building with the green dome on the roof. Follow the yellow BEE MEETING signs.

SPEAKERS: **Dr. Judy Wu-Smart** “Impacts of systemic pesticide exposure on bees: a case study from Nebraska that’s affecting us all”; **Grace Mehl:** “What’s Happening in the Hive”.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Kathy and Toni can always use help **setting up the hospitality table**, and of course, **donations** of cake or cookies and the like are always welcome!
- **We also welcome donations for our door prizes.** A little something that you have hanging around that you are willing to share with other club members to brighten their day!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **If you haven’t received emails** or newsletter you probably haven’t paid your \$40 dues for 2024 due (Jan 1, 2024 to Dec 31, 2024). Paying via PayPal is the quickest way to get a paid response.
- **Classified ads** must be updated by members who have paid their dues and updated by the next meeting or the ad will be removed!

- **The Library will be open for lending and returning books.** Our policy is, if you may borrow books and return them the next month. If you fail to return the books after 2 months, then the name of the borrower will be list in the “Delinquent Borrower” section of the Newsletter.
- **Club T-shirts and sweat shirts** will be available to purchase.

Call for Venue Recommendations

Did you go to an event with a nice venue?

Have you recently gone to an event, perhaps a Bridal or Baby Shower, at a great venue? We would like to hear about your experience and and the venue for possible use for our Holiday Party. If you have information on a venue you think might work for us, please email Moira at Ramoj@aol.com or send her a text at: 631-664-6810.



Our April Speaker: Dr. Judy Wu-Smart

Dr. Judy Wu-Smart (Associate Professor & Extension Specialist) received her MS at Washington State University under the advisement of Drs. Steve Sheppard and Carol Anelli and a PhD from University of Minnesota with Dr. Marla Spivak.

She has been the director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bee Lab since 2015. At UNL, she and her team have been developing a robust pollinator health program for the Midwest region to help beekeepers, scientists, policy makers, and land managers understand the underlying stressors challenging bee health, such as improper management of pests and diseases and exposure to pesticides. Community engagement and promoting science literacy around these complicated farm-to-table issues are also key components of our research and extension education programs. To find more about our programs and training opportunities visit <https://entomology.unl.edu/bee-lab> and <https://gpmb.unl.edu/> or follow us on Facebook.



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The Magazine of American Beekeeping

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Bee Culture was started in 1873 by Amos Ives Root, a historical figure in beekeeping, in Medina, Ohio. Bee Culture, the magazine of American beekeeping, is designed for beginning, sideline and commercial beekeepers who want the latest information on keeping bees. From industry news to upcoming events, Bee Culture is a must-have resource for beekeepers around the world. Published monthly; print and digital editions are available.

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*** EAS and Cornell Master Beekeepers Program:** Master Beekeepers are certified beekeepers who have a detailed knowledge of honey bee biology, expertise in the proper practices of beekeeping, and can present this information to the beekeeping and non-beekeeping public in a detailed, accurate, clear and authoritative manner. Master Beekeepers provide education and assistance to beginning beekeepers and serve in other capacities in the community as experts in beekeeping. The Master Beekeeper program was developed by Dr. Roger A. Morse at Cornell University and has been expanded by the Eastern Apicultural Society of North America to other areas.

You can learn more about the Master Beekeeper Program by visiting the Eastern Apicultural Society website:
<https://easternapiculture.org/programs/master-beekeepers/master-beekeepers-certification-program/>





NY Bee Wellness SPRING SURVEY 2024

We would like to assess the situation for for NON-migratory New York State beekeepers and their beehives. Information gathered is for beekeepers, and may help to determine trends in honeybee health.

NOTE: The survey will be open for several weeks, if you are not ready, you can fill in the survey later this Spring.

If you have difficulty with the online form, please contact info@nybeewellness.org

Please complete the survey as best as you can and write any comments you feel that can add to future surveys and improve the NY Bee Wellness program.

If this is your first year with bees or do not have bees, you do not need to do the survey, but please look over the survey , to consider various management options.

2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the NY Bee Wellness surveys. Published results and data are archived for research and historical use. Your information is important not only for this year but for years to come.

SCROLL DOWN FOR PHOTOS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SURVEY PAGE which may assist you.

All info is confidential, and general results of the survey will be shared and posted on NY-BeeWellness.org in the Summer.

For the results of previous surveys, please see [the website](#). Remember, results are broken down into 8 major regions in New York State.

Here is the Survey Link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BSHBDC6>

Thank you for your participation!

Questions? Contact:

survey@nybeewellness.org

BEGIN SURVEY



Please consider filling out the New York Bee Wellness Spring survey. The data helps beekeepers understand why they have losses and gives organizations topics to work on to help beekeepers in New York State. You can access information from previous years on their website and they will send you info if you provide an email address. There is no charge for any of this, but they will take donations if you desire!

please participate in the
Monthly Beeline Poll



Thank you to everyone who participated in last month's Beeline Poll! We appreciate you sharing information on your apiaries and helping us learn about our membership! A few

reminders about our Monthly Poll:

- We hope the poll can shed some light on what's happening in our apiaries, as a collective entity, our club as a whole.
- This Beeline Poll will be included monthly along with the results of the previous month's poll.
- The poll is short (max 2-question). Topics will vary month to month.
- The poll is completely anonymous.
- The more people who respond, the more informative these polls are! <nudge, nudge. wink wink.>

If you haven't participated, please do. It will only take 1 minute of your time. Thanks in advance for participating. We're excited to learn about you and your bees!

[Here is April poll.](#)

Click the button:



Here are the results from March. Thanks to everyone who contributed! We had 27 responses!

1) What is one of the most common questions you get asked by non-beekeepers?

The most asked question was related to being stung! Coming in at 8 of the 27 respondents. The question was:

“Have you ever been stung? / Do you get stung? / How many times have you gotten stung?”

4 of 27 respondents have been asked:

“Do Bees hibernate?”

These were other great questions:

“Do the bees die in winter?”

“What made you want to start beekeeping?”

“Are Bees going extinct?”

“Why do most of your bee hives die every year?” [yikes!]

“How much honey do you get?”

“How many bees do you have?”

“Do you wear that white suit?”

“How do you get the honey?”

“Where do they live?”

“You're a beekeeper?!”

“Aren't you afraid they'll sting you?”

“Can you place your bee hives inside over the winter or under a protective overhang over the winter?”

“Your Bee's are on my yard!” (after checking they are generally wasps, yellowjackets, etc.)

**DON'T
FORGET**

**As of January 2024,
Annual dues will be \$40.**

PLEASE send a check payable to LIBC to Conni Still at 82 Stephen Road, Bayport, NY 11705, or go to the club website Longisland-beekeepers.org.

Any member who does not pay their dues will not receive future newsletters nor have free advertising in future newsletters, Also please update your copy for your ads. Send your information to Moira Alexander at ramoi@aol.com and put LIBC Classified Ads in the subject line.

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If you've posted an ad, please update any information for your classified ads. Only current members have this privilege. [Go to the LIBC website, log in](#) and go to **"My Account"**. You will see a Green Button on the right lower side saying **"Submit Ad"**. Click on this and the form will come up for you to fill out. Nick, the IT Director, will review it and post or contact you for any problems.

CLASSIFIED ADS DO NOT CONSTITUTE ENDORSEMENT BY THE CLUB. THEY ARE SHARED AS INFORMATION ONLY.



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