



THE
apillary NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE WORCESTER COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2020-21

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**RENEW YOUR WCBA
MEMBERSHIP BY DEC. 31!**

Don't miss out on all the club has to offer: free admission to indoor meetings, exciting guest speakers, discounts on honey jars and of course a world of beekeeping knowledge in your fellow members. Memberships should be renewed by December 31 each year. To renew for 2021, see page 6, visit our website or renew at an upcoming WCBA event.

From the President

To say this year is 'challenging' is an understatement for all of us. I can not even imagine all the ups and downs you have had to go through as beekeepers.

Hopefully, you've solved your problems by watching Ken's videos or with the help of mentors. Please know your Board of Directors have been meeting regularly via Zoom to meet the needs of our membership.

Very thankful and due to the follow up of Phil and Doug we were able to obtain metal caps for those who didn't get caps with their jars. No plastic caps are being produced right now as those companies have changed over to making items for medical purposes.

In addition, we were meeting with Bill Mahoney, a CPA, to produce a financial review. Hooray—that's been accomplished and now we're working on Bill's recommendations. This is a great opportunity for you to get involved. Lots of committees, lots of jobs!! Please see page 5 to learn more and let us know what committee you're interested in. WCBA, like a strong hive, is a result of the efforts of everyone working together!

Our membership chairman, Angela, is so good getting information out to you. Please continue to check your emails and the website. Due to COVID-19, we have had to follow the State's guidelines canceling all our summer meetings. I'm hopeful that once a vaccine is approved and accepted, restrictions will be relaxed and we can go back to getting together again. Until that happens, we'll have to rely on videos and Zoom.

Many of you have requested a mentor. Unfortunately, we have failed to satisfy every request. We are working to improve this program and will have a stronger Mentor Program in place for next year. In the meantime, if you have questions, feel free to call one of our Directors or Officers for help.

It's already December, your hives should be prepare for winter. Every year is different and this one was very hot and dry. Due to a dirth of nectar, we all have to feed our bees!!! We can help them get through this just like we're all helping our family, friends, and neighbors get thru COVID-19!!! Thanks for your patience and understanding.

—Barbara



WCBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 2020

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Feel free to contact any of the above directors or committee chairs with questions relating to the Worcester County Beekeepers' Association or beekeeping in general.

NOTES & TIPS FROM THE BEE INSPECTOR

Keeping Your Hives Alive Through the New England winter

This is always a daunting task for beekeepers in New England including experienced ones. The tough weather of a long, cold winter is part of the reason but far from the only one. There are many other factors leading to the loss of up to 50% of our colonies. Hopefully all of your late fall preparations are nearly completed.

You should have evaluated your queen before going into the winter in order to have a vibrant queen going into the January brood rearing season—essential to produce young bees that can carry your colony into the spring season. I always consider this as one of the most important tasks going into the winter. A poor queen in the fall will not get better by spring.

You should have evaluated your pollen and honey stores before the winter months to support the colony over through the long, cold season. Ample stores are needed to produce enough heat to hold the cluster over until the spring with pollen crucial to raise the young bees starting in January. The stores are also needed to feed the newly hatched bees with honey. Many beekeepers underestimate this factor. You still have time to address this by feeding a 2:1 sugar syrup solution for the next 2-3 weeks along with pollen patties to supplement their natural stores. Your hives should have 80 pounds of honey in the upper chamber and 3 frames of pollen below at this point. Hopefully, you did not see this scenario too early and had your colony honey/pollen bound too early in the season with no room for brood. Keep in mind that September and October brood rearing require 6-7 frames that have 2/3 of open space that produce a nice cluster of young bees that carry the colony over until spring. November feeding is ample to get that space now filled. Jar feeding is best suited for November to December, only feeding as long as the bees can keep it warm by clustering around the neck of the jar.

Hopefully, your entrance reducers are in at this time with the 5 inch opening showing for incoming air and ventilation for the colony as to prevent moisture buildup in the colony. The 2 inch notch on the inner cover should be facing down in order to accomplish this. You should now close up your screen bottom board so as not to create a wind tunnel up through your colony. If you still see moisture on the underside of your inner cover then I suggest Popsicle sticks on the rim of your top brood chamber under the inner cover. This will allow the bees to vent out the moisture. Wrapping is also something you can consider especially windy areas. A mouse guard can also be added at this time.

Hopefully, you monitored your varroa mite levels in August and checked for other diseases and abnormalities that may take your colonies down through the winter months, taking appropriate action to solve any irregularity. You thought this was easy, huh! As far as your mite levels go, I hope your August mite monitoring was not your last one because, just as your bees are building in September and October, so are your mites. If you have not done any checks since August then it might be wise to treat with oxalic acid or apivar before the bees

cluster up for the winter. Hopefully it is not too late, especially if they have heavy virus levels that can take them down along with heavy mites. With all this now being done, you can now take a short break until January. The short break from December to January will go by quick.

Starting in January, it is now important to gently open your hive and see where your cluster is. Are the bees down low with plenty of stores? Or up high coming through the oval hole in the inner cover looking for stores because they started brood rearing in December like last year or in early January and so they are searching for food? This is when you come to their aid and provide them with Warchol's sugar/fresh pollen patty (see my winter video for making one or contact me.) You will need to add a 2 inch riser under the inner cover to do this. Once you start with sugar and pollen you will need to continue so the bees around the brood keeping the colony 93 degrees do not starve. I usually check back every week as my 1/4 inch thick and 8 inch diameter patty is consumed in one week as winter continues and bee numbers skyrocket. Do not let them starve now that you have worked so hard to get them to this point.

I also take a steel hook around with me and scrape out the dead bees so they do not block ventilation coming into the hive. I continue this regimen through March until the warm weather days and see the bees bringing in nectar and pollen. What an exciting time seeing your bees alive. **THEY MADE IT!** They did their part and you did your part, what teamwork.

Even with all that, there is one factor to still consider. The one other factor is all the other bee keepers around you. Did they do their part like you did or were they remiss? It is everyone's role to work as a team to keep our bees healthy. Let's all do our part and keep all our bees alive. If I can be of help, feel free to contact me through these cold winter months. Nobody ever said beekeeping was easy. It is very challenging, and that is part of the fun and love in beekeeping. Let us all rise to the challenge. I now say farewell and Happy Holiday. Join us at our virtual meetings in January-March and advance your beekeeping knowledge.

Best in Beekeeping.

The bee whisperer, Ken

PHILIP A. PIKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

With an extensive collection of books, DVDs, and other items related to beekeeping, the WCBA is fortunate to have such a wonderful resource as its very own library.

The Philip A. Pike Memorial Library is currently being maintained by John Hedly. Some of the items are very modern but others are quite old, providing a long-term look at the world of beekeeping. Bee sure to check out the online listing to see if any items are of interest to you. To check out any items, contact John directly and he will be happy to help. The winter months are a great time to read up beekeeping.

The WCBA would like to thank Gary Cantwell of Bolton, MA for his generous donation of various beekeeping clothing items and hive equipment, as well as many books/magazines for the library. The club truly appreciates it will put the items to good use. We would also like to thank Margaret Parker Naylor of Worcester for her donation of several books to the library. We appreciate the donation and hope our members will take advantage of these new additions.

If your membership is up-to-date but you are not receiving club emails, please contact our Membership Director, Angela Hogue, to update your email in our records.

Ken's Sugar Patty Tips

Take sugar and water and mix it into a paste consistency and make a meatball and then flatten it on wax paper into an 8 inch patty about ¼ inch thick so the bees can warm it up easily. Place it on the frames overlapping the bee cluster by an inch overlap. If you trapped fresh pollen, press it into the sugar patty and the bees will thank you. If any questions then contact me at 508 -680-3440 or KenWarchol2@msn.com

WCBA meetings & events



Meet our Guest Speaker

Dr. Jeff Pettis As former research leader of the USDA-ARS Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, MD and now an independent consultant, Dr. Pettis has focused on improving colony health by limiting the impact of pests, diseases and pesticides on honey bees. His research areas include: IPM techniques to reduce the impacts of parasitic mites and disease, effects of pesticides, pathogens, and temperature on queen health and longevity, host-parasite relationships and bee behavior. Dr. Pettis is the current President of Apimondia, the International Federation of Beekeeper's Associations and serves on several international committees including the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and With more than 35 years of research experience conducted in more than 15 countries; he is frequently interviewed by the media for his opinions on worldwide pollinator declines and honey bee health. Dr. Pettis received undergraduate and MS degrees in Entomology from the University of Georgia and his doctoral degree in Entomology from Texas A&M University in 1992.

Friday | January 8 | WCBA Annual Meeting

ZOOM @ 7:00 PM

Join us for our annual meeting where the membership will elect 2 new Directors. Candidates are Dave Lewcon and James Kieras. Nominations will be accepted from the floor.

SPEAKER: DR. KIM SKYRM: Report on apiary season statistics

Friday | February 12 | WCBA Monthly Meeting

ZOOM @ 7:00 PM

SPEAKER: TBD

Saturday | March 6 | March Conference

ZOOM @ 9 AM - NOON

SPEAKER:

DR. JEFF PETTIS, *Research Scientist and Consultant, Pettis and Associates LLC*

This March our Big Name Speaker conference is co-sponsored by Hampden County and Worcester County. We hope you will join us to expand your beekeeping knowledge.

Queen Talk

Honey bee queens seem to be failing at a higher rate than in the past. If we have marked queens in a colony it is often that 50% of these queens will be replaced in the first year when queens should last 1-2 years. We have identified shipping temperature as one factor that can hurt queens. This talk will focus on queens and the many reasons queens may not be lasting as long these days. Some data on the impact of poor queens on colony performance and honey production will also be discussed.

World Wide Beekeeping

Most of us manage the European honey bee *Apis mellifera*. This is the most common honey bee managed world wide but the movement of this bee around the world has led to many problems as well. This talk will discuss the wide variety of bees managed around the world, stingless bees and others and discuss different ways that the European bee is managed: beyond the Langstroth equipment and methods common in the US.

WCBA WANTS YOU!

Volunteer Opportunities! We're looking for a few good beekeepers. If you're willing to get more involved with the WCBA we like to hear from you. We have listed some of the opportunities available serving on our various committees. Don't be shy—send inquiries to BarbsHoneybees@gmail.com

WCBA HONEY JAR ORDER

Responsibilities include:

- Acquiring 3 quotes for jars and choosing a vendor
- Taking prepaid orders and the total is called into the company
- Locating a warehouse for the weekend of pick-up that has a fork-lift and can store 25-35 pallets of jars
- Organizing caps counting and jars pick up
- Writing a financial report for the Treasurer

WCBA MERCHANDISE

Responsibilities include:

- Acquiring 3 quotes for tee shirt
- Coming up with art work for current year.
- Creating order form to share with membership
- Finalizing order
- Organizing pick-up /delivery
- Collecting all monies and giving a report to the Treasurer

SPENCER FAIR

Responsibilities include:

- Judging of honey, wax products and baked goods
- Scheduling of volunteers
- General overall help

*WCBA will be holding
a photo contest for a 2022
Honeybee Calendar!
A different photo will be featured
each month. To be on the
contest committee, email:
brmacphee@aol.com*

WCBA BEE SCHOOL

Responsibilities include:

- Recruiting volunteers to work at bee school
- Refreshments
- Organizing presenters and print materials
- Assigning a tech person for live school nights and a back-up Zoom person

WCBA PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Responsibilities include:

- Scheduling speakers for monthly meetings and the 2 Big Name Meetings and finding a location when they are not held at the Knights of Columbus
- Finding locations for our summer outdoor meetings
- Acquiring and contracting caterers.
- Collecting all entrance fees from non-members
- Collecting all raffle fee money
- Acquiring checks for payments to speakers, caterers , refreshments bought and any other expenses, tabulating income and expenses after each event with a balance sheet to be turned into the audit committee
- Getting coffee and Danish set up for meetings
- Picking up speakers, making hotel reservations through the treasurer and returning speakers to the airport.
- Setting up the Friday night meal with directors

WCBA MENTOR PROGRAM

Responsibilities include:

- Soliciting membership for volunteers that would like to help with mentoring new beekeepers
- Sending out a responsibilities instruction sheet to those members with a follow up phone call to confirm their interest and contact information
- Placing announcements to all new (1-3 year members) about the mentoring system along with a sign up sheet
- Assigning mentors to new beekeepers and contacting mentors

GOT HONEY?

If anyone has extra honey, the area Food Banks will welcome the donation. You can attach your own label to any size jar.



WCBA MEMBER BENEFITS: Extractor Rental

Guidelines for renting WCBA extractors

1. You must have an up-to-date membership in the WCBA.
2. You must show a completed state inspection form for the current year.*
3. The rental fee is \$15 per usage. This fee funds equipment repairs and replacements. Please make checks out to WCBA.
4. You must return the equipment PROPERLY CLEANED for the next member to use.

To clean:

- a. First hose off thoroughly with COLD water to remove all honey, wax and propolis.
 - b. Then wash with hot water and soap, and rinse.
 - c. Finally use a 3% bleach solution to sterilize all surfaces (1/2 cup bleach + 1 gallon water).
 - d. Drain thoroughly and let stand to dry.
5. During the harvest season the extractors may be in high demand. Please return within 3 days.

Included with rental: Extractor, Uncapping Tank, Knife, Scratching Pick, Stainless Steel Sieve, Bucket with Gate Valve

To rent a club extractor, please contact one of the following:

Westborough—Scott Parker 508-366-9651

Westminster—Todd Pickett 978-257-7086

Whitinsville—Doug Partridge 508-951-3353

Worcester—Nikki Howell 508-439-9826

Charlton—Scott Herbert 413-427-2774

*Note: 2020 state inspections are currently suspended for COVID-19 concerns.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL | *Deadline is December 31 for 2021 membership*

Dues are \$15 annually. Mail this form to the address below or renew online at wcbamembers.wildapricot.org.

NAME *(please print)* _____

STREET _____

CITY, STATE ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please make your check out to WCBA and mail to: WCBA, Attn: Angela Hogue, 4 Brook Road, Southbridge, MA 01550

79th ANNUAL WORCESTER COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

2020 BEE SCHOOL



The Worcester County Beekeepers Association (WCBA), the oldest county beekeeping association in the country, announces its 79th Annual Bee School to begin March 4, 2021. The school will run Thursday evenings from 7:00 - 9:30 PM via ZOOM.

This school is appropriate for beginner and experienced beekeepers alike. **The fee to attend the school is \$35 per student.** Class size is limited. Registration begins January 1, 2021. Pre-registration is required and must be received by March 3 (registration may end sooner if classes fill up before the March 3 deadline.) Register early to guarantee your seat! To register, see the registration form below or visit our website wcbamembers.wildapricot.org. Registration forms can also be downloaded at wcbamembers.wildapricot.org.

The curriculum includes a variety of interesting lectures, hands-on experiences and outdoor workshops. Learn from the experiences of commercial as well as hobbyist beekeepers. Topics include Getting Started, Hive Management, Safety Equipment, and many others that are important to local beekeeping.

Honey Bees are renowned for their economic value as pollinators of fruits, vegetables and other agricultural crops. As well as being important pollinators, honeybees collect pollen and produce royal jelly and propolis—all of which are used as dietary supplements. Honey Bees also produce beeswax that can be used for everything from candles to cosmetics.

WCBA is a non-profit organization aimed at educating the public on the Art of Apiculture.

Online Registration:

wcbamembers.wildapricot.org

LOCATION:

Virtual via ZOOM

DATES:

Thursday evenings @ 7:00 PM
Begins March 4, 2021

FEES:

\$35 per student

INCLUDES:

WCBA membership through December 31, 2021—As a member of the WCBA, you are encouraged to attend our organized events, from indoor educational meetings to outdoor hands-on workshops. The WCBA is a wonderful resource for beekeepers of all levels of experience and those simply interested in the art of beekeeping.

2020 BEE SCHOOL REGISTRATION | *Pre-register by March 3, 2021*

\$35 per student Number of students _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____ DATE PAID _____

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY, STATE ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Years of beekeeping experience (if any) _____

Register online at wcbamembers.wildapricot.org or make checks payable to WCBA and send along with registration form to:
WCBA Bee School, Attn: Anne Lenault, 180 Parker Ave, Holden, MA 01520

Worcester County Beekeepers Association
c/o Barb MacPhee
428 Salisbury Street
Holden, MA 01520

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

save THE date

**PLAN ON DOING YOUR HOLIDAY
SHOPPING ON AMAZON?
WANT TO SUPPORT THE WCBA?**

Choose Amazon Smile!

AmazonSmile is operated by Amazon—same products, prices, and shopping features. When you shop through AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

**Go to smile.amazon.com and
choose to support the WCBA.**

**Friday | January 8, 2021 | Virtual
Annual Meeting** (Stay tuned to email for Zoom Link)

**Friday | February 12, 2021 | Virtual
WCBA Monthly Meeting** (Stay tuned to email for Zoom Link)

**Saturday | March 6, 2021 | Virtual
March Conference** (Stay tuned to email for Zoom Link)

