



bcba

Barnstable County
Beekeepers Association



buzzwords

<http://www.barnstablebeekeepers.org>

April 2021

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 7:30 pm

Tim Schuler, Retired NJ State Apiarist



We will be talking about beekeeping in the African country of Malawi. It was and maybe is the 4th poorest country on earth. Bob and I have gone there me 6 times Bob 2 times to learn from and help subsistence farmers learn about beekeeping and how honey and candle sales can add income to their subsistence lifestyles. They keep the African bee in Kenyan top bar hives. We will also talk about Villages in Partnership, the organization we went with.

For Those Of You Curious About What Oxalic Acid Crystals Look Like On Bees' Bodies:

This was grabbed from a recent blog I read daily and from [Randy Oliver](#). He did note that the crystals were not noticeable on the bees 10 minutes after vaporization. This application was done in the lab.

And note, that the results of vaporization will be poor if your colony is in a tight cluster. The dribble was noted to be more effective when the bees are clustered. But not an option when there is capped brood. Claire

Planning Your Pollinating Garden?

The attached was supplied during a recent zoom from our state apiary folks. These native plants are said to be available in local nurseries.

Wanted

We would love to have contributions from members in regard to the style hive you are managing. Do you have a Flow hive and managed successfully, or how about a ApiMaye hive? We know there are polystyrene hives out there and some very creatively built long hives. We have featured the Slovenian hive in the past but perhaps a few paragraphs as to their current success??

Top Bar Hives

Last month we featured the Warre hive so we thought it might be interesting to work our way through the different types of hives available to keep honeybees. Of course, the Langstroth is the most popular but there really is a considerable number of other types that our honeybees are comfortable setting up their colonies. Do the bees care? Doubtful as long as they have a dry environment and correct space.

Newsletter Submissions

Please send Buzzwords submissions to [David Whalley](mailto:david.a.whalley@gmail.com) david.a.whalley@gmail.com.

We are looking for good stories, photos, links, news about talks and presentations you've done or seen, book and movie reviews, and items for sale or free to good home! PDF, scanned document files, and hard copy submissions are not acceptable. You can create files in Word, Pages, Notepad, TextEdit, etc. for articles.



Forage

[Bee Careful With The Recent News On Oxalic Acid](#)

[How bees and drones team up to find landmines](#)

[Take the survey today!](#)

[Hexagons!](#)

Top bar hives are easily made from excess lumber and can be really any size you might like. It gets its name from the fact that the frames make up the top of the hive. Each frame is nestled side by side with no space between as with the Lang hives. Really it is similar to the horizontal hive. Many of our members have made similar longitudinal hives to save their backs but used the standard frame. This is ideal if you have different styles of hives so they might be interchangeable, a nice feature.



The top bars are just that, plain bars of wood about 1.25" wide by 20.5" long. No wax or foundation is attached but my frames were started with tongue depressors glued on the underside and then melted bees wax was dribbled to give the bees a help to start drawing the comb. And you can see by the picture on the left how they draw it down and rarely attach it to the sides of the hive. The frame on the right gives you an idea of how the bees work the wax down with slanted sides based on the shape of the body of the hive. The hive should be level for the straightest comb.

One advantage with this hive is that with a follower board (solid sheet of wood), one can create any size hive needed or by moving the follower board, the hive is encouraged to grow.

Mangement is a bit different as the entrance is at one end and this is where the brood starts. As the numbers increase, the colony moves towards the rear of the hive where the honey is stored. No supers need to be added but just increase the number of the bars moving the follower board further to the back of the hive. Swarms are the easiest way to start but adding a package works well also.

Feeding on initial set up can be a challenge due to the low depth of the hive. Small jars of syrup or zip lock bags of syrup laid on the floor work well. Currently, this hive has a shallow plastic container with a float and pine needles to feed syrup.

Check out the BCBA Facebook page for shared links, photos, and questions/answers! Join the conversation!
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BarnstableCountyBeeA/>

Some folks feel that since this comb is natural that varroa will not be a problem thinking the cells are smaller. This is not so and varroa treatment is needed. Formic pro can be laid on the bottom during the summer if needed. Oxalic acid dribble can be used in November but each frame must be separated to apply.



The perfect shape of the comb and yes, it is upside down as the frame is very fragile. There is brood here under the cluster in the center just below the honey. This frame was just pulled this spring. Putting the frames nestled together does take smoke to prevent too much crushing of the bees.

Drones will be found on the outer edges of the frame in another month.

Come winter, a sugar brick frame can be made and added behind the honey frames simply as a backup. If not used, it can be stored in the freezer til next season.

Winterization = sides are lined with Styrofoam sheets, burlap bags are laid over the top bars and a shim is added supporting another sheet of Styrofoam.



Honey can be harvested by either pressing the frames and straining or just cutting the frames into comb honey. It is fun to watch this hive expand but it is a challenge to get them through the winter.

Claire

And Down On The Farm

Although it is a bit early in spring for much yard activity, plans are well under way regarding hive management at the club's apiary in Barnstable.

As of this writing, we have nine colonies alive having lost just 3 since last fall. They consist of single deep hives, double deep hives and two nucleus colonies in polystyrene boxes. Five of these colonies are headed by locally grafted queens, three have Cape Cod mutts for queens and one is the original package queen from May of 2020 and one of our strongest hives. Plans are to add a single package this May which, hopefully, will be used for workshops and hive openings. Eventually, the queen will be replaced with a locally grafted queen.

Our technology will include:

- Arnia scales and monitors for temperature and humidity
- BroodMinder scale and monitors for temperature (www.beecounted.org)
- Nectar detector for weekly weights.

Did You Know?

It takes one ounce of honey to fuel a bee's flight around the world.

- Our integrated pest management plans include:
- Screened bottom boards
- Drone comb removal
- Brood break with caged queens
- Sentinel monitoring program of 4 hives monthly from May through October. Samples to U Md
- Monthly varroa testing of all hives.
- Frame exchange with new foundation

Due to interest in single deep management, we will be adding this to our program. Although, we are not in the honey business, we do like to harvest a bit for sale and as a donation to the farmer who leases the county land.

Still to be decided is the miticide protocol for the apiary. Current thinking is when one hive has a high varroa count, all hives in the apiary will be treated due to drift and close proximity of the hives.

When locally queens become available, a few nucleus colonies will be made to offset any losses.

We are fortunate to have a freezer donated to the program and it will be used in warm weather to store our excess drawn frames to prevent wax moth damage and to store excess frames of honey to prevent robbing in the apiary.

Claire

Further Forage

Beekepingtodaypodcast.Com

If you still need more zooms and management help, [check out these podcasts](#) by Kim Flottum

Frame Replacement

[Here is an article](#) on the reasons for swapping out old dark frames every 3 to 5 years. And when you add the new foundation mark the top bar with a WHITE paint pen as then you will know how old the comb is. WHITE is the queen paint color for 2021.

Claire

Seasonal Tips * April

April is here!!! Perhaps the busiest month in the bee world but are you ready?

- **Dead outs** cleaned out, bottom boards brushed cleaned and rinsed of old sugar and paper remnants.
- New wax exchanged for old black comb or poorly built out.
- Honey left for the new package or nucleus colony or split.
- Good time to relocate hive if needed.
- **Overwintered hives** weather permitting unwrap and top insulation removed.
- Mid-month – dandelions in bloom – rotate the deeps BUT, know where your cluster is so you do not break mid center.
- Clean bottom board of debris – brush screen with wire brush and rinse.
- Replace up to 5 old black comb/frames if the hive is 4 to 5 years old
- Check brood pattern for nice tight pattern and pearly white larva
- Feed 1:1 sugar syrup/ theory being it gives the hive the sense of a nectar flow and increases egg laying.

So What Is Your Favorite Ipm?

We know there is no “silver bullet” to keep the varroa mite under control in our hives with a strong laying queen. But there are some measures we can take to reduce the numbers without using miticides.

My favorite is drone comb removal. Never a fan of the green plastic drone frame, using one or two honey shallow frames in the #2 and #9 position in your top deep could help reduce the varroa counts.

Or you can start from scratch with an empty frame with tongue depressors glued into the top bar. Add BBQ sticks top to bottom for support of the free form comb. These sticks make it easy to cull or cut out the drone comb.



We know varroa favors drone brood due to the longer pupal stage. With the extra space, workers will draw down the frame with drone comb. Once capped, it can be scrapped off along the bottom bar. Is it extra work and wasted resources for the hive? Perhaps, but each foundress varroa you eliminate could prevent major extrapolation of your infestation. Just be sure you make notes and watch the frame for capped drone. If forgotten and drone emerges, your infestation just increased!!

Keep good notes!!



Green plastic frame on the left with drone cells impregnated. Wax well with clean beeswax to improve use. Keep a second on hand to swap out.



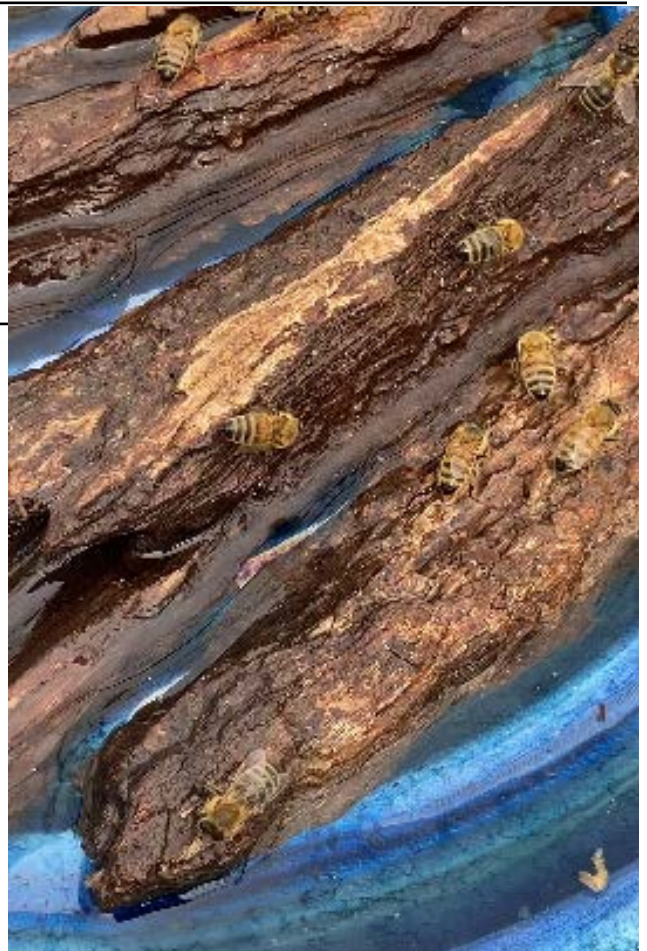
Always skewer the drone pupa on removal to give you an idea of just how much varroa is in your hive. The mites are easily seen on the white pupa making it easy to count. Consider culling every 3 to 4 weeks in May, June and July.

Claire

Waterworks

We all know that bees need water to cool the hive in the summer, but did you know that bees also need water to raise brood? Honey must be diluted before feeding to the larvae, so when I see a lot of bees on my bee watering basin in cool weather, I take it as a happy sign of lots of brood being raised.

Anne Richards



RESOURCES

The following officers and directors are a great resource to answer questions and requests for assistance.

Officers		
President	Michael D. Smith	michaeldgetsmail@gmail.com
Vice President	Maria Cashdollar	winter64@aol.com
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