



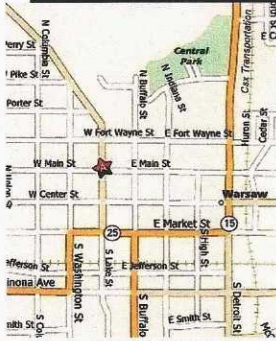
The Bee Line

Creating good and healthy beekeeping throughout MICHIANA



Published by the MICHIANA Beekeepers Association

SEPTEMBER 2011



Saturday, September 17 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Old Munson Bldg, 126 North Lake St., Warsaw. You can take S.R. 15 South from the Elkhart area or U.S. 30 East from the South Bend area then take SR 15 South into Warsaw. Turn right on Main St. the right again on Lake St.

We will talk over fall bee work and Winter preparations. Bring a sample of your honey to taste, we had fun judging everyone's honey by taste last year and you can have your honey's moisture content checked.

Hello MICHIANA Beekeepers,

Welcome to an early fall. The entire 2011 season has been scattered with weather records, why should we think fall would be any different. Near record setting daily highs and night time lows. Welcome to MICHIANA!!

Now is a great time to begin making those winter preparations in order for our stock to survive the MICHIANA Winter. Any treatments you subjected your hives to should be complete by now. One last hive inspection of the entire hive is in order, soon. While you are inspecting the hive, it is a good idea to scrape the bottom board one last time if needed.

Determine if you need to feed, if so, 2:1 sugar water should be provided thru the end of the month, allowing enough time for it to properly cure the moisture out for winter consumption. Get mouse guards on, they have been moving into weak colonies on these rather cool September nights. Make sure the hive is tilted forward to ensure proper drainage over the winter months. Inspect the corners of the supers to make sure they are tight, if not, you should consider replacing that super or making a repair as you go through the hive during that inspection.

Are your hives located in an open field with little protection from the wind, if so consider a wind break, bales of straw, plywood or fencing or wrapping them to shield them from that Westerly or Northern Winter storm. (We will cover winterizing your hives at the September MBA meeting in Warsaw, see the caption on our location, time and date and join us!!)

While we make preparations for the worst winter conditions, take a minute and reflect back on the season, did you enjoy the time spent in the field, watching those hives grow in strength, awed by the sight of bees returning to the hive loaded with pollen? You enjoyed it so much, you hope to expand next season and make some increases. Beekeeping is the life line to our survival, as a club we strive to prepare you for all conditions, good and not so good, but you have to attend meetings and get involved, ask those questions that have you stumped, find a mentor. Bee Prepared, join us. See you in Warsaw.

Bob Baughman - MBA President

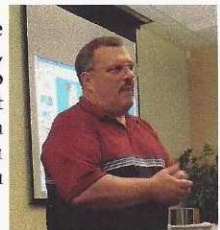
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FALL BEEKEEPERS BANQUET RESERVATION

The Fall Beekeepers Banquet will be Saturday, October 15 at the Madison Elementary School, 66030 Dogwood Rd. in Saint Joe County, Indiana. Doors will open at 5:30. The Polish style meal will be catered by The Skillet from South Bend. Cost is \$10.00 per person with children 12 and under free. We must have a final count for The Skillet by Tuesday, October 11 so mail your reservation no later than Saturday, October 8. We can accept last minute reservations by phone on Oct. 11 but no later. Because this is an off-site catering there will be no allowance for un-reserved walk-ins. Send reservation and checks made out to MICHIANA Beekeepers Association to David Emerson, 58303 C.R. 105 South, Elkhart, IN, 46517.

Name _____
Number of adults _____ at \$10.00 each, number of children 12 or under _____ (free). Total enclosed _____

Our guest speaker will be Dr. Joe Latshaw.

Latshaw apiaries focuses on the production and development of highly productive and well-adapted honey bees for beekeepers across the United States and strives to perfect and improve the instrumental insemination of queen honey bees through constant research and development. Dr. Joe Latshaw specializes in the design and production of instrumental insemination equipment used by researchers and beekeepers around the world. Dr. Latshaw has over 25 years of beekeeping experience and utilizes his extensive background in honey bee genetics to develop industry-recognized stains of AUREA (Italian) and KARNICA (Carniolan) honey bees. Dr. Latshaw designed his first award-winning instrumental insemination device in 1998 and lately released the new Latshaw Instrument for 2011. Dr. Latshaw constantly conducts research on a variety of topics, including overwintering honey bees in polystyrene boxes. Recently Dr. Latshaw has also developed the first ever vitamin and mineral supplement designed specifically for honey bees.



2012 MICHIANA Beekeepers Association Membership Renewal

Membership is \$15.00 per household and runs from January 1 thru December 31 each year. Renewing as early as possible relieves some of the last minute work and pressure on our volunteer treasurer for which we thank you. Send your renewal to David Emerson, 58303 C. R. 105 South, Elkhart, IN 46517. Make checks payable to: MICHIANA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION.

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
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Local Honey
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SEPTEMBER. It is still August as I write. Yesterday there was a light rain and I sat under the Maple tree watching as my bees flew in and out just as heavily during the shower as before or after. I wondered what nectar source was so interesting to keep them going in the rain. Then I wondered how often they got hit by rain drops and what affect it had on them. While I would like to know I would hate to think of research money being wasted on that while we have so many other problems to solve.

Traditionally September is the month we think of the colony downsizing for winter.

A colony population in summer is around 50,000 to 60,000 and must be reduced to about 25,000 for winter. The queen is usually kept less active so that as older foragers die they are not all replaced.

Fat bees and skinny bees. New bees raised from this point on (fat bees) will be different from those raised from January through August (skinny bees).

During winter bees will not have access to fresh pollen to make the high protein brood food to nourish themselves, the brood and the queen. To make up for this lack winter bees develop with a greater fat content in their bodies than summer bees which will allow them to make high protein brood food with greatly reduced amounts of inferior, stored pollen.

Some parts of our MICHIANA area are blessed with abundant and varied fall pollen sources while others are limited because of extensive mono-culture, with fewer fence rows and wood lots. Variation in diet (pollen types) is as important to bees as a varied diet is to people.



Like finger prints pollen grains are distinctive.

This frame of pollen has very little variation in color meaning it is probably all from one source, not so good.

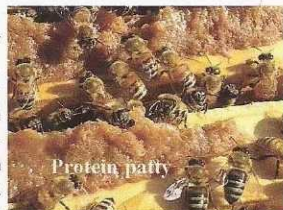


It is not so apparent in black and white but this pile of pollen pellets contain yellow, orange, brown, white, and blue/black; a good variety of sources and nutrition.



If you are going to feed your bees protein supple-

ments for winter early is better than later. Making sure these winter bees are raised with lots of good protein will make them better able to raise a healthy colony in January, February and March.



Protein patty



Liquid Mega Bee

Protein can be fed either dry, moist or as a liquid. As with feeding protein in spring this feeding needs to be right next to the brood,

not three or four honey supers away.

Feeding. Many years ago when I was pretty new at beekeeping I remember a fall meeting where we were discussing how our bees were fixed for the coming winter and someone said their hives were pretty light on honey and they were going to have to feed sugar syrup.

One of the genuine old timers, I think it was Ernie Fisher, asked how that could be, hadn't his bees made any honey this summer?

Well yes, the newer beekeeper answered, they had made a good crop of honey but when he got done extracting he found there wasn't enough honey left on the hives to go through winter.

Ernie summed it up, "You mean you took too much honey."

In 1999 I fell off a ladder and broke my heel. There seemed to be three options for taking care of the problem. A former work buddy suggested they should just shoot me like a lame horse. The doctor said they could either just immobilize the foot and let it mend as it was or he could operate and put it back to as close to the way it should be as possible. Fortunately for me they chose the third option.

Sometimes an "accident" happens to a bee colony; too much rain or too little sun or it is too cool to provide enough honey or they get robbed out, or they requeen to many times...the possibilities go on and on not least is the beekeeper. But with some emergency help the colony that almost certainly would die can get through the winter.

I am not in favor of routinely taking as much honey as possible then feeding sugar syrup to get

the bees through winter, but neither am I in favor of letting a colony starve that could be saved by providing sugar syrup.

Having a fixed hive unit that the beekeeper does not invade for honey will help you with winter stores management.

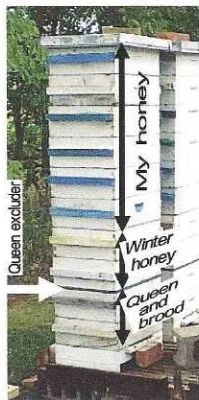
Tim Ives has an arrangement with his bees to leave them and their honey in their three deep brood boxes and puts his medium honey supers on top to be fill for him. Tim relies on the large brood nest area to produce larger than normal colonies which will store more than the average amount of honey. Tim gets plenty of honey and his bees survive well in their large domain. Deep boxes for the bees and mediums for Tim.



The super and outer cover are leaning against and hiding from view the bottom deep box.

I am not so trusting that the bees will provide their own winter stores in our modern hives so I rely on the queen excluder to help them and me.

I use medium boxes for everything with four serving as the fixed hive unit and these all have handles the same color as the box, they used to be white, now they are an off green. My honey supers have blue painted handles so they are easily identifiable whatever color the box is. My wood rimmed queen excluders are also painted blue so they stand out and are not left in the hive over winter, a sure death sentence for the queen.



After spring build up when it is time to put honey supers on the hives I restrict the queen to the bottom two brood boxes under the queen excluder and the second two brood boxes are put above the queen excluder knowing that when I take the honey supers off and the queen exclud-

ers out there will be two completely full medium boxes of honey for winter. By removing my honey in early August I can be very sure that there will be three medium brood boxes full of honey for winter and some in the bottom box too.

Why go through all of this now when it is too late to do it? Because right now you are going to have to put out money for sugar, spend your evenings and weekends boiling the water, mixing the syrup, cleaning up the mess, taking the syrup to the bees, not just once but many times (if you are only going to feed them once you might as well not bother at all because syrup is like nectar and must be reduced considerably before storing in combs and only one feeding will not provide enough stores to matter in late winter and early spring).

So now, while you are irritated with this mess and drudgery and unable to do other things you want to do it is good to know there is an alternative that you can plan on taking advantage of next spring so you can do what you want next fall.

So lets talk about feeding. Sugar syrup for fall feeding should be as thick as possible; you want to give the bees sugar, not water, but the water is necessary to deliver the sugar in a usable state. Make your syrup with two parts sugar to one part water. Boil the water or bring it close and remove from heat before stirring the sugar in until it is all dissolved. Let the syrup cool until you can hold the container without wanting to drop it. Bees will not take cold syrup but you do not want to cook their insides either.

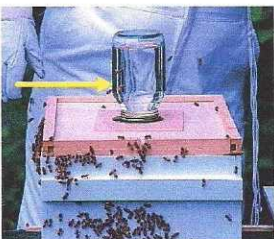
The cheapest and easiest method to feed is with a Ziplok baggie. Fill the baggie with syrup and lay it on the inner cover or top bars of the top brood box. Use a razor blade or something equally sharp to make slits in the center of the top side of the baggie. Put an empty super around it and put on the cover. Bob showed us a little twist to this arrangement. The baggie can be picked up and moved and even refilled and put back if the slits are parallel. A stick or even a finger can be slid under the central flap to lift the baggie and even refill it.



Friction Feeders are probably the most commonly used feeders and though they come in a large variety of styles they all work on the same

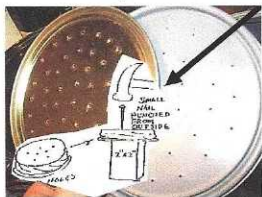
principle of vacuum and surface tension.

The container, in this case glass but you can use plastic, just be sure it is fairly rigid or the vacuum can cause it to collapse and flood the colony.



Use a small nail to punch holes in the lid or a very fine drill bit if the lid is plastic.

Fill the jar with syrup and put the lid on. Do not turn the jar over until you are at the hive. Turn the jar over quickly because

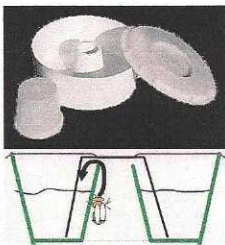


there will be a rain of syrup until the vacuum is established in the jar. The rain of syrup will call bees to the jar. Set the jar over the inner cover hole, directly on the top bars or on 1/4" spacers.



Finally put a super or brood box around the feeder and cover it up. Eliminate any holes or cracks bees from other colonies could use to get in and steal the syrup.

The angel food cake feeder can be used the same way on top of a hive with a super to close it in.



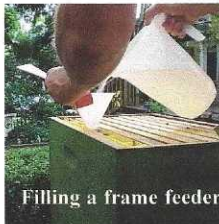
Set the donut shaped cake pan over the inner cover hole or right on the top bars, fill the cake pan with syrup, put the plastic cup over the central cone to confine the bees to a small amount of the syrup around the center post to prevent mass drowning then put the lid on the cake pan and cover the hive up.



Frame feeders come in both medium and deep sizes and are nice from several points. The feeder can be placed

right where it will do the most good, when placed next to or in the cluster the bees will keep the syrup warm and usable, and the feeder can be left in the hive year around.

The hive must be opened to fill the feeder so you will probably need to suit up.

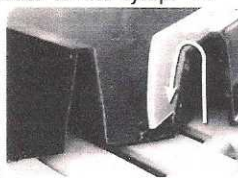


Filling a frame feeder



Hive Top feeders come in a variety of materials and styles but they all sit on the top brood box and hold a gallon or more of syrup. Bees go up through an opening at one

end and down into the feeder to the syrup. A wire, mesh or plastic shield keeps the bees from drowning en masse in the syrup. If the syrup is warm and the population large a lot of syrup can be taken down into the hive in a very short time.



Do not feed in the open in fall and be sure all feeders are safe from outside intruders. Access to syrup by foraging (robbing) bees can lead to frenzied robbing that will leave a lot of bees dead and possibly more than one colony completely robbed out. The fit of outer cover to Hive Top feeders is particularly questionable, a piece of foam insulation between the feeder and cover with a heavy rock on top can seal things up nicely so no robbers can get in the top.



Filling a Hive Top feeder

Just how much syrup should you give them? Well, that is another question that really needs to be answered by looking in the hive to see what they have stored. A deep box will hold 60 pounds of honey. I would guess you would need 15 or more 5 pound bags of sugar to equal that because the bees are going to consume some of that syrup to fuel themselves and raise brood while storing the rest. So be liberal with the syrup or do it again in winter.

At the end of August I am sitting here looking at my four hives with the bees coming and going hurriedly. I have seen bees on Goldenrod and the air around the hives is just beginning to have that distinctive goldenrod smell. I wonder if it is worth putting a super on each hive to try to get some goldenrod honey. There is a whole month of possibility ahead but that would mean getting the extracting equipment out again then cleaning and storing it, again. Are there more important things to do? I'll have to consider it.



overflow with loss of honey and a mess to clean up. Such spilled honey can be fed back to the bees but do not try to re-filter and bottle it.

Even after straining and filtering honey there is going to be foam and very small residue in the honey.



If the honey is left to sit in a settling tank for a few days at a warm temperature all of that will rise to the top. A settling tank does not have to be large. You can use a five gallon plastic bucket and put a honey gate in the side at the bottom.

As the honey in the tank goes down surface tension pulls the residue on top of the honey to the sides of the tank where it will stick. Honey bottled from the bottom of the tank will be clear.

People who know and like honey can forgive a lot in appearance but the general public needs to be pampered. Foam is no problem but it does not look nice.

Cool honey traps and holds onto air bubbles while warm honey releases them quickly.

Running honey onto a smooth surface and letting it flow down into the honey already in the jar will almost completely eliminate bubbles. You can put a broad paddle in a jar and run the stream of honey onto that or you can tip the jar and run the stream of honey down the side of the jar.

Last winter some time a beekeeper named Starke introduced an anti moisture frame to put in the hive in fall. He winters his bees in two deeps so he took one deep frame out of both boxes. In their place he inserted his moisture frame.

This moisture frame was made of one empty frame, deep or medium and on each side he tacked pieces of thin, hard board with a slick finish on one side. These boards were the width of the frame but deep enough to reach almost to the bottom board.

The idea is that moisture will collect on the slick surfaces of this frame and run all the way to the bottom, drip onto the bottom board and run out of the hive entrance reducing the moisture problem inside the hive.

If you try it let us know what you think next spring.



Let's look back at working with the honey you took off your hives. Almost any food can be damaged if it is not handled properly. Damage with honey does not necessarily mean making the honey inedible but making it unattractive to potential customers.

While there are honey consumers who want their honey as unprocessed as possible most want a clean, clear attractive product.

All honey should be strained to remove wood slivers chipped off of frames during uncapping, grass from a frame set on the ground, clumps of propolis, large pieces of wax, and dead bees.

A coarse screen will take care of all of that then a fine mesh screen will remove small bits of wax and bee legs.

A nylon cloth or cheese cloth will remove granulated honey crystals, hair, and very small bits of hive trash.



This succession of going from coarse to fine works better than going straight to the fine nylon cloth as at left. At each stage something is removed but smaller stuff passes on until you get to the fine stage and each should flow fairly freely. At left everything is jammed against the filter cloth and very quickly there is a total stoppage until the beekeeper

clears the sides of the cloth with a spatula, again and again and if you are somewhat automated there can be an

