From the President

Welcome Spring! Never mind that the snow is still lingering in shady spots—it will soon be gone. The bees are ready to go, and we beekeepers are also making our preparations, getting ourselves ready for the busy outdoor season.

I hope that your bees (or at least some of them) made it through the winter. We’re not quite out of the woods yet, and for now we must keep feeding since there is nothing sadder than a hive which starves to death in March. It won’t be very long before the skunk cabbage and the red maples are blooming and we see the bees bringing home that first round of lovely fresh pollen. Until then we must still be good caretakers.

This year the state of Massachusetts has again asked us to fill out an online “Bee Aware” survey about hive survival and beekeeping methods. Please consider helping our community by answering this survey before May 31st. You can find the link in this newsletter and on our web site. The more data we can gather, the better we can determine how to direct our shared resources to help bees and beekeepers.

Meanwhile, our WCBA board of directors has been busy putting together an exciting schedule of events for the warm season. Bee School is in full swing and we would like to welcome our newest members to all our events! We hope you will take advantage of our monthly meetings to learn hands-on techniques for working with your bees. We have one more indoor meeting on April 12 with a chef supper, where you will find ample opportunity for “bee talk” and fellow beekeepers who will enjoy answering all your questions. Then on May 4 we will move outdoors with our first outdoor meeting in Uxbridge and the first hive openings of the season. Check this newsletter and our web site for details and directions. I hope you can join us!

In this issue you will also find information on our annual jar order, including pricing and the order form which must be mailed or submitted in person. Please check the deadline and make sure to get your order and payment to Phil Gaudette in time. We only order jars once a year and as Norman says, “Jars don’t go bad!” so make sure you order enough (and a few extras just in case)!

A huge thanks to the many people who are working so hard behind the scenes to make all of our activities possible. We are an all-volunteer group and we welcome your help—if you have time or resources to donate to club activities, please let me know!

—Kathy
TIPS FROM KEN, THE BEE INSPECTOR

It will be early April by the time you get this newsletter. Temperatures fluctuate day to day in early April, getting warmer by the end of the month. You can now switch over from sugar patties to sugar syrup (continue pollen patties for a while yet). Maples and pussy willow usually open up buds by the end of March but are delayed this year due to the cold, so the early pollen and nectar is not yet available on warm days. I have seen a little witch hazel pollen come in on two warm days— but very little—so keep feeding for brood rearing to continue. Brood rearing started in many hives in December and hives that made it through winter are very strong and need feeding until temperatures warm and nature releases its stores.

On the first warm day when the temperature is over 60 degrees you should get into your hives and do spring cleaning. Scrape off your bottom board, transfer your brood frames into a clean super and scrape down the empty one and then transfer the frames from your other chamber into the clean one. You can then easily move your frames around in the supers. Check your brood, looking for any disease that may be present and evaluate your queen, requeen if necessary. Replace the frames in the same order they were in so as to not separate the brood cluster allowing bees to cover all the brood more easily in these early spring days. You should also evaluate how much fresh pollen has come in and decide if you need to continue with a pollen patty. Likewise, evaluate how much honey remains in the colony and move frames of honey closer to the brood so the bees can more easily warm the honey for use. Honey is usually found on the outer edges of the brood chamber where the bees could not warm it up for consumption. While you are doing all this movement be careful not to knock the bees off the brood frames they are working to keep at 93 degrees. Even though it is 60 degrees the brood can be chilled with exposure to outside temps. This year, I am finding more April brood than usual due to early brood rearing. Remove any outside wrapping by mid April, but leave your entrance reducers in place.

May brings with it the warmer temperatures coaxing the bees out to forage for natural pollen and nectar and you can be safe in cutting out syrup and pollen patties. The brood nest will now continue to expand more rapidly as April’s hatched bees can cover the larger brood nest. I have discovered over the years that brood nest usually remains in the top chamber until May’s warmer temps brings movement of brood lower. May also brings on another challenge—SWARMING. As the bees reach peak strengths in May, they now decide to split. Whitened wax on the outside of queen cups is one of the first signs along with an increase in drones, followed by the egg in the cup and the cup’s extension into a queen cell. You must act at that point to prevent the swarm. There are a number of ways to do this. It would take too long to describe the methods in this exposé. It is much easier to stop if you catch the swarm cells before they are capped. I suggest weekly hive checks to watch for swarming and prevent half of your bees from leaving. You will be glad you did especially if you are planning on a honey crop. After all, spring brings us that nice fruity honey from all the fruit trees and berries that are blooming.

May is also a good time to start checking varroa mite levels. Remember, that just as the bees are building, so are the mites. Overwintered hives vary with mite counts at this time. Most still are on the lower side but I have seen hives with counts in
May high enough to treat by early June. Keep monitoring from this point on the rest of the season. Heavy mites can take a hive down fairly quickly and vector viruses. May is also a good time to replace old frames with new foundation. I try to recycle my frames every six years on a rotating basis. Bees tend to build wax quite readily in the spring and less easily in the fall. Spring is a good time to draw out new honey supers, or extra deep frames needed for swarm prevention. Brood foundation is more quickly drawn out by placing the frame between brood frames. Only do 1 or 2 at a time so as to not expand your brood nest too much by separating the brood to the point the bees cannot heat it properly. The end of May is also a good time to make splits if you want to expand your apiary. Do not remove too many brood frames thus weakening the mother colony. I usually wait until I have at least 8 frames of brood. I also bring in a queen as it takes the bees too long to produce their own unless you are doing it as a learning experience. I remove my entrance reducers at the end of May for better ventilation.

June brings with it warm 75 degree temps that allow massive numbers of foragers to get out and collect vast amounts of nectar. I prepare for this by placing 2 honey supers on my hives the first week of May when dandelions start to bloom. Allowing the bees to put the nectar into honey supers helps prevent the clogging of brood chambers resulting in honey-bound hives that force you to spin out honey from the brood chamber to open up brood space for the queen. Honey-bound hives can quickly cause a drop in bee numbers. Remember, foragers are dying in six weeks and your hive dwindles if new bees are not replacing them. You should always have at least 8 frames open for brood during the season and more in the spring for buildup. Honey-bound hives also tend to swarm more. June also usually sees heavy mite loads and you should treat to keep numbers down. Formic acid can be used with honey supers and can prevent honey-bound hives unlike methods where you have to take off your honey supers to treat. June also brings the temps needed to use formic acid. Remember, keep an eye on your honey supers as they can fill up rather quickly with a good nectar flow. I have had a strong hive bring in 15–19 pounds of nectar in one day. I recommend a weekly check of your hive for all of the above issues talked about.

New beekeepers starting with packages in April and May will find mite, swarming and honey-bound issues delayed for 2–3 months as your package builds up. They need to build a lot of wax in order make the nest. You will continue feeding for much of the season until both brood chambers and honey supers are built out. You too must continue to do the weekly check to look for all of the above issues. Early on you must keep an eye out for queen issues especially looking for drone laying queens and supercedure issues which will cause a building slow-down for your colony. Get a mentor to help you with issues that you may not recognize even with bee school. Pollen patties will also be needed during the first month or more until your colony gets stronger and has more foraging bees. You can also contact the Mass Dept of Agricultural Resources to request an inspection or two and get advice. Attend club meetings with hive openings or come to the MDAR monthly hive openings by looking at the MDAR website for the Saturday dates. June ends my exposé but you may contact me at kenwarchol2@msn.com for advice. I will be happy to answer your questions and come out for an inspection of your hive. Best in Beekeeping—Ken

WELCOME WCBA BEE SCHOOL CLASS OF 2019!

The Worcester County Beekeepers Association would like to Welcome our new Bee School Students into our great organization. You are about to embark on an experience of a lifetime. We want this experience to be enjoyable and fun. You will have many questions as you progress through your new experience in beekeeping, so ask them.

We all have many of the same questions when we first start. Please realize that there are many different ways to manage your bees. Find a management style that works for you and the area you live in. Attend as many outdoor workshops as you can. These workshops are designed to enhance the classroom lectures that you have attended.

You are only a phone call away from help when you need it. Most important—Keep Your Smoker Lit & Veil Tight!
WCBA
meetings & events

DIRECTIONS: Please visit our website for directions to WCBA meetings.

Friday | April 12 | Chef Supper
Knights of Columbus Hall, Manville Road, Leicester, MA, 6:30 PM
A-I — Vegetable / Side    J-R — Dessert    S-Z — Main Course
SPEAKER: DR. KIM SKYRM, Mass Chief Apiary Inspector
TOPIC: An update on last year’s apiary inspections and this year’s apiary programs
Bring a dish big enough to serve 10, based on the first letter of your last name.
Please remember to bring your own tableware.

Saturday | May 4 | Home of Dave Lewcon
201 West River Road, Uxbridge, MA, 11:00 AM (Early Start)
SPEAKERS: KEN WARCHOL AND WCBA BEEKEEPERS
Ken Warchol will do a Hive Opening on “Inspecting your hive weekly through
the entire season.” We will then break into small groups of 6-8 for hands-on hive
openings for our new beekeepers led by a seasoned mentor. New beekeepers will
have the chance to learn close up what to look for during a weekly hive inspection.
We have over 12 hives available, including the Harvard study hives.
Dave will have hamburgers, hot dogs and chowder for all beekeepers. We only ask
that you bring a dessert to share. There will be bee talk during the lunch hour for
new and old beekeepers. Join us for an excellent Bee day!

Saturday | June 1 | Home of Peter Hoffman
183 Randall Road, Berlin, MA, 1:00 PM
From 1-4 our presenters will do 30 minute demonstrations on a live hive on four
issues beekeepers face from July-October.
TOPIC 1: Dick Callahan—Evaluating your queen and requeening
TOPIC 2: Mary Duane—Evaluating mite levels in your hive and treating for mites
TOPIC 3: Dave Lewcon—Swarm prevention methods
TOPIC 4: Bill Crawford—Making a split the correct way by
Please bring hors d’oeuvre and dessert to share—how about honey recipe desserts!
Also bring your homemade meads for everyone to try with shot cups. Ken will
taste the meads for a Best of the Day prize.

NOTICE:
Massachusetts Beekeepers,
get your 2019 bee inspections by
one of our state apiary inspectors
(Ken Warchol in Worcester county or
one of our other counties’ inspectors).
This is a great opportunity to watch
an experienced inspector check your
hive. Request up to 2 inspections by
visiting the Mass Dept. of Agricultural
Resources website at www.mass.gov/
apiary-program-honey-bees.
You will receive a call ahead of time
to let you know which day to expect
your inspection. Do not miss this
opportunity—it is free.
Call our Chief Inspector, Dr. Kim
Skyrm at (857) 319-1020 if you have
an issue registering online.

4 / SPRING 2019
WorcesterCountyBeekeepers.com
MASS BEE FIELD DAY

Saturday | June 15
UMass Agricultural Learning Center, 911 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Beekeeping experts from throughout New England attend this field day to share their knowledge and experience with fellow beekeepers. The all-day outdoor event is free and attendance is highly recommended. The Massachusetts Beekeeping Association also holds its annual State Bee Smoker Contest at this event, so bring your smoker and secret fuel. Pre-registration is recommended. For more information, to register or order lunch, visit www.massbee.org. The full field day agenda will be posted as it is finalized.

Last year we had fourteen new speakers and exciting new topics. If anyone is interested in presenting please contact your club president who will forward your request to Dan Conlon of Warm Colors Apiary. Our major vendors will include BetterBee and Mann Lake—to save on shipping costs, pre-place your orders with BetterBee and Mann Lake and pick up your equipment at Field Day!!

Saturday | July 20 | Home of Scott Malkasian
Dowd’s Lane, Princeton, MA, 11:00 AM (Early Start)
10th Annual WCBA Cookout: Scott Malkasian and Brian Faucher generously provide us with hamburgers, hot dogs, condiments and drinks. Please bring a salad, side dish and/or dessert to share. After lunch, Scott will open his hives talking about his style of management and bee issues he faced with his hives. Other reasons to come out and enjoy the afternoon with your fellow beekeepers:
  • Annual WCBA Smoker Contest—bring your smoker and favorite fuel
  • Tips on preparing your honey entry for the Spencer Fair
  • Honey extraction demo—great for new beekeepers
  • Tour Scott’s log cabin mansion—the view from the top is spectacular

Saturday | August 17 | Bill & Karen Robinson
155 Old Upton Road, Grafton, MA, 1:00 PM
SPEAKER: KEN WARCHOL
TOPICS: Preparing your hives for Winter
Come join us at the beautiful Robinson Farm Homestead where you learn what you need to do to get your hive through the winter months and get a recap by Ken of the season’s inspections thus far.

We ask all members to bring desserts to the meeting. This meeting is a must for all new beekeepers. Hope to see you all there—Ken

REMINDER
Jar orders MUST be picked up Saturday, May 11 or Sunday, May 12 between 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Davidian’s Farm, 150 Ball Street, Northborough, MA

Legislative News:

**Background:** The enforcement of federal pesticide regulations is the responsibility of the states as provided by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The enforcement of these laws in Massachusetts is the responsibility of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) as provided by the Massachusetts Pesticide Control Act (MCPA Chap 132B of the MA General Laws, 1978).

Eight bills have been filed in the current legislative session relating to pesticide management.

H. 763 The first is our old friend from the past session, “An Act to Protect MA Pollinators” resubmitted by Rep Carolyn Dykema. Once again this bill has been assigned to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture (ENRA). Essentially unchanged, this bill will limit the use of Neonicotinoid insecticides to licensed pesticide operators eliminating use by unlicensed people. Although this bill does not affect farm use last session the Farm Bureau successfully lobbied the Speaker to keep it from reaching the floor for a vote by the members. Last year’s bill was co-sponsored by 135 members (84%) of the membership. This year the bill is co-sponsored by 153 members (97%) plus the Attorney General.

**Other bills of note include** (Assigned to ENRA):

S. 463, “An Act Protecting Pollinators by Eliminating Harmful Products” submitted by Senator Jamie Eldridge. This bill bans all uses of neonic in the State excepting the sale of treated horticultural plants.

H. 792 “An Act Relative to the Transfer or Use of Glyphosate (Roundup) in the Commonwealth”. By Rep. Carmine Gentile. This act will ban all uses of this very broadly used herbicide recently associated with human cancer.

S. 432 “An Act to Restrict the Use of Pesticides Around Children” William N. Brownsberger. This bill extends the protection of pesticide restrictions to all facilities housing children and to athletic fields.

S. 499 “An Act Relative to the Use of Glyphosate on Public Lands” (Including school property) Senator Jason Lewis. This bill prohibits the use of glyphosate on all public lands including schools except in exceptional emergencies.

H. 776 and S463 Rep Fernandes and Senator Eldridge This law would allow cities and towns the option to enact pesticide laws that are more stringent than State restrictions.

H. 766 Carolyn Dykema, “An Act Relative to Tick Borne Illness” Expands the authority of the Mosquito Control Board to use IPM tools (including pesticides) to control ticks.


The proliferation of bills designed to restrict the use of pesticides reflects the efforts the bee community in recent years. As always, passage of any of these bills will require the imprimatur of the Speaker, who controls the legislative process.

Please contact your state representatives to let them know you support these bills.

STAR MENTOR AWARDS

**DID YOU HAVE AN AMAZING MENTOR?**

If you are a mentee who has had a valuable mentor that has helped you throughout the season then you should write up a recommendation of several paragraphs recommending them for a star mentor award presented at a monthly meeting. They deserve it. Email your recommendation to Kenwarchol2@msn.com and we will have you present the award to your mentor at an upcoming WCBA meeting.
Orders are due by Wednesday April 24, 2019. NO EXCEPTIONS!
Orders will be taken from WCBA members in good standing ONLY
Order NOW while you have this form in your hand. Order extra—glass jars don't go bad!

NAME ________________________________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS ____________________________________________________________________________________

PHONE ___________________________ EMAIL ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price per Case</th>
<th>Cases Ordered</th>
<th>Total Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ lb. classic (24 jars/case)</td>
<td>$11.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lb. classic (24 jars/case)</td>
<td>$12.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb. classic (12 jars/case)</td>
<td>$9.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 lb. classic (6 jars/case)</td>
<td>$12.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total for all Jars

NOTE: 5 lb. jars will be ordered only if we have enough to fill a pallet. You will be reimbursed only for 5lb. jars if the minimum is not met.

Make checks payable to WCBA and send along with order form to:
Philip Gaudette, 105 Ball Street, Northborough, MA 01532

Orders MUST be picked up on Saturday, May 11 or Sunday May 12, 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Any jars left at the end of pickup time will be sold and your payment WILL NOT BE REFUNDED.
The WCBA does not have room to store jars. Find someone who lives near you to pick up your jars on pickup day.
Order pickups will be at Davidian's Farm: 150 Ball Street, Northborough, MA

Signature (required): _______________________

We need help to count caps! Friday, May 10

Cap counters may pick up jars at this time (free pizza too!) If you can help count caps, please circle .................... YES

Directions to Davidian’s Farm (150 Ball Street, Northborough, MA):
Take Interstate 290 to Exit 24 (Church Street, Northborough). Head North toward Boylston.
Take the first right before farm stand onto Ball Street. Go to the top of hill. We are in the steel building on the right.
Any questions, call Phil at 508-826-5599.
Worcester County Beekeepers Association
c/o Kathy deGraaf
23 Edmunds Way
Northborough, MA 01532

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

THE DATE

Friday | April 12, 2019
Chef Supper (Leicester Knights of Columbus)

Saturday | May 4, 2019
First Outdoor Meeting / Hands-on Workshop
(Dave Lewcon’s, Uxbridge, MA)

Saturday | June 1, 2019
Outdoor Meeting (Peter Hoffman’s, Berlin, MA)

Saturday | July 20, 2019
Annual Cookout & Smoker Contest (Scott Malkasian’s, Princeton, MA)

Saturday | August 17, 2019
Outdoor Meeting (Bill and Karen Robinson’s, Grafton, MA)

The APIARY NEWS is published quarterly by the Worcester County Beekeepers Association for its members. Submissions are welcome and should be sent to:

Editor:
Charice Kalis
207 Lebanon Hill Road
Southbridge, MA 01550
cgkalis@verizon.net