

The Middlesex ee

The Middlesex Bee is the official newsletter of the Middlesex Beekeepers Association, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

August 2016

“The hum of the bees is the voice of the garden.”

Elizabeth Lawrence

July MCBA Outdoor Meeting and Hive Opening Minutes

Host/Location: Robin, 60 Foster Street, Littleton (Robino1460)

Officer: President Tom Fiore

Minutes Volunteer: Don Rota

Members in attendance: Roughly 30

Tom: Thank you to Robin for finding a nice cool place for us to all sit for the meeting! I'd like to start by having the newbee's introduce themselves:

- Barara from Ashby - 1 hive - Looking forward to hearing people's opinions and ideas.
- Fred from Billerica - 2 hives - I grew up with bees, and am trying to get my grandkids to start. I'm having problems with bees drifting from one hive to another.
- Ed from Marlboro - No hives - just here for research. Next year will get a hive. Tom's

advice: Its good to take classes in the Spring, to understand what's ahead of you. Editor's Note: MCBA offers several beginners classes (Bee Schools) around Middlesex County.

- John From Wayland - 2 hives - Started from nucs, and they lasted until February. I purchased two new replacement nucs and they are doing well now.
- Mike from Carlisle - 6 hives- Just joined today. I've had hives for a long time, but I'm worried I'm not doing things the right way. It seems that the work I'm doing does not match with the results that I'm getting. Sometimes I do nothing and get a good harvest of honey, and other times I do more or less and get worse or better results. I want to know if I'm doing things correctly, or if there's a "Correct way" to do things.
- Dave & Way from Lexington - 1 hive, started from a nuc - and we are getting honey. "We have honey that is not capped,

1 July Meeting

Minutes taken by Don Rota

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Tool to Catch Queens for Marking

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Kathy Martin, Extractor Information

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Save the Date

MCBA Outdoor Meetings and Hive Openings

08/27, 1-3pm, 520 Lexington Road, Concord

09/24, 1-3pm, 8 Crescent Avenue, Bedford

MCBA Indoor Meetings and Bee Talks

First Religious Society Hall, 27 School Street, Carlisle, MA

10/28, 7-9pm, Topic/Speaker: TBD; Annual Auction

11/25, 7-9pm, Topic/Speaker: TBD; (Annual FAT meeting)

12/12 (Tentative), Saturday, 6:30-9pm, Holiday Dinner

01/27, 7-9pm, Topic/Speaker: TBD

02/24, 7-9pm, Topic/Speaker: TBD

03/24, 7-9pm, Topic/Speaker: TBD

04/28, 7-9pm, Topic/Speaker: TBD

can we harvest it? Do I need to wait until it's capped?" Tom: "If you shake it and it does not drip out - its cured, and they just have not capped it yet. Better to take it off before its capped, because they need more nectar in order to cap it. It's easier to harvest now, than having to cut the caps off.

- Jen from Framingham - 2 nucs, 1 died, now I have 1 new nuc, and have done a split. I had capped queen cells so I split the hive.

Both hives are thriving - 2 hive bodies and 2 supers each.

- Allan from Marlboro - 2 hives - Still having problem finding the queen. Everything is doing okay though. Tom: "Just look at the bees, if they are ignoring you, that's a good sign that all is well. If you have no queen cells then you're probably okay. If you can find eggs, then its the same as finding the queen - that's the minimalist approach.

Some people look at every frame... I don't unless the bees don't look right."

- Lee - No hives - I'm going to take a class.
- Mikelle from Groton - No hives - I will get a hive next year.
- Cindy from Littleton - 4 hives. I've been doing it for 6 years and let it go for a few, and got new hives this year.
- Mike from Newton - 1 hive - I've had hives in Vermont, and had a bear problem in the past. Hoping for a better year this year.
- Ottavio from Belmont - 3 hives, 2 nucs, 4 supers - I've been doing bees for over 20 years. I had reported the AFB incident in Watertown. I told Tony and Anita Daily after that incident - Anita was very nice to come out and personally check out my hives in 90 degree weather, and I have no AFB in my own hives. One woman in Watertown suspected a problem last year and had bees sent to Bellsville in Bethesda who diagnosed AFB, but she didn't want to do anything with her hives. She had it again this year, and the fire department and the state health department said they'd help her burn her hives, but she didn't want to do that. Tom will follow up to find out how this turned out, and post it on the internal website. To burn hives is simple, use a 50 gallon barrel, put the hives in and burn them.

Continued Next Page.

Q&A session:

Can you use frames from a previous year - for how many years? Tom: “Old frames should last for 4-5 years and then you should cycle them out.

How do you clean up old hives? Tom: So long as they don't show signs of dysentery, you can use Chlorox Wipes. If you get moths, of course clean that wax out. Remove excess burr comb. If its black don't reuse it, get rid of it – the comb is too old. There was a time when there was an irradiation program that was done by a Northboro company that would sterilize equipment. That program is now on hold, and I have no idea how much that costs. Some older bee keepers would scorch the insides of the hive, but that is no insurance that there is not spores hiding in the corner crevices. It's risky if you don't know the provenance of used equipment.”

Which type of setup (hive type) is best? Do you need new boxes if your hive dies off? Tom - “You don't need new hive boxes if you have a hive die off - so long as you have them tested and it's not AFB”. **What hive (type) is best for the bees? Langstroth?** I have a friend who has Top Bar hives too...Tom: “It's difficult for top bar hives to overwinter well here in New England. How does your friend overwinter them?” Mikelle - “He keeps them in his shed.” Tom: “Exotic hives can be really interesting to work with, but the more exotic/fun it is, the more time consuming it is”. *Editor's Note: The club suggests using Langstroth Hives, because those are the hives that the mentors and experienced beekeepers in the club use.*

Octavio Recommends a documentary on bee keeping called “More than honey” - very educational. Tom: “We have a copy of that in our club library.”

Have other people used slotted boards? John: “I drill two holes down into the slotted board on my hive. Because my hive leans forward, the condensation accumulates on the front cross bar, and bees too, The ½ inch holes in the slotted board helps drain the water and makes a place for worker bees to dispose of dead bees (down the holes and onto the bottom board). I drill the holes in the front corners of the slotted board, because water will drain to one side or the other. Nothing is ever perfectly level. With the slotted board, I still use a mouse guard on the front of the hive.” Tom: “Something I do for my hives in the Winter - I use a bottom screen

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board, but I staple a black plastic skirt around the base. It helps keep out cold up drafts, and helps keep them warmer - because of the sun's heat. *Editor's Note: Slotted Bottom Boards were developed as an extra space for field bees to occupy, and theoretically cuts down on swarming. It also prevents updrafts in winter.*

Is it too late to split now? Tom: "Yes, it's risky. It all depends how good the nectar flow will be in the Fall, so it's probably better to split next Spring".

Some people skip using the queen excluder, and think that the queen will just not go up into the supers - what do you recommend?

Tom: "sometimes the queen excluder is referred to as a "Honey Excluder," because the bees will hang out with the brood and the queen, and not go up into an empty space with no other bees. Another member recommended that you "put some syrup or honey in the super to encourage them to build wax up there."

What if you don't have a lot of wax/honey in your super? Tom: "Just leave them be, and

Join us on Facebook

Our Facebook Page has updates about meetings (delays/cancellations in Winter), and articles about bees - so the next time you're online, come visit!

they'll build up on their own, because there will be a Fall nectar flow anyways."

Should I do a hive manipulation, because I have bees drift from one hive to another?

One hive has twice the amount of full frames than the other. Tom, and others: "You can try moving 2 frames, but it's more likely that you have one queen that is not as productive as the other queen, don't blame the wind. Go ahead and move over 2 brood frames, but if after that, the weaker queen is not performing any better during the next nectar flow, then she's your problem. You may have had a hive supercede and not known it.

Should I do a powdered sugar drop and check

for mites once a month? How many mites is too many to find? Someone recommended you treat the hive with Listerine... Tom: "I have never heard of a Listerine treatment... You can assume that you have mites, and it's probably best just to treat as if you have them. Ken Warchal (*Worcester County Bee Inspector*) treats twice a year with Formic acid, and then Thymol/Apiguard in the Fall." Ottavio: "I treat with Oxalic acid vapor - 1/2 teaspoon for each hive - treat once a week for 3 weeks in early Spring and in June. Better Bee sells a kit for oxalic acid and has an excellent video" Tom: "No matter if you treat (or don't) you may still lose hives". Ottavio: "There are just too many variables .Treat anyways and hope for the best". Tom: "If you don't test after you treat them, you'll never know if your treatments were effective". Ottavio: "Oxalic Acid can be used

Bee Magazine Discount

MCBA members receive a 25% discount off subscriptions to *American Bee Journal*.

For a copy of the ABJ Association Member Subscription form, visit the *Club Business & Important Links* section of the MCBA members-only website:

membership.middlesexbeekeepers.org

with honey supers on". **What do the seasoned bee keepers use?**

- Apiguard: 2x year
- Oxalic Acid: 2 Spring and 3 Fall treatments
- MAQS
- Hop Guard 3x - good to use in cold weather
- Never treat - made no difference.- but I'm not testing.(two people said this).

Group poll: 12 people treat and 3 don't

After our introductions and Q&A, Robin provided refreshments and food.

The hive opening - Robin said she got a new Nuc in June, but could not find the queen and thought it was queenless. Tom removed the water feeder (empty), found some eggs on frame 6 on the bottom hive, and declared that we don't need to look for the queen, as the bees

did not seem defensive and were bringing in good amounts of pollen and nectar. Tom left the top cover slightly tilted for ventilation.

A tip from the crowd - (which someone noted Robin was doing) Using the Red Sumac flower pod as fuel for the smoker – it's cheap and it burns cool. Which had also been a tip from Rick Renault.

I left at 4PM - that was a great meeting - Many thanks to Robin, Tom, John and all the mentors who helped during the day. Don.

Editor's Note: A huge thanks to Don Rota for filling in and taking notes for the club while I was away. ■

Annual Auction

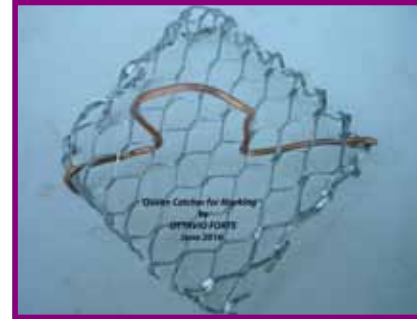
Have some extra frames? Don't like your Hive Tool? Think about donating unused or un-needed equipment to the club to raise money at our October Meeting & Annual Auction.

Editor's Note: the information on mite treatment in the June-July Newsletter (Ken Warchol's treatment recommendations) was incorrect. Member John Zonfrelli sent in the following correction: The recommendation is for mite away in the summer, and "Apivar" in the fall, not Apiguard, as is written. Apiguard is not effective in September, temps cool off. Apivar is a contact treatment and is not temperature sensitive.

John noted that his own treatment plan has been pulling all honey supers in early August, applying Apiguard, then using Apivar strips, Oct 1 to Thanksgiving Day, which resulted in Zero losses, winter 2015-2016, in 8 colonies. All 8, with swarm cells in late April... making for a busy, interesting spring season for him. ■

Ottavio Forte's Tool Tips

Queen catching for marking is not easy, especially if you are wearing gloves, god-forbid you kill the queen, so you never dare mark a queen on your own, it is not worth the risk. So all your queens remain unmarked and unnoticed in the midst. Here is a device that you can use.



Use it also when you buy a package with unmarked queen. After the queen has settled in the hive find it for the first time and mark it yourself, easily, and save the cost of buying a marked one.



Get a screen, the one in the photos is made from a Home Depot builders' screen, the diamonds diagonals are 1/2 by 1/4 inch. Cut a square 3 by 3 inches, bend the sides about three eights, trim as required. Add a handle as shown, I used 14-gauge copper wire. You are ready to use the tool, even with the gloves on. After you have arrested the queen under the cage you can remove the glove for dexterity and do the final marking. Good luck!

Summer Hummer

I'm the hummer of summer,
So busy with buzz.
A never-humdrummer
All covered with fuzz.
I'm a nectar collector.
Make wax to the max.
A beehive protector.
I never relax.
I'm a lover of clover.
A seeker of scent.
A zigzag flyover-
A thing heaven-sent.
I'm a dancer, a prance.
My own pollen nation.
A flower enhancer.
A summer sensation.

Douglas Florian

Extractor



MCBA maintains a hand-operated Maxant 3100-series 9-Frame Honey Extractor for rent by current members. Rental includes everything you need to extract your honey, including:

- Electric hot knife for uncapping honey frames
- Uncapping Fork
- Uncapping Tank

Terms:

- This extractor is available on a first-come, first-served basis to members only.
- The extractor is easy to transport in an SUV or Pickup, and is capable of being moved by one person with ease (however 2 people are helpful)
- \$15/day. Extensions may be available depending upon scheduling. Contact the Extractor Coordinator at extractor@middlesexbeekeepers.org for information.
- The Extractor must be cleaned WITH COLD WATER before returning to the club.
- Any and all damage and/or maintenance issues MUST be reported to the Extractor coordinator immediately.

To reserve, contact Kathy at:

extractor@middlesexbeekeepers.org or by phone at: 617.549.7460

What's Blooming Now?

Common Name	Scientific Name	Value	Plant Type
July			
Aster	Aster Acuminatus	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
	Aster Novea Angliae	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
	Aster Preatlus	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
	Aster Viminius	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
Basswood	Tilia Americana	Nectar & Pollen	Tree
Bee Balm	Monarda Punctata	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Buckwheat	Fagopyrum Esculentum	Nectar	Annual
Butterfly-Bush	Buddleia Davidi	Nectar	Shrub
Buttonbush	Cephalanthus Occidentalis	Nectar & Pollen	Shrub
California Poppy	Eschscholtzia Californica	Nectar & Pollen	Annual
Canada Thistle	Cirsium Arvense	Nectar	Perennial
Clematis	Clematis Virginiana	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
Corn	Zea Mays	Pollen	Annual
Cucumber	Cucumis Sativa	Nectar & Pollen	Annual
Dogbane (spreading)	Apocynum Sativa	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Dwarf Sumac	Rhus Copallina	Nectar & Pollen	Shrub
English Ivy	Hebera Helix	Nectar	Vine
Fireweed	Epilobium Angustifolium	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Golden-Rain Tree	Koelreuteria Paniculata	Nectar & Pollen	Tree
Goldenrod	Solidago ssp.(many species)	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
	S. Graminifolia	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
	S. Rugosa	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
	S. Speciosa	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
Hardhack	Spiraea Tomentosa	Nectar	Shrub
Marjoram	Origanum	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Meadowsweet	Spiraea Latifolia	Nectar	Shrub
Milkweed	Asclepias spp.	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Jersey-tea	Ceanothus Americanus	Nectar & Pollen	Shrub
Jewelweed	Impatiens Biflora	Nectar	Annual

Common Name	Scientific Name	Value	Plant Type
Onion	Allium Cepa	Nectar	Biennial
Purple Loosestrife	Lythrum Salicaria	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Purple Vervain	Verbena Hastata	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
Rhubarb	Rheum	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Rock-rose	Helianthemum Canadense	Pollen	Annual
Smooth Sumac	Rhus Glabra	Nectar & Pollen	Shrub
Swamp Loosestrife	Decodon Verticillatus	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Sweet Pepperbush, Clethra	Clethra Alnifolia	Nectar & Pollen	Shrub
Thyme	Thymus Serpyllum	Nectar	Herbaceous Perennial
Wild Cucumber	Echinocystis Lobata	Nectar & Pollen	Annual
Winter Squash	Cucurbita Maxima	Nectar & Pollen	Annual
August			
Bachelor's Button	Centaurea Cyanus	Nectar	Herbaceous Perennial
Boneset	Eupatorium Perfoliatum	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
Burdock	Arctium Minus	Nectar & Pollen	Biennial
Bur-marigold	Bidens Laevis	Nectar	Perennial
Goldenrod	Rudbeckia Laciniata	Pollen & Nectar	Perennial
Heart's Ease	Polygonum Persicaria	Nectar	Perennial
Joe-Pye Weed	Eupatorium Purpureum	Nectar & Pollen	Herbaceous Perennial
Regweed	Ambrosia Arenisiifolia	Pollen	Annual
Virginia Creeper	Parthenocissus Quinquefolia	Pollen & Nectar	Vine
September			
False-chamomile	Boltonia Asteroides	Nectar & Pollen	Perennial
Japanese Bamboo	Polygonum Cuspidatum	Nectar	Perennial
October			
Witch Hazel	Hamamelis Virginiana	Pollen	Shrub

Information for **What's Blooming Now?** was taken from **Nectar and pollen plants of Massachusetts as observed in the central Connecticut Valley region** Special circular #27, Revised F.R. Shaw, Department of Entomology, University of Massachusetts, 2-2-56

DID YOU KNOW ?

Propolis

Ancient Greeks observed the sticky substance that guards the gateway to the hive, or “city,” of the bees and named it propolis (PROP-uh-lis), after pro for “to come before” and polis for “city.” Today, beekeepers call propolis “bee-glue” for its adhesive qualities.

Honeybees collect waxy, resinous propolis from deciduous trees and transport it to the hive (above) in the way that they carry pollen. they layer it at the hive’s entrance and paint a thin coating on the interior of the hive, plugging up any holes. Beekeepers harvest it from both places. Russian peasants long ago recognized the antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral properties of propolis - hence the name “Russian Penicillin,” which is still in use today.

Propolis also has powerful antioxidant properties, and it fully metabolizes after 8-hours. One way to consume it is to freeze it, grind it into powder, and add it to honey. Studies have shown it to be good for the liver, the immune system, and the skin. You can place a small chunk of raw propolis between your cheek and gum and suck on it - but DON'T try to chew it, it can remove your fillings!



Image Courtesy of Tom Fiore



Member Paul Giovinazzo sent in two pictures from a swarm he caught - one of his hives swarmed and he was able to catch the swarm before it took off!





Middlesex County Beekeepers Association

Membership Form

\$15 Annual dues per family, **payable to MCBA**. Mail this form and payment to: Rick Ressijac, 7 Coolidge Road, Ayer, MA 01432 *OR* bring it with you to a meeting.

Please print CLEARLY.

Name _____

Family Members' Name(s) _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

How did you hear about us? _____

How many hives do you have? _____ Renewal or New Membership

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