



GREENE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS

GREENE BEE NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025



Monitor hive weight by
tipping the back of the
hive!



Begin 2:1 syrup feeding
as needed.



Look for weak colonies
that are vulnerable to
pests.



Prevent yellow jackets
with robbing screens
and wasp traps.



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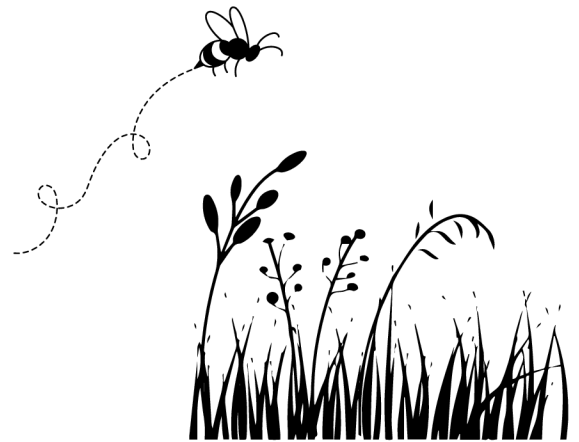
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GCBA Members' Meeting Guest Speaker: FERAL BEES AND VARROA RESISTANCE

Dwight Wells *IN PERSON*

October 21, 2025 at 7pm

Where: ZOOM and Xenia Community Center
1265 W. 2nd Street, Xenia, OH 45385



Come hear Mr. Wells discuss his findings about varroa resistance in feral bees and ways to support our apiaries. Dwight Wells is known as a sustainable beekeeper and a project coordinator for the Propolis Project. Wells has been particularly noted for his work with bee colonies at locations like the Huffman Prairie Queen Yard at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, contributing to bee conservation efforts. Dwight will demonstrate his specialized swarm traps for attracting feral bees.

**OSBA Fall Conference: Friday October 24, 5 PM through Saturday
October 25, 6 PM in Mansfield, Ohio**
Conference Page -- [HERE](#)



Bee Aware: Odds and Ends

October 2025

By: Bill Starrett

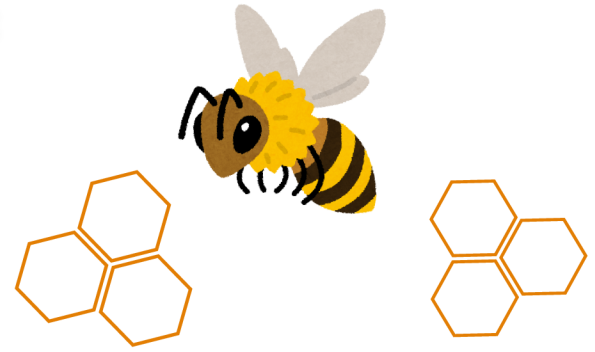
Preparing for successful wintering is a beekeeper's duty. Honey bees have learned to winter successfully in cold climates like we experience in Greene County Ohio, but they don't really "hibernate" in the true sense of the word because they are actively inactive. What that means is that they are able to respond to the ongoing temperature at any given time of the winter. When air temperatures are below 50 degrees they cluster around the queen to maintain her at about 75 degrees, and on a warm winter day above 55 degrees they can fly and empty their intestines in a valuable cleansing flight. Cleansing flights are critical after long periods of confinement due to weather too cold for their body systems to operate efficiently in flight.

When it is cold, so long as any part of the bee cluster is in direct contact with stored honey the cluster will pass the honey from bee to bee even in the coldest weather. Starvation occurs when no part of the winter cluster is in contact with stored honey and that can occur when the hive is well supplied with honey but temperatures are too cold for the cluster to move within the hive. That is why it is important for the beekeeper to make sure the location of the honey is immediately above the winter cluster as cold weather sets in. Typically, the cluster only moves upward inside the hive and any honey that is bypassed will not be available throughout the winter.

During cold weather when the bees are inactive an open hive entrance is an invitation to mice to enter and make a nest in the shelter of a dry hive. Half inch hardware cloth stapled over the entrance helps keep mice from getting in and making a nest while the bees are unable to respond.

When bees consume honey they release warm moist air that rises and the moisture will condense above the cluster during cold weather and can freeze, later melting and raining down on the cluster causing certain death. An upper entrance allows the warm moist air to escape preventing this wintering problem. An upper entrance can be created as simply as by putting a pebble on each corner of the inner cover so the telescoping cover is elevated.

Wind intensifies the effects of heat or cold, so anything that blocks a winter wind makes it easier for the bees to maintain cluster temperature and can reduce the amount of honey the bees must consume to generate survival heat. Throw-away skids, garbage bags full of leaves tied to the hives, or bales of straw creating a windbreak all help reduce the effects of winter wind. This summarizes the three major beekeeper tasks to assure successful wintering.



President's Message

October 2025



October has arrived! The bees have shifted to winter prep mode. It is still dry out there despite the rain we had recently so beekeepers should be monitoring winter stores in the hives and feeding as appropriate. I found that my hives needed significant feeding towards the end of September. They are in pretty good shape now. I started seeing the “fuzzy” bees in my hives which is a definite sign that the colony is preparing for winter. Although, there is still foraging going on with goldenrod, asters and other plants of interest to bees in this late season. The bees are moving along and I need to move along with them.

In September, our VP and I met with Marina Miquilini, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator at the Ohio State University extension location in Greene County. We discussed opportunities for collaboration between GCBA and OSU and we have our collective eyes on several potential projects in 2026. We hope to see Marina at one of our upcoming meetings. We look forward to working together with OSU.

This month's speaker will be Dwight Wells. He is known as a sustainable beekeeper and a project coordinator for the Propolis Project in Greene County at Wright-Patterson AFB. He will tell us about feral bee colonies and some of their attributes. This will be an in-person presentation regarding local bees and colonies so the information will be highly applicable to us. I am personally very interested in this presentation as I am inclining to move towards my bee colonies managing their varroa destructor population.

Hopefully, you have taken an opportunity to browse our new website. There are still a few things we plan to do but there is plenty there to enjoy. We welcome any comments and suggestions you may have.

A reminder to our members. Please tell us if you are interested in running for a GCBA board position. Or if you are just curious as to what we board members do behind the scenes. Elections are held in November which is next month. Any board member can tell you about the board positions and some of the work we share. Should you be interested in possibly running for a board position, please chat with Cindy Olsen. She is the Nominating Committee Chairperson.

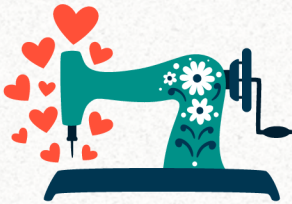


BBE-THEMED QUILT RAFFLE

Greene County Beekeepers Assoc. is raffling this beautiful, hand-crafted quilt.

Proceeds support our educational programs. This quilt was made by Susan Kinner and Sheryl Fischer in 2018 and was donated to our organization earlier this year.

It is Four Patch Lattice pattern, with backing, 64" x 72" in size, suitable as a throw or coverlet for a twin bed.



Tickets can be purchased at GCBA Meetings

or Check sent to:

GCBA-

Attn: Bee Quilt Raffle

P.O. Box 362; Xenia, Ohio 45385

Include full name, _____

phone number, _____

email and _____

address _____

Tickets are:

\$5 each

Three for \$12

All entries *Must be received by Nov. 15th, 2025* and the winning entry will be pulled Nov. 18th at the Annual GCBA Holiday Dinner.

Entries after that date will be returned.

Down My Garden Path: There's still much to do. By Cynthia Olsen



Both a native bee and a honeybee share a drumstick allium bloom.
Photo credit: Great Garden Plants

There is a subtle sadness that starts in late fall. There aren't blooms for pollinators, the bees are pretty much tucked in, and my veg patch is done for. But there are always tasks to do around the place such as planting flower and garlic bulbs, cleaning up beds, and putting bee equipment in the workshop for repair or storage. I must remember that the work doesn't end when the season does, it just slows down. Just as the bees have slowed down. Now is the best time to plant new trees and shrubs. Get those holes dug before the ground freezes. Since I lost a favorite maple tree that the bees loved, I have decided to replace it with a cherry tree. I'm putting out additional nine-bark bushes also.

I have terrible issues with deer, but alliums seem to be resistant. Allium bulbs bloom at different times of year and my bees and other pollinators love them. They come in different heights, colors and varieties.

Some folks reseed their lawns in the fall. Why not consider a more natural lawn? Add some creeping thyme, short yarrow or clover to the mix.

I have had some challenge putting in a pollinator bed on a vacant area near my shed. The grasses and bindweed got the best of it. Killing off a patch can start now by covering it with tarp, or in my case, cardboard from many saved shipping boxes. Flattening them out and layering them thick, then covering with a bit of new soil and mulch is needed. Come spring, I'll reseed with a pollinator mix and keep my fingers crossed.

I like fullness and color in the yard, but I am a messy gardener. I get a bit lazy. But this is okay for pollinators. Leaving hollow stems cut at 18" from the ground provides nesting opportunities for native bees. A pile of logs with cracks and loose bark also acts as a native bee home.

What is left of the coneflower heads is left alone, so finches and small birds can benefit from the seeds.





Mourning cloak butterflies avoid spending energy on migration by hiding under the leaves for the winter.

Photo Credit: Popo.uw23/Flickr

Leaving some leaves on the ground, pushed up against fence lines and garden beds provides a safe harbor for butterflies and moths who have laid eggs there. Those that do not migrate, harbor in the safety and warmth of the fallen leaves. A residual brush pile offers the same refugee. I ignore them till mid to late spring when the insects have hatched. The rest of the leaves are mulched for compost and placed on garden beds.



Now for a nice cup of tea and honey and to settle back with my seed and plant catalogs for next year.

References:

<https://blog.nwf.org/2024/09/how-fallen-leaves-support-moths-and-butterflies/>

The Beekeeper's Library: Expert Tips and Resources

Why Not Top Bar Hives?

Some pros and cons of one of the oldest hive designs.

By Jamie Norris

[<CLICK HERE>](#)



Using Oxalic Acid

A varroa mite treatment review.

By Cynthia Olsen

[<CLICK HERE>](#)

The Queen Bee Vaccine

The oral vaccination with *Paenibacillus larvae* bacterin can decrease susceptibility to American Foulbrood infection in honey bees—A safety and efficacy study

Franziska Dickel, et al. ***AFB VACCINE QUEEN CAGES are now commercially available to vaccinate your own queens!***

[<CLICK HERE>](#)

Viruses and vectors tied to honey bee colony losses.

A preprint article regarding extensive overwinter and spring colony losses 2024-2025

Zachary S. Lamas, et al.

[<CLICK HERE>](#)



OSBA MEMBERS
Don't forget to VOTE for your
officers for 2026!
Check for voting link in your
Email!

Events, Meetings and More!



Board Officer Election Information

Please Consider Serving on the GCBA Board for 2026!

- You must be a paid member for at least one year to be nominated for any position.
- Nominations for all offices will be accepted until 11/7/2025 by email or text, send to Cynthia Olsen, rascal1.co@gmail.com or 937-477-7471.
- Voting will occur online.
- Ballots will be emailed to all PAID members (one vote per family membership) on Friday 11/14/2015 and must be returned by Monday 11/17/2025.
- To update your membership or membership contact info, please contact GCBA Treasurer, Paul Piskiewicz piskiewicz@gmail.com. Membership can be paid on-line through PayPal at gcbeekeepers.org. MEMBERSHIPS must be updated by 11/12/2025 at NOON.
- Election results will be announced at Member Meeting/Potluck on Tuesday 11/18/2025

October

October 14 - GCBA Board Meeting 7-8PM (ZOOM)

October 21 - GCBA Members Meeting 7-8:30 PM (ZOOM and In-Person), XCC Room “Feral Bees and Varroa Resistance” with Dwight Wells

October 24-25 - OSBA Fall Conference Mansfield

November

ELECTION: Nominations Due by 11/7, Ballots EMAILED 11/13 and vote submission by 11/17

November 7 - STEAM NIGHT at Greenon Jr/Sr High School, 5-7PM at 3950 S Tecumseh Rd, Springfield Ohio **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

November 18 - GCBA Members Potluck and Meeting: Quilt Raffle Announcement and Board Election Results!

Our September 2025 Member Meeting Minutes [here](#)
Please review our September 2025 Treasurer’s Report [here](#)

