



GREENE BEE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

GREENE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS



Clear away snow and any piles of dead bees from the entrance of hives



Check hive weight or peek under top cover to assess food supplies



Register for Indoor Field Day & educational offerings



Mid-winter treatment with oxalic acid vapor during peak mite load.



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Beekeepers Indoor Field Day

Indoor field day of skill-building workshops.
Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

Saturday
FEBRUARY
14
9:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

Location:
Greene County OSU Extension
Buckeye Room
100 Fairground Rd.
Xenia, OH 45385
937-372-9971

Rotating Mini-Workshops Include:

- “How to Get Bees:Pros and Cons of Each”
- “All Bees Need Integrated Pest Management”
- “How to Use Growing Degree Days in Beekeeping”
- “Effective Documentation Methods”
- “Varroa Treatment Decision-Making”
- “Organic Acid Safety”
- “Making & Sustaining Nucleus Colonies”
- “Are My Bees Mite-Biters?”

Fee: \$10.00 Cash or check will be accepted Money will be collected on the day of event by GCBA

Register by February 8, 2026

- Scan the QR Code or,
- Registration Link: go.osu.edu/indoorfieldday



EVENT COLLABORATOR: Greene County Beekeepers Association



OSU Extension Greene County
greene.osu.edu



Bee Aware: Odds and Ends

February 2026

By: Bill Starrett

Our honey bees are amazingly able to survive cold temperatures, even extreme cold, for brief periods of time. The problem surfaces when we have prolonged cold like we are currently experiencing. The winter cluster generates heat to keep the queen at about 75 degrees in the center of the cluster regardless of the air temperature by flexing their wing muscles. At the same time the cluster contracts to retain the heat or relaxes to release heat to maintain the desired temperature. When the body temperature of the bees in the outer most portion of the cluster drops to a critical temperature those bees move toward the center of the cluster and bees from nearer the center move to the outside. This constant movement results in sharing the burden of maintaining cluster temperature enabling the colony to survive.



So long as any portion of the cluster is in contact with honey, the bees are able to pass the honey around the cluster and keep the cluster alive. As the winter progresses the cluster instinctively moves upward to maintain contact with the stored honey reserves, and that is the reason the winter honey supply needs to be above the winter cluster when the winter begins. The ability of the cluster to move upward is dependent on it being warm enough for the cluster to relocate and that brings me to the focus of my immediate concern this winter.

During prolonged cold like we are experiencing it is possible for the cluster to consume all the honey with which it is in contact. If that happens and they are not able to relocate because it is too cold to enable the bees to move, the colony can starve to death even though the hive is full of honey. Occasional warmer days make it possible for the cluster to move within the hive to maintain contact with honey. Also, the larger the winter cluster, the greater the chances are the cluster continues to maintain contact with honey even during prolonged cold periods. The duration of the cold we are currently experiencing causes me to anticipate higher colony winter losses.

President's Message

February 2026



Welcome to a new beekeeping year! Many of you have bees coming through the winter. They will begin to expand their colony numbers sometime this month as it begins to warm up. But it's still too cold to peek inside to know for sure. I, like many of you, am wondering how many of my hives survived this winter. Then there are others who are preparing for their first hives from nucs or packages. Preparation now includes reviewing beekeeping books and notes, gathering hardware and hive tools. February is that month when it starts shifting into gear for you and the bees.

Last year, GCBA accomplished much in improving our services for our members. The newsletter was colorfully recast to include more and varied information. We created a new website with some additional improvements planned this year. And our November holiday party was well attended with a great mix of people swapping some excellent beekeeping stories. And the bee-themed quilt that was raffled off is being prominently displayed in that beekeepers home.

We also introduced the Indoor Field Day. This was a members-only event held in the Greene County Parks & Trails garage with simultaneous 15-minute presentations and demonstrations. People moved from presentation to presentation so one could attend them all during the event. It was very well received. This year we are doing it again with some changes. First, we are holding it in collaboration with Ohio State University at their facility at the Greene County Fairgrounds. Second, it is open to the public. All will be required to pay a registration fee because we are using the OSU facility but GCBA members will be reimbursed that fee. So, "free" to members. Refreshments will be provided and a silent auction of numerous beekeeping items will be held.

Many of our 2025 board members have returned to serve in 2026. A couple have chosen not to continue this year. I want to thank Bob Wheeler and Dan Miller for their time and contribution to the 2025 GCBA board in managing the association. Jamie Norris is our new, Member-at-Large, board member in 2026. You may know her as a frequent contributor to our newsletter or you may have chatted with her during our meetings. Find her at our next gathering and introduce yourself.

Go forth and bee happy!



Silent Auction at Indoor Field Day

Feb 14th, from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
OSU Extension Office, 120 Fairgrounds Rd.
Greene County Fairgrounds, Xenia, Ohio

As part of our Field Day Workshops and presentations, we are offering a Silent Auction of gently used, clean beekeeping equipment. Donors have contributed these materials.

Opening bids are suggested. Accepting cash or check. You must register for the workshops. GCBA non-members invited.

MANY ITEMS OFFERED:

- Honey Extractors
- Bee suits and jackets
- Bee glove sets
- Workman's bag with beekeeping tools
- New pint canning jars
- Smokers



**Proceeds are used for 4-H Youth Scholarships and educational programs.
Support Greene County Beekeepers Association.**

“Tools of the Trade”: Repairing Beekeeping Equipment



By Cynthia Olsen

Winter is time that beekeepers read up on new bee-related information, attend workshops, order supplies for the coming year and repair equipment. Beekeeping is an expensive endeavor. With the rising expenses of supplies, it makes sense to repurpose, reuse, recycle, and repair old hive ware and equipment as much as possible.

You don't need a fully equipped workshop to effectively care for your equipment. A couple of sawhorses or table is sufficient. Hive ware can be assembled easily with 1" nails; staples in hive ware doesn't always hold up to the prying required to open a hive.

Pests, like small hive beetles, can enter a hive through gaps and cracks. I use wood filler, which is safe for bees, to seal holes in old hives. My favorite exterior hive paint is a low volatile organic chemical paint that is mold-resistant, such as KILZ. This strong basecoat seals the hive. A second coat of colored paint and decoration can be added afterwards.

Broken screened bottom boards can be re-screened with ¼" hardware cloth and staples or tacks. Spring is a good time to clean or replace the white corrugated inserts.

Frame assembly and repair is probably the most time intensive activity in the beekeepers- shop. Getting your frames squared is fast and easy with a framing jig. By using a safe wood glue (Tightbond is my favorite and holds the best), and then ¾" to 1" nails, your frames will last longer and hold up to the prying action of your hive tool.

If you are using plastic foundation, the black color provides contrast and is best when observing eggs and larvae. I use a pair of tin snips to cut away about a ½ " triangular piece in both lower corners, which gives the bee a passage away to the next frame of comb.

I like reading the controversies on social media about cleaning hive tools and smokers- many see no need. But hive tools used between hives and apiaries theoretically can transmit bacteria and viruses. They can be cleaned using a propane torch and wiping clean or using a bleach solution and rinsing with water. Smoker canister and lids should be scraped free of creosote buildup with a tool or wire brush as it can cause a fire and reduce the devices efficiency.

Finally, I have cleaned my bee suit by removing the veil, picking off propolis and laundering in cold water with a gentle odor-free detergent. Veils and gloves must be handwashed in cold water and I use Woolite or a similar detergent. Any gaps or holes in bee clothing need a needle and thread.

GCBA Members can rent our Framing Jig for a small fee. Email us to reserve.



Growing Beekeepers of the Future!



Where do new beekeepers come from?

How do you teach children about nature, agriculture, and the importance of nature?

Do you want to support the next generation of farmers and beekeepers?

JOIN US in teaching and training!

The GCBA Scholarship Program for 4-H Youth is for those that are prepared to begin their beekeeping journey. Again, the GCBA Board has approved funding for a youth scholarship for 2026, which includes a beginner eight-frame hive, complementary club membership for the year, and mentoring. The guidelines for the award and application can be found on-line at our website, gcbeekeepers.org. Applications are due no later than March 15th, 2026. Interested parties can contact Cynthia at 937-477-7471.

STEM Night at Bellbrook Middle School, Thursday, February 26th, 2026, from 5-7:00 PM is featuring exhibits and learning for children with sensory sensitivity. Christy Piskiewicz and friends are presenting information of bees and pollinators with a four-paneled display, handouts and hands-on items.

Want to know more? Contact us.

The Beekeeper's Library: Expert Tips and Resources

Start beekeeping at home as a beginner (step by step guide)

Are you considering becoming a beekeeper, but are not sure where to start? This article walks through many different scenarios to help you decide if it is right for you. Step by step, it even includes a video with a gentleman named Michael Palmer, discussing stings, and why those happen. After reading this article, if you decide to become a beekeeper, let us know! We would be happy to have you join us at the Greene County Beekeepers Association.

<https://beekeeping101.com/start-beekeeping/>

Robbing behavior in the honeybee

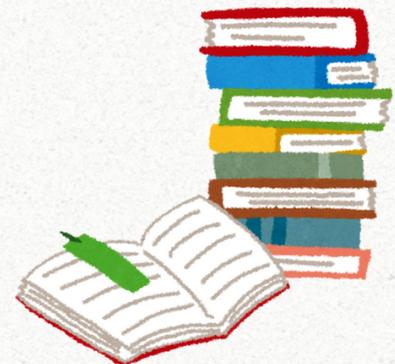
This article is an oldy, but a goody! It was written by Dr. Norm Gary in 1966, where he discussed robbing behavior of bees. In this article, he pointed out that although most stories paint robbing bees as pesky thieves, it is normal foraging behavior. Successfully, he described an in-depth analysis, unfolding the scenario with excellent visual clarity.

<https://scientificbeekeeping.com/robbing-behavior-in-the-honey-bee-by-dr-norm-gary-1966/>

The amount of antioxidants in honey has a strong relationship with the plants selected by honeybees

The meaty one! Woo! This article is deep, but fascinating. It provides information on nature's antioxidants which are found in honey, through the plants visited by bees. The article is based geographically in Iran, but there is still a lot of good information in here to consider. Simply having a garden with plenty of flowering vegetables is one idea. There is a lot of useful information here to educate the public, help save people (disease fighting, natural prevention), and the bees themselves. Zahra Shakoori, and other authors.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10764931/>



Events, Meetings and More!

January

Jan 22-Feb 26: GCP&T Beginner Beekeeping Class, 6 sessions weekly on Thursday. 6:30PM-9PM; John Finlay Education Center, Xenia. On-line registration and \$40 fee. Ages 18 y and up.

February

Feb 10: GCBA Board meeting by ZOOM, 7:00 PM

Feb 12: Weekly x 4 sessions. 6:00 pm-8:00pm. Southwestern Ohio Beekeeping Association Beekeepers School. “Bee Basics for Total Beginners”. Location- Hive & Comb, 1235 Chase Ave., Cincinnati. Registration and fee required.

Feb 14: GCBA Indoor Field Day, Beekeeping skills workshops; 9:30 am registration, ends 12:45pm. Buckeye Room at Greene County OSU Extension Office at the Fairgrounds. Handouts provided. Silent auction for bee suits and assorted equipment available.

March

Mar 6-7: Tri-County 47th Annual Spring Workshops; Fisher Auditorium (OSU CFAES), 1680 Madison Ave., Wooster, Ohio. Registration and fee required. Registration closes Feb 21st.

Mar 9: GCBA Board meeting by ZOOM, 7:00 PM

Mar 16-19: AgriAbility National Training Workshop; sessions on issues with disability in agriculture. Travis City, MI. Registration and fee required.

Mar 17: GCBA Members meeting. Larry Johnson, OSBA Miami Valley Director, is speaking about “The When’s and Why’s of Beekeeping”. In person & ZOOM, 7:00 PM. Xenia Community Center, 1265 W 2nd St., Xenia.

Mar 27-28: Basic Beekeeping Class with Fran & Tom Davidson. OSU Extension Office, Clark County. 3130 East Main St., Springfield. Registration and fee required @ go.osu.edu/beekeeping26

Mar 28: AgriAbility National Training Workshop Option- Benzie County Tour of the St. Ambrose honey processing facility and Meadery. Full Day 8am-4:00PM. Register and fee.



Please review our November 2025 Member Meeting Minutes [here](#)

Please review our January 2026 Treasurer’s Report [here](#)