



GREENE BEE NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026

GREENE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS



When 7 of 10 frames, (or 6 of 8), are full in either the brood deep or honey super, then additional boxes need to be added.



Check the brood every 10 days for new queen cells and act accordingly by making splits.



Start IPM measures such as drone frames and drone cell culling.



Time to add small hive beetle traps and start watching for SHB & wax moths.



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MAY 2026 SPEAKER

TBA

OUR MAY SPEAKER WAS
UNAVAILABLE, WE WILL EMAIL NEW
SPEAKER INFORMATION BY THE END
OF THIS WEEK

May 19, 2026; 7:00 PM; In-Person Meeting
Xenia Community Center, 1265 W. 2nd. St., Xenia, Ohio

**TREMENDOUS
work by Paul P and
other members to
have new apiary
sign placed at Russ
Reserve**





Bee Aware: Odds and Ends

May 2026

By: Bill Starrett

This article is a companion to the March article suggesting the queen of STRONG surviving colonies be removed in mid-April with a couple frames of bees and capped brood to begin another colony and reduce the swarm instinct forcing the parent colony to raise a new queen.

Now that May has arrived, colonies which survived the winter with smaller populations that have kept them from making swarm preparations heretofore and were not split already but have begun to reach swarm strength can be split to accomplish the same.

objective of making increase. However, a split now will probably not allow the colony to produce a full crop of honey like would be possible in the March article procedure. That's the difference between splitting a strong colony in April and splitting a colony in May and the procedure is slightly different; the May split does not need to find the queen making the procedure slightly easier.

The procedure is to remove two frames of capped brood with some eggs and larvae with attached bees and put them in empty equipment in the location of the parent colony and move the parent colony to another stand in the same apiary but with the entrance turned 180 degrees facing the other direction temporarily. The field bees from the parent colony will return to the original location boosting the population of the split, preventing the parent colony from any intention to swarm, forcing the unit without a queen to raise a queen. Once the parent colony is purged of its field force the bottom board can be returned to face its normal direction. Both colonies should be left alone for 3 weeks, then monitored for the presence of a queen. By the middle of June the colonies should both be checked to assess if they have enough honey to successfully winter so any insufficiency can be supplied before August brood rearing of winter bees known as "fat bees" begin.



President's Message

May 2026



The flow is in high gear! My hives are expanding well and making honey. That is hives as in more than the one survivor from winter. I was able to find the queen to make one split from that one. And, as of April 30th, one swarm moved into an empty hive I set up for that purpose. That made 3 colonies. Then it got cold. We'll see how the other 6 swarm hives I set out do in attracting swarms. If you are interested in a May split, read Bill Starrett's article on that subject.

I spread a mix of wildflower seeds out in my bee field at the beginning of May. I couldn't wait for the frost-free date that is around May 15th. Temperatures are forecast to be above freezing to mid-May so I think I'll be ok. I'll admit I felt a little nudge to get that seed out from Tom and Fran Davidson. At our April GCBA meeting they shared a couple dozen plants from their yard to attendees. A number of people were happy to take some plants ... red buds, mountain mint, and some others. I want to thank them for sharing.

Last month's speaker was Dr Chia Lin, a research scientist at the Ohio State University Rothenbuhler Honey Bee Lab. She spoke about honey bee nutrition along with related information. This month's speaker will be announced once confirmed. We are considering two and not certain yet which will be this month and which is a future presentation. Stay tuned!

Have you seen the bee hive tree at Russ Nature Reserve? Several GCBA members placed one there on April 30th. Many of us have heard of them but never seen one, including me until it was placed there. We are planning for an article with pictures in next month's newsletter. But you've seen pictures before; go see the real thing and enjoy some of the trails at Russ Reserve while you are there.

GCBA has started offering apiary visits in April. Those attending enjoyed the sharing of techniques and hands-on participation. There are more planned this month. Information is available on our website, www.gcbeekeepers.com.

Upcoming on June 20th is our Honey Harvest at Camp Greene in Glen Helen. This event is where GCBA both entertains and educates the public on honey bees and beekeeping. We can still use a few more volunteers. Please contact Cynthia Olsen at programs@gcbeekeepers.org to see how you can help.

Enjoy the spring weather. Go forth and bee happy!



Down My Garden Path: Locust Trees=Honey Flow

by Cynthia Olsen



BOOM! Everything seems accelerated. Mowing lawns, gardening and managing the bees! It's hard to keep up. The Xenia area has had rain, but we are still a couple inches off. I noticed that despite a nice downfall, there are areas where the soil is still cracked. We've been monitoring hives for the swarm impulse and queen cells are developing. Reports are that there was a strong pollen input this spring and brooding has been strong. Now it's nectar flow time. It's that waited for seasonal period when plants are producing an abundant amount of nectar and bees start packing in surplus honey. Around here it occurs in May to June. There may be a second flow in September during the aster and goldenrod season. Honey production and thus winter survival is very dependent on these flows, so we need to be able to recognize them and act accordingly with adding supers to provide space for the incoming resources and prevent backfilling into the brood chamber.

While out I'm seeing the billowing white trees of black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) along the roadways. These hardwoods are native to the Appalachian Mountains. The cascading sprays of white shell-like blooms are abundant.

Attracted by the sweet, citrusy aroma, the honeybees must work their way into the pea-like bloom. These bloom for 7-10 days and a heavy rainfall can wash away the nectar.

The nectar has a high sugar concentration of 40-51%, which is dependent on warm weather. Black locust nectar is high in fructose meaning the honey is slow to granulate in storage. The honey is fragrant and ranges from water clear to a light lemon yellow.

A conversation with a local farmer revealed the feeling that the rot resistance black locusts were a nuisance, being invasive and spreading by underground roots when cut. New wood produces wicked looking branching thorns which he claimed punctured truck tires.



Not to be confused, the Honey Locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) makes very little honey and is probably named such for its sweet pulp that was used as a food source by native peoples.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE: FOUNDATION

BY CYNTHIA OLSEN

I've been asked lately, "why are my bees doing that"? This is an especially common reframe when it comes to wonky comb going onto the frames. In our desire to jump start even comb building by the young bees, we apply all manner of foundation to help guild them along. But is this what the bees want? They've been building parallel, vertical on their own since, well, they were honeybees.

There are several foundation options when making new frames: beeswax sheets, plastic sheets, or nothing. Sometimes adding a partial bees wax strip along the top bar is all the incentive needed.

Beeswax foundation is imprinted with the worker bee cell sizes and needs to be stabilized into frames with wiring and pins. Failure to do so can result in deleterious sagging if it becomes heavy can break during extraction. It can be pricier at \$35 for 10 deep sheets. Plastic wax-coated foundation will run about \$26 for 10 deep sheets and just pops into the frames. Many beekeepers prefer the black sheets because it's easier to detect eggs in the brood nest. Even though it may be labeled as "waxed" it may not be enough.



There are several irregular patterns commonly found on plastic foundation. Perpendicular bridge comb, reaching to the adjacent frame is not uncommon.

This is typically due to poor coating of the foundation with wax and possibly improper spacing of the frames.



These extending, double-sided "tongues" of comb built by the bees is in part due to the failure of 3/8" bee space between the frames, allowing them to build out this irregularity. It is disappointing when you encounter this, but all is not lost. If you don't deal with it, it won't improve and make bigger problems. Look for your queen as she may be hiding behind one of these wax columns. If there is substantial brood, you might consider allowing it to hatch before removing and fixing the foundation.

Oftentimes bridging and burr comb is filled with drone brood and can be easily removed without reducing bee populations. In the process, you will be destroying varroa which prefers the drone comb. Don't throw this extra comb into the apiary as it will attract pests and predators such as wasps and small hive beetles. I always carry an empty container for this purpose.

How can we remedy this problem? Firstly, remove the irregular frames and cut out the

FOUNDATION CONT.

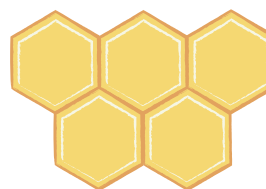
wonky comb. If you are using plastic foundation, melt down your burr comb and harvested wax. I use a double boiler on low heat. Keep the temperature below 175°F. Melting beeswax is a dangerous endeavor as it has a low flashpoint, can cause severe burns and is flammable. Spread it evenly back onto the foundation. I use a small paint brush, but a 1" paint roller works well also.



In this next photo, I am coating a plastic green comb which is used to produce drone cells and drone brood for the purpose of “drone trapping” and removal. This is a smart means of Integrative Pest Management (IPM). My bees just didn’t take to these green frames, so I need to give them a bit of encouragement. You can see some bee-built comb on this frame in the left lower corner. But they just wouldn’t finish the job.



Lately, I am reading several comments from new beekeepers about the bees not drawing out comb on new foundation. A word of caution- get your waxed foundation from a reputable vendor. Plastic foundation from overseas contains paraffin wax which the bees detest. The bees will reject it, and if they do build, their comb will be highly irregular and frequently not hexagonal. Finally, the close spacing of the frames is important in encouraging the bees to stay within their limits. Sometimes the ears of the frames get gunked up with wax and propolis, preventing a tight fit. Take the time to scrape this off and leave no gaps.



4-H BEEHIVE RECIPIENT, STILL BEEKEEPING!

By Jamie Norris

Gracie Norris won a beehive four years ago from the Greene County Beekeeper's Association. While she doesn't have a lot of time to work in her hives, due to her intense college schedule (her bees rely on her mom, also a beekeeper), she is almost always willing to help catch a swarm.

Gracie can be creative when it comes to gathering the bees. In this case, she said, "Who needs a ladder?" Gracie used a pole device to move the bees from ~40 feet, down to 30, and then to ~20 feet up. It was at that time that she decided to climb the tree, with a nuc box in hand.

Quickly and precisely, she gathered the large swarm. Afterward, she carefully moved the nuc from limb to limb until she was able to hand it off to another person, safely. Fortunately, this other person, who happened to be a beekeeper, noticed her in the tree. Gracie said, "Ah, it was nothing! I have been climbing trees since I was five!" She said the pole was not working today, because the bees were flying out of it, and going back to the branches.

Sometimes unconventional methods just work better! But... she had better not do it again! I heard the other beekeeper standing by on the ground, was a little nervous about the catch.



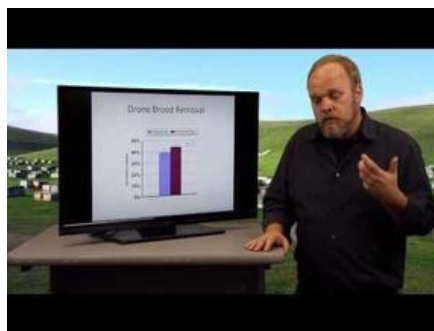
Head - Heart - Hands - Health₈

The Beekeeper's Library: Expert Tips and Resources



Here is a great YouTube video, an oldie, but a goody, about Varroa mites, and results from different treatments. The video is from The Bee Informed Partnership Management Survey.

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



The next article has some great photos and short descriptions to go with them, about insects and different creatures, from all over the world, that prey on bees. Whoa! That bee-wolf wasp is a bit on the creepy side!

[Natural Enemies Of Bees: Mites, Parasites, Spiders, Wasps Birds & More](#)

The last source is a YouTube video, with a wonderful podcast featuring Randy Oliver. It is about Varroa. There are some bee ads, but it also has valuable information.

[Scientific Beekeeping with Randy Oliver \(S4, E34\)](#)



GCBA Upcoming Apiary Visits: May 3rd & 17th

Apiary visits are your opportunity to witness beehives other than your own. Watch how other beekeepers handle their hives. Learn better identification of findings. Ask experienced, local beekeepers questions. Develop your skills. You must bring your veil and clean tools.

Sign up to visit, to host or both. Give your name, email address and cell number. If you decide to host, I will contact you on your preferred date to host and the address of the apiary.

CLICK to complete GOOGLE FORM to participate

<https://forms.gle/UkfsWuU3eMuxVfzR8>

Feel free to contact Marianne Bishop with any questions.

Email: bishopjm28@gmail.com

Cell: (937) 623-6307



Community Outreach

On April 17th one of our beekeeping members visited several classes at the Bright Beginnings pre-school- 2nd grade, in Beavercreek. The children learned about honeybees visiting flowers, tasted honey, touched beeswax comb, and made their own bee to take home.



Events, Meetings and More!

May

May 10: Spring Native Plant Sale. 2nd St. Market, 600 East 2nd St., Dayton

May 12: GCBA Board meeting by ZOOM, 7:00 PM

May 19: GCBA Members Meeting. In person & ZOOM, 7:00 PM. Topic and speaker TBA. Xenia Community Center, 1265 W 2nd St., Xenia.

May 30-31: Heartland Apicultural Society 2026 Conference. East Lansing.MI. Multiple talks and hands-on workshops. Registration now open; space limited. Heartlandbees.org

June

June 6: “What’s Bothering my Blooms?”. 10:30-11:30am. GC Master Gardener’s presentation. Carol Graff Beaver creek Library- large room; 3618 Dayton-Xenia Road, Beaver creek

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

June 13: Beaver creek Native Wetlands Native Plant Event. 10:00 am-2:00PM. McCoy Middle School Courtyard, 1786 Dayton-Xenia Rd., Beaver creek.

June 16: GCBA Members Meeting. Barb Bloetscher, “Minor Bee Diseases”, In person & ZOOM, 7:00 PM. Xenia Community Center, 1265 W 2nd St., Xenia.

June 20: GCBA Honey Harvest 2026. 9:00 am staff set-up; visitors 10:00 am-3:00 pm; clean-up 3:00-4:00 pm. Volunteers needed for multiple tasks.

July

July 14: GCBA Board meeting by ZOOM, 7:00 PM

July 21: GCBA Members Meeting. In Person & ZOOM 7:00 PM “Wax Production and Uses”, Xenia Community Center, 1265 W 2nd St., Xenia.

July 26-31: Eastern Apicultural Society 2026 Conference in Shephardsville, KY



Please review our April 2026 Member Meeting Minutes [here](#)

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

CURRENTLY PAID MEMBERS LIST [here](#)