

# FCBA NEWS

Franklin County Beekeepers Association

[franklincountybeekeeperspa@gmail.com](mailto:franklincountybeekeeperspa@gmail.com) <http://fcbapa.com> FB: Franklin County (PA) Beekeepers Assn.  
May 2020 Volume 3 - Issue 5

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## Club Upcoming Events

### Spring Meeting

May 28, 2020 - Still to be determined logistics due to COVID rules. Speaker: Jim Bruckart, discussing the requirements to honey entries in fair contest and more.

We will be voting on the bylaw revision.

*Please check the [fcbapa.com](http://fcbapa.com) calendar for updates and additional events*

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## Special Notice

The Franklin County Fair is cancelled for 2020, due to COVID-19 and social distancing issues. They will keep us updated for 2021 as time draws nearer, for our display setup and honey comb and frame entries.

## May in the bee yard

**In the hive** Egg laying and brood rearing are in high gear, with the brood area expanding rapidly. The bees are foraging for pollen and nectar to support this colony growth. They are likely to be less defensive than in fall, with less to protect and lots to do!

With the growing population and possible overcrowding, mid-May is the beginning of swarm season; this year seems to be no exception. This week alone I have had 4 of my hives swarm. Queen cups are being built along the lower edges of brood frames. If the hive is crowded, some cups will likely be laid in.

The drone population is growing. The Varroa mite population is also building. By May, our mite treatments should be completed and removed from the hive before adding honey supers. You may also add queen excluders at this time, if you are choosing to use them, and supers can be placed above the excluder.

Our last frost seems to have been last week. Dandelions, maples, deadnettle, wild strawberry, yellow rocket, oak, honey suckle, elderberry, elm trees, willow, and poplar trees are ongoing. Fruits and fruit trees are blooming: wild and cultivated cherry, peach (hope yours didn't get hit by that frost as ours did) and plum trees, pear

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trees, and apple and crabapple trees, as well as blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries.

**Other tasks** on the beekeeper's calendar this month include installing package bees and conducting your first hive inspection a week or so later. Try to make a habit of inspecting all established hives weekly, especially during this swarm prevalent season.

### **From Nate Weber** **Your inspector**

Good afternoon/evening fellow beekeepers and club members,

I am happy to report that the Department of Agriculture has cleared Apiary Inspectors to return to work!

Today (11 May 2020) is the first day of the season. I have been busy today setting up my office at home and taking care of vehicle maintenance, so now I am ready to hit the ground running!!

This year, some things will certainly remain the same, although there are some changes as well.

As in the past: All inspections will be scheduled; I will NEVER arrive unannounced to any apiary.

\*I have a current list of all REGISTERED beekeepers and I will use this list to create my schedule. If you are not registered, please consider doing so!

\*Inspections consist of the visual examination/inspection of minimum 3 frames of capped/sealed brood per colony.

New this year:

\*We (the inspectors) have been supplied smart phones! So now I have the ability to call and/or text while communicating to schedule inspections/answer questions.

\*Due to COVID-19 concerns/prevention, the Apiary Inspector is to be the only person in the apiary at time of inspection.

\* Additionally, the Apiary Inspector is the only person permitted in the Inspection vehicle (no more carpooling to multiple apiaries/out yards). I have to drive alone in the work truck.

Furthermore: State Apiarist Karen Roccasecca is finishing up a document that will be sent out to all members/registered beekeepers that concretely explains the new protocols for inspections regarding social distancing recommendations.

Moving forward: Please feel free to contact me via my mobile phone (call or text!) or email. 717.919.0940 is my direct line. [nathweber@pa.gov](mailto:nathweber@pa.gov) is my direct email address. Remember: I am inspector, driver and secretary all in one!! I PROMISE there will be a delay to my responses back, but I try my hardest to not let anyone slip through the cracks!! Also: It will be most likely that I will be calling back instead of texting due to the amount of time I spend driving the truck. I have a Bluetooth system that allows me to speak on the phone hands-free while driving. That being said; please do not hesitate to text me in order to make initial contact! (Simply expect a return call from my end instead of a text). Last point: emails take me the longest to reply to, as 85-90% of my time is spent in the field and not in the office. Again, as with texting, if you email me, it is mostly likely that I will reply with a phone call.

Please include your first and last name and county of residence (or Apiary Location), if you write to contact me. That is a GREAT help to me as I create my schedule!!

I wish everyone a successful 2020 in beekeeping! I would recommend considering a Spring mite treatment (take your pick!!) to ensure your colonies are off to as clean a start to the season as possible!

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All the very best,

Nate Weber

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P.S. I was in Guyana, South America for almost the entire month of February this year. [Made it back Stateside JUST in time!!] The Guyanese beekeepers are stuck working/managing/running Africanized Honey Bees... ....Needless to say: I am very excited to be working our European Honey Bees we are so lucky to keep here in South Central PA!!! If reminded, I can show off some photos of beekeeping on the Northern edge of the Amazon Rainforest!

### **Message from club President**

The situation with COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc in so many ways. We were originally told a couple weeks, that masks were useless and several other things that most of us have long forgotten. I'm sure we're all getting frustrated with the situation, yet it continues with no logical agreed conclusion. I refuse to get into politics or opinions in this forum.

The club activities continue to be a challenge because technically we're probably not supposed to have in-person meetings, yet agriculture is exempted. One thing I'm really sure about is that the bees are not waiting for the governor's decision about restrictions. I'm hearing about a lot of swarms this year.

Another sure bet this year is that the weather is not typical. I'm getting calls "shouldn't my bees ... (whatever) by now?" to which I can only reply with "typically yes, but.... and I'd suggest you be patient because of the weather". I know this all has made my job as president a challenge and is taxing the board.

We had great momentum going into this COVID thing and now most of us are like sitting there waiting for something to happen (including myself).

Things are still happening, but at a slower than typical pace. Sugar demand has been steady, but slow, we did find a volunteer for mentor coordinator and with almost everything being canceled it seems we all don't have the urgency to address business. I know I feel like "just hold off" because "everything" is being canceled, but at some point (hopefully) things will be back on track & we need to have the program ready. We are admittedly waiting until the last minute to announce plans because things are still changing quickly (the only thing quick lately).

It looks like our Spring meeting on 28 May will be canceled/rescheduled unless we do the meeting online; I was really looking forward to hearing from Dr. Bruckart. I guess I'm old school, but the online just doesn't replace the in-person stuff. Your board has the full gamut from "what?, I can't do that" to "gee, it's so easy" when it comes to technology, but I still think most of our members would really rather do things conventionally.

The next thing we have on the calendar is the Ice Cream Social on June 11, which should be after we move into the Yellow stage, but we'll have to see what restrictions are in place by then. It is at Norlo Park this year (outside pavilion) and I'm hoping to make it more social where we can talk & get to know one another.

If anyone has suggestions on "meetings" or would like to request something "special" (or different), please feel free to contact any board member so we can discuss it.

Stay safe.

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### Newbee Workshop

Georgia hosted the newbee workshop at her apiary last week. It looks like all is going pretty good in Georgia's yard. I see at least 6 hives there.



### Classified Ads

I'd like to add here any items you all want to share. We have had a couple of requests for this so if you have something you would like to share with the club members please email me at

[franklincountybeekeeperspa@gmail.com](mailto:franklincountybeekeeperspa@gmail.com)

This addition I have:

We are finally converting to all mediums and have 2-3 deep boxes, barely used but cleaned, and frames, some not used, some used a little, to give away. These are 10 frame boxes.

[bonnie.birdsong@gmail.com](mailto:bonnie.birdsong@gmail.com) or

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