

FCBA NEWS

Franklin County Beekeepers Association

franklincountybeekeeperspa@gmail.com <http://fcbapa.com> FB: Franklin County (PA) Beekeepers Assn.
February 2021 Volume 4 - Issue 2

Club Upcoming Scheduled Events

Beginner Beekeeper Basic classes will be held Thursdays in March 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th 2021 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. **Location: Carlisle First Church of God**, located at **705 Glendale St., Carlisle, PA 17013**

Membership Dues

Dues can be mailed to: FCBA, P.O. Box 341, Chambersburg, PA 17201

FCBA Officers

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Well spring will soon be here, just a few more weeks, even though it doesn't seem like that recently.

It's time for our beekeeping classes, to give some new beekeepers a helping hand getting started. Even with the COVID-19 trying to keep us apart, we are determined to move forward with the club's mission to educate new beekeepers.

Membership dues: It's that time again. Cost \$10 for 1 year or \$100 for lifetime membership. Please renew your membership to have continued access to the sugar donated to the club, and this year, some local suppliers may offer discount on bees if you are a club member. Dues can be mailed to: **FCBA, P.O. Box 341, Chambersburg, PA 17201**. If you are not sure if you are paid up you may reach out to Georgia at, townsend.georgia@gmail.com

February in the Apiary

I hope your bees have made it this far. This period between winter and spring can be tough for our bees. It's also an important time in the development of the colonies. Keep this in mind during your visits to the apiaries, because the colonies are particularly fragile at this season and also because much of what happens this month will determine how well our bees will fare during the spring. We should not postpone the removal of any equipment that contained colonies that have died. If you have any hives that didn't make it through the winter you will need to

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clean out all the dead bees and any mold or fungus that is in the hive.

Brood production will begin ramping up steadily under the stimulating influences of the increasing day length and any incoming fresh pollen. Since the bee populations are close to their lowest level, the bees must work hard to take care of the growing mass of their young, to keep it well fed and warm in spite of the unstable and frequently harsh weather. By the end of the month, new bees will begin to noticeably replace the dwindling numbers of winter bees. To make this happen, the colonies consume their stores at a much higher rate than a few weeks earlier, especially when foraging is not rewarding or even possible for several consecutive days. Although vital, this intense feeding not only generates large amounts of in-hive moisture, but also increases the risk of starvation, two of the biggest dangers of the season.

Cleansing flights and foraging may happen as soon as the temperature rises above 50°F.

As beekeepers, we want our colonies to come out of winter in good shape. From this point on, their development should be unhampered and rapid. This is particularly important if the spring honey flow occurs early. Knowing that it takes five to six weeks for an egg to develop into a forager bee, we can see that the early April foragers are the brood that is developing in February. This is to say that strong spring colonies are made or lost in late winter, if not earlier. We must provide good care without disturbing the colonies unnecessarily, especially when they are clustered. Exterior hive inspections, entrances, flight paths and monitoring trays are still our best sources of information, as we begin to visit the apiary more often. Any sign of health problems should prompt further investigation. The presence of whole dome-shaped cappings on the monitoring trays will be evidence of the

emergence of the first drones. For healthy queenright colonies, this is a leading sign of the upcoming time of colony reproduction.

Because the lower part of the hives is usually empty at the end of winter, our attention is directed at the upper part of the hives. A rapid and non-intrusive peek under the hive tops without accessing the brood nests can determine the appropriateness of supering within the upcoming weeks. It is better to super early rather than too late, although this should not be overdone. Offering a few frames of empty drawn comb between two follower boards to colonies that have reached the top of their hives actually takes less than a minute and effectively achieves satisfactory results. Doing this can be good insurance against premature swarming of the colonies, and a positive step towards achieving strong and productive hives in the spring.

At this season colonies do not become strong without adequate stores in the hives. Hefting the back of the hive can give some clues about their contents. If they feel light, the bees are probably running low on stores. At least twenty pounds of honey should be directly accessible by the clustered bees inside a mature hive, as the honey and pollen flows of the season are not dependable. The beekeeper may then decide if some form of emergency feeding is needed.

What are your plans for your colonies? If you want to make splits later in the spring, you may want to have some protein patties on hand for helping the bees build up during March. Time to order package bees and nucs if necessary, repair and purchase equipment. Get ready – spring is almost here!

Items of Interest

Chester County Beekeepers Association has shared the following:

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2021 CCBA Annual Online Conference, March 13th, 2021 9am-6:30pm+
12 Presenters !!! Dewey Caron, Sue Cobey, Les Crowder, Deborah Delaney, Deb Klughers, Randy Oliver, Michael Palmer, Solomon Parker, Steve Repasky, Tom Seeley, Marla Spivak, & Margarita Lopez-Uribe.

All lectures will be recorded and able to be viewed by paid attendees for 2 weeks. You don't have to miss any lectures! Yes there will still be door prizes! Mainly of the gift certificate, coupon, voucher style.

Registration Closes on Friday March 12th at 6pm!

*Conference requires attendees to download the Zoom app and have it updated to the newest version.

<https://chescobees.clubexpress.com/>

President's Corner

- ❖ I have a much better report for this month than last. We have secured a venue for our BBB class and that seems to be coming together well. Registration is open. I've received several inquiries so it should be fairly well attended. As in years past, we are opening this to our members to attend, to strengthen your knowledge. Given the current Covid situation, we ask that members not attend to "just watch" (please do not take offense to that & understand our situation). We will hold this at Carlisle First Church of God, 705 Glendale St., Carlisle, PA 17013. The church has asked that we strictly follow their safety protocol to include masks at all times, unless speaking to the group.
- ❖ The mentor list is being updated because mentoring will need to

substitute for some of the meetings we cannot hold. Donna is working on this so any volunteers, please email Donna at donnacaleymock1@gmail.com. If you think you're already on that list, it's probably better let her know so we're all sure. Almost anyone with experience can help those with no experience so volunteer if you're able. Remember, we all get in situations where we don't have the answers, which is what this association is all about-helping other beekeepers. If you feel you'd like to have a mentor, please let Donna know that as well. She will need your general location as she's trying to match members in the same area.

- ❖ The club is changing the way members can purchase bees this year as well. The practice of the club collecting money then having everyone who has paid come pick-up their bees at one specific time has become cumbersome, plus members are asking for options of both packages & Nucs. We are assembling a list of recommended suppliers (hopefully with prices) and letting individual members coordinate with those suppliers individually. Some of these suppliers are giving member discounts so if you haven't renewed your membership, you might want to do that.
- ❖ General club meetings are still not something I feel we can even address until we have a viable location. We are supposed to be getting a few more drums of sugar soon. It appears we will be receiving less sugar than we have in the past because they have found a way to use it in their operations; we are grateful for whatever they can donate. Like I said before, "stay tuned", we're doing the best that we can.

Thanks for being a member of FCBA!