President’s Message
September 2020

So, phase 3 of COVID-19 continues, and Massachusetts has done well keeping the infection rate below 2%. This crisis that we are experiencing does not affect on our bees. However, the extreme summer weather conditions we have experienced certainly does and has. I’ve heard from many beekeepers about the drought, the nectar dearth and the current robbing concerns. Hopefully, you’ve been able to ward off some of these problems by making sure that water is available, you’ve got robbing screens in place and you’ve started feeding sugar syrup. Read Ken Warchol’s article in this newsletter for additional tips. I’m also aware of the current sugar shortage at BJ’s, Costco and Wal-Mart. You just have to keep searching and I’m sure you’ll find some.

The honey crop this year seems to be inconsistent around the State as well. Some folks have had bumper honey crops while others have had very poor crops. This is all to do with the various micro-climates around the State. The honey crop is very important for funding our beekeeping, but now is the time of year to take the necessary precautions to make sure you have live bees in the spring of 2021. Keep up the good work!

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Mass Bee has a sub-committee spearheaded by Middlesex County members working on the annual Fall meeting being held on November 7th. Because we are only in phase 3 of the COVID-19 requirements we are hosting this meeting virtually via Zoom. Details follow in the newsletter, please make an effort to attend and bring a friend.

Your corresponding secretary and the board of directors have been working diligently to present good information in the newsletter and organize great speakers and relevant topics for all beekeepers. Please assist us by giving us feedback so we can give you what you want and need. The newsletter also invites our members to submit articles to enlighten fellow members about their beekeeping experiences and for publication. Our organization is only as good as the members who participate allowing us to distribute great information. Please be an advocate for our great association.

Additionally, please keep your membership up to date. You can check your status with our Corresponding Secretary. These funds allow us to continue holding meetings virtually, make deposits on future meeting venues and keep standard business operations current.

Stay Safe and healthy!

Pete Delaney
President Massachusetts Beekeepers Association

FALL MEETING HONEY SHOW

The Fall Meeting will include a Honey Show!

Entries will be accepted by shipping in advance by UPS, FedEx or USPS.

Entries must be received by October 21st and results will be announced at the Nov 7 meeting.

Please see the MBA website for additional details.
Mass Bee Board of Directors Nominations

Mass Bee Nominating Committee presents the following slate of officer nominees for 2020/2021, to be voted on at the Fall meeting:

- President – Mary Duane
- Vice President – John Cheetham
- Treasurer – Phil Gaudette
- Corresponding Secretary – Kitty de Groot
- Recording Secretary – Katherine Carlson

If you are interested in being on the Mass Bee Board of Directors or a volunteer, contact any of the members of the Nominating Committee or the Corresponding Secretary.

Tom Graney, Mary Duane, Dick Callahan - Nominating Committee

CONGRATULATIONS! TO THE 2019 BEEKEEPER OF THE YEAR:

TOM GRANEY

Each year a beekeeper is awarded Beekeeper of the Year in recognition of their outstanding dedication and support of Massachusetts Beekeeping – a beekeeper in our counties and state who provide examples of the best in a bee person.

Tom, a 15+ year beekeeper and active member of the Franklin County Beekeepers Association (FCBA) was nominated by Dan Conlon of the President of the Franklin County Beekeepers Association (FCBA) supported by recommendations from dozens of people in the FCBA. As noted in his nomination letter, “…every club has one or a few indispensable members; Tom is FCBA’s. Mentoring and willingness to help others is a core value for Tom and many of the FCBA members have benefitted by a visit from Tom. Several times he would inspect hives while a member recovered from surgery or needed help assessing what was happening in their hives, or helping replace a queen, or countless other reasons someone needed help. Tom is generous with his time and I believe sincere in his hope that everyone has a positive beekeeping experience. Tom’s outreach to the broader community includes: the “Bee Fest” held in Greenfield, MA; selecting the “Pollinator Garden Awards” for FCBA; and, participation in this year “Bee Sculpture Project”. Tom serves on these committees and continues to donate his time and organizational skills to keep these important programs funded and on schedule.”

Join us in congratulating Tom on being selected Beekeeper of the Year for 2019!
On April 16 Governor Baker filed **H.4650 - An Act to mitigate arbovirus in the Commonwealth**, legislation granting the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board (SRB) broad authority to conduct wide area aerial pesticide spraying to eradicate mosquitos carrying EEE “when the Commissioner of Public Health determines that an elevated risk of arbovirus exists”. On April 21 the bill was referred to the **Joint Committee on Public Health**. In lieu of a traditional hearing, written testimony was accepted through May 11. The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) submitted testimony citing the concern that the bill “is overly broad and would grant unchecked authority to the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board, enabling that agency to preempt local management plans and private opt-out agreements”. The MMA testimony also raised concerns regarding the lack of information sharing, transparency or a notification process prior to spraying to help minimize public exposure. The testimony states that “H. 4650 would allow for indiscriminate spraying of unknown pesticides without transparency or information-sharing, leaving communities unable to properly weigh public health risks.” and concludes by requesting that committee report the legislation unfavorably. Mass Bee President Pete Delaney also submitted testimony citing similar concerns as did members of a coalition of environmental groups from across the state.

In response to the submission of a significant body of written testimony the **Joint Committee on Public Health** redrafted H.4650 as **H.4751 - An Act to mitigate arbovirus in the Commonwealth**, reported H.4751 out favorably and referred it to the **Joint Committee on Health Care Financing**. H.4751 improved upon H.4650 by requiring a 48 hour notification prior to aerial spraying to various concerned parties including beekeepers and requiring that the notification include procedures for property owners and municipalities to opt out of aerial spraying. It also created a task force entitled the Mosquito Control for the 21st Century Task Force that includes “an organization representing bee keepers or groups concerned about pollinators”. While this is an improvement it does not guarantee that beekeepers will be represented on the task force. The appointee could potentially be from a group “concerned about pollinators” that views managed honey bees as an invasive species that should be ignored.

The next step of the process was for the **Joint Committee on Health Care Financing** to recommend that H.4751 “ought to pass” and refer it to the **Senate Committee on Ways and Means**. The Senate Ways and Means Committee then recommended that it “ought to pass” with an amendment and substituted H.4751 with a new Senate draft, **S.2757 - An Act to mitigate arbovirus in the Commonwealth**. One of the differences between the S.2757 and H.4751 is that S.2757 specifies that the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (or her designee) shall serve as chair of the task force and appoint the task force members rather than the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health who shall serve as vice-chair. This could balance the task force more evenly in favor of environmental considerations as well as just public health considerations.

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S.2757 then proceeded through its second and third readings in the Senate, was passed to be engrossed and sent back to the House where it was read and referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. From there it proceeded through several more steps in the House involving a House amendment to resolve change in the count of the number of commissioners of a regional mosquito control program from 2 to 1 on the advisory board and resolve a discrepancy in the count of additional task force members. It then went to the house floor for the second reading where it was amended by substitution with the text of the House amendment, was ordered to a third reading, read and passed to be engrossed. It then passed back and forth between the House and Senate where both chambers concurred on the amendments, adopted the emergency preamble, enacted the legislation and laid it before the Governor where it was signed into law by the Governor as Chapter 120 of the Acts of 2020.

You might think this is the end of the story but it isn’t. As I mentioned above, the language determining the task force makeup includes the clause “an organization representing bee keepers or groups concerned about pollinators” that does not guarantee that beekeepers will be represented on the task force. The next task was to make sure that we got that seat. With the help of Representative Carolyn Dykema and others we pushed hard to convince Secretary Theoharides at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to appoint Anita Deely, chair of the Mass Bee Pesticide Committee as the beekeeper task force member. Mass Bee President Pete Delaney wrote a letter to the Secretary stating our case that a Mass Bee representative is the best most logical choice for the seat. Shortly thereafter Anita got the word that she had been chosen for the seat and she accepted. Congratulations Anita!!!

Due to the COVID-19 situation, we are still in a holding pattern with Representative Carolyn Dykema’s bill, H.763 – An Act to protect Massachusetts pollinators. Last December the environmental consulting company that was contracted by MDAR called Industrial Economics, Inc completed its FY2020 Budget mandated review of neonic impacts and sent a memorandum summarizing its findings to MDAR. The review found that 42 of 43 impact-based studies cite neonicotinoids as a significant factor in the unsustainable losses of pollinators of which we are all so acutely aware. It also specifically mentions that the only studies that have mixed results are industry funded.

The review submitted by the contractor makes a compelling case for the passage of H.763. It is therefore crucial that beekeepers of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provide written testimony supporting this legislation in response to the review documents, both as individuals and as beekeeping associations.

The Neonics Scientific Literature Review Public Hearing that was originally scheduled for March 13, 2020 was postponed and the deadline for submitting written testimony was extended. There have been rumors that the hearing may be rescheduled via Zoom soon. When that happens we need everyone to testify via Zoom and send testimonial letters stating that the review submitted by the contractor documents that an overwhelming body of science and research demonstrating the catastrophic effects on pollinators of neonicotinoid pesticides is valid and makes the case for the passage of H.763.
This review, submitted by the independent contractor, removes the last obstacle preventing the legislative leadership from supporting H.763. It removes any lingering doubt that the overwhelming body of science and research demonstrating the catastrophic effects on pollinators of neonicotinoid pesticides is valid.

Written testimony should be submitted to the Pesticide Board Subcommittee by e-mail to taryn.lascola@mass.gov or by mail to Taryn LaScola-Miner, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114-2151.

The review documents that were submitted by the independent contractor can be downloaded from View the full text of the Neonics Scientific Literature Review and View the Neonics Scientific Literature Review Framework.
Longtime beekeepers look at each new season with anticipation but surely know that they cannot predict what will happen as each season is so different. Last year was a season of plenty (of honey), while we can call this season a season of feast to famine. My dad’s seasonal notebook of bee season reviews dates back to 1947, which I have kept up through the present, shows an unpredictable pattern. From the 1958 season where my dad writes, “The worst year ever I hope I never see another year like this one with zero honey”, to the 1963 season where he writes, “The best honey season in 12 years with 105 lbs. honey average”. Then there is the 1971 season where he lost 12 out of 50 colonies that winter and writes in his log, “This is the most losses I have ever had, and I just cannot understand why?”

The entire 73-year log is a series of up’s and down’s and that is what the hobby of beekeeping is. The good years, the bad years, and mainly the average middle of the road years. I guess we cannot control what nature sends our way. This makes the hobby a challenging one which does not allow us to be masters all of the time!

This brings us to this season which started off with early brood rearing starting last December with strong colonies by March. Then the nectar flow that started in early May like last year and continued through the end of July. Then came the crash with a dearth that started in early August and has lasted to the present time due to the hot dry weather. The dearth cased the goldenrod and Joe Pye weed to shut down their nectar flow. Many beekeepers removed their full honey supers thinking the flow will continue like last year. With the dearth, the bees quickly used up all the stored honey in their brood chamber bringing on famine. Many hives left on the verge of famine becoming lethargic due to no food for energy. Many beekeepers waiting for the fall flow, that they thought was being delayed, but yet nothing and they realized and had to start feeding. This threw a little loop into the hive management.

This takes us to the subject of management for September. The good news is that for the first time in a month I have seen the start of a nectar flow starting last Thursday (Sept 3rd) where my scale hives have started to show a weight gain after a month of weight loss. This would be good news for most of us but not for the bees. I am keeping my fingers crossed and hope it continues. I tasted the new nectar and can tell it is Japanese knotweed and hope it avoids us having to do long range feeding. The nectar is full of nutrients whereas the sugar syrup has none for the health of the bees. This may save all of us beekeepers a lot of work by not having us with many hives to carry buckets of syrup out to our hives.

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This will change our management strategy as well. Those that have taken off our honey supers may have to put them back on. Remember we do not want our brood chambers to get clogged up with a strong nectar flow this early leaving no room for brood rearing. Keep in mind that September and October are the key months for building up young bees that will make up our winter cluster. Without brood space the queen will not have room to expand the brood nest creating a small winter cluster. Keep in mind that September and October brood rearing requires the queen to have 7 frames about 2/3 open for a strong winter cluster. This is too early to be honey and pollen bound. This requires management on our part.

This brings us to the topic of winter management. Do not ignore winter management as it starts now. So, what do you look for? Evaluate your queen. Is she still viable in this last stretch? If not, then this is the last chance to requeen and build a strong winter cluster. Check for any abnormalities or disease in the hives. Do you have any punctured brood cappings that may signify something is going wrong before the winter? uncapped larva should be c shaped and pearly white and not yellow or brownish in color. Have you checked your mite levels going into this last stretch that would take your hive down? Do you see uncapped white pupa heads that would signify mite damage? If so, then you need to treat asap now, and then possibly again in October to keep your mite levels low going into the winter cluster. This could help to also keep viruses being vectored in your hives taking them down. Do an alcohol wash to see where you are. Mite issues are the biggest factor in taking hives down in the winter months.

Those that started with packages this year want to prevent late season swarms that would certainly doom your colony as they would not have time to build back up before the cold sets in. The entrance reducers and mouse guards should be put in by the second week of October. If you wrap your hives, then Thanksgiving time you can wrap. There are still warm days up to that time. I would recommend closing off screen bottom boards by the end of October to avoid fall gusts of wind into your cluster that may still be trying to keep brood warm. The third week of October is the time to make evaluations of winter honey stores in your brood chambers and feed if necessary. The brood is now being scaled down and keep in mind you need at least 80 pounds of stores especially in a severely cold winter. Now you can start force feeding to accomplish that goal. Top feeders are not good at this time. It is best to use a jar feeder close to the brood nest due to cold late mornings and evenings chilling the syrup.

Finally, early December and the cluster is ready for winter, and you can breathe a sigh of relief and know that your cluster is prepared for the long winter until the end of January when the bees start brood rearing again and you need to start with your winter sugar patties and pollen you trapped over the summer. You thought beekeeping was easy huh? Well now you know it is a challenge from year to year like my dad recorded, and even more so from season to season, and sometimes from week to week. However, there is nothing more pleasurable then knowing that your colony made it through the winter and is alive next March when things start over again ...but with different challenges.

I wish you all the best in your wintering management. The bees appreciate it.

Best,

Ken Warchol
Back in March of 2020, our Bee School Director, Betty Mencucci, gave me a DVD containing footage shot by RIBA in the 1940s/1950s. I had heard rumors about this film for a while and was eager to finally see it. I was awed by the level of professionalism and care that went into its production. This was clearly a labor of love for those involved in its creation, especially at a time when shooting and editing a movie was much more expensive, time consuming, and less immediate.

Although there is no sound, it is usually easy to follow thanks to the excellent titles between scenes. Howard Pike, who is credited with photography, editing, and titles, was the State Bee Inspector from the 1930s into the 1950s. This is a fascinating look back into the past of the organization. The fact that we had an actual Film Committee back then speaks to the tradition for progressive and innovative thought in RIBA that continues to flourish today. Despite that, you will notice that the actual techniques, tools, and hives seen in the film will be extremely familiar to a beekeeper in 2020. The attire at meetings has certainly gotten a lot more casual over the years, however!

The fact that the RIBA has these movies today is essentially thanks to the efforts of Betty Mencucci. She and her husband, Carlo, did the initial transfer of the 8mm film reels to VHS, and later transferred them to DVD.
Dating the Footage

These scenes were originally shot on 8mm film, likely over a period of time in the 1940s and early 1950s. There is only one (apparent) date in the film: a hive body that has “BCBA May 1954” stenciled on it at the 52:29 mark. I say “apparent date” because I’m not sure why the month and date would be painted on a hive; perhaps the beekeeper was named May and the 1954 was simply an ID number. It may well be a legitimate date, but it’s impossible to know. Based on preliminary research I’ve done; it seems likely the first hour of the film can be confidently dated to a point prior to 1950. Brayton Eddy, who appears early in the film, died in 1950 so the footage is most likely from the 1940s. CP Cornell died in 1956, Sayles Steere died in 1958. The other names of members who appear in the film were active in RIBA at various points from 1933 until at least 1945. Virtually the entire extended Executive Board of 1945 appears in, or was involved in making the film: Rudolph Wallitsch, Evert Janson, Howard Pike (State Bee Inspector), Webster Goodwin, Amy Brown, and Rudolph Watson. After 1945 I don’t have a complete slate of RIBA officials again until 1982.

In the second half of the film there is footage of several outdoor meetings, including what appears to be a meeting of the Vermont Beekeepers Association and possibly the Bristol County Beekeepers Association (BCBA May 1954). VBA member Chas Mraz was able to identify his grandfather, Charlie Mraz, and the Champlain Valley Apiaries honey shop around the 57:00 minute mark. My misgivings about taking a firm stand on the 1954 date aside, I do believe this date is reasonable. We know that in the early 50s RIBA President Gaston Levitre visited meetings of other clubs regularly and was instrumental in founding the Eastern Apicultural Society. In fact, the “Tri-State Meeting” of RI, MA, and CT beekeepers which RIBA hosted at URI in 1954 was the inspiration for the formation of EAS, and Levitre was elected the first president of the new organization in 1955 at the Maryland meeting. There is footage in the film of a “Field Day at West Kingston.” It is tempting to think this could be a record of that historic pre-EAS meeting, but there is no proof of that. Based on the quality of the other titles, it seems unlikely that they wouldn’t have specified it as such a special event or identified some of the famous speakers who appeared.

I hope you’ll take the time to watch and enjoy. If you have any further info that can help date any of the footage, or recognize any of the names, faces, or locations involved, please get in touch.

Scott Langlais
President, RI Beekeepers Association

**Link to video on YouTube:**
https://youtu.be/JicmmfqZvAQ
SAVE THE DATE!

Massachusetts Beekeepers Association
first virtual Annual Fall Meeting

Nov. 7, 2020 – 8:00 AM TO 12:00 PM

As President of the Massachusetts Beekeepers Association (MBA) I want to invite you to the 2020 Fall Meeting taking place on Nov. 7th. Because physical distance continues to be needed, for the first time, the MBA Fall Meeting will be a virtual event!

The online Meeting includes two Keynote Speakers and sessions with interactive Q&A sessions. Gary Reuter, a researcher at the University of Minnesota Bee Lab will be talking about wintering in cold climates and about the U of M’s research on propolis.

Dr. David Peck, a professor at Cornell University, will be giving a presentation on varroa mites.

Presentations and updates will also be given by Dr. Kim Skyrm, Hannah Whitehead, and others. Vendors will also be participating.

The Fall meeting will continue to include a Honey Show. 🍯 Details on how to enter will be posted on the MBA website.

This is one virtual meeting you do NOT want to miss. Pre-registration is required. The MBA Fall Meeting will remain the privileged occasion for current MBA Members. If you are unsure of your membership status you can contact the MBA Corresponding Secretary and if you would like to join MBA or renew your membership, you can do so on line.

We look forward to seeing you online on November 7, 2020!

Sincerely,

Pete Delaney, MBA President
Mass Bee Fall Meeting Details
Saturday, November 7, 2020
8 AM – 12 PM
ZOOM Meeting

Come join us for an outstanding educational event hosted by the Middlesex County Beekeepers Association (MCBA).

SPEAKERS

Gary Reuter  -  A long time hobby beekeeper and trained in technology education, Gary began working with Marla Spivak when she moved to Minnesota in 1992. Without his hard work, the program would not be what it is today. He maintains the research colonies, helps train and work with students in the field, designs and builds specialty equipment and speaks to beekeeping, student and civic groups. He plans the Extension short courses and together with Marla teaches beginning, as well as experienced beekeepers. His humorous style of teaching helps the class stay interested and enthusiastic about a sometimes-challenging subject. He is a past president of both Minnesota Hobby Beekeepers and Wisconsin Honey Producers Association and director of the American Beekeeping Federation and remains active in these groups. He still finds time to manage his own colonies, while learning to blacksmith, maintaining an orchard, and helping his wife raise sheep.

Gary’s presentation will be on wintering hives in cold climates and the research the university is doing on propolis. He will talk about how honey bees winter and what the beekeepers should do and not do to help them make it through the winter. He will also discuss what they have learned at the University of Minnesota Bee Lab regarding propolis and how it relates to honey bees’ health.

Dr. David Peck  -  Dr. David Thomas Peck is a professor at the Cornell University Department of Neurobiology and Behavior. Behaviorist interested in the behavioral interactions between parasites and their hosts, including parasite behavior, host-resistance behaviors toward parasites, and host-manipulation by parasites. He’s currently focused on studying: mechanisms of naturally evolved behavioral resistance to the mite Varroa destructor in honey bee populations in the United States and Madagascar; and consequences of both mite and bee behavior in the transmission of Varroa mites between honey bee colonies in apicultural and natural settings.

Dr. Peck’s presentation, “Varroa destructor – History, Biology, Transmission, and Bee Resistance”, will include information about Varroa biology that most veteran beekeepers rarely know. The focus is on Varroa as an animal in its own right, with its own interesting biology, and not “just a pest” – that needs to be destroyed as quickly as possible.

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HONEY CONTEST - No experience necessary.

Mass Bee and the MCBA welcome beekeepers to submit honey samples from their 2020 honey harvest for this year’s honey contest. This is a great chance to show off your stuff! Ribbons are given for the judge’s top three entries in each category. Modified honey contest rules and submittal instructions for the virtual Fall 2020 Meeting are posted on the Mass Bee website.

VENDOR SUPPORT by:

During the business portion of the meeting, several important items will be discussed for Membership vote:

- MBA’s updated Bylaws – the Bylaws have been updated to reflect current practices and to align the Bylaws with the Articles of Incorporation. A copy of the proposed version of the MBA Bylaws will be sent to Members before the Fall Meeting.
- MBA Executive Board – nominations for MBA Executive Board will be up for Membership vote. (See page 3 of this newsletter for the list of nominees.)
- The Beekeeper of the Year for 2020 will also be announced.

Additional details and schedule will be available soon on our web site [https://www.massbee.org](https://www.massbee.org).

Updates & notices will be posted on the Mass Bee web page [https://www.massbee.org/events/](https://www.massbee.org/events/) and shared in our Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsBeekeepers](https://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsBeekeepers).

All attendees must be current Mass Bee members or current high school or UMass Amherst students.

If you are unsure of your membership status you can contact the [Corresponding Secretary](mailto:corresponding.secretary@massbee.org).

If you are not currently a member or student, you can join online or by mail with payment received by Nov 4th ($15 for individual, $25 for family and $50 for organization.) Payments by credit card are accepted on our web site via [Mass Bee’s online membership](https://www.massbee.org/join).

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This is the second year that I have participated in the USDA Honey Bee Pests and Disease Survey (Survey). The Survey has been conducted annually since 2009. It is funded by the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and carried out in collaboration with the University of Maryland, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and, the Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA). The goal is to provide valuable national and longitudinal data about honey bee pests and disease in the US.

Each year, 24 mid-large scale apiaries (consisting of 8 or more hives) per state are sampled for Varroa, Nosema and viruses. They are also inspected for brood diseases. A subset of those apiaries are sampled for pesticides in wax or pollen (this varies by year). It is separate from, but compliments, data from other large-scale beekeeper surveys, like the Bee Informed Partnership Loss and Management survey (https://beeinformed.org/), and the annual NASS (National Ag Statistics Service) Honey Bee Colonies report (https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Bee_and_Honey/).

Luckily, the first time I participated in the study, samples from my hives came back with no detections – Yeaa! Results from the sampling conducted at my apiaries (one shared apiary) in August and September, respectively are expected in January. Hopefully, those sample results will also come back with no detections.

I have participated in the Survey because it allowed me to have a second set of eyes looking at some of my hives, which I appreciate since I am afraid that sometimes I am moving too fast through my apiaries and maybe not seeing something right in front of me. The survey also lets me have sampling conducted at no cost to me and provides data to support the assessment of honey bee health nationwide.

The Survey is nearing completion for 2020 but if you are interested in...
possibly participating in the 2020 Survey, contact Hannah Whitehead (from UMass Extension). You can also find out more about the Survey under the UMass Extension Update in this newsletter as well as at the links below:

- You can review data from past years here: [https://bip2.beeinformed.org/state_reports/](https://bip2.beeinformed.org/state_reports/) (this website is really cool!)
Are you artistic and creative?

**DESIGN CONTEST**

The Massachusetts Beekeepers Association will be developing a specialty license plate focused on honey bees and other pollinators.

As part of that effort, the Massachusetts Beekeepers Association is in need of a GRAPHIC DESIGN for the license plate.

Examples pollinator license plates:

![Pollinator License Plates](image)

**The DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION is February 28, 2021.**

Design submissions must follow the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (MRVM) Design Specifications:

- All Massachusetts passenger license plates have a white background, with “Massachusetts” in blue and the registration numbers in red. These colors cannot be changed.
- Special plates have up to six characters in the registration number. The first two characters are letters, which are displayed vertically and designate the plate series, e.g. “CI” for the Cape & Islands plate (see example).
- 3M (MRMV contractor for design and manufacture of license plates) uses Process Color Printing technology. Pantone color references should be provided for color matching, if necessary.
- 3M’s preferred high-resolution file formats in order of preference are: eps, ai, pdf, & psd.
- All digital images (photos, scans, etc.), must be at least 300 DPI at actual size. All fonts must be provided with artwork or outlined within artwork.
- Design elements that are dark in color must be at least ¼ inch away from the registration number on the plate.
- When it comes to the design of license plates, simple is better!

Please submit your entry to the MBA Corresponding Secretary. Any questions should be directed to this email address.

The winning submission will be announced at the MBA Spring Meeting and will receive a life-time membership in MBA and a t-shirt!
EAS MA 2021

July 26 – 30, 2021

66th Annual Short Course and Conference *
University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA

Speakers:
- Dr. Tom Seeley
- Dr. Samuel Ramsey
- Dr. Cameron Jack
- Paul Kelly
- Bill Hesbach
- Dr. Scott McArt
- Dr. Tammy Horn-Potter
- Dr. Heather Mattila
- Michael Palmer

Workshops:
- Honey Judging
- Bees Under the Microscope
- Lotions and Potions
- Cooking with honey

Short Course Tracks:
- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Queen Rearing and Colony Management
- Hands-on beekeeping in the State Apiary

Special Events:
- Field Trips
- Auctions
- Honey Show
- Special Visit by Lorenzo Langstroth

Nature, Culture, Food and Entertainment

Flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts system and nationally ranked public research university.

Downtown Amherst - Walkable mile of cuisine, culture, art, and independent film at the center of legendary trail networks for biking, hiking, arts, and literature.

90 miles from Boston and 175 miles from New York City. 64 miles to Tanglewood summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

EAS Master Beekeeping Program Testing & Certification

*More information on Conference schedule and details HERE.
The Massachusetts Beekeepers Association is honored to have the opportunity to host EAS in our great state at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst) during the week of July 26th–July 30th, 2021. We look forward to sharing the rich history and importance of beekeeping in our state. The conference rotates locations each summer between member states and it hasn’t been held in MA since 2001 when it was held at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy on the Cape. So please try to take advantage of the having it in our state next summer.

The theme of the conference is Past, Present and Beeyond. We will explore with our speakers the history of Beekeeping, the current state of Beekeeping and what Beekeeping in America might look like in the future. Dr. Tom Seeley, Dr. Sam Ramsey, Dr. Tammy Horn-Potter, Dr. Heather Mattila, Michael Palmer, and Dr. Cameron Jack have all graciously agreed to speak at the conference.

If an in-person conference is possible, it will be held at the conference center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. UMASS Amherst is a world-class university and a nationally ranked public research university. The conference center has an on-site hotel and an extensive food court. The food services have consistently been ranked at the top in the country. The Amherst area is known for its cuisine, culture, art, and independent films. Also, there is an extensive trail network for walking, biking, and hiking. The campus is only 90 miles from Boston.

Attendees will have the opportunity to sign up for two off campus excursions that feature the rich historic side of Massachusetts. There will be a bus trip to nearby historic Old Deerfield. Explore the lifestyle of early New England in a working village of endless beauty. Historic Deerfield is a series of museums, programs, and historic homes dedicated to the heritage and preservation of 17th century Deerfield, and the history of the Connecticut River Valley. There will also be a bus trip to Old Sturbridge Village. Old Sturbridge Village is a living museum that recreated life in rural New England during the 1790’s-1830’s. A private tour of their antique beekeeping equipment collection is part of this trip.

Come to improve your Beekeeping, hear the latest Honey bee research, enter the EAS Honey show, participate in the EAS Master Beekeeping program Testing & Certification, attend workshops on cooking with honey, bees under the microscope, and so much more.

Please Save-the-Date, July 26th – 30th, 2021 and check the EAS website for updates. Join us at EAS 2021! You are sure to gain new friends, new ideas, and inspiration to take your beekeeping to new levels.
NEW! Apiary Program Message Line Phone Number: 508-281-6784

The MDAR Apiary Program Message Line phone number has changed. Note that the old phone number (617-626-1801) is currently active but being phased out so please direct future calls to the new number.

Request Your 2020 Apiary Inspection Requests ASAP!

Routine colony health inspections for hobbyists and sideliners resumed the week of August 3, 2020. The Apiary Program understands the value of these inspections for honey bees and beekeepers, but must continue to minimize the risk of COVID-19, so inspections will only take place under these conditions:

- Inspections are preferred as those without beekeepers present in the apiary.
- If present during the inspection, beekeepers must wear masks and practice social distancing of at least 6ft during the inspection. Inspections will not be performed if beekeepers are not wearing masks or practicing social distancing!
- Beekeepers must confirm that they are currently asymptomatic or have not tested positive for COVID-19 within 14 days prior to the inspection date.
- Inspections will only occur outdoors. Inspectors cannot enter dwellings to gain access to an apiary to perform inspections.
- Inspections will not occur in gatherings of 10 or more people.

In an effort to accommodate as many requests as possible given the short season this year, inspections will be limited to one (1) per apiary. We encourage you to submit your inspection requests ASAP so that we can schedule efficiently: https://www.mass.gov/forms/mdar-apiary-inspection-request-form. Emergency inspections (i.e. American Foulbrood – AFB and pesticide related bee kills), will continue to be prioritized, so please notify us ASAP if an issue arises: bees@mass.gov; 508-281-6784.

Canceled! 2020 Honey Bee Education Days at the State Apiaries

Given the risks of COVID-19, we have canceled the remaining educational events for this season. Visit the website soon to get the listing of 2021 events: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mdar-state-apiaries.
Voluntarily Register Your Apiary Now!

A total of 585 beekeepers have voluntarily registered their apiaries with MDAR since April, 2017 by using the new online form: https://www.mass.gov/forms/apiary-and-colony-registration-form. Please consider taking a quick second to register your apiary today so that we can best communicate with beekeepers and investigate honey bee health issues.

Join the Apiary Program Mailing List

Stay up to date on statewide efforts focused on honey bee health by joining the current email list of 461 subscribers. To join, simply submit your email address using this link: https://www.mass.gov/forms/join-the-apiary-program-mailing-list.

Thank You! For Participating in the Honey Bee Health Survey

A HUGE Thank You to all those that took time to submit data on your apiaries by participating in the 2020 Massachusetts BEE AWARE: Honey Bee Health Survey! We almost broke our highest record of participation with 562 responses this year! Stay tuned as the data from the survey will be analyzed during winter and shared by Spring 2021! Notice to all those who expressed interest in getting a free Bee Aware sign, they have been sent via USPS. If you have not received your sign and participated in the survey, let us know and we will mail one to you ASAP: bees@mass.gov.

Zoom with Apiary Inspectors to get the New England Honey Bee Update

Due to popularity and continuing interest from the 751 attendees at the past five (5) meetings, we are continuing to offer these Zoom sessions with regional apiary inspectors! Note that we are unable to record these sessions, but do plan to continue offering them as long as there is interest, so mark your calendars now and plan to attend the next one:

- Join the Zoom Meeting: https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/97016701631?pwd=cXhNNHd0eGlsTMQrV2hPOTk2cjmUT09
- Meeting ID: 970 1670 1631
- Passcode: 774258
- One tap mobile: +16468769923,,97016701631# US (New York)
Apiary Regulations Public Hearing Update

The public hearings originally scheduled for April 8, 2020 and April 16, 2020 have been postponed. Updated dates and locations (potentially virtual) will be scheduled in the future.

Registered Pesticides for Honey Bee Hives

The following is a list of United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) registered pesticide products labeled for use in honey bee hives for management of pests and parasites. These product registrations are currently active and will expire on 6/30/2021. Stay up to date on current product registrations and label changes by visiting the Massachusetts Pesticide Product Registration Information website: http://www.kellysolutions.com/MA/pesticideindex.htm.

These general use products can be applied to individual beekeeper owned hives. If applying to hives other than those owned by the beekeeper, then a pesticide license is required. Visit the following pesticide regulations to learn about the pesticide applicator license: https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/30/333cmr10.pdf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT NAME</th>
<th>ACTIVE INGREDIENT</th>
<th>EPA REGISTRATION NUMBER</th>
<th>PEST/PARASITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Api-Bioxal</td>
<td>oxalic acid dehydrate</td>
<td>91266-1-73291</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apiguard</td>
<td>thymol</td>
<td>79671-1</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Api Life Var</td>
<td>menthol, eucalyptus oil, thymol</td>
<td>73291-1</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apistan</td>
<td>fluvalinate</td>
<td>2724-406 &amp; 2724-406-79671</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apivar</td>
<td>amitraz</td>
<td>87243-1</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CheckMite Plus</td>
<td>coumaphos</td>
<td>11556-138 &amp; 11556-138-61671</td>
<td>Varroa mite, Small hive beetle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formic Pro</td>
<td>formic acid</td>
<td>75710-3</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HopGuard II</td>
<td>potassium salts of hop beta acids</td>
<td>83623-2</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HopGuard III</td>
<td>potassium salts of hop beta acids</td>
<td>82623-2</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mite Away Quick Strips</td>
<td>formic acid</td>
<td>75710-2</td>
<td>Varroa mite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B402 Certan</td>
<td><em>Bacillus thuringiensis aizawai</em></td>
<td>94413-1</td>
<td>Greater wax moth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEW! Check Out the Latest Version of the Varroa Mite IPM Brochure

Bee sure to download the latest version of the Varroa Mite IPM Brochure and Plan template: https://www.northeastipm.org/ipm-in-action/the-ipm-toolbox/varroa-mite-ipm-four-part-series-for-a-healthy-hive-in-2020/. Free sample jars and printed brochures are available upon request to bees@mass.gov. Now is the time to FIGHT THOSE MITES!
NEW! *Massachusetts Native Plants and Pollinators* Poster and Stickers

Check out the newly released pollinator themed poster and stickers freely available electronically and in print: [https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-native-plants-and-pollinators-poster/download](https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-native-plants-and-pollinators-poster/download). Contact us to request printed copies: bees@mass.gov.
Update on the USDA-ARS Bee Research Lab in Beltsville, MD

The lab is still ONLY accepting comb/smear/swab samples for European Foulbrood (EFB) and American Foulbrood (AFB). Visit their website to get information on how to submit samples: https://www.ars.usda.gov/northeast-area/beltsville-md-barc/beltsville-agricultural-research-center/bee-research-laboratory/docs/how-to-submit-samples/.

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  We speak for all beekeepers in Massachusetts and make our point of view to all the states in New England. We are paid memberships to all surrounding states, allowing us to keep members aware of surrounding States activities.

Our hope is that you continue to support Mass Bee with your membership and also become active members helping to guide and implement Mass Bee activities. Please join or renew your membership today.

https://www.massbee.org/membership/
UMass Extension Update

We hope you are all staying healthy and safe in these challenging times. All UMass Extension staff continue to work remotely, and there will be no in-person workshops until further notice. For more information about the UMass Extension COVID response, click here.

Even though there are no in-person classes, there are still a number of exciting projects that have been happening at UMass this summer and will continue into the fall! (including some opportunities for beekeeper involvement, highlighted in red):

1. We conducted a SARE research project in collaboration with two Northeast queen breeders – Sam Comfort from Anarchy Apiaries and Ang Roell from They Keep Bees. We compared the quality of queens raised through three methods: (1) grafted larvae in a 10-day cell raiser, (2) grafted larvae in a 48-hour cell raiser, and (3) walk away splits. The results will allow us to empirically compare grafted queen quality to walk-away queen quality and could help us to better advise beekeepers on how to obtain or raise a new queen. The project is still on-going, but stay tuned for results this fall!

2. We are collecting Massachusetts data for the annual USDA Honey Bee Pest and Disease Survey. This national longitudinal survey has been conducted for over 10 years (you can learn more about the survey here, and explore the data here). We are looking for a few more beekeeper participants. If you have >8 hives in one location, and would like to take part in this national monitoring effort (and receive free varroa/nosema/virus testing on your bees!), email me (Extension Educator Hannah Whitehead) at hwhitehead@umass.edu.

3. We are creating a set of resources, protocols and training materials to help veterinarians inspect honey bee hives. This project is a collaboration with the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University and is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture.

   Our goal is to connect veterinarians to beekeepers, and beekeepers to veterinary care. This work was motivated by the 2017 FDA regulation that requires a veterinary feed directive for the use of medically important antibiotics, including those used to treat foulbrood in honey bees. However, we also see a larger role for veterinarians in the effort to improve honey bee health: vets could provide science-based animal health expertise for MA beekeepers, especially those who live far from existing resources. The immediate goal of this project is to help veterinarians with prior beekeeping experience make the leap to inspecting hives.

   And we need your help! We are seeking certified veterinarians who have at least two years of beekeeping experience (backyard or commercial) and are interested in conducting honey bee veterinary visits. You would give us feedback on materials, trainings and protocols while gaining skills to inspect hives. If you are interested and meet the criteria, email extension educator Hannah Whitehead at hwhitehead@umass.edu for more information.
Welcome back to the Research Buzz, a recurring column that summarizes the newest and coolest in bee research. This week, you will learn about crop pollination (which bees are visiting our crops? and are there enough?), and how flowers can become sites of disease transmission for bumble bees. You will also hear about research from the University of Georgia on propolis-friendly hive design and Varroa mite evolution. Finally, we will describe an exciting new bumble bee behavior that may have implications for climate change. You can also read this column on the UMass Extension website.

1. Are US Crops Pollination-Limited?

Many important food crops depend on pollinators. At the same time, pollinators may be less abundant: yearly honey bee losses remain high, and many wild bee species are in decline. Past research has studied the effect of insufficient pollination on wild plants; surprisingly little has focused on crops. Are crop yields limited by insufficient pollination? And how important are wild bees (as opposed to honey bees) for crop pollination?

Recently a multi-university group carried out a national study looking at seven key crops across the US – almond, apple, blueberry, tart cherry, sweet cherry, pumpkin, and watermelon. They monitored pollinator visits to target farms in key growing regions, as well as available blossoms and final yield. They then estimated the proportion of pollination that was performed by wild bees and assessed yield loss due to insufficient pollination. They found that apples, blueberries, sweet cherries and tart cherries were pollination limited. They also discovered that wild bee visitation varied by crop: pumpkins were overwhelmingly pollinated by wild bees (74.6% of visits), while almonds were pollinated exclusively by honey bees (100% of visits). Overall, wild bees performed about 26% of pollinator visits. The authors estimate the value of wild bees to the economy at 1.5 billion across all target crops except almonds. The economic value of honey bees across these crops totaled 2.2 billion.

Why is this research important?

This study found that wild bees provide substantial agricultural pollination services, and that several large-scale crops in the US may be limited by a lack of pollinators. It provides clear support for the need to preserve and attract native bees in agricultural areas.

Read the full study here.
Designing a Propolis-Friendly Hive

Many studies have shown that propolis improves honey bees’ immune response. But what is the most practical way to encourage bees to coat the hive interior with propolis? To answer that question, researchers at the University of Georgia compared the efficacy of three propolis-inducing hive modifications: 1) propolis traps stapled to the hive interior, 2) parallel grooves cut into the interior hive walls, and 3) roughened interior hive walls (using a mechanical wire brush). They measured propolis production in 20 colonies over the course of a year and found that all three designs increased propolis deposition compared to standard hives. However, the bees stored propolis in the grooved hives less consistently over time. The researchers concluded that roughed walls are the most effective and practical way to create a propolis envelope, since they induce maximum propolis hoarding and don’t detract from bee space (like the propolis trap design).

Why is this research important?

This study has practical implications: hive manufacturers could simply use naturally rough, un-planed lumber for hive interiors in order to create propolis-friendly hives. Future research could directly test the effect of rough hive interiors on colony health.

Read the full study here.

Are Mites from Feral Colonies Less Virulent?

Ecologists have long wondered whether beekeeping practices themselves have caused Varroa to become more destructive. According to host-parasite theory, parasites will become more virulent (increased reproduction, leading to quicker host death and quicker spread to new hosts) when hosts are clustered, because there is no downside to killing the host (there is always a new one to infect!). A parasite should evolve avirulence (lower reproduction, slower host-death and slower spread), when hosts are dispersed, since the parasite must keep the host alive until it encounters (or gives birth to) another host. It follows that mites infesting crowded apiaries would become more virulent; while mites infesting dispersed feral colonies would become less virulent.

Researchers from UGA recently tested this theory. They stocked 8 apiaries with miticide-treated packages and queens from the same source, and then infested them with mites from one of three donor colony groups: commercial hives, hobbyist hives or feral colonies. Two apiaries received no mites. They then tracked mite growth, colony health and mortality over three seasons. They found that mites from feral colonies had lower population growth compared to mites from either managed background. They were surprised to find that un-inoculated hives also developed high mites. However, they saw no differences between apiaries in colony strength or survival. They concluded that feral mites do seem to display lower virulence; however, something more complicated is affecting hive outcomes. They suggest that it may have to do with host-parasite interactions, and that future studies could pair bees and mites from different backgrounds.

Read the full study here.
Plant Composition Affects Bumble Bee Pathogens

In order to support bee health, advocacy groups have encouraged planting flowering strips along agricultural fields, roads, and residential areas. In addition to providing food, however, these flowers can be hubs of disease transmission for pollinators. Recently, researchers from Lynn Adler’s UMass lab tested the impact of different flowers on bumble bee health. They had previously shown that certain flowers increase or decrease transmission of bumble bee gut infections in the lab (read it here). In this study, they assembled three groups of outdoor tents and filled them with: (1) a pollinator-dependent crop (canola) + a flowering strip of mostly high-transmission plants, (2) canola + a low-transmission flowering strip, and (3) canola only. They placed bumble bee microcolonies in the tents for 2-week intervals and monitored bee disease and colony reproduction. They found that bees in tents with high-transmission flowering strips had double the infection intensity of those in low-transmission tents. However, bumble bee reproduction was improved in tents with any flowering strip, compared to those with only canola.

Why is this research important?

This study found that flowering strips improved bee reproduction, regardless of flower composition. However, certain floral mixes also increased infection intensity. The researchers don’t know why some plants led to lower infection; future research will explore factors like floral architecture, plant volatiles, and nectar chemistry. Understanding how plants affect bee disease is important because it could help us to design optimal planting mixtures for flowering strips.

Read the full study here.

Contact: Hannah Whitehead, UMass Extension, hwhitehead@umass.edu

Bumble Bees Damage Leaves to Induce Early Flowering

A research group from France and Switzerland recently published a startling discovery in Science: when workers from a common European bumble bee species (Bombus terrestris) are pollen-deprived, they will damage plant leaves in order to induce early flowering. The study was inspired when the researchers casually observed bumble bees chewing holes in plants. They subsequently conducted a series of experiments and found that bumble bee colonies that were deprived of pollen were more likely to damage plant leaves, and that plants with bee-chewed leaves flowered significantly earlier (30 days on average!) than plants that were mechanically damaged or left undisturbed. This behavior was observed in two other bumble bee species, but not in honey bees. This is the first evidence that some bee species directly manipulate plants in order to accelerate flowering when forage is scarce. As climate change alters the phenology of both plants and their insect pollinators, this behavior could become increasingly important to help Bombus terrestris align flowering times with resource needs.

Read the full study here.

Contact: Hannah Whitehead, UMass Extension, hwhitehead@umass.edu
Massachusetts Beekeepers Association
Membership

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Our hope is that you continue to support Mass Bee with your membership and also become active members helping to guide and implement Mass Bee activities. Please join or renew your membership today.

https://www.massbee.org/membership/

Don’t forget to register for the Fall 2020 ZOOM Meeting

https://www.massbee.org/events/

Hope to see you there!
Massachusetts Beekeepers Association

Membership Application

Application Date: ____________________________

Check #: _______ Amount: ___________________

Membership Year: ____________________________

New: ___________ Renewal: _________________

Memberships are based on the calendar year and are due each January 1st.

NAME(S): ___________________________________________________________________________

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP TYPE: Individual $ 15.00 ___________

Family $ 25.00 ___________

Organization $50.00 ___________

ADDRESS: __________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

EMAIL #1: ___________________________________________________________________________

EMAIL #2: ___________________________________________________________________________

PHONE: _____________________________________________________________________________

County Beekeeping Association: _______________________________________________________

Completed applications along with payment made out to the “MBA” should be mailed to:

MBA Memberships
PO BOX 232, Marion, MA 02738

Applications may also be emailed to correspondingsecretary@massbee.org

Or fill out the form online on our web site at https://www.massbee.org/membership/