

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

Minutes for Monthly Meeting

09/15/2025

Apprentice meeting led by Doug Stanley

Apprentice meeting started at 6:23pm

When you have a new hive, you feed about half a gallon of sugar syrup per week, but monitor closely so you make sure you aren't giving them too much. If you have a honey bound hive, you can take out some frames and put empty, waxed frames in their place so they won't abscond. Just make sure the frames you take out are only sugar syrup/honey and not brood.

Freezing your frames kills pests. Such as after you extract honey from honey frames, freeze them to get rid of any pests. Also, if you had a dead hive, as long as your frames aren't very slimed out from small hive beetles, you can freeze those. Frozen frames are good, because you can give new nucs or weak hives already drawn out frames.

Some neighborhoods allow beehives, but you have to be responsible. You can't keep aggressive genetics so you can minimize the risk of your bees stinging people. Also, bees like to drink from your neighbor's pool.

Bees also prefer dirty water over clean water. The reason they drink out of pools is because of the chlorine and minerals, and the reason they drink out of dirty water is also because of the minerals, and typically dirty water has things for them to land on to avoid drowning. You can't make sure that your bees don't drink out of your neighbors pool, but you can try to minimize the risk by putting a trough/small pond of water near the hives (about 1-3 yards away). Put little pieces of wood, plastic water bottles, etc so they have things to land on. You can also mix a bit of chlorine in the water, and you can let it get dirty.

If you are using bees for ag exemption, you have to look closely at the rules. Bee exemption typically is for properties 5-20 acres not including the house/structures. It also takes a few years for it to be valid.

Meeting adjourned 6:52pm.

Attendance: 8 people

Main Meeting

Meeting started at 7:00pm

Announcements:

Club is looking to fill positions of Youth Director, Vice President, President

Main speaker: Matt Thomas led the presentation on Varroa mites

Varroa mites are the top cause of bee deaths. There are many treatments for controlling the mites. It's best to catch them earlier rather than later, because it's easy to control them when you only have a few. When doing varroa tests (like alcohol wash or powdered sugar shake) you should only have about 3 mites per hundred, because more than that can give diseases to your bees. The Honeybee Health Coalition has many resources and tips on how to control your varroa mite levels. Honeybeehealthcoalition.org

Varroa mites feed on the fat of a bee. A bee infected with varroa mites will be out foraging with other bees, and the mites will transfer on to other bees. This is one way how mites are transferred between colonies.

There is no such thing as a varroa resistant honeybee, only bees that are better than cleaning them out of their hive. You want to make sure you treat before it starts getting cold, so you knock the mites down before the bees are already stressed from the cold. Apivar, a popular mite treatment, is starting to not work, as mites are becoming resistant to it. There are many different treatments you can use, it also depends on the weather. Some treatments can't be used when it's cold, and some can't be used when it is hot. Some can be used with honey supers, and others cannot. It's also good to alternate between treatments to avoid resistance to the chemical.

When using oxalic acid vaporizers, you have to put proper eye and respiratory protection. When using the oxalic strips, you have to use chemical protection gloves.

It's recommended to test for varroa mites about 4 times a year. You may also test after each varroa treatment so you can see how it worked.

When you are testing a hive, you want to make sure you DO NOT put your queen in the test bees. You need about a half cup of bees for the test and a wide mouth jar with a strainer top so bees will stay in jar. After you do your alcohol wash/sugar shake, wait about 3 minutes so all mites fall off. Then shake out onto white plate so you can count the mites. Alcohol washes will kill your bees. Powdered sugar shakes won't kill your bees, but you still do not want to have your queen in there. For consistent results in your tests if doing multiple, then shake bees for same amount of time.

Drone brood removals are a way some people control a small portion of varroa mites. Varroa mites target drone (male bees) since drones have larger cells and stay in cells for a longer period of time. Some people have a frame of just drone brood, then remove it from the hive to get rid of some

varroa. However, it's very rough on the bees since they have to keep redoing frames. It also doesn't take down a whole lot of varroa mites.

You have to find which mite treatments work for you to have the best results.

Matt's presentation ended at 8:03pm

Quick Q&A

Goldenrod and snow on the prairie are two autumn flowers for bees. However, we leave fall honey for the bees so they can use it to overwinter, and the taste of honey from autumn flowers is not preferred. If you smell a putrid smell in your hive during the fall, don't be alarmed because it's probably just goldenrod nectar. And snow on the prairie gives an unpleasant, almost spicy honey.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm

Attendance: 25 people