

The Bee Line



Newsletter of the Maine State Beekeepers Association | mainebeekeepers.org

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2019/2020 Honey Bee Survey Summary

by Jennifer Lund

Demographics

312 respondents, representing 1,875 hives. Most (97.8%) identified as backyard/hobby beekeepers (<30 hives) and 96.5% have their apiaries registered with the state of Maine. Most (69.6%) are also members of a beekeeping organization (MSBA, local MSBA chapters, EAS). Respondents keep bees for a variety of reasons, the top of which are hobby/enjoyment (94.6%), bee product production for personal use (72.1%), and to help the bee population (67.0%). The average number of years of beekeeping experience was 8.4 years (range 1-66).

Table 1: **Beekeeping Experience
Years Beekeeping**

Years Beekeeping	#
1 to 3	115
4 to 6	81
7 to 9	35
10 to 20	49
21 to 30	10
31 to 40	12
41 to 70	6
unknown	4

Practices

Participants started colonies by buying packages (46.5%), buying nucs (39.7%), and/or splitting already existing hives (36.5%). 18.9% reported collecting swarms to start new colonies.

Most beekeepers (79.5%) provided supplemental food to their hives during the 2019/2020 beekeeping season. About a third (31.4%) used sugar syrup to boost food stores and encourage comb building. 55.1% of beekeepers used either fondant, candy boards or dry sugar for supplemental winter feeding. About 17.3% of respondents reported using pollen patties.

Less than 1% of respondents rented hives for pollination of agriculture. The 312

participants reported approximately 59,840 pounds of honey harvested (averages 191.8 pounds per beekeeper, 31.9 pounds per hive). Participants reported approximately 35,002.3 pounds of honey harvested (average 97.2 pounds per beekeeper, 18.3 pounds per hive) in the 2018/2019 survey and 15,093.5 pounds of honey harvested (average 71.2 pounds per beekeeper, 13.1 pounds per hive) in 2017/2018 survey.

Hive losses

Statewide hive loss was 35.8% between April 2019 and April 2020 (summer: 9.7%, winter: 26.1%). This is 10% lower than last year where respondents reported a 45.2% (summer: 6.2%, winter: 39.0%) loss between April 2018 and April 2019.

Table 2: **Average losses by county from April 2019-April 2020**

County	#	Summer Loss (%)	Winter Loss (%)	Total Loss (%)
Androscoggin	11	0.0	23.7	23.7
Aroostook	4	41.4	20.7	62.1
Cumberland	72	9.6	27.9	37.5
Franklin	6	27.3	12.1	39.4
Hancock	19	3.1	29.7	32.8
Kennebec	31	12.0	26.5	38.6
Knox	20	15.7	34.3	50.0
Lincoln	22	6.4	16.7	23.0
Oxford	19	4.4	25.7	30.1
Penobscot	29	11.4	22.5	33.9
Piscataquis	4	0.0	19.0	19.0
Sagadahoc	10	13.3	22.2	35.6
Somerset	9	13.3	33.3	46.7
Waldo	17	11.3	30.2	41.5
Washington	3	5.6	16.7	22.2
York	36	14.2	40.0	54.2

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Honey Bee Survey Summary

The most commonly reported causes of summer loss were queen loss/failure (13.8%), Varroa mites/viruses (11.3%), unknown (8.7%), and environmental factors (5.1%). 217 (69.6%) respondents reported no summer losses. The most commonly reported causes of winter loss were Varroa mites/viruses (25.6%), unknown (17.0%), environmental factors (16.0%), and queen loss/failure (14.1%). 118 (37.8%) respondents reported no winter losses.

Pest and Diseases

Varroa mites/viruses: Three quarters (75.0%) of respondents monitored for Varroa mites. Of those that monitor for mites, 47.4% do so using alcohol rolls, 45.3% using a sticky board, 16.2% using sugar rolls, and 16.2% using drone brood survey. Many beekeepers (43.6%) that report monitoring for Varroa use more than one method of monitoring. Beekeepers report using screened bottom boards (28.5%), brood disruption (7.1%) and drone brood removal (2.9%) as part of their Varroa mite management strategy. The most common miticides used were oxalic acid (vaporization, 51.0%), Formic Pro (formic acid, 34.6%), Mite-Away-Quick-Strips (formic acid, 15.7%), and Apiguard (thymol, 14.1%). Twenty-three beekeepers (7.4%) reported no Varroa mite management.

Other Pests/Diseases: Most respondents (87.2%) report using no treatments in their hives, 12.5% used fumagillin and 2.2% used Terramycin.



Tips and Tricks

by Jason Peters

Feeding for small operations

Feeding can be a daunting task but oftentimes a necessary one for colony build-up during times of dearth or to adequately prepare your colonies for winter. For those that have between 1-20 hives, mixing and delivering syrup can be challenging. Over the years, we have tried numerous methods and devices and as we have expanded, we settled on a skid/trailer mounted 275 gallon food grade tote and a gas powered pump to mix and pump the syrup into our feeders. This would most likely be overkill for smaller operations but a good solution is to mix your syrup in five gallon pails with a paint mixing paddle attached to a corded/ cordless drill.



Photo courtesy of Jason Peters

Pails can be temporarily mounted onto a hand truck with a ratchet strap and wheeled right into the bee yard (no heavy lifting required). After mixing comes the hard part; pouring the syrup into your feeders without spilling it all over the ground potentially creating a robbing frenzy. A great solution to this is what is known as a Bucket Pump. These devices are commonly used in automobile repair facilities to move thick fluids like gear oil into hard to reach places. Guess what else they move pretty well?



Photo courtesy of Jason Peters

You guessed it: SYRUP. This pump can quickly be attached to a four or five gallon pail and the tube can be placed in your feeding device of choice while you pump the syrup from the pail. Once finished, these are easily removed so that they can be cleaned and stored away for future use. The product used is a Lumax LX-1300 which can be purchased locally from some auto parts stores as well as from Amazon. For the cost of approximately \$35.00 your back will thank you!



Photo courtesy of Jason Peters

Editor's note: My management practice with 20+ hives is to feed with gallon buckets when necessary. I found this product intriguing and decided to purchase this pump. It was a great investment not only for back mechanics, but for ease of filling the buckets! I would typically take them off the hives, bring them to the kitchen to pop covers, fill with freshly made sugar syrup and then return to the hives with the buckets. Great tip Jason!

Keeping Time

by Michael Donihue

We keep bees in our apiary in central Maine for lots of reasons. Making money is clearly not one of them. Actually I don't know of any hobby beekeepers who are in it for the money. Despite a good harvest this year of over 13 gallons of honey from our three colonies we aren't going to break even, let alone turn a profit, until I can get a handle on wintering through more of our hives. Demand for raw local honey does seem to be pretty strong in our community.

The real reason we keep bees is mostly an emotional attachment. We just enjoy having a few colonies of *Apis mellifera* in residence on our property. We have probably only had one or two summers in the past 30 years when we weren't managing hives and I still remember how out of balance our lives felt when that happened.

When asked, however, I tell people that we keep honey bees because it helps with the pollination of our fruits and vegetables. This year the familiar rituals of comparing gardening experiences with friends and family have been 'virtual' instead of the more traditional harvest suppers in the back yard. Most of us seem to have taken advantage of the coronavirus constrained nature of this year's growing season and either expanded our gardens, experimented with new varieties of vegetables or just did a little better at keeping up with the weeds. Despite a very dry summer, we harvested enough fruits and vegetables to share. Our bees provided plenty of honey for gifts or to sell to co-workers and friends to recoup part of the cost of this year's investment in nucs and mite treatments.

Seed saving of heirloom varieties feature prominently in the gardening conversations of our extended family each year and I like

to think that an average honey harvest of between four and five gallons of honey per colony is due in part to the variety of plants we have in our gardens. For this reason, I like keeping my eyes and ears open for new heirloom vegetables to experiment with and this year's effort went into growing fish peppers.

We encountered fish peppers last summer when my wife and I happened upon a community garden event that coincided with a visit to our son and his fiancé in Washington, DC. People from all walks of life turned out to sample tastes from the garden and hear about plans for a small urban apiary. Every great heirloom plant has a story and it was at this gathering of friends and neighbors that I discovered the story of the fish pepper shared by a member of this community selling his homemade barbecue sauce. The sauce was delicious and his story made me want to try growing fish peppers in our garden.

The story of the fish pepper begins as a secret ingredient in the chowders, soups, and sauces on the menus of seafood restaurants in the Mid-Atlantic states during the late 1800s. When young, fish peppers are mostly white with light green stripes and were easy to hide in the most popular seafood dishes of the day. They provide a peppery kick when added raw, but mellow when sautéed leaving a nice balance of heat and flavor. The plants are quite prolific and as the peppers mature, their color changes to all green, then orange with a few shades of brown before turning bright red. My fish pepper plants this year are more than two feet tall and have stunning white and green variegated leaves.

Most stories I found trace the origin of the fish pepper to the Caribbean and were grown in the U.S. almost exclusively by black farmers up until the turn of the twentieth

century. By the early 1900s the crab and oyster houses that were popular hangouts in the fishing communities in the Chesapeake Bay area began to disappear as people migrated to more urban areas for better jobs and the lifestyles that went with them. Family farms declined and the fish pepper was nearly lost.

Legend has it, however, that in 1918 a man named Horace Pippin returned to Pennsylvania from World War I with an injured right arm. It seems that Corporal Pippin was a folk artist of some renown but fell victim to sniper fire while fighting with the 369th Infantry regiment nicknamed the "Harlem Hellfighters." Pippin apparently suffered from crippling arthritis as a result of his injuries and had to relearn how to paint using his left arm to guide the brushstrokes of his right hand. As the story goes, Horace sought the help of a beekeeper named H. Ralph Weaver for some home grown pain relief remedies and treatments that included bee stings. In exchange for these treatments Horace would give Weaver unusual seeds passed down from generation to generation by Pippin's gardening friends. It seems that during his lifetime H. Ralph Weaver accumulated an impressive private collection of a wide variety of saved seeds. In 1995, William Woys Weaver eventually shared his grandfather's seeds with the public. Every fish pepper seed found today can reportedly be traced to those century old apitherapy bartering experiences between Pippin and Weaver.

Honey infused with hot peppers seems to be a 'thing' this year so I am planning on making some for Christmas presents. I'm thinking that I'll also try making hot honey fish pepper barbecue sauce.

For a brief biography of Horace Pippin see <https://www.history.com/news/harlem-hellfighters-horace-pippin-ales-from-wwi-trenches>



*Photo courtesy of
Judith Stanton*

MSBA History Part II

by Matt Scott

The first MSBA Annual Meeting was held in January 1977 at the Augusta Civic Center in conjunction with the Maine Agricultural Trades Show. 103 individuals attended, standing room only. Our guest speaker was Paul Raybold from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture on foulbrood diseases and fumigation equipment being used in NJ. This was relevant because Maine had a rampant American Foulbrood problem with virtually no control or adequate inspection. The incidence was over 20% and disease transmission was statewide.

Also at our Annual Meeting was State Horticulturist Al Black, who oversaw bee industry law for the Maine Department of Agriculture. Al gave his report including the fact that the state had inadequate inspection funds and only part-time inspection services. He also noted that the bee industry law was in need of revision. As education was MSBA's role and mission, we began working with the Department of Agriculture, becoming involved with new legislation, drafting policy, finding sponsors for the bill and holding hearings. We also advocated for a fulltime bee inspector. It took a lot of time and effort on the part of MSBA, and would be a few more years before we saw light at the end of the tunnel.

Membership during our first year grew to 175, due to the newsletter and its content, bee schools and interest in the craft. We joined the Eastern Apicultural Society and elected Matt Scott to serve as the Director for Maine.

At the Agricultural Trades Show we staffed the booth with MSBA members and developed a model still used today. Things were pretty much the same with educational materials and facts about honey bees. Boxes of comb honey were contributed and sales became a significant part of income during the Ag Show. Our booth was in an ideal location for people traffic, and continues to this day to occupy the same space next to the main entrance doors.

Beekeeping classes were set up in various parts of the state with lots of interest in learning about bees and beekeeping. At the same time local chapters were encouraged to be formed under MSBA by-laws. Penquis, Somerset and Kennebec were already active clubs but Cumberland County Beekeepers became our first official chapter.

We beekeepers know honey bees and wild bees are very sensitive to pesticides. Maine had already prohibited the use of DDT but Malathion and Methoxychlor were being used, with significant bee kills. These also were eventually banned. Carbaryl (Sevin) was thought to be the savior but it too was a broad spectrum pesticide and killed bees. We talked with many decision makers in agriculture and met with legislators and growers to discuss Sevin's impact.

In the 1970s losses were lowered and over time the education program worked. Various shows, fairs and picnics came up during our first two years, and it was a labor of love for all the locals who set up and participated. We spread the word about MSBA and the benefits of its membership. Our first Annual Picnic was held in July at the Hinckley School in Fairfield.

As you read this history you see we had a variety of "actors and players" that promoted the MSBA and participated actively in the events.

Our second Annual Meeting was held again at the Civic Center in January, 1978 with 125 members and standing room only again. More space was needed and winter storms continued to be a potential for cancellations. We thought a winter meeting was the best time of the year but our membership was growing and some folks wanted a summer venue. Also the Cumberland Chapter wanted to be a host so why not make a change?

At the end of 1978 we had 300 members with a mailing list of 350.

The 1970s were the decade of change. MSBA became a 501(c)3. We saw more interest in the formation of chapters under the umbrella. The agriculture industry in Maine also saw the value of MSBA. Farmers were growing apples, squash and wild blueberries, all in need of commercial pollination.



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Ask A Master Beekeeper...

What strategies do you use to provide for adequate ventilation in the winter months?

Ventilation is a strategy of dealing with excess winter moisture in the colony. In the winter, bees give off moisture as they respire and also there is some moisture generated from consuming honey. I'm starting to move away from ventilation as a strategy to increased insulation at the top of the hive. My goal is for it not to "rain" on the bees as hot breaths rise and condense on the inner cover, while giving the bees a source of water which they use to both drink and uncrystallize honey. Two-inch foam is rated about R12 and I am trying to get to an insulation value of R25.

Though at the end of the day, keeping the bees dry is the name of the game, and ventilation can be a good way to do that. An escape hole for moisture near the top of the hive is needed so that air can circulate within the hive. I don't think the notch in the inner cover is an adequate moisture escape exit by itself. Some beekeepers put channels in foam boards (or homasote) to line up with the hole in the inner cover in an effort to make the opening to the outside larger. *Andrew Dewey, Master Beekeeper*

I find it is much better to use a metal mouse guard style entrance reducer (I actually use them all year). Using the small opening on the wooden "stick" style doesn't seem to

give enough ventilation and mice can certainly wiggle through the opening. The wood swells when it gets wet and it is very difficult to remove when you need to clear dead bees from behind the entrance. Initially I was afraid that I was leaving too large an opening, but after listening to Mike Palmer I realized that too small was more of a problem. He just uses hardware cloth (half inch) bent into a V shape to put in the entrance. It is also important to brush off the landing board in front of the entrance after each storm as there is no ventilation if the entrance is covered in snow and ice!

I know a lot of beekeepers use an auger hole in their top box but I have found the notch in the inner cover works for me. You can always prop the top up with a small stick if you need a bit more ventilation. *Carol Cottrill, Master Beekeeper*

I have always, I do mean *always* used a 5/8" breather hole in the top hive body. It allows the bees to move in fresh air should they need it. I also have used the wooden entrance reducers ever since I started keeping bees. I only used the smaller entrance one year and ever since I have gone to the larger entrance. *Rick Cooper, Master Beekeeper*

Are there tricks to pouring honey into the jars to reduce air bubbles? How full do you fill the jars? What is the ideal temperature to store honey once bottled?

I don't know if is a trick or not but I usually pour warm honey and I tilt the jars slightly so the honey runs down the side of the jar. Pouring directly on top of honey already in the jar just creates all kinds of air bubbles. I fill the jars to the full mark. Now some jars come with a label protector bump on the side of the jar but this is not the full mark. I fill to this tiny line about 1/8" down from the top of the jar. I also have scales so I can check the weight of the jar every once in awhile. *Rick Cooper, Master Beekeeper*

When you reflect upon your most recent beekeeping season from early spring to the fall, what might you consider doing differently in the upcoming year?

I plan to be more aggressive with my alcohol washes next year, testing all or most colonies monthly, instead of relying on Sentinel Hives within the apiary. I missed mite build up in one good colony that ended up absconding late in August. I will also be doing the test, with more of an eye to selection, that is identifying colonies where treatment is not called for. *Andrew Dewey, Master Beekeeper.*

I have been doing what I do for a very long time and as my wife says, it is hard for a dinosaur to change. I would have loved to have gotten my supers out a week or so earlier but the weather never seemed to cooperate this year. I have changed some over the last few years. I am doing a spring medication program now. I tried some Imirie shims this year and may try again next year. They have not appeared to work. I take this opportunity to remind everyone three weeks of drought, three weeks of rain, six weeks of drought. *Rick Cooper, Master Beekeeper*



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October 17th

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MSBA VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

OCTOBER 17, 2020

The 2020 MSBA Annual Meeting will be virtual this year!! Join us for a morning of presentations from nationally recognized speakers Jon Zawislak, Dr. Meghan Milbrath, and Mary Reisinger (2020 American Honey Queen). Jennifer Lund will present the State of the State Address and the MSBA business meeting and elections will be held. There will also be a raffle!! Everyone who registers for the meeting will automatically be entered for a chance to win one of many prizes!

A little about virtual meetings: Virtual meetings are very easy to navigate. Prior to the meeting, you will be sent a link that can be used to enter the meeting. You will be able to attend from the comfort of your home and will be able to ask questions of the presenters. Several beekeeping clubs are planning watch "parties" (with proper masks and social distancing) so keep an eye out for an announcement from your local club if you would like to participate in this way. The program is listed below and short stretch breaks will be interspersed throughout the morning. The annual meeting is FREE to all MSBA members.

Looking forward to seeing you on **October 17th** for an incredible program geared to both new and seasoned beekeepers!



MSBA ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM

8:30 AM	Welcome
8:35 AM	Jennifer Lund, Maine State Apiarist "State of the State Address"
9:00 AM	Jon Zawislak, University of Arkansas "Keeping Colonies Healthy and Productive" Honey bee colony productivity and survivorship is linked to overall health. Learn about ways to reduce stress to colonies all year long to keep your bees happy and healthy.
10:10 AM	Mary Reisinger, 2020 American Honey Queen Join Mary Reisinger as she makes her favorite seasonal dish - pecan pie! With only a few ingredients, this pecan pie is easy to whip up in a hurry and sure to satisfy everyone. Mary will also spend some time discussing the unique promotional year that the American Honey Queen and Princess managed in 2020 and how they reached the public with messages of how honey bees are superheroes to agriculture and how honey has powerful purposes beyond the kitchen.
10:30 AM	Business Meeting
11:00 AM	Dr. Meghan Milbrath, Michigan State University "Sustainable Northern Beekeeping Using Late Season Nucs" Never buy bees again! In this talk we cover a management strategy that can help beekeepers get off the treadmill of buying bees every year. We discuss how to make replacement colonies and expansion from within your operation, so you can be self-sufficient.

PRESENTERS

Jon Zawislak

University of Arkansas

Jon is the apiculture specialist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. He has worked and played with honey bees since 1998, and is equally at home in the bee yard, the laboratory or the classroom. Each year he presents lectures, workshops and short courses for new and experienced beekeepers throughout Arkansas and beyond. His teaching emphasizes the biology and behavior of bees as the cornerstones of keeping them productive and healthy. He also spreads the word about the importance of pollinators to the non-beekeeping public. Jon has a background in botany and entomology, and is a certified Master Beekeeper through the Eastern Apicultural Society. He and his family operate Walnut Valley Honey Farm in Little Rock, AK (walnutvalleyhoney.com) producing products from the hive and supplying pollinators for area community gardens.

Mary Reisinger

2020 American Honey Queen

Mary is the 20 year old daughter of Peter and Stephanie Reisinger of Parker, TX. She is a senior at the University of Texas at Dallas, studying speech-language pathology. Mary is an active volunteer in the Collin County Beekeepers Association and currently tends six hives. As the 2020 American Honey Queen, Mary serves as a national spokesperson on behalf of the American Beekeeping Federation, a trade organization representing beekeepers and honey producers throughout the United States. The American Honey Queen and Princess speak and promote in venues nationwide and as such, Queen Mary will travel and present throughout the United States in 2020.

Dr. Meghan Milbrath

Michigan State University

Meghan began working bees over 25 years ago, and now owns and manages The Sand Hill Apiary, a small livestock and queen rearing operation in Munith, Michigan. She studied biology at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, and received degrees in public health from Tulane University and the University of Michigan, where she focused on environmental health sciences and disease transmission risk. Meghan worked as a postdoctoral research associate at Michigan State University, studying nosema disease, and is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Entomology at MSU, where she does honey bee and pollinator research and extension. She is also the coordinator of the Michigan Pollinator Initiative. Meghan is active in multiple beekeeping organizations, writes for numerous beekeeping journals, and speaks about bees all over the country. She currently runs the Northern Bee Network, a directory and resource site dedicated to supporting queen producers. She is passionate about keeping and promoting healthy bees.

Jennifer Lund

Maine State Apiarist

Jen earned a master's degree in entomology from the University of Maine in Orono and has more than 20 years of entomological experience. Before becoming the State Apiarist, she was a research technician in the entomology department at UMO. Jen is passionate about honey bee health and helping beekeepers succeed. In addition to managing the inspection program, she has several hives of her own on her farm in Argyle Township.



Jon Zawislak



Dr. Meghan Milbrath



Jennifer Lund



Mary Reisinger

Reflections of a Beekeeping Mentor

by Joseph G. Devonshire

A few years ago I was approached about being a mentor with the Knox Lincoln County Beekeepers Club. I was humbled that there was such trust in my abilities and knowledge. I didn't have to think long about taking on this challenge as it was a natural extension of something I had been doing in another long time hobby of mine.

There are several challenges in mentoring anyone new to a hobby or craft. I have found that listening and watching are key to understanding what the mentee knows. The bee schools offer a great foundation, but moving on to the application of beekeeping can be quite a leap. This year has been a greater challenge to everyone. So let me list some of the things I've seen over the last few years and offer them to you as something you may want to incorporate for yourself.

What I will cover here is what it takes for the new beekeeper to get started. One of the basics of beekeeping may seem to be the bees themselves, but as I see it, it's the hive body. Construction is everything. Let's start with the basic hive body. Square corners along with well sealed and fastened boxes are necessary. If you don't have one, pick up a try square or combo square to check the box corners. Getting your box square is essential. If you don't get this right from the start, the frames may not fit right, the bee space will not be correct, and this will follow you for the rest of the life of the box. Just try to stack misshapen hive bodies. I like to use a good wood glue on the joints and good box nails, galvanized if possible. Be sure to wipe any excess glue from the inside and outside. Simple advice for good construction.

While we're at it, take a look at the top and bottom edges of the box. Are they perfectly flat? If not, how much is the surface distorted? Bees don't need much room to squeeze through and a gap between boxes can and will be used by the bees as an additional entrance/exit. This becomes critical to keeping out interlopers. If you don't fix this now, it will cause problems not only during the temperate season, but in the winter. They may use this as an additional access point which will result in a draft.

Don't paint the inside. The bees will take care of their own house. You take care of the outside. For that, use a primer paint made for exterior surfaces.

Frames are another important construction item. Any carpenter will tell you that nailing into end grain for secure construction is a bad procedure. When I am building new frames, I like to use a good wood glue. There are a couple of reasons for this: 1) it doubles the strength of the joint and 2) when I'm pulling a heavy frame of honey out of a box, I don't have to fear the bottom of the frame will stay in the hive. This leads me to where to nail the frames. I like to dry fit with a dab of glue on all four joints. Then, from the side of the vertical support on the bottom, put a nail from each side so it penetrates the bottom bar. Do this on both sides. On the top, you have two choices: either nail in at an angle from the top, or go in from the sides. If you have a power nailer, brads work just fine.

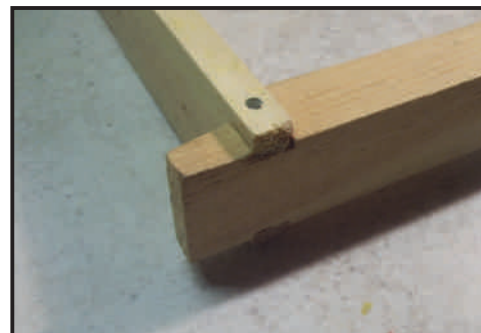


Photo courtesy of Joseph Devonshire

Before we finish the interior of the hive body, we need to consider one last structural item: the ledges where the frames hang. Keeping this part of the hive free of propolis will make moving frames in the hive much easier. New beekeepers don't have experience with propolis. It's that gooey, sometimes hard substance bees just love to pack all over the place. Something I've seen missed are those simple metal pieces of "L" channel that can be nailed to the frame ledges in the hive bodies and supers. This simple addition to the hive can save the beekeeper from damage to the ledges in the hive. It makes removing built up propolis much easier. Without them you run the risk of damage to the ledge by gouging and/or splitting the wood when cleaning or moving frames. Small brads work fine in attaching them to the ledges.

Now that we have covered the hive box basics, there is the issue of a hive bottom: what to use or not use. When I started back in the 90's, everyone was using a bottom board. No easy way to clean it out, and no easy way to see what was dropping down. Then along came the screened bottom. There have been a variety of them over the years, but the basic concept is to have a screen on the bottom of the hive, and a removable tray underneath. Now this is where the new beekeeper can get things mixed up and the mentor tends to come onto the scene after it happens. Which hive bottom to use? The plusses of the screened bottom are that you can use a removable tray to observe the debris that falls, do mite counts, and keep the bottom clean. A wood



Photo courtesy of Joseph Devonshire

bottom can serve to keep the hive a little less drafty in the winter. This is where the mentor can give their personal advice.

Moving to the top of the hive, my own personal preference is to use an inner cover with the notch up. This is another improvement to hive equipment. There was a time when there was no notch and the top cover was propped up with something to elevate the inner cover to allow for ventilation in the summer. The notch up serves two vital purposes: 1) to allow for good air flow all year. Keeping the notch up keeps the inside of the top cover from accumulating moisture. 2) it allows the bees a way of escape. If you are employing a varroa mite treatment with an OA vaporizer, it will bring the vapor completely through the hive into the chamber above the inner cover. Any bees in that area will also reap the benefits of the treatment. Finally, I'd like to offer this advice to all beekeepers: tilt your hive just a little bit forward. Why you ask? Look at your hive from either side. How does water drop

down from the roof? Is it landing on the front of the hive, landing board, or in front of the hive? If it is landing on either of the first two points, the water is getting into your hive at the bottom, and if you are using a wooden bottom board, it will accumulate in there. Wet wood and wet bee debris are not a good combination. By tilting the hive slightly forward, you can get the rain water to drop further away from the hive. This becomes irrelevant in a storm, but can help. Even more so, doing this in the winter will help the bees to enter and exit the hive without a wet entrance. I've gone so far as to put a piece of rigid insulation on top of the hive and extend it out to keep the water from dripping on the front of the hive.

These are but a few of the things I've encountered with new beekeepers along with suggestions I've offered to them. There is so much more to beekeeping, and I've purposely left out foundation. That's a discussion better left for another time.



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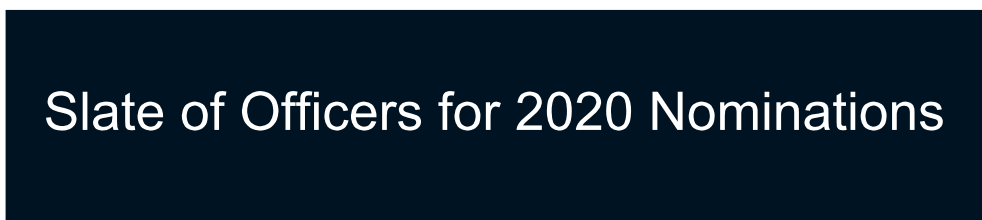
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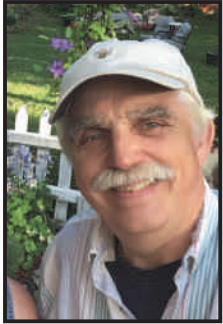
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Treasurer: Keith Kettelhut

Keith is the current president of Cumberland County Beekeepers Association and was named MSBA's 2017 Beekeeper of the Year. A resident of Durham, he has been keeping bees for twelve years and runs 55 hives. Keith is an active member of the Swarm Team, and has been very involved with education and outreach with regard to honey bees and other flying insects. He is a satellite communications engineer working for WMTW TV-8, operating and maintaining their satellite truck. Keith is also a scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 109 in Lisbon Falls.



At Large Director: David LeGloahec

David is an urban bee keeper in Gardiner, where he has lived for almost five years. He helped write the city's new beekeeping ordinance, which allows anyone to have honey bees anywhere in the municipality, dependent on lot size. A retired educator from Lewiston, he's an active member of both Kennebec Beekeepers Association and Knox-Lincoln County Beekeepers. He is currently the treasurer for KBA and up for re-election as an MSBA at large director. David became interested in bees through a class taught at Gardiner Adult Ed "So You Want Become a Beekeeper," and each year tries to learn some new aspects of beekeeping, the most recent being management of resource hives.



Membership Chairperson: Sheri Zimmerman

Sheri was born and raised in Oklahoma and earned a degree in Animal Sciences from Texas A&M University. Currently living in Winthrop, she moved to Maine 25 years ago and works as a Veterinary Technician.

During her five years of beekeeping she has become very active in Kennebec Beekeepers Association, serving as secretary, mentoring four new beekeepers and conducting open hive classes at Viles Arboretum. Sheri has also implemented a 4-H scholarship through KBA, which provides students with the instruction, skills and equipment to start their own hives. She will further her educational contributions in KBA's 2021 Bee School, covering honey harvesting, extracting, bottling, and grading.



Secretary: Thalassa Raasch

Thalassa became involved with honey bees as a teenaged apprentice to a commercial beekeeper in Minnesota. With several hundred colonies to manage, every fair-weather day was spent tending hives. After settling in Maine Thalassa embarked on her own solo bee endeavor, which has grown to 20+ colonies and counting. She now operates a business called "Keepers" which provides bee hive tours, live colony removals and hive management services. She maintains hives on the rooftop of the Press Hotel/Union Restaurant in Portland, at the Blaine House governor's residence in Augusta, and for private individuals in various locations. Her personal apiaries in Portland and Brunswick produce her "Little Dude" honey. Thalassa teaches darkroom photography at Colby College. Her work as an artist and as a visual storyteller has allowed her to explore all sixteen counties in Maine. This year she presented "Rooftop Beekeeping" talks at the B-Side storytelling event, and meetings at York County and Cumberland County Beekeepers; as well as other talks and workshops at Maine Audubon and Frith Farm.



At Large Director: Geoff MacLean

Geoff started keeping bees in 2007 as a favor for a real estate brokerage client looking for a home for two colonies. That beekeeper quickly faded away and Geoff, with help from "Beekeeping for Dummies", 'splits and nucs, ended up with 10 colonies by the end of his first year. Today, in addition to 3+ decades of real estate brokerage, training and consulting as a founding partner of The Real Estate Learning Group, and running several charter boats in Casco Bay, he keeps 20+ colonies and sells honey under the Red Brook Honey label from an honor stand at his bee farm in Scarborough. Realizing the benefit of networking with fellow beekeepers, Geoff became involved in Cumberland County Beekeepers and MSBA a dozen years ago. He has taught a sustainable beekeeping course for seven years at The Honey Exchange in Portland, is a past vice president of CCBA and a current EAS Master Beekeeper candidate. He routinely gives talks to local clubs, groups, and schools in an effort to further public understanding of the honey bee.

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