



Beginner Beekeeping Classes



The classes were a total success.

We had 31 students many of whom are families. We had three ZOOM sessions and one in-person session where we talked about equipment and answered questions. Kim Flotum summarized his book by explaining his 10 rules for backyard beekeeping during the last session.

Many thanks to Blue Sky Bee Supply for donating a hive tool for each student. Also thanks to Dadant for donating a smoker and two subscriptions to the American Bee Journal.

We welcome 31 curious and enthusiastic new beekeepers to the club!

Upcoming Events

**March 15th at 7:00 PM
(ZOOM)**

Drawing of winning numbers for the hive and package raffles.

**March 21st, 2023 at 6:30 PM
(IN-PERSON)**

Dr. Reed Johnson will speak on what flowers honey bees utilize to make honey.

**May 3rd, 2023 at 7:00 PM
(ZOOM)**

Julia Mahood, Master Craftsman Beekeeper will present on Splits, NUCs and Swarm Control

[Click here for more details](#)

EVENTS



Inside the Hive in March

*By Rosanne Slivka
Treasurer of SCBA*

March is a critical month for our bees. Most colonies are lost in March due to starvation. The most important thing to do is be sure the bees have food and to add more if they need it. Check the weight of the hive, gently lift the front and then the back of the hive. If it feels light and is easy to lift, they probably need more food.

Check where the bees are, top of the frames or still low in the hive. Remove the telescoping cover and gently lift the inner cover. Are the bees on the top bars? Have they eaten any (or all) of the supplemental sugar you provided earlier? If so, it is time to add more food. Do this sooner rather than later. This is critical if you want to have colonies that are still alive in April. Several options for food are sugar brick, fondant, winter patties, or sugar poured on newspaper (also called Mountain Camp). Just place this on top of the frames of the top box so it is easy for the bees to get to. If you have a candy board in place and they need more candy or sugar brick, just place the food on the screen of the candy board.

If you start to see white wax being built up from the tops of frames and into the shim or candy board, you should plan to add more room. If you have questions about this, feel free to reach out to us to discuss your options.

Watch the size of the population. February was warm and the maples and skunk cabbage were in bloom and producing pollen. This stimulates the queen to start laying.

On a calm, sunny day near 70* pull a couple of frames to see how much capped and open brood is in the hive. Don't leave the hive open for too long otherwise it could chill the brood. It is still too early to do a full inspection, but a quick pull of a couple of frames will help you gauge how fast they are building up their population.

Bees need water to liquify honey and sugar in the hive to feed to the brood so it's good to have a water source nearby. I see many bees on the mulch and flower pots in our yard gathering water. I place a dark-colored tray or bowl in a sunny location near the hives. Add some rocks and sticks for the bees to land on and just enough water so it does not cover the sticks or rocks. The sun will warm up the water. Once they find it, you will be surprised how many will come back to gather more.

Keep a close watch on the food stores and add more when needed. Watch for white wax on top of the frames. Provide a water source near the hives and have boxes and frames made so you can add more room when needed.



Beekeeper of the Month



Jasen Smolk & His Family

BEE keeping is a family affair for Jasen Smolk and two of his keen children.

The Smolk family are new to beekeeping, having taken up the hobby only last year after they signed up for the Summit County Beekeepers Association beginners class last spring.

“I live in Portage but came to Summit for the class, and boy I am glad I did,” said Jasen. “We took the beginners class with my youngest son Nashua and my eldest daughter Samantha.”

“I had always had an interest in beekeeping but with four children, coaching their sports and music lessons it has been hard to justify the time for a hobby for me, but Nash developed an interest which was the motivation we needed.”

“When it was bedtime, we would read some Dr Seuss and then 10 or 20 pages of Beekeeping for Dummies which was our prep work so we had a good idea of what we were getting into when we started with our first nuc.”

The classes and research paid off. The bees exploded and in the first four weeks, our 5 nuc frames had turned into nearly 20 full frames and queen cups.

He was especially grateful to association treasurer Rosanne Slivka who was on hand to offer support and guidance. Jasen said: “She came out to see how I was doing and became my unofficial mentor. She was fantastic.”

The hive thrived and Jasen and his children soon found themselves splitting the hive and this winter they have successfully kept both alive by using sugar patties.

“Even with two fairly strong hives we only took a little honey, a few frames to keep the children interested. That was a big day for us, very exciting.”

The family interest has only grown stronger, Jasen said:

“The one that started this, Nashua, was eight and he still helps with the inspections. My eldest daughter, Samantha, really has taken to it and does inspections with me and came to a presentation by the association on how to catch a swarm, which was awesome.

Now my youngest, Cadence (five) wants to be involved too.”

“SCBA has been just awesome,” said Jasen. “It has been excellent between the well-organized classes and the regular emails and the socials and get-togethers. A lot of nice people are willing to share their experiences and time. I cannot say enough about the club and am thankful to have met so many nice people.”

Recipe of the Month

Lotion Bars from Bees Wax

4 oz. beeswax

4 oz. deodorizer cocoa butter

4 oz. sweet almond oil

Melt together

Pour into molds.

These bars are nice and gentle on your skin. Try it when you have extra wax and give it away to friends and family. They will appreciate it.

[You can find molds and packaging here](#)

Have a favorite honey or other bee product recipe you'd like to share? Send it to newsletter@summitbeekeepers.com