

# The Buzzword

May/June, 2009

A publication of the East Central Ohio Beekeeping Association (ECOBA) serving Fairfield, Licking, Muskingum and Perry Counties

## Swarm Season!

*My favorite time of the year. In Ohio, this typically lasts from very late April until mid-late June. Free bees (kind of)! Sometimes you can drive quite a few miles only to find a handful of bees that caused a homeowner to panic and tell you there were thousands of bees. But then there are the ones that are hanging from the top of a small tree and the tree is now doubled over from the weight. Those are exciting.*

*In old style beekeeping, in skeps or gums, swarms were welcome as this was the primary way to expand your number of colonies. Today we realize that with the departing swarm, an incredible amount of energy leaves with it, usually costing the beekeeper a large portion of his/her honey crop.*

*If you want to "chase" swarms on a regular basis, it's nice to be prepared at all times. Try to keep at least the essentials for "easy" swarms in your vehicle ready to go. These include a box of some sort, with a bee tight lid (I like cardboard nuc boxes); a bee brush, a smoker and fuel, a lighter or matches, a veil and maybe small pruning shears or loppers. These essentials will take care of the nice swarms on low limbs, fences, or in bushes.*

*Although many swarms are fairly docile, a swarm that has not found a home for a few days can be a bit more aggressive. Better safe than sorry. Wear your veil and/or whatever you feel comfortable*

(Continued on page 3)

## Area & Regional Meetings & Events

### June 19th, 20th

#### OSBA Summer Meeting

Brukner Nature Center,  
5995 Horseshoe Bend Road  
Troy, Ohio 45737

Contact: Tony Rimkus  
rimkus@juno.com

### June 27th - ECOBA Picnic

11 am Bee Yard activities-Ed Rowlands  
~1 pm Picnic at Dawe's Education Center area

### July 9 - 11

#### Heartland Apicultural Society (HAS)

Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio  
www.heartlandbees.com

### August 3-7, 2009

#### EAS Conference/Workshops

Ellicottville, New York.  
www.easternapiculture.org

## Ohio State Beekeepers Association (OSBA) Summer Meeting

OSBA summer meeting will be June 19th-20th at Brukner Nature Center, 5995 Horseshoe Bend Road, Troy, Ohio 45737. For more information, contact Tony Rimkus [rimkus@juno.com](mailto:rimkus@juno.com) Time will be 6pm - 9pm on Friday night for an informal discussion and 8am - 4pm on Saturday for the meeting. —Submitted by Dana McVay Note: This was the location of the North Central Queen Assembly meeting in 2007 and is a very beautiful location. — editor



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## \*\*OUR NEXT MEETING\*\*

May 21st, 2009 6:30 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Jackson-  
town Methodist Church, 9350  
Jacksontown Road (St. Rt. 13),  
Jacksontown, OH

## **Small Hive Beetle in Ohio by Dana Stahlman**

Do not panic if you have SHB. They have been in Ohio since at least 2002. They have been brought in by commercial pollinators and in package bees from the South.

The Small Hive Beetle is established in Central Ohio. I found SHB in two bee trees last year when the high winds knocked down several trees including one within four blocks of the state capitol building on Front Street. However, several Central Ohio Beekeepers (COBA) had indicated to me last year that the SHB was overwintering in their hives. I made a presentation at HAS last year on hive beetles and the demand for that talk has led me to Indiana and Massachusetts where I found that the SHB has been established in some apiaries for at least five years. This is no longer a problem just for the South.

The real question is what we do about SHB. First, I would suggest that in the north, the SHB is about on the same level as the wax moth problem. First, they both are opportunistic – they take advantage of weak colonies. They seem to avoid or are kept under control by strong colonies. Second, the beekeeper must manage hives and pay attention to the condition of colonies they keep.

The first step is to identify SHB. This is a small round looking bug. Picture of a SHB to show relative size. It seeks dark places and if you remove the inner cover from a hive, they will often scurry about seeking a place for shelter. If more advanced problems exist, the larvae does all the damage in the hive -- will reproduce with a number of small worm in a single cell but many cells will have larvae in them. They become a problem later in the season when the weather gets warm. This results in a slimy mess of fermented honey and loss of brood in the hive being attacked.

What can you do: 1) Place SHB traps in your hive. A number of traps are sold on the market. However, the most cost effective trap is just a simple piece of corrugated paper cut three inches wide and 22 inches long. It is placed on the bottom board and pushed all the way to the back of the bottom board. It is removed on each visit to the hive and checked for SHB. If SHB are detected, you can use the traps to remove



Small Hive Beetle larvae

the beetle on a regular basis – you won't get all of them but if you keep it up, the adult beetles trapped and destroyed will for the most part control any serious damage. 2) Check-Mite + is an approved treatment for the SHB. 3) Get as much information you can about SHB from the internet. There is plenty to find. Also Bee Culture magazine for May had a good letter to the editor from Joseph Fitzpatrick on how he traps SHB.

I realize in so short of an article, that I can not completely answer all the questions or idea presented on SHB. If you find SHB in your hives, contact your county bee inspector for help and advice. They are around to stay. I would advise the following web site for a good study of SHB. [www.bugwood.org/factsheets/small\\_hive\\_bee.htm](http://www.bugwood.org/factsheets/small_hive_bee.htm)

Also check Univ. of Florida page @ <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AA257> (ed.) **Photo Credits :** Above pictures were taken from Keith Delaplane

**Small Hive Beetle Adult** - Note the "clubbed" antennae adult actual size approx. 1/4" inch long

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Approximately 50 mixed Italian nucs for sale in deep and mediums for \$75 each. They will be ready soon. If you want to keep the nuc box, add \$25.

Thanks,

Bill Dawson 740 743 2224

[www.e-c-ohiobeekeepers.org](http://www.e-c-ohiobeekeepers.org)

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*The Buzzword*

*May-June 2009*

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**Swarm Season (Continued from page 1)**

with. Where do I start with catching a swarm? First, contact your association web master and have your name and location placed on the website with a contact number. Second, have your name and information added to the swarm lists at the County Ag. Extension office and at the sheriff's office.

Then comes the first call. What now? Ask questions, questions, questions. What appear to "regular" people as a "huge" swarm may turn out to be a disappointment to a beekeeper expecting 10lbs of bees. The best method I have gleaned from articles is to have them compare the size of the cluster of bees to a ball. Is it the size of softball? ...a football?...a basketball? This will help you gauge it's worth to you and the amount effort to expend in retrieval. How high off the ground is it? Within reach standing on the ground? Will I need a ladder to reach it? I had a swarm call today and it turned out to be under the soffit of the house...but it was the second story so I had to pass. Can I cut branches to retrieve the swarm? Some people are sensitive about what pruning you might need to do, but sometimes clearing extra branches around a swarm makes retrieval easier. You might ask about the terrain, reaching for a swarm on level ground is a bit different than on the side of a slope. Many homeowners are

frantic when they call, so a few calming words can also help while gathering information.

Once at the site, take your time and assess the situation. Are there small children around? You may want to create a buffer zone if in a neighborhood where you are the current entertainment. This is also a good chance to explain what swarms really are and how they are not chasing you when they swarm. Use the opportunity for public education and be prepared to answer questions.

Now that you are ready to get the swarm, your method will vary with how the swarm is clustered. Hopefully, you can hold the box directly under the swarm, give a branch a sharp shake or two and close up the box. Close the box and let things settle. Hopefully the queen went in the box with the cluster of bees. I leave a small opening for bees to gather around and scent fan, as they do when installing a package. When there is time, I tend to wait for sundown to allow the return of foragers. Get all the bees you have time for, but sometimes calls are in the middle of the day and you won't be able to come back later. These bees may not be there at sundown so you have to get what you can get while you are there. Use smoke and the bee brush to gently guide the bees to your box. You will rarely get all of them, but you don't want so many left behind that you get a return call the next day.

Now what? Having tried hiving a swarm early in the day, I don't suggest it! I like to hive close to sunset. The bees much more readily accept a hive at this time and once they spend the night, they will usually stay. I like to have a few drawn combs in the hive but also include foundation as swarms are ready to build wax. Some people suggest adding a frame of open brood to help hold the swarm. I typically give the box a sharp tap to get the bees on one side and then dump them at the entrance of the hive. Check for eggs being laid in a few days if you had drawn comb or maybe a week if you had all foundation. Hopefully all is well and you have yourself a new hive.!

As always in beekeeping, there is more to swarms than presented here and each situation will have its own uniqueness that continues to make beekeeping the fascinating passion that it is. ---Editor



Facing off with a forager on a mission



This was a swarm being hived late last August. Large for a fall swarm. Fall swarms are usually small.

## April Meeting Minutes

The April meeting of ECOBA was opened by Roger Miller with 61 Members present on April 16 at the Jacksontown United Methodist Church. Roger ask all members to sign up on mentor map so Jim Mathews could get mentors assigned.

The New Phone book has been sent out to those with e-mail and some printed copies are available to those without e-mail.

The Arbor Day at Dawes will start at 10a.m. on April 25 and run til 4p.m ,Linda Huston and Dana McVay ask for volunteers to help man the booth. Craft project for children will be to make pipe cleaner bees, will also have flyers to hand out and flower packets for donations to Save Ohio Bees.

Karen Crutcher read minutes of March Meeting-motion to accept was made by Jim Mathews, second by Ed Rowland. Vote passed.

Karen then gave treasurer report. Beginning balance was 5,067.12 after expenses of 415.47 and deposits of 397.50 balance for April 16 stands at 5,049.36 with 690.00 in scholarship fund. Motion to accept treasurer report as read was made by Ron Hoopes, second by Ron Willison, vote passed.

Karen ask if club wished to continue membership with Dawes, Ron Hoopes made a motion to pay Dawes dues for this year, second by Bud Albaugh, Vote passed.

Bill Huston ask that we consider purchasing some electric equipment for club presentations. Example power point and screen. Brain Worsley said he may have lap top to donate to club. After some discussion Tom Burkett will gather info for club.

Roger Miller ask about revamping club flyer to hand out at fairs, etc. Mike Albaugh said he would work on flyer.

Date for June Picnic was set for June 27 with club meeting at Ed Rowlands at 11am for beeyard activites and than moving to Dawes about 1pm for picnic near education bldg at Dawes. Volunteers are needed for committee to organize picnic.

OSBA has summer meeting June 20-mark your calendar.

Lithopolis Honey Fest will be Sept 12 and we are sponsoring the Photo Contest.Gary Blackford volunteered to organize the contest; Dana McVay volunteered to help Gary.

Howard Seigrist had the Outville Church contact him that they wish to support bees, committee to suggest how they can best help will be set up by Roger Miller and report later.

Club broke for refreshments and door prizes were given out.

Bill and Linda Huston gave a very well presented talk on bee diseases. Thanks for the GREAT JOB Bill & Linda.

Motion to adjourn was made by Greg Trecker and second by Linda Huston. Vote Passed and next meeting will be May 21,2009

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### **ECOBA CONTACT INFO**

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ECOBA meets the third Thursday of every month from February through November. Meetings are held at the Jacksontown Methodist Church at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. The Jacksontown Methodist Church is located on S.R. 13 (9350 Jacksontown Rd.) north of Interstate 70 and just south of the junction of SR 13 and U.S. 40 in Jacksontown.

**Our Mission: To support beekeeping in the East Central Ohio Area (Fairfield, Licking, Muskingum, and Perry Counties), including providing our membership with educational opportunities, updates on current beekeeping information, and promote public awareness about the important benefits of beekeeping to our food supply.**

## How are your packages doing today?

By the time you read this, your package bees from April 16th (or so) will be one month old. How are they developing? Are they drawing comb well? As you look in your hive(s), you should now be seeing the brood pattern and emerging brood of your queen. With brood finally emerging, your package is finally in a growth mode and will build up quickly. As they continue to draw comb, monitor them well. I have had first year packages swarm due to my inattention. Once the first deep box is nearly complete and you add the second, keep a close eye on what the bees and the queen are doing. In my case, the center frames of the upper box were drawn and filled with nectar very quickly and the next thing I knew, I was chasing half my hive up a pine tree! Hopefully your queens are laying well, the bees are taking feed and building comb. It's a long process to get ready for winter and it's a lot of work for the bees. Don't forget to check for varroa mites in summer. Waiting until fall to check and treat for mites (if necessary) can be too late and make all your (and the bees) efforts for naught. —Editor.



Poppy Worsley, daughter of Brian Worsley, helping with package installation

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## President's Letter

Beekeepers,

Winter in Ohio was hard on the bees, lots of colonies starved out due to long spans of cold temperatures that kept bees from repositioning. This is being followed by a spring of cool, wet and windy days. The bees were slow to build but are now doing well but I would estimate they are 2 to 3 weeks behind last year.

Now is the time to get those supers on your colonies, put on an extra one just for good measure. This is also the time to get some new comb drawn out, so put the foundation in and rotate out that 10 year old stuff. If you are supering remember to remove all that mite control products you put in. How long ago was that anyway?

This month's class will be presented by Greg Pifer, Ten Things they didn't tell you when you started. Bring your own examples to share with all. I am accepting volunteers for future months, the number of colonies you have is not the key, just the willingness to teach others.

The Honey Fest is just around the corner, as is the Fairfield County Fair, and our Picnic is June 27<sup>th</sup>. Please help make these events a success. Plan ahead, put aside some of that beautiful, special honey your bees made and enter it at the Fair, remember to take lots of pictures of everything and send your best to Connie Schalinske who has stepped forward to co-ordinate the displaying of these pictures at the Honey Fest. She would really like someone to help her, it is a huge undertaking and she will really appreciate help.

If you have been a member for a while, take a moment a call someone who hasn't been to the meetings and invite them to attend. The new place is great and I am sure they would enjoy meeting all the new beekeepers. Some president said, "We will leave no beekeeper behind". I think that was the quote.

Hope to see you at the next meeting.

Your beekeeper friend,

Roger Miller