

THE SKEP

COLUMBIANA & MAHONING COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

BEE-utiful spring at Fellows Riverside Gardens

Courtesy of the Mill Creek MetroParks Staff

It's all about the bees this spring at Fellows Riverside Gardens. On Thursday, April 17, the park received additional hives to install in its Family Garden and now offers for sale its own honey and beeswax candles.

Mandy Smith, Fellows Riverside Gardens Horticulture Education Manager spoke with Lori Mowad, Horticulture Educator, and our own Don Kovach, beekeeper and board member of the Columbiana & Mahoning County Beekeepers' Association, to learn the buzz about the park's new inhabitants.

MS: Why were additional honeybee hives installed in the Family Garden?

LM/DK: We are installing two additional hives, plus replacing one from the two original hives from 2013 that were lost to the cold winter. We wanted to install two more hives to continue educating the public about the importance of pollinators to our health and nutrition. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, out of approximately 100 crop species which provide 90% of our food worldwide, 71 are bee-pollinated! Honey is one of the best natural sweeteners and there are now studies being conducted on the benefits of local honey for allergy sufferers.



Beekeeper Don Kovach (right) shows 'em how it's done at the MCP Family Garden.

MS: Where did these hives originate?

LM/DK: All three hives are fresh from working the almond crops in California. They are an Italian breed of honeybee. We are releasing four pounds of honeybees into these three hives; each pound contains approximately 3,000 bees.

MS: What will these new hives need in order to survive and prosper?

LM/DK: As we put the honeybees in their new hives, we provide them with pollen patties and sugar water, a 1:1 solution, as supplements – basically for a rainy day. The queen is kept in a special box with 'queen candy' that keeps her from the rest of the hive. All three queens are new, so it is important for the colony to acclimate to her pheromones before she is released into the hive. The queen candy is eaten by both her and the worker bees, which then releases her and establishes her as queen. If she is released before the bees adjust she may actually be mauled.

MS: Why is the Family Garden at Fellows Riverside Gardens such a great place for honeybees and other pollinators?

LM/DK: First, it is the best place for pollinator education. We rely on our pollinators now more than ever. It is estimated that Ohio lost 40% of the honeybee population due to winter die off. Second, 23 out of the 24 garden areas at Fellows Riverside Gardens are pesticide-free and there is such a diversity of plant life — it is a safe haven for them. In the original hive, we have already found purple, white and yellow pollen.

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Our next monthly meeting will be held on Sunday, May 18, at the home of George and Edwynna Stacy, 43455 County Line Road Columbiana, OH 44408
The potluck luncheon takes place at 1 p.m. with the business meeting beginning at 2 p.m. Guest speaker Don Kovach will be discussing nucs (nucleus colonies).

MetroParks cont.

MS: Inquiring minds want to know... when can we expect the first batch of honey from these bees?

LM/DK: It truly all depends on the weather. Honeybees need days of 50 degrees or higher to fly to collect pollen — the next ten days look great! The first batch should be ready by the end of July to the beginning of August.

MS: Any final thoughts?

LM/DK: We just want people to appreciate bees and understand their importance to our survival. If anyone sees a bee, please do not kill it, it is simply looking for a pollen source and may be sidetracked. If there is a swarm of bees in or around your home, please make sure that your exterminator knows to contact a beekeeper to collect the bees.



Fellows Riverside Gardens is selling honey and beeswax candles from its very own Family Garden. The new bees will produce honey that should be ready by the end of the summer.

Meanwhile Family Garden Beeswax Candles are \$5 each and burn for 5 hours. They are handmade by Fellows Riverside Garden staff members. The wax for the candles comes from the capped honey frames. They melt the excess wax in a solar wax melter, and then after the wax is melted, the wax is then strained and filtered of all impurities. There are still some impurities from the bees that remain — you can see small black particles in the candles. After the wax has been strained, they heat the wax and pour it into a silicon candle mold. Some of the wax is kept and is used to put starter wax foundation on the frames. This helps the bees at the beginning of the new season. The strained part from the solar wax melter is put in the Family Garden compost bin and then added back to the garden after it has broken down.

Family Garden Local Honey is \$15 for 12 oz., \$12 for 8 oz., and \$3 for 2 oz. Both the candles and honey make great basket fillers and are truly handmade Youngstown originals. All items available for purchase at the Information Desk at Fellows Riverside Gardens, Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Supplies are limited! Call 330.740.7116 for information. All proceeds from the sale of these items benefit the Family Garden at Fellows Riverside Gardens.

Mentors 2014	
Bruce Deafenbaugh	330-457-0326
Bill DeHoff	330-549-2984
Don Hays	330-921-1012
Don Kovach	330-272-3711
George Stacy	330-360-8717
Floyd Marshall	330-821-0563



Fellows Riverside Gardens Horticulture Educator Lori Mowad



The Herbs and the Bees

Last month's list was a bit incomplete – the following herbs will also attract bees to your garden:

- ✓ Bee balm
- ✓ Borage
- ✓ Chamomile
- ✓ Catnip
- ✓ Fennel
- ✓ Germander
- ✓ Hyssop
- ✓ Lavender
- ✓ Lemon Balm
- ✓ Marjoram
- ✓ Mints
- ✓ Oregano
- ✓ Sage
- ✓ Sacred basil
- ✓ Thyme
- ✓ Winter savory



Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*) features tubular red flowers held in dense clusters. Foliage is strongly scented.

Scholarships, etc.

Treasurer Edwynna Stacy reports that all four of the Association's 2013 scholarship recipients have received their \$500 check to apply toward their college tuition. The recipients include:

Alex Schmidbauer	Youngstown State
Sydney Schisler	Kent State
Evan Wehr	Geneva College
Lisa Clarke	SUNY Maritime College

Board members also voted unanimously to donate \$250 to the American Red Cross on behalf of Sandra Hays who will be participating in the upcoming Relay for Life in Boardman on May 16.

Ohio Beehive Registration Deadline

Owners of honeybee hives are required by state law to register them by June 1 of every year.

The registration is used to notify hive owners of diseases in their area or let them know when pesticide spraying that could be harmful to honey bees will be conducted near them.

For more information go online to www.ohioagriculture.gov or call (614) 728-6373.

According to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, honeybees have always played a vital role in agriculture and as such the department has overseen their inspection since House Bill 28 was approved on April 21, 1904. This 108 year history has evolved as agriculture has evolved and changed across the state. Honey bees not only provide honey but are a vital source of pollination for many of the fruit and vegetable crops grown in Ohio such as apples, melons, cucumbers, and pumpkins. They are also used to pollinate seed crops such as sunflower and canola.

The Apiary Program coordinates the state and county inspection services that help to ensure a healthy beekeeping industry. In 2013, 4390 beekeepers registered in accordance with Ohio Revised Code section 909.02 which represents 7,199 apiaries, and an estimated 39,822 colonies.

The Apiary Program works with several national groups and the USDA in providing samples for the study of Colony Collapse Disorder which caused massive colony deaths in various parts of the nation, including Ohio.

Urban Beekeeping When You Can't Keep Honey Bees

Rebecca Simpson of Suburban Stone Age

Urban beekeeping is a rising trend among many who are interested in producing their own source of honey and interacting with honeybees. Unfortunately, there may be several reasons why a would-be backyard beekeeper is unable to start and maintain a honey beehive of their own. Challenges such city ordinances, pets and small children, liability issues, and unenthusiastic neighbors can all pull the plug on dreams of being a honey beekeeper.

Honeybees need more than a hive to be successful. The good news is that you can be involved in some very important aspects of beekeeping, even if you can't have the actual beehive on your property. Here are some alternative ideas for "keeping" bees, by supporting bees:

Grow bee friendly plants – Having an abundant food supply is important to a healthy, productive bee hive. By planting bee friendly plants that bloom throughout the seasons, you'll be giving bees a delicious, long lasting buffet. Excellent bee plants include cilantro, lavender, rosemary, borage, lamb's ear, echium, bee balm, echinacea, and many others.

Let the lawn grow - For those who prefer lawns to gardens... instead of cutting the lawn every so often, leave the grass to grow for one week longer or so – this will give clover the chance to flower and bees can get some much needed nectar. *Cont. on Page 4*

Urban Beekeeping *Continued from Page 3*

Don't use insecticides – Insecticide use can have unintended consequences for bees. To keep bees safe and healthy, use alternative organic methods to control garden pests.

Supply clean water – A shallow basin of clean water can supply bees with much needed moisture, especially in hot weather or in a dry climate. Fill a basin with pebbles or stones to give the bees a safe place to land and sip without drowning.

Involve the community – For the golfers among us, talk to management and ask that they use 'bee-friendly' products to keep their courses in pristine condition.

Get involved – Join our local beekeeping association to learn about urban beekeeping from the experts. Even if you can't have your own hive, beekeeping groups are a great way to interact and build a relationship with bees and people. Depending on the group, you may be able to participate in swarm rescues, harvest honey, or work with public education, among other activities. Every group is different, but getting involved is a great place to start.

President's Corner



By Bruce Deafenbaugh

Hello, Beekeepers! With the flowers and trees blooming, the bees are doing a good job of bringing in the nectar and the pollen. Last month some of your surviving hives were strong enough to rotate boxes. This month, rotate your boxes to keep the queen in the bottom box, and start looking for queen cells. Some members have asked me when to start raising queens. The best answer is when you begin to see drones in your hives, you need them to mate with your new queens. You can make splits by:

The OTS (on the spot) method: OTS method, also a system for bee management, is not just specifically for queens. With OTS the idea is to force queen cell development and have the hive go into a false swarm situation, but can still be used for making queens.

The Cloake board method: invented by Harry Cloake, the Cloake board, or floor without a floor, consists of a queen excluder mounted to a wooden frame. The wooden frame contains a slot which allows a "temporary" floor to be inserted.

The Snelgrove method: first described by Leonard E Snelgrove in his 1934 book, *Swarming - Its Control and Prevention*. The method follows on from decades of hive manipulation using various kinds of board to separate queen from brood. Snelgrove introduced his specific design of board that makes use of entrances above and below the board to "bleed" bees from one box to another.

Mating is when nuc boxes come into play with queen cells. Make a split and move it at least 2.5-miles away so the bees don't return to the mother hive. Some people squash queen cells to keep their hives strong. Make sure you keep undrawn out frames in or several honey boxes on. It is also a good practice to set up a bait hive for swarms. Catch your neighbors' swarms – they're free bees! See you May 18 at the Stacys! Don't forget to bring chairs to summer meetings.

Special thanks to our generous suppliers who have provided us with catalogs and door prizes. It means a lot to these folks to hear back from you, so be sure to mention our club when doing business with them:

Koehnen; Better Bee; Miller Bee Supply; Sailor Plastic; Mann Lake; Glory Bee; Pigeon Mount Trading Co.; A.I. Root – Bee Culture; Drapers; Beeline Apiaries; B&B Honey Farm; Blue Sky; Brustly Mt. Bee Farm; Cowen; Dadant; American Bee Journal; Mother Load Products; Rossman Apiaries