

# The Bee Line



Newsletter of the Maine State Beekeepers Association | [mainebeekeepers.org](http://mainebeekeepers.org)

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## Ag Day at the Legislature

The MSBA was well-received at this year's March 22nd gathering with its first-ever banner displays, informative hand-outs and ever-popular honey sticks. Suzanne Brewer, Kevin Fabian and Erin MacGregor-Forbes were on hand to inform state legislators and staffers about our organization and the plight of our State Insect, the Honey Bee.



## Let Your Voice Be Heard

All around the country people are increasingly recognizing the importance of Honey Bees and other pollinators. The Maine State Beekeepers association is doing its part to promote our State insect and responsible beekeeping.

The MSBA is following in the footsteps of West Virginia and promoting a bill in our State Legislature which will encourage responsible beekeeping in Maine: LD1184, An Act to Limit Liability of Apiary Owners and Operators.

In a nutshell, this bill indemnifies beekeepers from ordinary liability with respect to their bees if 1) the beekeeper is currently registered with the Department of Agriculture and 2) the beekeeper is following Best Management Practices for beekeeping.

The Maine State Beekeepers Association established the Best Management Practices document in 2006 and it can be found on the MSBA website, [mainebeekeepers.org](http://mainebeekeepers.org).

We would like to encourage you to contact your State Legislators and ask them to support this bill. Please also ask your friends and coworkers, and other friends of the Honey Bee to contact their Legislators as well.

All around the country bees are threatened through lack of habitat, poor nutrition, increasing exclusion of beekeeping in urban and suburban areas. Let's make sure that Maine remains a place where Beekeeping is encouraged and promoted, and where pollinators are respected and understood as the key component to our environment that they are. Please voice your support for LD1184 (assuming it's still alive at this newsletter's publishing).

Thank you,  
Erin MacGregor-Forbes

**LD1184 information:** [maine.gov/legis](http://maine.gov/legis)  
**Draft letter:** [mainebeekeepers.org](http://mainebeekeepers.org)

## Attention Beekeepers in Androscoggin County!

A new chapter of beekeepers is being formed in the Androscoggin County area. All are welcome, new or experienced beekeepers.

This will be an informal group for the purpose of exchanging information, helping one another, and generating enthusiasm for the art and science of beekeeping.



### First meeting

Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 7:30PM  
West Auburn Congregational Church, in the Vestry  
811 West Auburn Road,  
Auburn

For more information, contact Charles Armstrong  
charmstrong1@roadrunner.com  
784-9757

## MSBA Board

Upcoming Board Meetings: Apr 21 & May 19 (7-9PM)\*

### Executive Committee

**President**  
Erin Forbes, 838-4046  
president@mainebeekeepers.org

**Vice President**  
Larry Peiffer, 642-1089  
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**Secretary**  
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**Treasurer**  
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Anthony.M.Jadczyk@maine.gov

Hank Nicolaus,  
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563-2555  
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Lincoln Sennett,  
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### At-Large Members

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**MSBA Librarian**  
Carole Armatiss, 368-4419

\*Open to all MSBA members; generally held the 3rd Thursday of each month, at the Maine Farm Bureau, 4 Gabriel Drive, Augusta.

## MSBA Chapters

**Androscoggin Beekeepers**  
Charles Armstrong, 784-9757,  
charmstrong1@roadrunner.com

**Borderline Beekeepers**  
Ed Wilkey, 925-3203,  
edwardwilkey@yahoo.com

**Cumberland County Beekeepers**  
Ed Lewis, mittenhed@msn.com

**Down East Beekeepers**  
Barb & Jim Reed, 244-3684,  
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**Kennebec County Beekeepers**  
Roy Cronkhite, 897-4043,  
roycronk@roadrunner.com

**Knox-Lincoln County Beekeepers**  
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or Cheryl Rudy, 785-3055,  
final-lee@roadrunner.com

**Penquis Beekeepers**  
Tish Dutton, 997-3546, tishdutton@yahoo.com

**Sagadahoc County Beekeepers**  
Bob Budden, 725-8527,  
or Sonia Woodrum, 375-8839,  
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**Somerset County Beekeepers**  
Samantha Burns, 696-4906,  
sam7anthaburns@gmail.com

**Tri-County Beekeepers**  
Jon Cullen, johndandkaren@pivot.net  
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**Western Maine Beekeepers**  
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**York County Beekeepers**  
Ray Salmon, President, 699-8616,  
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642-1089, lpeiffer@sad6.k12.me.us

## Call for Content & Advertisers!

The Bee Line requests and welcomes member contributions! Please contact the Editor with your comments, photos, calendar events and articles to be considered for inclusion.

**ALL CONTENT IS DUE 15 DAYS PRIOR TO THE PUBLISHING DATE.**

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## SARE Grant Colony Update, 4/5/11

by Erin MacGregor-Forbes, Master Beekeeper

Spring is fast approaching; some southern Maine beekeepers are reporting silver maple bloom and pussy willow pollen. I generally gauge my incoming forage by the activities of the observation hive that I keep in the house and so far they are not dancing forage locations. But I am waiting.

I checked the Westbrook SARE yard on 3/12/11 and found our first significant losses. Five colonies had died. This was discouraging, as my last check on 2/5/11 showed all colonies alive, but I recognize that winter losses often come late in the winter and into the early spring—and it is best not to count losses until the bees have reliable incoming food which is still several weeks away.

It was a good workout carrying the five colonies worth of equipment down the hill to my truck through 10-plus inches of snow, but I didn't want what honey was left to be robbed by the other colonies. Snowshoes come in very handy for checking bees in the winter, but add an extra-awkward dimension when carrying out equipment. I ended

up just slogging up and down the hill in my boots, and by the time I was done I'd mashed down a pretty good path. I am sure the honey and drawn comb will come in very handy for increase colonies or swarms this year, so I brought it home and will protect the combs from damage until they can be put to good use later in the spring.

The good news is that the rest of the colonies in the SARE yard looked very good. The day I inspected, the temperature was approximately 45°F so I did not keep the colonies open for long, but in the case of the live colonies, I did reorganize honey to move it closer to the bee cluster where necessary.

As we do every time we inspect the SARE colonies, I used our “hive inspection sheet” to keep notes on each colony, including my notes on the dead colonies and what appeared to be the cause. The inspection sheet is based on a standard commercial inspection sheet, but with a few modifications to make it easier to use and more relevant to our project. A PDF of the sheet (shown ½-size at right) can be downloaded from the MSBA website at [mainebeekeepers.org/pdf/overland-hive-inspection-sheet.pdf](http://mainebeekeepers.org/pdf/overland-hive-inspection-sheet.pdf). I encourage you to print it and use it in your own apiary.

We will do our final inspections of the SARE colonies at the end of April or beginning

of May, depending on the weather. Then we will finish compiling the data and I'll write the final report and create a presentation explaining our project and the results. I will present the results at the EAS conference in Warwick, RI on Friday, July 29th at 1:30PM. I am very excited and honored to be on the program at EAS. I hope to see a big turnout of beekeepers from Maine and New England, as EAS is really the best beekeeping educational opportunity available in the US, and we are very lucky to have it so close to Maine this year.

Outreach is a big part of any Sustainable Agriculture program, and a major focus of the SARE project. As part of my outreach, on March 8, I had the honor of speaking at the Prince William Regional Beekeepers Association monthly meeting in Manassas, VA. The Prince William beekeepers also have a SARE Grant working with nucs and packages with their new beekeepers. They invited me to talk about my SARE project and also about small-scale backyard queen rearing.

The trip was fantastic and the group was really amazing. Nearly 100 beekeepers turned out for the Tuesday night meeting. I flew-in a few hours early and had a chance to do some hive inspections with my host, Karla Eisen prior to going out for dinner with several of the beekeepers. (The weather



Snowshoes come in very handy for checking bees in the winter.



was in the low 50s and some spring bulbs and Maples were blooming). After dinner I gave my talk. It was a great opportunity for me to get out and present the reasoning behind my SARE project and to cover some of the fundamentals of the project. Putting the presentation together for Prince William created good basis for the beginning of my full presentation.

I always value getting together with other beekeepers. There were a few people in attendance that I knew from EAS and other national meetings, but for the most part I met a whole lot of new people. The Prince William group is very active and enthusiastic, with many workshops at the intermediate as well as the beginner level. I came home with some neat ideas which I hope to bring to MSBA and the Cumberland Club, and I expect we'll hear from some of the Virginia



The Prince William meeting was full of enthusiastic beekeepers, including my host, Karla Eisen (left), and Keith Fletcher (right).

beekeepers who spend vacation time in Maine in the summer.

I'm glad to be on the home stretch towards real spring; I saw the bees in the Westbrook

SARE yard carrying in pollen for the first time this year on 4/4/11. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for the remaining colonies and looking forward to another great year of beekeeping in Maine. 🐝

**Food Stores**      Honey/Nectar      Pollen  
 High (everywhere)          
 Average                  
 Low                       
 Near Brood              
 Moved/manipulated    

**Disease / Pests:**     No     Yes  
 Chalkbrood             Nosema/Dysentery  
 Varroa Mites Visible    Tracheal Mites  
 EFB                     AFB     Small Hive Beetle  
 Varroa Associated Virus (Circle)  
 Deformed Wing    Hairless Bee    Stunted  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Medications:** Added Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Remove Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Apiguard     Apilife Var     Fumagillin  
 Mite Away 2     Terramycin

**Varroa Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**  
 Screened Bottom Insert:  IN    OUT  
 Screened Bottom Board Check: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Powdered Sugar Roll Mite Drop: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Drone Brood Check: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Alcohol Wash Mite Drop: \_\_\_\_\_

**Spring Feeding / Build Up:**  
 Pollen Substitute    dry \_\_\_\_\_ patties  
 Sugar Syrup 1 : 1 ratio \_\_\_\_\_ qty

**Spring / Summer Honey Flow Preparation**  
 Added Supers: \_\_\_\_\_ (D) \_\_\_\_\_ (M) \_\_\_\_\_ (S)  
 Added Pollen Trap

**Honey Removal / Extraction**  
 # Supers Removed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pounds Honey for Extraction \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pounds Honey for Cut Comb \_\_\_\_\_

**Winter Preparation:**  
 Screened Bottom Insert:  IN    OUT  
 Homasole Insulation Added    Wrapped hive  
 Entrance Reducer / Mouse Guard

**YARD:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Hive ID:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Weather Condition Today:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Weather Condition Recently:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Who Worked Hive:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Who Taking Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Next Inspection Due:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hive Temperment**  
 Calm     Nervous     Aggressive  
 Time to Requeen

**Located Queen**     No     Yes  
 Marked?     No     Yes    Color \_\_\_\_\_  
 Replace Queen - Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Laying Pattern**  
 Beautiful - Solid and Uniform  
 Good - Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hygienic - Spotty due to Hygienic Behavior  
 Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mediocre - Intermittent or Random  
 Poor - Spotty  
 Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Eggs Present**     No     Yes  
 Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Population:**     Heavy     Good     Moderate     Low  
 Rotated Frames in Brood Chamber  
 Added Additional Hive Body  
 Split Hive (new hive #): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Swarming Imminent - needs monitoring  
 notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Excessive Drone Cells:**     No     Yes  
 Drone Population Estimate:  
 Low (30)     Average 30-100     High 100+  
**Queen Cells**     No     Yes  
 Along Frame Bottom # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Converted Worker Cell Frame # \_\_\_\_\_

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## Bee Pride Grand Opening

by Margaret McLaughlin

The sunny weather and early willow blossoms may have drawn a few hardy forager bees outside on the first day of spring, Sunday, March 20th, but it was the grand opening of the new Bee Pride beekeeping supply store in Lebanon, Maine that attracted a large swarm of winter-weary beekeepers. As the number of beekeepers in York County has grown steadily over the last few years, so too has the need for a local beekeeping supply shop. Peggy and Brian Pride stepped up to the task and over the last year began assembling the parts to create what is now Bee Pride. Housed at their 20-acre farm off of Route 202, the new 800-square-foot shop (with inventory storage space above) boasts a display space full of a wide range of items. From smokers to feeder pails, hive tools to veils, you'll find everything you need to outfit yourself and your bees.

The events of the day included demonstrations on woodenware assembly, honey tasting, and a raffle for a spiffy new 10-frame English-style copper top (Congratulations, Lois!). Two informative presentations by MSBA VP Larry Peiffer on how to install packages and nucs were given to a large cluster of new and experienced beekeepers. Peggy and Brian filled orders throughout the day and answered numerous questions, illustrating already that Bee Pride will become a valuable resource for beekeepers in southern Maine and New Hampshire.

Bee Pride offers woodenware by Maine's own Humble Abodes and is an authorized Brushy Mountain dealer. In addition to beekeeping equipment, you'll also find numerous books on beekeeping, several styles of protective hats and veils, Dadant candles, hand-crafted jewelry and hive products by Maine artisans, and of course, honey from local producers such as Lebanon's own Dick Broadbent.

Bee Pride will offer ongoing Saturday open hive demonstrations led by experienced beekeeper, Bill Vivian, of Alfred, Maine—a great opportunity if you are looking for a refresher, are a 'newbie' with lots of questions, or if you are just considering starting with bees and want to see what it's like behind the veil with thousands of bees buzzing at your fingertips. Plans are also in the works for more seasonally related classes such as how to build your own swarm trap, and make your own hive products (candles, lotions, etc.).

Take a trip to Lebanon this spring and check out York County's only beekeeping supply store. And while you're there, be sure to follow the honeybees to Peggy's beautiful gardens for ideas on bee-friendly plants. 🐝

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## Swarm Catching: A Fun [Club] Opportunity?

by Geoff MacLean, Beekeeper



We're now just a month away from the kickoff of our honey bee swarm season in Maine. With a little preparation, and the right

attitude, we can have fun rescuing some of Mother Nature's most healthy, robust colonies. Without our help, they are probably in for a short lifespan as a feral colony in a small tree, your neighbor's attic, or even worse, stuck out in the open come late fall.

Last year, my phone started ringing on May 1st and by the end of May we had picked up, scooped up, gently placed and/or marched single-file to a new home, seven strong honey bee colonies. A typical number of swarms that just got started two to three weeks early because of an early spring. As a good rule of thumb, be ready when the dandelions pop.

They were clustered together on a tree trunk, in a pile of leaves on the ground along a side street, snuggled on a "for rent" sign, or hanging out in the open on a small branch. Sometimes at eye level (the way we like 'em), sometimes 40 feet up in a tree (handy to have a brick tied to a length of strong twine), sometimes in a bait hive/swarm trap (like we all should have in our bee yards).

You look so talented to the onlookers when the bees just march right into their new home! Swarm catching is a great opportunity to have a positive impact on the public's perception of the beekeeping community.

We get to chat with people about the enormous benefit bees provide and show them that the bees can be handled in a safe, calm, and respectful manner.

What can we do to help the colony find a new home? Put together a few items in a 10-gallon-ish-sized plastic tub (with a large window-screened opening taped into the lid) and be ready to go on very short notice:

- small pruning clippers
- small pruning saw
- long handled clippers
- a bed sheet or tarp to lay out so the bees don't get lost in the grass
- a spray bottle with water to keep them cool and clustered
- any small paper or plastic container to gently scoop bees with if necessary
- a frame of foundation or drawn comb
- a smoker
- a hive tool

Every swarm will present you with a different opportunity to be creative as you consider how to best get them into the (temporary) tub or directly into a single hive body for transport. Just stand back for a moment think about the easiest way to get the bees into a new home.

- I have placed a hive body on a sheet on the ground directly beside a swarm cluster and scooped a couple of big handfuls of bees into the hive body containing empty frames and just watched the rest of the colony march on through the entrance into their new home.

- I have put a frame of drawn comb into a five-gallon bucket, duct-taped it to a long pole and raised it up under the swarm, jostled the branch so the bees dropped into the bucket, lowered the pole, covered the bucket with a screened lid and carried them to their new hive body.

- I have cut the branch and laid it and the cluster down into a transport tub/bucket/cardboard box/hive body. Given it a shake or two to get the bees off the branch, taken the branch away and closed the screened lid.

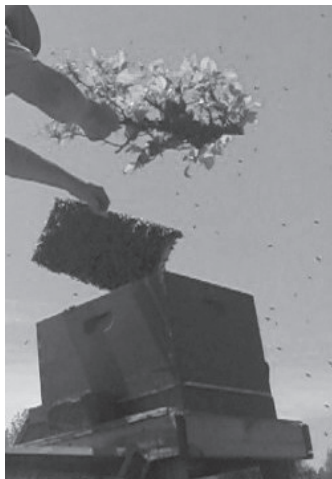
Now I know you must be thinking there is more to it than this brief description. Maybe if you saw it done, you would be much more comfortable with trying it yourself? Your local club could easily organize a swarm-chasers group that could match the experience of your fellow beeks with your interest!

These new colonies could repopulate your yard and/or go to your club's new "teaching yard." What a great opportunity for your club to provide hands-on experiences for the new beeks to work with more bee, and a mentoring opportunity for the experienced beeks to learn from teaching others! Let's get our clubs out of meeting rooms and into bee yards and have fun catching swarms! 🐝



A swarm on the ground will march into their new home with a little coaching.





Top to Bottom: Carefully trimming the swarm-occupied branch into a box; getting ready to shake the bees from the box; branch and bait comb moving into new home.

## YCBA Hive Census

by Richard McLaughlin, YCBA President

At our last club meeting in March, a writer from a local newspaper approached me with a few questions about our organization for an upcoming article. One of which was regarding how many hives are managed by our members in York County. Since the YCBA didn't have that number in its membership database, I thought it would be a good idea to poll the group and get an actual count from our beekeepers. The question went out to the YCBA Google Group, creating the 2011 YCBA Hive Census.

As many of our beekeepers began responding, some also included reasons for their winter losses. The winter kills were reported as being due to starvation, small clusters, varroa-related issues, and failed nuc overwintering attempts. Some beekeepers won't know for sure until they get into and inspect their hives this spring. Forty-eight percent of our 100+ membership has written in and reported a total of 216 hives going into winter, with 52 hives lost, resulting in 167 hives coming out of the winter. We are happy to report that a handful of the hives coming out of the winter *are* successfully overwintered nucleus colonies!

Our members keep an average of 3.7 hives, with a maximum of 24 and a minimum of 1, though the YCBA indeed has some new members without hives yet, who are planning their first ones for this year or next.

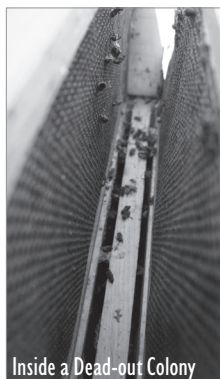
Many members have plans to replace or augment their apiaries with packages, nucs, or splits. Add to that a healthy crop of new beekeepers planning to start their very first hives, and we can anticipate 79 new hives to be set-up in York County this spring. This is a 12.3% increase over the number of hives last fall. You might be wondering how these new hives will be set-up. Of the 79 new hives, 49% will be packages, 27% will be nucs, and the remaining 24% are hopeful splits. With spring in the air and hopes high for the new season, the number of hives managed in York County by the YCBA membership could become 246.

Mother Nature was tough on our bees last fall, and although winter kills hover around 24%, all of our beekeepers remain excited for spring and optimistic about another season of beekeeping. A special thank you goes out to all our YCBA members who responded to the census, especially those who travelled long distances to check on their York County hives, and especially Joanne who braved the snow on her crutches!

YCBA 2011 Census Summary		
Percent of Membership Reporting		48%
Hives Going Into the Winter	219	
Hives Coming Out of the Winter	167	
Hives Lost Over the Winter	52	
Hive Loss Rate		23.7%
New Hives Planned for This Year	79	
Number of Hives planned for this Year	246	
Hive Increase from Last Fall		12.3%

Any member who wasn't able to report prior to the deadline for this article, and would like to contribute, please email me directly at richardmcl@earthlink.net. I will continue collecting data throughout the spring and all year long. Thank you! 🐝

**Editor's Note:** *There are two surveys (winter losses and management) that ALL of us should participate in at [beeinformed.org](http://beeinformed.org) by April 18.*



### Nucs for Groups & Clubs

- 5-Frames, April, No old equipment!
- Resellers welcome — please call us for pricing

### Pollination Units

- You pick-up and deploy or we deploy

### Bulk Honey

- 5-gallon pails, wildflower, pallets & singles

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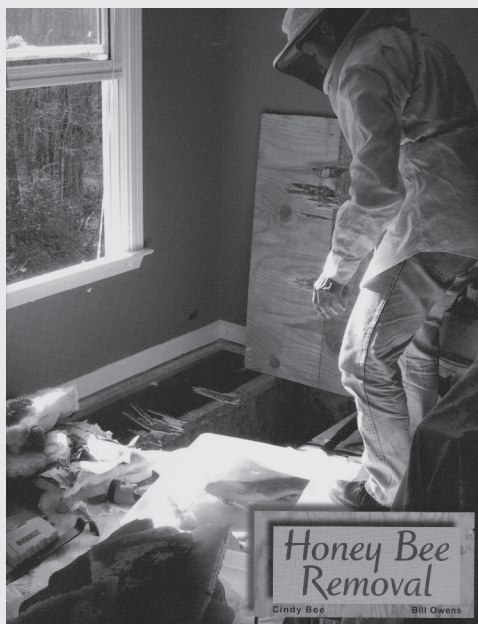
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- B O O K R E V I E W -

## Honey Bee Removal: A Step-by-Step Guide

by Cindy Bee and Bill Owens



### Review by Geoff MacLean, beekeeper

Last year, I safely removed honey bee colonies from five homes around Greater Portland, but sure wish I'd had the opportunity to read a great book on the subject first!

Let's take a look at what I believe is the first comprehensive guide to honey bee colony removals, written by Cindy Bee and Bill Owens, masters at the craft of honey bee colony removal: *Honey Bee Removal: A Step By Step Guide*, hot off the presses in January 2011.

You may remember Cindy Bee from her presentation at the (first) MSBA Annual meeting last spring in Augusta. She and Bill have done a masterful job of compiling all one needs to know about removing honey bee colonies in

a short but packed 79 pages of details, checklists and real-life experiences.

The rise of inexperienced suburban beekeepers, mother nature's eternal desire to have strong colonies swarm (possibly into a neighbor's house!) and the public's desire to preserve the honey bee have created the need for beekeepers to also become experienced in honey bee colony removals.

I read this book in an evening and came away with great insight into how I can improve my colony removal techniques. If you read this book, have any skill working with saws and tools, and have some real beekeeping experience, you are already on your way to becoming very capable of removing a honey bee colony safely.

The text walks you through *everything*—from effectively communicating with your customer to gathering all the tools and equipment you'll need (including how to make your own very effective bee vacuum). The text then moves into an overview of building construction so that you know what to expect behind siding and sheet-rock, or under the roof. Always nice to stay away from the wiring and plumbing!

There are also chapters on how to find the nest in the first place—the specifics of working from inside the structure, from outside the structure, and other special situations like columns, apartments and trees.

How about more detail on how to relocate the removed colony into your own equipment? What to do with the new hives? What to do with all your new wax and honey? What about

liability, litigation, and what to charge for your services? It's all here.

The great photos, lists, and years of real-life lessons shared are invaluable. The plans for Cindy's bee vacuum alone make this book a bargain.

If we are going to keep bees around our neighbors and Mother Nature is going to inspire them to swarm, we must become capable as a beekeeping community of removing them safely from structures in our neighborhoods. All this so that we may maintain the public's confidence that we are capable of safely managing bee colonies and the swarms they throw off.

I not only strongly recommend reading this book yourself, but also welcome your referrals for honey bee colony removals.

*Geoff can be contacted through [redbrookhoney.com](http://redbrookhoney.com)*

*Editor's Note: Honey Bee Removal will be available on the web soon ([beeculture.com/store](http://beeculture.com/store)). Until then, you can purchase the book by mailing a check for \$19.95 to:*

*Dawn Feagan  
Bee Culture  
A. I. Root  
PO Box 706  
Medina, Ohio 44258  
[Questions? Call 800.289.7668, x3220]*

*Include a note to Dawn indicating the name of the book, as well as your mailing address.*



## Catch Swarms Before They Find a Home in a Wall

Photos from some of Geoff MacLean's recent Honey Bee removal projects.



A bee vacuum can be made or purchased; it is very effective, and surprisingly easy on the bees when used correctly.



A fireplace bump-out on a Saco home, prepared for the cutout of the colony (approximately 3'x5').



Two packages of bees from the bee vacuum, ready for transport.



Taking care with cutting-out, storing, and handling the comb is a must to make it available for reuniting with the cut-out colony in your own equipment back home.



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## A Swiss Bee House: Inside and Out

Photos by Jim Blanchard from his 2009 trip to Cornol, Switzerland, where he happened upon Aheniry Amseutz...

Swiss beekeepers' hives are kept inside a trailer or house—sometimes simple, sometimes rather elaborate.

The bee entrances, all on one side of the structure, are typically painted different bright colors for easier bee recognition.

“Lighting up the smoker” takes on a whole new meaning—the Swiss smoker is a small mouth-held object into which a cigar is inserted—Aheniry simply lights and puffs the cigar to create the smoke.

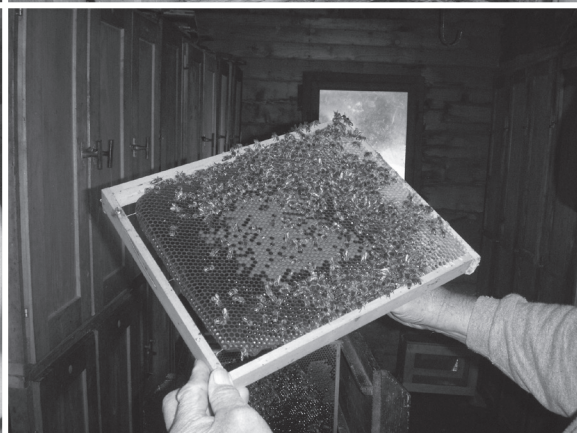
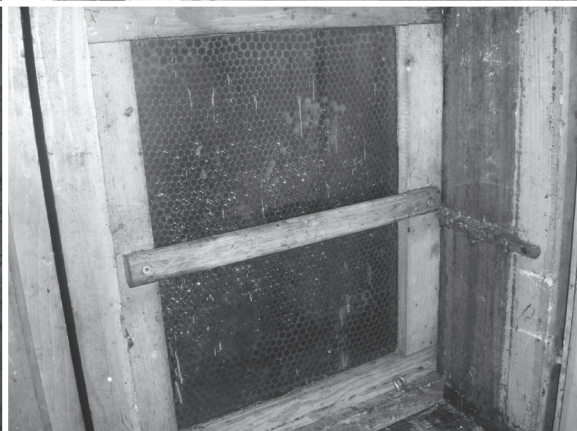
The bee house provides protected access to all of the keepers' tools, as well as convenient frame storage.

The bee boxes are tall and narrow, each accessible from the inside by its own door. The bees are cozied-up for colder months with insulating blankets wrapped around the vacant areas in these file-cabinet-styled hive enclosures.

Often the Swiss bee house, like Aheniry's, is a product of the beekeeper's own hands. The frames are released for inspection by an end frame which otherwise keeps them all snuggled up together.

The beekeeper, with smoker and tools, selects a hive, and inspects a single frame at a time. (Note the fancy metal debris catcher fitted to the bottom edge of the opened bee box.) Choosing a prime bee-foraging day when most of the field force is out is very helpful!

The bees are cozied-up for colder months with insulating blankets wrapped around the vacant areas in the file-cabinet-styled hive enclosures.





**Greetings from Florida! Following is what I have been observing or have seen the past few months:**

Spring has really sprung down here—the red maple bloom is all over and now the oaks are in full bloom, producing pollen like mad. By the time you read this it will be spring and I will be back in Maine by April 15th to check on my bees and all my winter losses, like others I have talked to. What a tough winter you folks have had.

There are lots of wild flowers in bloom down here, with the citrus bloom going strong. The bloom period for grapefruit and oranges lasts for nearly three weeks and the nectar flow is tremendous. In talking with Dennis Sasser-ville and John Cotter (both Maine migratory beekeepers), the citrus nectar flow is so heavy and rich that when they move their trucks through the groves, the stake-bodies are all sticky with nectar. The yellow mustard is in bloom, as well as some small fruit trees such as pears and peaches. Strawberry varieties have been producing since last December, but will be all over in early April. It is amazing what these fruit growers do to survive the frost periods. They use a lot of water for spray irrigation to protect the plants and fruit from frost damage.

I attended the Florida State Fair, which is always a great event, lasting 12 days in late January. I enjoy attending the agricultural displays and various booths exhibiting Florida products. The Florida Department of Agriculture has a building of its own for various crop displays, and the honeybee display is no exception. The Florida State Beekeepers Association has a booth with observation hives, along with the Department and the University of Florida research work on honeybees and other insects. The

## THE SNOWBIRD BEEKEEPER: Reflections from Florida by Matt Scott

observation hives are very good, plus the African small hive beetle display and what a mess that insect makes of come and honey.

The Florida State beekeepers exhibit is where I met Laurence Cutts, the recent retired State Apiary Inspector. He is a friend of Tony Jadcak and they have had a number of personal and professional communications over the years concerning the movement of bees between Florida and Maine. Larry and I had a great conversation on a number of issues concerning honeybees and the future. He gave me several publications of which I am utilizing for this article. Larry says the greatest problems they have in Florida are still American Foulbrood, Varroa mites, small hive beetles, and yes, Africanized honeybees. He says the best defense against the Africanized hives is well-managed European hives. Mr. Cutts supervised 13 full-time inspectors during his 38 years of service to Florida. He says there is significant impact from out-of-state pollination services; a portion of the hives are not returning, and those that do return have had Africanized bee intrusion, requiring requeening with European queens or hive destruction.\* All of their publications are printed in English and Spanish to further education and awareness. He feels that the only solution, if you want to call it that, lies in raising public awareness and providing education about the value of honey bees to Florida agriculture. It is an important part of the Department's mission. The Department will continue to protect the apiary industry and combat current and future threats through education, research, regulations, and best management practices because of the significant economic and agricultural contribution honey bees provide to Florida. Otherwise, he says, we may have to import our pollination in the future.

Much of my discussion with Laurence Cutts was with regard to Africanized honey bees. We talked about the European x African

cross and how aggressive that hybrid Africanized bee is. Since its movement from South America to Texas in 1990, the problem has simply escalated. They have established a "Bee aware of your environment" policy to look, listen and run—especially in Florida where there is lots of development every year. New homes provide more and more potential nesting sites for absconding Africanized honey bees. They seek out nesting sites such as storage sheds, wood piles, flower pots, bird houses, empty containers, cinder blocks, air conditioners, mailboxes, culverts, meter boxes, barbecue grills, rain gutters, chimneys and roof vents. Just about anything around the home you can imagine. As a result, the apiary inspectors are very busy. The more development, the greater the problem to control the aggressive Africanized honey bees becomes.

The next item of interest is the University of Southern Florida in Tampa, only 15 miles from my home, where a beekeeping course of four weeks was offered and my last class was March 19th. I also am going to the University of Florida, Gainesville to visit with some folks. I hope to see Tom Sanford. That's about it for now, so hope to see some of you at some up-coming lectures. Tony, Laurence Cutts sends his best regards from Florida. I know that at one time, you were a possible candidate for his vacated position.

So, I look forward to my return home in a few weeks. Hope all of your bees survived the relentless Maine winter. 🍄

\*Addendum: European hives are weakened by the African strain by genetic contamination, and further weakening them to CCD syndrome. So the returning hives are sometimes a total loss to the beekeeper. Also, Africanized bees tend to swarm a great deal by absconding—this also weakens a hive. There is no single cause, but instead, a combination of all the above.

## MSBA SWAG FOR SALE



**MSBA T-shirts**, Fall 2010 Edition: bright green, 100% cotton, with logo on front and "BEEKEEPER" on back. Sizes: M – XXL

**MSBA Stickers** for vehicle/home windows.

**MSBA Hats:** with old logo (supply limited), or new logo. One size, with adjustable strap.

**Online Store:** [mainebeekeepers.org](http://mainebeekeepers.org)  
[No internet? Call Tish Dutson: 997-3546]



## UPCOMING MEETING SPEAKERS & OPEN HIVES

Please check [mainebeekeepers.org](http://mainebeekeepers.org) Calendar and Chapter pages for all of the most up-to-the-minute information.

### Cumberland Beekeepers

May 3 Big and Little Pests and Diseases: Matt Scott, retired State of Maine Aquatic Biologist and re-founder of the MSBA.

May 15 Open Hive Geoff Maclean's, Scarborough

Jun 11 Open Hive  
or 12 Liz Moran's, Gray

### Knox Lincoln Beekeepers

Apr 23 Open Hive  
or 30 Eileen Murray's, Rockland

May 21 Open Hive & E-O-Y Meeting/ Annual Auction/ Pot Luck  
Dick & Amy Royer & Zabby's Farm, Waldoboro

### Sagadahoc Beekeepers

May 11 Maine State Bee Inspector, Tony Jadczyk

### York Beekeepers

Apr 11 Larry Peiffer: Swarming, Swarm Control, Nucs, Splits/Divides

May 9 Marc Plaisted: Rendering Wax & Making Candles

## WORKSHOPS

### Swarming and Swarm Traps, Cumberland County Beekeepers Association

Presenter: Master Beekeeper  
Erin MacGregor-Forbes

Tue, Apr 26, 7 – 9PM

Multi-purpose Room, Mabel Wilson School, 353 Tuttle Road, Cumberland Ctr

Fee: \$45 per person/couple (space limited)

FMI: Erin, 838-4046  
or [queenbee@overlandhoney.com](mailto:queenbee@overlandhoney.com)

Register online via the Cumberland County Chapter, or contact Erin.

Lecture-style workshop describing the swarming impulses (reproductive, overcrowding, "suicide") and how to manage them. Focus will be on swarm prevention and management, discussion of catching/hiving swarms, and use/creation of swarm traps. Each person/couple will leave with one swarm trap ready to use in their own apiary.

### How to Make Summer Nucs, Cumberland County Beekeepers Association

Presenter: Master Beekeeper  
Erin MacGregor-Forbes

Thu, Jun 16, 1 – 4PM

163 Highland Cliff Road, Windham

Limited to 20 people (two-plus years of beekeeping experience recommended)

Fee: \$120 (includes 2 queens and 1 divided hive body to contain the nucs)

FMI: Erin, 838-4046  
or [queenbee@overlandhoney.com](mailto:queenbee@overlandhoney.com)

Register online at [www.overlandhoney.com](http://www.overlandhoney.com) via PayPal, or contact Erin for registration form.

A hands-on workshop utilizing the CCBA's club hives to make four summer nucs for the purpose of wintering-over for use the following year. (Two nucs per each full-sized colony.) Northern-raised queens from Michael Palmer of French Hill Apiaries will be utilized to head the newly made colonies. Participants will learn the fundamentals of making their own summer nucs as well as receive instruction on preparing the new colonies for wintering.

Each participant will leave the workshop with two queens and one divided hive body so they can make up their own nucs in their home apiary. This requires at least one strong, healthy queenright colony in the beekeeper's own yard.

Purpose: to educate our membership in methods of sustainable apiary management, as facilitated by wintering nucleus colonies. The goal of making summer nucs is to provide a strategy for New England beekeepers to obtain locally raised increase/replacement colonies in the early spring. Due to climactic conditions, it is feasible to raise and mate Northern queens in the early spring in New England. It is for this reason that we raise our queens spring and summer of the previous year and support them with small (nucleus) colony through the winter. The following spring overwintered nucleus colonies are used by beekeepers to replace deadout colonies, to increase colony numbers, or to provide the beekeeper a benefit by offering these nucleus colonies for sale.



**OBITUARIES: THIS WINTER WAS HARD ON BEEKEEPERS, TOO**



**David A. Penney, 1955 — 2011**

*Bangor Daily News* | David Allen Penney, 56, died peacefully March 13, 2011, with his family by his side at his home. He was born Jan. 21, 1955, in Hartland, a son of Richard and Carolyn (Dunphy) Penney. He graduated from Skowhegan High School, Class of 1974.

He enjoyed the outdoors, fishing, hunting and working with his honeybees. David was a self-employed woodsman, and also worked at Irving Tannery and Snowman's Oil and Soil. ...

A memorial service was held March 19, 2011. Spring burial will be at Pittsfield Village Cemetery. Those who wish may leave written condolences at [CrosbyNeal.com](http://CrosbyNeal.com).



**Robert A. Budden, 1930 — 2011**

*The Times Record* | Robert A. Budden, 80, of the Meadow Rd. died unexpectedly on Thursday, February 17, 2011 at a local hospital. He was born in Greenville on May 15, 1930 the son of Paul and Mary Budden.

Bob proudly served his country in the United States Navy during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts retiring in 1970. He also worked at Bath Iron Works for over 20 years retiring in 1990.

Bob was a former member of the Topsham Fire Department and an EMT with Topsham Rescue.

He enjoyed spoiling his wife of 59 years Elizabeth, making jewelry for the various locations that he patronized, panning for gold, gardening, fishing, antiques and canoeing. ... A burial will take place at Maine Veterans Cemetery at a later date.

Bob was an awesome father and grandfather "He was loved by everyone who met him"

In Bob's memory donations may be made to the Coastal Humane Society, 30 Range Rd., Brunswick, ME 04011 or Mid Coast Hospital, 123 Medical Center Dr., Brunswick, ME 04011.

**APRIL HIVE MANAGEMENT**

Monitor food reserves. | Feed medicated (Fumagilin-B) light syrup (1:1) to hives low on stores. Scrape bottom boards and check the brood pattern on a mild day. | Install package bees April 15th or later and feed light syrup medicated with Fumagillin. | Apply mite treatments to wintered colonies if Varroa are detected (mid-late April) in the drone brood. | If you medicate hives with Terramycin, dust according to label instructions. | Make plans for attending EAS this summer in Rhode Island (see above listing!). | Continue feeding nucs and package bees until they have drawn out the comb in their brood chambers.

**UPCOMING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**EAS 2011 Conference and Short Course**

Jul 25 – 29

Crowne Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, Warwick, Rhode Island

The EAS Conference will be held in Rhode Island in 2011. Make plans now to spend the week of July 25 through 29 in Warwick at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Conference Center. Warwick is an easy 3½-hour drive from Portland and the beekeepers of Rhode Island have planned a great week. The short course—with both novice and advanced levels—will take place on Monday and Tuesday. The Conference begins on Wednesday and in addition to lots of interesting speakers offers workshops on Thursday and Friday. There are plans for a barbeque and a clambake during the week and of course the traditional banquet on Friday. We toured the facility in October and it is really nice. Rooms are available at a discounted rate (ask for the EAS rate—group code BEE) and there are even camping spots on the grounds if you have a self-contained unit (no hook ups).

[www.easternapiculture.org](http://www.easternapiculture.org)

**The Business of Queen Raising**

Apr 15 & 16: Ohio State, South Center, Piketon, Ohio

**OR**

May 20 & 21: OARDC, Wooster, Ohio

Course Designed by Dr. James Tew & Ohio State Beekeepers Association. Agenda includes Business Structures, Planning, Finances; Queen Biology, Trait Selection, Methods of Producing Queens, Setting up Mating Nucs, and Processing Queens for Sale.

Pre-Payment & Registration Required: \$75 (Seating Limited)

FMI: 330-339-9317 or [Beverly.Fisher@rcdnet.net](mailto:Beverly.Fisher@rcdnet.net)



**CLASSIFIEDS**

**Bees Needed for Pollination**

Blueberry grower seeking to rent hives for crop pollination in Wolfeboro, NH. Corey Eastman: H 603-569-2742 c 603-817-2416

**Equipment for Sale**

Hobbyist beekeeper selling all equipment [inspected by Tony on Apr 12: "excellent"]. Stephanie Berry: 207-926-4929



Maine State Beekeepers Association

THE BEE LINE Newsletter of the MSBA

Lori Harley, Editor
111 Alba Street
Portland, Maine 04103-1701
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Form fields for LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE INITIAL, STREET, CITY/TOWN, STATE, ZIP, PHONE, CELL, EMAIL.

Membership Type\*

- Annual Individual, 2011 \$ 15.00
Annual Family, 2011 \$ 22.50
5-Year Individual, 2011-15 \$ 68.00
5-Year Family, 2011-15 \$ 100.00
Lifetime Individual \$ 180.00
Lifetime Family \$ 270.00
Extra Gift Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cost

Table with 4 columns: Current Age, # of Years Beekeeping, Most # of Hives, Current # of Hives.

PRIVACY POLICY: Member information will be provided to other MSBA Members unless specified otherwise here: [ ] No, please do not share my contact information with other MSBA Members.

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HONEYBEES NEED YOU!

This is a [ ] new / [ ] renewing membership (check one). How did you find out about the MSBA? \_\_\_\_\_