



# Catskill Mountain Beekeepers Club

bees@catskillbees.org

www.catskillbees.org

264 Albert Slater Road, Prattsville, NY 12468

---

## A Message From The President

After a long cold spell the wintery weather has let up and now we are in the midst of a January thaw. Just what the doctor ordered. I have already lost several of my weaker hives. The warm November weather was their downfall. They were all out flying around when they should have been inside in a cluster. They were flying, eating honey and not bringing in anything to help get them through the winter. I fed them as much as I could but sugar syrup is no substitute for honey. And a weak hive is a weak hive no matter what you try to do to save them. I tested all my hives at the beginning of the fall and they seemed to be heavy enough but they lightened up considerably during the next month and a half. I plan to do lots of splits in April so I will propagate the survivors and hopefully come up with a stronger strain of bees. Good record keeping is essential in order to keep track of which new hives are splits from which the over-wintered ones. Every time you open a hive make note of condition, strength, brood pattern, temperament, and other characteristics each hive presents. Record keeping is not the most exciting part of beekeeping and often a bother but in the long run these notations can be invaluable.



At last month's meeting we had an unrehearsed panel discussion and question and answer period. I think it worked out to be a valuable exchange of information and helpful to novice members who sometimes don't get an opportunity to get questions answered when we have a more formal program scheduled. I will try this year to provide more time for questions and discussion. January was a good month to start.

### President (cont.)

We have begun with package orders. If you wish to order packages and haven't done so please contact Heidi. Her phone number is on the next page. Orders are done on a first-come-first-served basis. Members will be placed on the list before non-members.

*"Our treasure lies in the beehive of our knowledge. We are perpetually on the way thither, being by nature winged insects and honey gatherers of the mind."*

*Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900*

Check out our website. There are photos of the Christmas party and we have posted the schedule of programs for the coming year. The past year's newsletters are all on there. The Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Association spring seminar scheduled for March 27 is also posted. It is a worthwhile experience and it is nearby, at SUNY Albany. Refer to the site when you have any questions about what we are up to.

This is the time to pay your yearly dues. \$15.00 per family. Our next meeting is on February 9th. Hope to see you there.



---

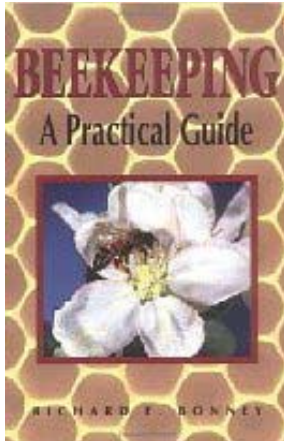
## **TO DO LIST FOR FEBRUARY**

- When any warm weather shows up, check out your hives. You can lift inner cover, or just knock on the front of the hive and see if you hear buzzing.
- If hive is dead this is a good time to take apart, clean out dead bees, clean up frames and store in mouse-proof place.
- Determine reason for loss. Sign of starvation is many bees with butts sticking out of cells. There may be honey in other parts of hive. Save to fortify other hives that might need it later
- You may want to sprinkle a bit of granulated sugar around the oval hole in inner cover for insurance. It is too early in the Catskills to start feeding syrup.
- Order new packages
- Work on a plan to keep better records than you did last year.
- Are you going to feed pollen patties? If so read up to see which ones are the best. In fact read up on everything, you never know enough.
- If snow is deep make sure bees have an open exit.
- Weigh down outer covers with bricks so they don't blow off in wind.

## From the Library... Christine O'Dell

Thank you to all who supported the Christmas dinner raffle to help raise money for more library books. We raised \$186.00 thanks to Kate Henderson's donation of her antique "ABC to Beekeeping" book. I have had many suggestions for new books - let me know if you have ideas.

Please check your shelves for overdue materials, there are many. Late notices were sent out to those of you who need reminding.



### Club Officers

President	Richard Ronconi	518-797-3922
Vice President	Helen Faraday Young	518-851-1361
Secretary	Heidi Ruelmann	518-299-3145
Treasurer	Doina Dewell	518-734-4965

### Board Members

Refreshments	Kate Henderson	518-239-6238
	Amanda Bodian	845-758-0044
Program Chair	John Sturman	518-989-6802
Events Chair	Group Effort	
Newsletter Editor	H. Faraday Young	518-851-1361
Librarian	Christine O'Dell	518-322-3084

### Website

<http://www.catskillbees.org/>

Our club's online discussion room is:

<http://catskillbees.wetpaint.com/thread>.

There is a direct link from the website too, in the News section.

If you would like to advertise hive related products on the website please send all information to Sally Lord.

518 239 8029 or  
[wedontrentpigs1@gmail.com](mailto:wedontrentpigs1@gmail.com)

## The Photographs

The photographs used in this months newsletter were taken by a French photographer Eric Tourneret. He has traveled the world researching indigenous people, learning about and documenting their beekeeping practices.

His website is spectacular  
[www.thehoneygatherers.com](http://www.thehoneygatherers.com)

Also an interview with him at  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD5-jBwznJk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD5-jBwznJk) site is spectacular.

*Instead of dirt and poison we  
have rather chosen to fill our hives  
with honey and wax: Thus furnishing  
mankind with the two noblest of  
things, which are sweetness and light.*

*Jonathan Swift 1667-1745*

## HoneybeeLives Late Winter Bee Candy

Feeding your honeybees can be critical at this time of year, as more fuel is needed to raise the brood chamber to 95 degrees for optimal brood rearing. Proper colony management should ensure adequate honey reserves are left on the hives for winter, however if there is a shortage, feed and then keep feeding until the spring nectar flow kicks in. The recipe below is for late winter emergency feeding. Bee Tea should not be fed at this time of year, as the bees cannot metabolize moisture during cold weather. Once brood rearing has been fully established by the bees' own rhythm within the hive, change the candy to one containing the pollen/protein that they will need to help feed the brood. Do not spur on brood rearing early as it threatens the sustainability of the hive.

Honey provides the bees the carbohydrates to generate warmth, and principally consists of glucose and fructose. When we use white cane sugar to feed our bees, we must transform the sucrose of sugar, which is a complex sugar, into the simple sugars glucose and fructose that can be more easily digested by bees. This is called invert sugar which can be accomplished by heating water and sugar to a point where it breaks down naturally. This process can be hastened with the additional of acerbic acid from vinegar or crushed vitamin C, but until further investigation I think it best to keep the transformation via heat only.

You need a Candy Thermometer or one that can tolerate 242 degrees (digital would be best). Have everything ready, and realize that this takes longer than you may think to make these, especially the first few times. Each batch has taken me 1 hour—start to finish. It's helpful if doing a large batch to have someone else around to share the time. It also helps to have someone to laugh with when you feel like you are in an episode of "I Love Lucy."

(Recipe is on the next page)

## Recipe

Mix together in a heavy-bottomed, wide-mouth pot over medium heat:

- One part water (including seeped tea) to Four parts White Cane Sugar
- 4 cups water plus 1 cup tea (5 cups total liquid)
- 10 pounds of sugar (20 cups).  
(I make a separate quart jar of dandelion/chamomile/dried thyme tea to keep in fridge for use—strain before adding to recipe)
- Dash of salt

Bring to boil in uncovered pot, stirring frequently to help dissolve sugar and keep from sticking. (Please note that mixture swells quite a bit during the boiling period so best to have a large enough pot.) Once it boils, cover and allow a low boil for about 5 minutes. Then uncover, and stir until it the temp reaches 240 degrees (depends on altitude and humidity). (Note: I may recommend stopping it at 236 degrees instead for better fudginess. Any comments are appreciated)

Remove from heat and let cool to 200 degrees, add 1/2 tsp of Honey B Healthy\*. Once cooled enough beat with an electric blender until it turns a bit cloudy. (I tried using a whisk but I don't recommend this.) When temp reaches approx. 190 pour immediately into containers to form sugar cakes (use pie tins – jelly pans, etc) lined with wax paper to help removal and handling once cooled. When cool the consistency should be firm but not completely hard, kind of like fudge. They can be used as soon as cool, or stored in plastic bags. Peel off wax paper before using or storing. The sugar cakes will be harder and more brittle when cold, in the warmth of the hive they will become less hard. Best not to put cold cakes into hive.

On hive, place a shim between top Hive Body and the Inner Cover. Lay two small wooden pieces above frames within hive, and gently place the sugar cakes onto these so it can be accessed all the way around.

\* There is a concern about Honey B Healthy because of the sodium lauryl sulfate and other additives used. The following recipe, using food grade essential oils, is a similar concoction to be used as a feeding stimulant, and to help protect the bees' mid-gut.

Ingredients:

- 5 cups water,
- 2 1/2 pounds of sugar,
- 1/8 teaspoon lecithin granules (used as an emulsifier),
- 15 drops spearmint oil,
- 15 drops lemongrass oil.

Bring the water to a boil and integrate the sugar until dissolved. Once the sugar is dissolved remove the mixture from the heat and quickly add the lecithin and the essential oils. Stir until everything is evenly distributed. This solution should have a strong scent and not be left open around bees. Cool before using. We have recently heard of something called Apiforme, essential oils without bad additives, yet have no experience with it yet





Catskill Mountain Beekeepers Club  
264 Albert Slater Road  
Prattsville, NY 12468