Berkshire Backyard Beekeepers
Tuesday, February 12, 2019 - 6pm - Berkshire Botanical Garden

Group Hive Check-in: Open Q&A amongst beekeepers

Upcoming beekeeping workshops and events:
- ***Creating a Varroa Management Plan** - Hannah Whitehead, Honey Bee Extension Educator
  - Saturday, March 9, 10am-noon at Berkshire Botanical Garden
- **Honey Bees under the Microscope** - UMass Honey Bee Extension Center
  - Saturday, February 9, 10am-noon at UMass Amherst
- ***Utilizing Natural Queens and Making Nucs** with Jack Rath, Betterbee
  - Saturday, February 16, 10 am - noon at Berkshire Botanical Garden
- **Worcester County Beekeepers Association Conference**
  - Saturday, March 2, all day. Information at WorcesterCountyBeekeepers.com
- ***Beekeeping 101**: An Introduction to Beekeeping
  - Saturday, March 16, 9 am - 4 pm at Berkshire Botanical Garden

*Denotes a class held through Berkshire Botanical Garden. Register at berkshirebotanical.org/events. Contact the host organization for all other events.

Winter Feeding: Throughout the winter, you will need to check that your bees still have plenty of food and in a place they can get to it. If your bees are at the top of the top hive body then they are unlikely to have enough food until the first natural source comes out. A few notes on winter feeding:
- Only dry sources of food should be used. Adding liquids to the hive can result in your bees freezing. An extra box of capped honey frames can be added, either from stored frames or a dead hive, as long as you know those frames are free of diseases. Do not break the cluster to add more frames, though.
- Options for feed (in no particular order):
  - Winter Patties--Similar to pollen patties but with a lower protein content as to not stimulate brood rearing. Starting later this month or in March pollen patties (or pollen granules) can be used to encourage early brood rearing from the queen.
  - Dry sugar--Place a piece of newspaper on top of the frames and sprinkle on dry sugar.
  - Fondant--Many ways to make this, but here is one: https://honeybeesuite.com/how-to-make-fondant-from-table-sugar/
  - No-cook sugar patty (adopted from Ken Warchol)--mix enough water with table sugar into a consistency where you can form the sugar paste into a meatball. Press the sugar meatball flat on a piece of wax paper about a ¼ inch thick. Place this directly on the frames partially over the cluster. Optional, mix in some honey-b-healthy or other supplements.

All methods have their pros and cons, so experiment with various methods to see what works best for you and your bees.

Selected February beekeeping activities (same as January):
- Check your bees' food supply. If your beest are at the top of the hive, they are likely low on food or too far from remaining food to get it. Add supplemental feed such as winter patties, dry sugar, fondant or candy boards. Do not remove any frames or break the cluster.

- On warm days (near or above 50 degrees), look for bees flying around the hive on cleansing flights and to remove dead bees from the hive.
- Ensure mouse guards are still in place. With the drastic temperature changes, it is advised to leave bear fences on.
- Fix, clean and inventory equipment. Order new supplies as needed. If ordering bees, do so ASAP as some suppliers have already sold out.

Select Notable Nectar Sources in February: none

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 12 at 6pm

Bee Suppliers

- Betterbee (Greenwich, NY)
  - Package - late April/early May - $133
  - Nuc - Spring, mid-April to early May - $191
  - Nuc - Overwinter, mid-April to early May - $246
- Hudson Valley Bee Supply (Kingston, NY)
  - Package - early April - $137
  - Package - late April - $137
  - Spring Nuc - late April - $177
- Warm Colors Apiary (Deerfield, MA)
  - Package with Carniolan queen - late April/early May - $135
  - Nuc with Russian queen - late April/early May - $195
- Red Barn Honey Co. (Northampton, MA)
  - Package (Russian, Italian, or Carniolan queens) - late April/mid-May - $135
- New England Apiaries/Billy C's Raw Honey (Southwick, MA)
  - Packages and Nucs available and various spring dates - $115--$175