

# THE BEELINE

Official Newsletter of the Central Iowa Beekeepers Association



## ISSUE

### Fall 2020

Editor: Laura Miller

### UPCOMING VIRTUAL DISCUSSION INFO

**Saturday, September 19** (Tentative; time TBA)

**Topic:** Hive Inspections with Arvin Foell

Prior to the online discussion, you will have an opportunity to view a video of Arvin inspecting several hives. Then join us via Zoom for a Q&A with Arvin and other topics related to bee care.

An email or postcard will be sent shortly to verify the date and provide a web link to watch the video. We'll also provide instructions on how to join us via Zoom (you will need a laptop or tablet with an internet connection, or a smart phone).

**Questions?** Call Linn Wilbur, program chair:  
(515) 291-6204

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR THE  
NEXT NEWSLETTER: November 10, 2020**

**Email to:** Beeline\_editor@yahoo.com

**Mail Submissions to:**

Laura Miller  
5920 North Swing  
Ames, IA 50014

We encourage you to receive the newsletter via email; however, we understand if electronic delivery is not for you! You may make updates to your subscription, or add a subscription by sending a notification to:

Valerie Just  
[justiowahoney@gmail.com](mailto:justiowahoney@gmail.com)

Find us on the web:  
<https://centraliowabeekeepersassoc.org>

### FROM THE PRESIDENT, JAMIE BEYER

The year 2020 will be remembered for generations, especially in Iowa. The virus situation combined with the derecho storm that literally tore through Central and East Central Iowa is historic!! Anybody with a love of trees and nature (like us, of course) was devastated by the storm. Mature healthy trees that took generations to grow are now gone. That combined with the damage to structures and to our hives is simply overwhelming to a lot of us. That storm changed our timbered landscape for generations. Even cleaning up will take some time.

So, on a more positive note -- let's get on with keeping connected to each other as best we can with the virus situation. Linn Wilbur, our talented VP and Program Chair, has been busy with figuring out how to keep connected to our membership. He and his committee has come up with some unique ideas so please check out the programs they have come up with.

Many of you newer bees may never have known the late John Johnson. But he was one of the primary movers and shakers in Iowa's bee groups only 10 to 20 to 30 years ago. That includes CIBA!! He was our President for a number of years and did an outstanding job. Please read the obituary and remembrances of CIBA member Curt Bronnenburg (Spring Valley Honey Farms) related to John. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to John's memory and to his surviving wife, Elaine.

In speaking with Curt a couple weeks ago he mentioned that this is one of the best honey years he has had in more than 20 years. Now that is saying a lot. I, along with many of you, have had a great honey year as well. The increased amount of swarming also indicates bees are doing well. I am now up to 31 swarms that I have caught and those are just from around my own apiaries. In just one location I have caught 14 swarms, so far. So the hot dry weather combined with a mild winter and early spring must have been the ingredients of being a good year for bees.

Thanks for being a member.

Your President,

Jamie

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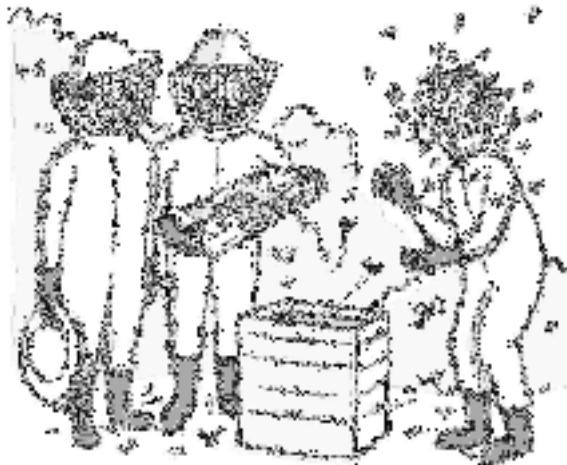
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### CIBA Leadership and State Organizations

### Editor's Document Navigation Tips

1. Table of Contents: Hover over any section of the Table of Contents, then hold the CTRL button down on your keyboard. This action will create a pointing finger image - press the left button on your mouse on any section of the Table of Contents to go directly to that section.
2. Document navigation: No matter where you are in this document, if you press the CTRL + Home buttons on your keyboard concurrently, the action will take you to the top of the Beeline. You can then scroll to page 2 to gain access to the Table of Contents to navigate the entire document using guidance in bullet number 1.



“Bee” kind to your bees by being supportive of local beekeepers. It’s the best thing you can do for them!

## CIBA Business

### September CIBA Program Goes Virtual

Submitted by CIBA Program Committee



With the continuing COVID-19 virus prevalence in central Iowa, CIBA will not have an in-person meeting in September. However, we still will meet this month, hopefully late afternoon on Saturday, September 19 via Zoom, an online meeting platform. The only thing you need to be able to join us is a smart phone, or a laptop or tablet with an Internet connection.

The topic is hive inspections. Prior to the September discussion, please watch a video of CIBA member Arvin Foell's recent inspection of several hives. Arvin is an Apiary Inspector for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. He's also a former CIBA president and long-time beekeeper. In the video, he explains what he looks for in every hive, and he provides many management tips and generally talks about bees and their care. One of the hives he inspects is a boomer, and the other was recently combined from two hives that did not do well this year, so you'll be able to see both the good and bad and what Arvin looks for.

Then on Saturday, September 19 (hopefully!), we'll conduct the Zoom discussion. We'll talk about the video and answer any questions you have on hive inspections and honeybee care. We are still editing the video and arranging for the Zoom meeting so the date/time for the discussion is tentative. All info on how to access the video and join the Zoom discussion will be sent via email or postcard shortly.

If you have any questions, or difficulty accessing the video, contact Linn Wilbur at (515) 291-6204.



## Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Val Just, CIBA Treasurer

I hope this finds our membership doing well and adjusted to our new state of normal with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, and our inability to personally engage and conduct meetings, our financial health has remained static.

I have provided further details on the business checking account and the honey queen account below, with balances as of July 31, 2020. As you can see, after our expenses for the winter seminar were paid, we have not had any further expenses; membership dues have been trickling in since the winter seminar.

Abigail Kelly provided final gas expenses at the winter seminar, and the organization presented Abigail with her scholarship also at the winter seminar. Congratulations to Abigail on her recent high school graduation!

Please let me know if you have any questions and I will be happy to assist. I can be reached at [justiowahoney@gmail.com](mailto:justiowahoney@gmail.com). Take care! I am wishing you all a healthy harvest!

ACCOUNT SUMMARY	
Account	Balance as of 7/31/20
Checking	\$8,796.75
Honey Queen Account	\$887.55
Savings	\$1,052.04
CD13	\$1,237.46
CD14	\$1,236.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,210.17</b>

CHECKING ACCOUNT DETAILS			
Trending	Sum of Debit	Sum of Credit	Balance
Deposit: Balance Transfer 2019		\$7,135.15	
Deposit: Membership Dues 2020		\$670.00	
Deposit: Refund		\$20.00	
Deposit: Winter Seminar		\$4,295.00	
Expense: Auction Seller Proceeds			
Expense: Quarterly Meeting Room Rental	\$20.00		
Expense: Seminar Food	\$1,232.64		
Expense: Seminar Rental	\$212.50		
Expense: Seminar Speaker	\$806.02		
Expense: Seminar Speaker Expenses	\$1,000.00		
Expense: Seminar Video Taping	\$52.24		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,323.40</b>	<b>\$12,120.15</b>	<b>\$8,796.75</b>

HONEY QUEEN DETAILS			
Description	Sum of Debit	Sum of Credit	Balance
Beginning Balance		\$1,156.57	
Expense: Honey Queen Mileage	\$19.02		
Expense: Queen Scholarship	\$250.00		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$269.02</b>	<b>\$1,156.57</b>	<b>\$887.55</b>

### Your Update Please!

Submitted by Val Just, CIBA Membership



Our CIBA Membership Directory is sent annually in June if you indicated on your membership form that we could share your information. The Board has determined that the directory only will be provided electronically via email.

If you did not receive an electronic version of the 2019-2020 CIBA Membership Directory (our most recent version), please contact Val Just at [JustIowaHoney@gmail.com](mailto:JustIowaHoney@gmail.com). Please review your individual information and if something is wrong, contact Valerie as soon as possible so we can assure that our records are accurate.



### Send Us Candidates!

Submitted by Susan Kelly, Queen Committee Chair

We are now accepting applications for the 2021 Central Iowa Honey Queen or Honey Ambassador! We are looking for a young person (age 16-20 as of January 2021) who has a passion for honey bees, honey, beekeeping and products of the hive. The Central Iowa Honey Queen/Ambassador will be the public face of CIBA and will promote honey bees, beekeeping, products of the hive, and the like around central Iowa.

We understand that this may be a unique opportunity in light of current COVID-19 issues, but we hope that someone is willing to step outside the box and be an active Queen/Ambassador during this interesting time.

Applications are due December 1. Interviews will be conducted the first weeks in January and the 2021 queen or ambassador will be announced at our January 2021 meeting. Go to the CIBA website, <https://centraliowabeekeepersassoc.org>, and go to the Honey Queen/Ambassador page to read our guidelines and download an application.

Mail applications to Susan Kelly, Queen Committee Chair; her email and address are on the application form. Send questions to: [CIBAQueenChair@gmail.com](mailto:CIBAQueenChair@gmail.com).

## Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship News

### News from our State Apiarist, Andy Joseph



Hello. Here's hoping we're all staying healthy and maintaining some sanity.

The bees have done well this summer in spite of the craziness all around them. I'm playing some catchup following a week spent at Mitigwa scout camp with Harlan, my son. Really appreciative for the time and happy simply that they held their programs given so much else being ground to a halt this summer.

It seems honey sales have been way up for nearly all of us. The ongoing farmers markets are well-attended and people are buying. It seems that sales are skewed to larger quantities as well. I hope this will continue as things return to "normal."

Many have been extracting this season's crop as I write. I'll be getting started on mine very soon. The main flow has definitely come to an end, and the bees are eating their way into the supers. Hopefully we'll get a good late-season flow of aster and goldenrod but be ready to feed regardless. Many hives have starved these last few years in late summer and early fall due to removal of the honey supers with very little stores remaining in the brood boxes. Don't allow that to happen!

I'm seeing a trend of people shifting to using only a single deep box for the brood nest. I believe a lot of this comes from the influence of YouTube. It seems to have worked well for some last winter. I certainly believe 10 deep frames can hold enough stores and volume to get a colony through a typical Iowa winter, but haven't had luck in the past with it unless the 10 frames were arranged vertically as stacked nuc boxes (2 combs and a feeder in the bottom, then 4 more combs in a second box, and 4 more combs above that).

When I've tried to winter single deeps in past years, it too often resulted in a starved dead cluster on one side with several frames full of honey stores inches away on the other side. Maybe there are some management nuances which make all the difference. Time will tell and I'm very interested to hear how it works out for you.

I've seen so many people's bees over the years that not too much is "surprising" anymore. But I came across something recently that was pretty offensive. I swung into a yard, lit the smoker, pulled supers off the first hive. I found a fresh shop towel mite treatment and thick line of antibiotics spread across the top brood box. Every other hive I opened had the same. I've never –

*Fast forward a week. While writing the above paragraph last Monday morning, the Derecho kicked up and my power stopped. I know some you have been dealing with damaged homes, buildings, vehicles and farms. After a week of long days – keeping a generator going, chainsawing limbs and branches, and fearfully checking bee yards, it's time to get back to "normal." Of course, some of you aren't even close to being through it...*

To pick back up where I'd left off – I've never seen this sort of misuse around the state, particularly with honey supers on. I tend to keep my head down and eyes on the road when checking hives. I look at pest and disease conditions. I check mite counts. I see trends of EFB or Sacbrood or mite crashes. But I don't get into trying to be a "meter maid" of rules regarding mite treatments or antibiotic use. I figure that's not in my job description, and it's between you and the feds (technically the EPA regarding off-label mite treatments, and the FDA regarding antimicrobials).

But to see these treatments fresh in use in direct contact with honey to be extracted for human consumption is pushing it. My hope is that everyone reading this is disgusted by it. Now I need to decide how to handle this in a way that doesn't cause bad press or unnecessary attention to our industry, and as a beekeeper, I resent it.

Enough ranting. Here's hoping you're all dug out following the storm. Here's hoping you've all had a great honey crop and have either got it extracted already (overachievers!) or are working on it now. Bees overall are looking big and strong, though mite numbers are creeping up. Let's get them in great shape for fall and winter!

## ISU Extension News



### A Word from Our Extension Bee Specialist, Randall Paul Cass

Although we have not been able to hold in-person presentations and demonstrations, the ISU Extension bee program has been very active this spring and summer. While most of us have been staying home, our bees have not – and they have had an exceptionally productive season.

This spring ISU unveiled a new apiary to produce ISU-branded honey. This project is funded by the office of the new Dean of the College of Agriculture. For its first year, 20 hives are being maintained by our team at the ISU Horticulture Research Station located north of Ames. The apiary also will serve as beekeeping demonstration site, a teaching space for future undergraduate beekeeping courses, and a space for collaborative beekeeping research.

For more details about the apiary and how it will be used, read the ISU news release:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6f64uzy>

In addition to harvesting honey, late summer is a time for mite-checks. With the help of the staff at the ISU Integrated Pest Management team, we produced some quick how-to videos on performing mite checks using three different approaches, and we produced some fun videos on splitting hives and requeening.

Watch the five videos here on the ISU Pollinator Working Group page (go to Beekeeping Extension Videos link under Resources): <https://www.ent.iastate.edu/pollinators/>

Finally, if you miss “talking shop” with other beekeepers, Dr. Judy Wu-Smart at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and I host a beekeeper “HapBee Hour” every Friday at 5 p.m. We usually give a short presentation on what we’ve been up to in our apiaries and answer questions for beekeepers across the Midwest. To get an email reminder and Zoom link to the chat, you can add your email address to our list serv by following this link:  
<https://tinyurl.com/yy9vxqtg>

For more photos of our work, check out the ISU bee program’s Instagram: @iowastatebees.

You can reach Randall at (515) 294-2507 or by email at [randall@iastate.edu](mailto:randall@iastate.edu)



*Randall Cass inspects progress made in ISU's new apiary at the Horticulture Research Station. ISU photo by Chris Gannon.*

## CIBA Member Contributions

### Tribute to a Good Beekeeper and More, John Johnson

Submitted by Curt Bronnenburg, CIBA Member

I write this as a personal recollection of a man I consider a friend, a mentor and a leader. He helped manage and guide two Iowa beekeeping organizations – Central Iowa Beekeepers Association and the Iowa Honey Producers Association – for a third of a century.

Soon after I joined the IHPA in the late 1980s I recognized John Johnson as a leader, not because I was any kind of expert, but because I saw the respect he received from other highly regarded members of the organization. I found myself drawn to him because he was simply a very good person. The fact that he was also a very good beekeeper surely added to my high regard for him. When John spoke, everyone (and especially me) listened, analyzed and then stepped up as the voice of reason.

John managed the state fair sales booth for many years and made the changes needed to make it the main revenue source for the organization. It was easy to recognize his dedication and attention to detail.

Persistence is another trait I recognize, as he encouraged others to be active and participate. He is absolutely the catalyst for me becoming active in the IHPA as a board member, vice president and president. It was his prodding, guidance and leadership that gave me the confidence to get going. I'm sure many others in the IHPA and CIBA have benefitted from his guidance.

John was very willing to step aside so new leadership could take over, but also stay in the background to advise. The beekeeping world was a better place because of you! Thank you, John Johnson.

### W. John Johnson, Jr., 1931-2020

Worley John Johnson, Jr., 89, of Ames died on Tuesday April 28 at Israel House Hospice in Ames.

Born April 13, 1931 in Marshall County, Iowa, he was the son of Worley and Mary (Hodson) Johnson Sr. He attended and graduated from Van Cleve High School and later earned degrees in Agriculture Education (BS) and Rural Sociology (MS) from Iowa State University.

John served his country honorably in the U.S. military as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. On December 22, 1957, he married Elaine Eldridge in Ruthven, Iowa. He spent 33 years with Iowa State University Extension in several capacities: county 4-H and youth leader in Oakland; a member of the state 4-H staff in Ames; Palo County Extension Director; area director for a 10-county area in Spencer; and assistant dean and director of University Extension in Ames.

John enjoyed involvement in community activities including president of the Spencer Rotary Club, president of Northwest Iowa Regional Red Cross, president of the United Way, and president of the Ames Golden K Kiwanis. He was a member of the United Methodist Church of Oakland, Emmetsburg, Spencer and Ames, serving as chair of the Administrative Council, lay leader, member of the Finance Commission, chair of the Board of Trustees, and chair of several district church commissions and the United Methodist Conference Task Force on World Hunger.

He kept honeybees for more than 30 years and served as President and Vice President of the Iowa Honey Producers Association and 20 years on the Iowa Honey Producers State Board. He served as a volunteer



CIBA honored John, and his wife Elaine, for all their contributions to beekeeping in March 2019.

advisor to beekeepers in the Ukraine as they developed a new bee law for their nation. John was a longtime fisherman with over 40 trips into the Canadian wilderness.

Left to cherish his memory is his wife of 62 years, Elaine; sons, Greg (Rita Majewski) Johnson and Kent (Carrie Gustaveson) Johnson, grandchildren, Jessica and Jennifer, half brothers and sisters, Jim Johnson, Becky Birch, Wendy Leonard and Craig Kerr.

In death John rejoins his parents, grandson, Kevin Johnson and sister, JoAnn Barnes.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Israel Family Hospice House, 400 S. Dakota, Ames, IA 50014, or Collegiate United Methodist Church, 2622 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50014.

## Extraction on the Go

Jeremiah Kusel, owner of 12 Bees Honey in Slater, has embarked on a new venture, joining the world of mobile honey extraction.

Kusel has equipped a trailer for extracting honey on the go. He has installed electrical panels and outlets, a stainless steel that holds frames for decapping and two new eight-frame extractors anchored to the floor. He's given everything a fresh coat of paint and put in a customized observation window for visitors to see the entire extraction process.

The idea for this new service arose after speaking with fellow veterans from out-of-state who also were beekeepers. He learned that many of them would have someone else extract their honey, which often resulted in a high cost, or a substantial portion of their honey crop that year.

"I have a passion for helping veterans, so I began to think about how I could help," Kusel said. "I've also been helping local beekeepers with their extraction, hauling equipment back and forth in my truck. I've been wanting to simplify that process, too."

He has worked all summer on the trailer modifications and began offering his service at the beginning of August. He also hopes to use the portable extraction set-up to offer beekeeping and extraction classes to veterans interested in managing hives of their own.

Kusel got his first taste of beekeeping several years ago with his Dad and the four hives on his parents' farm. It began as a hobby but he quickly noticed the therapeutic benefits of beekeeping. His passion for bees grew from there.

Now 12 Bees Honey involves the entire family. Even the kids get involved, from helping Dad with the hives to labelling to photography and more. Currently, Kusel manages 25 hives. He also is a member of the CIBA Board of Directors.

Mobile extraction requires a \$40 set-up fee (depending on how far Kusel has to travel) and a base price of \$8 per super, \$9 per deep (potentially discounted for large numbers of frames). Customers must provide their own 5-gallon buckets or purchase them from Kusel at a cost of \$10 per bucket. Kusel eliminates the set-up fee if frames are brought to him for extraction. Contact Kusel for more information or questions at (515) 447-3203 or [12beeshoney@gmail.com](mailto:12beeshoney@gmail.com).



*Jeremiah readies honey frames in his mobile extraction unit.*

## **What to Do with All That Beeswax? Part 2**

*Submitted by Abigail Kelly, 2019 Central Iowa Honey Queen and 2020 Iowa Honey Queen*

Hello again! If you recall, in the last BEELINE I shared about how you can start making products out of beeswax. I shared how I started crafting with beeswax, how to render beeswax, and how to make molded beeswax candles and plantain salve.

### **Dipped candles**

So you've all tried making molded beeswax candles, right? Now it's time to try dipped beeswax candles! Here are two tutorials where I learned the process:

- <http://littlehouseontheprairie.com/homemade-dipped-beeswax-candles/>
- <https://www.keepingbackyardbees.com/diy-dipped-beeswax-candles/>

**Your first step is to melt the beeswax.** My initial attempt was using an old, tall, stainless steel pitcher placed in a crockpot of water, but it took more than 5 hours! I kept the wax in the metal pitcher, but instead placed it in a pan of water on top of the stove. After the wax was melted, I moved the pitcher with the wax to a crockpot full of water to keep the wax warm. This is an important step because I wanted to make my candles over a crockpot and not a hot stove. You want to avoid any chance of the beeswax dripping onto the stove and igniting a fire.

**Next, prepare the wicks** by tying a metal washer onto both ends of a section of wick string. You'll be making 2 candles, one at each end, connected by their wicks. The washer weighs down the wick and prevents it from floating in the wax. The washers are cut off once the candles are thick enough to keep the wick in the liquid wax.

**Then make your candle.** Hold the candles by the middle of the wick and dip both ends in the liquid wax. Repeat as many times as needed to get candles of the desired thickness. After every 3 dips in the wax, briefly dip the candles in cold water. This helps to create a smooth finish. I also let the candles cool slightly before the final wax dip, then dip one last time in water to complete the process.

Once the candles are cool, place them in bags to keep them clean. It takes a lot of work to make a nice dipped candle. I need more practice for my candles to have a professional look!

### **Lip balm**

Another use for beeswax is homemade lip balm, my favorite! I made my own lip balm tube holder by simply drilling appropriately-sized holes in a spare piece of wood. This keeps the tubes upright while the lip balm cools. You can purchase lip balm tubes and tube holders from beekeeping supply companies.

I tested two different recipes. I like the Mann Lake recipe best because it is thicker and held up better to heat.

#### **Mann Lake Lip Balm**

1 tablespoon beeswax\*  
1 tablespoon sweet almond oil  
1 tablespoon shea butter  
¼ teaspoon flavoring oil\*

\* I use only clean beeswax (typically cappings) for any product that is applied to the skin. I prefer candy flavoring oil but you also can use food-grade essential oil (peppermint and strawberry are most popular).

Put the first three ingredients in a glass measuring cup (use a different cup than what you use for candles) and melt it down. Once the wax is completely melted, add the flavoring oil. While the first ingredients are melting, I put the flavoring bottle in my hand or keep it in my pocket. This warms up the flavoring and makes it easier to mix with the other ingredients.

Make sure the flavoring oil is completely mixed in, then pour the lip balm into a tube or small cosmetic container. After everything is cool, clean the outside of the containers, put on the lids, and label the product.

I would love to hear how your dipped candles and lip balm turn out! Post your photos on the CIBA Honey Queen Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/cibahoneyqueen/>). Do you have any tips for making dipped candles? What flavors of lip balm do you make that people absolutely love?

In the next BEELINE, I will share about making Mom's Favorite Body Cream and reusable beeswax food wraps.



*Clockwise from top left: 1) Lip gloss tubes and cosmetic containers are secured on a block of wood. 2) Wax is melting in a tall metal pitcher in a pan of water on the stove. Be sure to remove the wax from the hot stove before dipping to avoid starting a fire from dripped wax. Abigail put the pitcher in a warm crock pot on a kitchen counter. 3) Metal washers are tied onto both ends of a length of wick for dipping. 4) Candles begin to take form. 5) Finished candles are drying on hooks.*



### Congrats to Abigail!

Abigail Kelly, CIBA's own queen-extraordinaire, is the current Iowa Honey Queen following a successful reign as the 2019 Central Iowa Honey Queen. She received her high school diploma during the NICHE (Homeschool Iowa) graduation ceremony on August 1. She plans to attend Faith Baptist Bible College and major in Elementary Education. Her grade-level of choice? Second grade – when insects are introduced in the curriculum!

## Common Beekeeping Mistakes to Avoid

By John Johnson, Past President of CIBA and IHPA

(from an ongoing series of teaching articles used by John over the years)

ITEM	WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES	WHAT TO DO
Allowing bees to starve or run low on feed	Colony dies	Ensure colony has sufficient feed at all times. Don't let bees get close to starvation. Times when bees are most likely to starve include when they are small startup colonies and do not have significant stores of feed, especially in late winter and early spring.
Failing to recognize the colony is queenless	Colony gradually dies out	Introduce another queen. Unite with a queenright colony. Give queenless colony a frame of newly laid eggs from a queenright colony.
Being slow to give colonies room when needed. Such as second hive body or supers when needed.	Swarming	Place a second hive body on top of the first one before it gets crowded. That means when about half the frames in the lower hive body have bees and/or brood covering them. Put first super on upper hive body when half of the combs in upper hive body are covered with bees and brood.
Failing to check for Varroa mite infestation and not employing control measures as needed.	Colony weakened or crashes from Varroa overload	Check bees in spring and early fall to determine mite levels. Use current Varroa treatment, if required.
Insufficient preparation and protections to allow colonies to survive winter	Colony dies out during winter	In September and October provide protection against disease, mites and predators as needed. Ensure colony has 65 to 75 pounds of honey and provide winter wrapping. Only winter colonies with large clusters of bees (approximately enough bees to cover 5 full depth combs on both sides).
When outside temperature is approximately 40°F and above, bees can overheat quickly when all openings to the hive are blocked with solid objects	Bees smother and die	When necessary to confine bees to a hive, do so with a screen rather than a solid object. In addition, ensure they have air flow.

## New Research Shows What Bees Like in Native Flowers

A new fact sheet shows results of a four-year study on honey bee and wild bee preferences for flowering native plants in the Upper Midwest.

The study evaluated 244 grassland sites in the Prairie Pothole region of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. It included conservation plantings, natural areas and roadsides. Much of central Iowa is considered part of the Prairie Pothole region, but the study did not include observations in Iowa. Researchers counted 1.25 million flowering plants representing 280 flowering plant species, and the number of bees observed visiting those plants during three time periods. Honey bees visited 70 species and wild bees visiting 83 species of flowering plants.



Species visited by all types of bees included milkweed, wild bergamont, blue giant hyssop, and several varieties of clover, coneflower and sunflower. The fact sheet includes their scientific names but be aware that several on the list are considered invasive species in Iowa.

The study was conducted for the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Honey Bee Health Coalition. To get the fact sheet go to: <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/fs20203038>

## Survey Shows Decrease in Winter Colony Losses

The Bee Informed Partnership's annual survey of managed honey bee colonies showed only a 22 percent loss over the past year, compared to nearly 38 percent the previous year.



The group released results of its 14<sup>th</sup> annual survey in late June. The survey included 3,377 beekeepers collectively managing 276,832 colonies as of October 2019, representing about 10 percent of the estimated 2.81 million managed honey-producing colonies in the United States.

This year's estimate is the second lowest level of winter loss reported since the survey began in 2006-2007, and directly follows the highest loss on record that occurred during the 2018-2019 winter.

Similar to previous years, backyard beekeepers lost more colonies over the winter (32.8 percent) compared to sideline beekeepers (31.8 percent), but this difference was negligible. Commercial beekeepers experienced less drastic winter colony losses (20.7 percent) than the other two groups. Backyard, sideline and commercial beekeepers are defined as those managing 50 or fewer colonies, 51 to 500 colonies, and 501 or more colonies, respectively.

The organization polls thousands of beekeepers each year to find out as much as possible about beekeeping management practices and the rates of loss. With years of data, the group is beginning to identify patterns across the best-performing beekeepers in each region to start to understand what combinations of management practices work best at keeping colonies alive.

For more information about the survey, including a state-specific loss map, go to the BIP web page at:

<https://beeinformed.org/citizen-science/loss-and-management-survey/>

## Ames Students Get Hooked on Bees

A group of students at Ames High School (AHS) is showing what it takes to get hooked on bees. Thanks to central Iowa beekeepers, members of the AHS Bee Club are busy taking care of two beehives set up in May with a grant from the Iowa Honey Producers Association. With help from CIBA president Jamie Beyer and CIBA members of the Todd Burras family, club members also caught a swarm this summer, adding a third colony to their apiary.

Now the group is getting ready to harvest its first honey crop, which will be sold to support club work. Members also raised funds by selling honey donated by several central Iowa beekeepers – many thanks! And three years ago, they installed 80 pollinator hotels in parks throughout central Iowa.

To learn about other plans, check out the club's website at: <https://ahsbeeclub.wixsite.com/savethebees/projects>

## Having a Little Fun during the Pandemic

An Irish beekeeper found a novel way to pass time during the COVID-19 pandemic by making a fully functional beehive built entirely with Legos. The bees sealed any gaps with propolis. Note the fancy doors at the three entrances. He has a GoFundMe website to raise money for wildlife rehabilitation. Get a link to his video here: <https://www.irishcentral.com/news/irish-beekeeper-lego-beehive.amp>



## From the Editor, Laura Miller

### A Mentor Extraordinaire

In this issue of the BEELINE we pay tribute to a master beekeeper, John Johnson. He generously offered his expertise, time and resources to improve the beekeeping industry in Iowa and to introduce countless others to the fascinating world of beekeeping.

Many CIBA members probably know John as a colleague and faithful volunteer. He worked alongside many of you on the activities of the Iowa Honey Producers Association and our own Central Iowa Beekeepers Association (John led both organizations at various times).

But I knew the teacher side of John Johnson. He always had time to listen to and thoroughly answer my questions. He helped me inspect my beehive. He invited me to his apiary. He even drove to my house one evening years ago to help catch my first swarm. Not only that, he brought the extra boxes and frames for the swarm!

He was patient. He was kind. He was a constant and dependable source of knowledge and support.

So when I heard last April that he had died, I was very sad. I called another beekeeping friend to share the news. She cried. That's how important John was to his students, and he had a lot of them! I learned a lot from John, and his many words of advice fill my beekeeping notebooks. I know that I got my passion for honey bees from John. I'm just wondering how many other people he has touched over the years.

More than a year ago, I had an opportunity to visit with John and his wife for an article about his years in beekeeping. It was just before CIBA honored them in March 2019 for their many contributions to Iowa beekeepers. It also was his first spring in more than 45 springs that he would not be checking bees on an almost-daily basis.

I've repeated this countless times each bee season. It's the one piece of advice that I can still hear John saying: "You need to give the bees what they need when they need it."

So true. And John always gave us what we needed, too. Thanks to a "Mentor Extraordinaire." To read my article about John Johnson, look at the Summer 2019 BEELINE or go to my blog, Bee Lady Honey at: <https://beeladyoney.com/2019/05/13/meet-a-mentor-extraordinaire/>

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