

Iron County 4-H Beekeeping News

Iron County, Utah
June 2024

Last month's club activity

At our last beekeeping activity, we covered these subjects:

- Hive inspection with mite count
- Mite treatment options
- Swarm prevention
- Catching swarms
- Splitting colonies
- Adding supers

Next club activity

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, June 14 at 9 AM at my home, 714 South 1175 West, Cedar City. Come right into the back yard through the gate on the south side of the house. Bring your protective clothing if you have them. I have suits and veils for those who don't have their own. As always, parents are welcome to attend.

We will cover the following topics:

- Use of protective clothing
- Lighting smokers
- Smoker fuels
- When and how to use smoke
- Hive inspection with mite count
- Raising queens
- Equalizing colonies



June in your bee yard

Swarm season continues this month. Free bees! But, don't let your own bees swarm – you never want to lose \$190 worth of bees just so somebody else can catch them or so they become a nuisance for your neighbors!

If you have a solid bottom board, it's time to remove any entrance reducers so the bees can keep the hive ventilated. A hive with a screened bottom board can still have the entrance closed down because of the ventilation coming through the screened bottom. Either way, look at the traffic at the entrance and adjust the opening to avoid opening congestion.

As it gets warmer outside, make sure you are supplying your bees with water and change it periodically so the water is clean. If you don't supply water, they'll get it from your neighbor's kiddie pool or dog bowl -- bad for good relations with the neighbors. Water can be in an inverted bucket, in-frame feeder, top feeder, Boardman entrance feeder or other locations and devices around the yard. My bees are going through about 3-4 gallons of water each week!

The bee population in your hive(s) should be increasing quickly at this time, even in new packages. Expect a honey flow beginning about mid-June and continuing through July as your neighbors' flowers and vegetables start to bloom. Your bees will be at their busiest for the next several weeks as they take full advantage of the season and gather all of the honey, pollen and propolis they can.

Check the hive population. You want it to be steadily growing and strong. To check the population, watch the bees flying in and out of the hive. If you can easily count the number of bees the colony may be weak or compromised. A strong hive will have between 30 and 90 bees arriving and leaving the landing board per minute.

It's best to check your bees at least every two weeks and add supers before they feel congested. Also check your ventilation. Inadequate ventilation (too hot) can also cause them to swarm. Keep adding supers as needed to prevent swarming. Add a new box to the hive when your bees have filled 7 frames of a 10-frame box with nectar, pollen, and brood. Don't add too many too soon or they may not fill completely, the bees will have a harder time keeping the hive at the right temperature, and undefended hive space is vulnerable to waxmoth invasion and ants.

Every time you open a hive, check for diseases and parasites. If you do see signs of disease or parasites do not medicate until the surplus honey has been removed.

When checking your bees, ensure that the queen is laying. Look for eggs and larvae.

Elected club officers:

- Adeline Kofford
- Vice President – TBA
- Owen McAfee

Other announcements

The 4-H registration year runs from October through September. **If you haven't registered as a 4-H member for the 2024-25 year, please do so right away at 4h.zsuite.org/.** If you need help with the process, call the Iron County 4-H Coordinator at 435-586-8132.

Club members are encouraged to set personal goals for the year including keeping a record of the progress of their bees, expenses, lessons learned, and other aspects of their beekeeping hobby. You can enjoy some competition by preparing one or more entries in the county fair such as honey, wax, and candles. All this is part of your workbook (<http://tinyurl.com/c9j72xc>) and can also be part of your 4-H Portfolio (see <http://utah4h.org/html/general-forms/portfolios/>).

When you've completed your beekeeping workbook and a full year of successful beekeeping, please call me to set a date and time to go over your workbook and what you've learned so you can earn your *Iron Beekeeper* certificate.

In addition to the New Jersey 4-H beekeeping manual (<http://tinyurl.com/786xsro>), members are also encouraged to read at least one other book on beekeeping such as *First Lessons in Beekeeping* by Delaplane, *The Backyard Beekeeper* by Flottum, *The Beekeeper's Handbook* by Sammataro, or *Beekeeping Basics* (free PDF download at <https://tinyurl.com/y587rsvr>) by MAAREC. I have several beekeeping books you may borrow. There are two very good magazines: *Bee Culture* and *American Bee Journal*.

We have a club website at www.ironbeekeeper.org and the Utah beekeepers' Association has a beekeeping webpage at www.utahbeekeepers.com. These websites have links to a lot more online learning opportunities as well as several vendors from whom you can buy equipment and bees.

The club is on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/IronBeekeeper/.

Some free opportunities to learn more about beekeeping:

- Randy Oliver's First-Year Care - <https://tinyurl.com/sborlfg>.
- A 13-lesson YouTube course in beekeeping is available at www.tinyurl.com/nrzgbe9.
- Another online course is at www.ohiostatebeekeepers.org/beekeeping_class/.
- Brushy Mountain Bee Farm has some very good videos at <https://tinyurl.com/yYu5g9pf>.
- The Northwest New Jersey Beekeepers Assn has some great videos at <https://tinyurl.com/y2f5eo72>.

The 4-H program offers leadership opportunities for youth at the county level in addition to within our beekeeping club. If you are interested, call the Iron County 4-H Coordinator at 435-586-8132.

I am always available to answer questions or to help you with your bees. Feel free to call me any time.

Please share this letter with your parents and interested friends.

Blaine Nay
Club Manager
blaine@nay.org
(435) 590-7569 (cell)
www.ironbeekeeper.org