

# Iron County 4-H Beekeeping News

Iron County, Utah  
April 2018

## Last month's club activity

At our March 2018 club meeting, we had 2 youth and 2 adults in attendance. We spent the evening:

- Assembling and painting woodware
- Hive location
- Preparing for package arrival
- Installing package bees - video



## Next club activity

The next club activity will be on Friday, April 13 from 6 to 8 PM at my home, 714 South 1175 West, Cedar City. The weatherman says we can expect some wind. Please come with your protective equipment. We'll open up a couple of hives.

We'll cover these topics:

- Use of protective clothing
- Lighting smokers
- Smoker fuels
- When and how to use smoke
- Installing package bees
- Installing nucs
- Feeding packages (syrup and pollen)



If you want to give a presentation on any of these topics, let me know.

## April in your bee yard

The bee population is growing fast to take advantage of the nectar and pollen that is out there. Your bees can run out of room faster than you expect -- especially if you have Carniolans or Russians. If they run out of room, they'll swarm.

Swarm prevention is vital for good honey production. Swarming is a natural instinctive behavior and it is how a mature hive multiplies into additional colonies. Swarm prevention is a challenge, and sometimes after doing everything to prevent a swarm, they still swarm. If a colony swarms, half of the bees leave -- \$150 worth. The remaining colony is less likely to produce a good honey crop that same year due to the reduction in bees.



If you are lucky enough to catch the swarm that emerged from your hive, the good news is that you now have another colony, but the bad news is, it will not provide a honey crop that year.

More bad news: If you don't catch it, the swarm will likely take up residence in your neighbor's home. A wise beekeeper manages bees to avoid swarming.

To prevent swarming, keep an eye on your hives to make sure you give them extra space when needed. If they are covering all but 3 frames you probably should add a new box to your hive.

It is wise to start having water located near your hives in your yard so the bees do not use to your neighbor's bird bath, or dog or cat water dish, swimming pool, or hot tub. There are many methods on how you water your bees:

- In-hive feeders
- Frame feeders
- Boardman feeder (entrance feeder)
- A bucket or pan with sticks floating in it to prevent bees from drowning
- A bird feeder or pan with rocks in it to prevent bees from drowning
- Chicken feeders
- A slow drip from an outside faucet

Dwindling (where old bees die off faster than new bees emerge) is common this time of year because temperatures, weather, and food sources are less than ideal. If you have been feeding through the winter or early spring because your hive is low on stores, keep doing it; changing weather can force the bees to stay in the hive and they don't have the ability to forage. The warm weather is bringing out the early blooming plants and the bees are now aggressively seeking pollen for the brood. Dandelions, willows, fruit trees and some berries are now in bloom and are the major source of pollen for the first part of the season.

Now is the first real month of work for the year. You will need to check your hives on a warm day for eggs, and signs of diseases and parasites. Clean the bottom board to save the bees some work.

If you wintered your hive in more than one box and the bottom box is empty, you should reverse the brood chambers. If the colony is strong and is already covering much of both boxes, there is no need to reverse the boxes.

#### **Elected club officers:**

- President - Ethan Hess
- 1st Vice President - Elliott Hess
- 2nd Vice President - Open
- Secretary - Open

#### **Other announcements**

The 4-H registration year runs from October through September. If you haven't registered as a 4-H member for the 2016-17 year, please do so right away at [ut.4honline.com](http://ut.4honline.com). If you need help with the process, call the Iron County 4-H Coordinator, Angela Hackwell, 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/htm/general-forms/portfolios/>).

When you've completed your beekeeping workbook, 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 <http://tinyurl.com/4mz5d99>) 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](http://www.ironbeekeeper.org) and the Utah beekeepers' Association has a beekeeping webpage at [www.utahbeekeepers.com](http://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/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/IronBeekeeper/).

Some free opportunities to learn more about beekeeping:

- A 13-lesson YouTube course in beekeeping is available at [www.tinyurl.com/nrzgbe9](http://www.tinyurl.com/nrzgbe9).
- A short online introductory course on beekeeping at <http://tinyurl.com/6dtsqk5>.
- Another online course is at [www.ohiostatebeekeepers.org/beekeeping\\_class/](http://www.ohiostatebeekeepers.org/beekeeping_class/).
- Long Lane Honey Bee Farms also has some very good online lessons on beekeeping at [www.honeybeesonline.com/lessons.html](http://www.honeybeesonline.com/lessons.html) and podcasts on beekeeping at [www.honeybeesonline.com/studiobeelive.html](http://www.honeybeesonline.com/studiobeelive.html).
- Brushy Mountain Bee Farm has some very good videos at <http://tinyurl.com/bldenau>.

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 Becky Barton at (435) 586-8132.

The Iron County 4-H website is <http://extension.usu.edu/iron/htm/4-h>.

Iron County 4-H Facebook - [www.facebook.com/groups/150034192364/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/150034192364/).

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.

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