

# Iron County 4-H Beekeeping News

Iron County, Utah  
October 2017

## Last month's club activity

At our September beekeeping activity, we had 0 youth and 1 adult in attendance. We spent the evening discussing how to prepare hives for winter and how to store empty supers over the winter.

## Next club activity

Our October beekeeping activity will be on Friday, October 13 at 6 PM at my home (714 South 1175 West, Cedar City).

Topics will include:

- More about winterization of hives
- Election of club officers
- Planning of the calendar of club activities for the next 12 months
- Setting personal beekeeping goals for the year (eg successfully keep or help keep one or more hives and prepare one or more entries in the county fair such as honey, wax, and candles)
- Completing the member's workbook

## October in your bee yard

The population of the hive is continuing to decrease because older bees are dying off at a faster rate than they are replaced by maturing brood. The queen has dropped off to laying only a few dozen to a few hundred eggs per day. This month, the last of the drones will be ejected from the hive to conserve winter stores.

On cold nights the colony huddles together into a cluster (see the photo at the right) inside the hive to stay warm. If the brood is scattered around the hive, the cluster won't be able to keep all of the brood warm and the abandoned brood will die.

We are at the end of the final nectar flow of the year -- the rabbit brush. Nectar and pollen sources are scarce as the cooler weather moves in and plants begin to die off or go dormant. Your bees will begin to bring in larger amounts of propolis to seal the hive against drafts for the winter.



You don't want more than two deep or three to four medium/shallow boxes on your hive for the winter. The more space you give them, the more space they have to keep warm. So, if you haven't already, remove all surplus honey supers to allow the bees to top off the brood

chambers with the winter honey and pollen stores. Make sure you leave the equivalent of 10 deep or 20 medium/shallow frames full of honey. The total weight of the hive should be at least 80 pounds (50-60 net pounds of honey). The honey needs to be all together so that the cluster of bees doesn't need to pass over empty combs to find something to eat.

Because of the cool nights, it's time to stop feeding syrup, if you're doing that. Excess moisture in the hive is more deadly than cold temperatures. Ensure each hive has adequate ventilation for the winter. Without ventilation, the hive can build up so much moisture that it will condense on the inner cover and then drip onto the colony chilling and possibly killing the bees. Poor ventilation will also result in mildew and mold on the frames, combs, and interior walls of the hive. Excess moisture can also sour any uncapped honey and give the bees nosema (dysentery). Nosema can destroy a hive quickly. A 1/4" gap between the one edge of the inner cover and the outer cover will provide adequate ventilation. An inside-the-hive syrup-feeder adds to the humidity, so use caution with this manner of feeding when nighttime temperatures drop below 50 degrees.

Another factor that is more deadly than cold temperature is drafts and wind. Although the hive needs ventilation, too much ventilation is bad. So, block off the hive entrance so that it is no more than 2 or 3 inches wide. Add a windbreak to protect your hives if they are located in an area where winter winds are prevalent. Hay bales make great windbreaks.

Take steps to prevent mice from getting into your hives, mouse guards or entrance reducers should do the trick.

Here is a good presentation on how to set up the hive for winter:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8kAzdKWp3k>

#### **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, Becky Baton, 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, 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 I have my own beekeeping webpage at [www.ironbee.us](http://www.ironbee.us). 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 resources 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.

Blaine Nay  
Club Manager  
[blaine@nay.org](mailto:blaine@nay.org)  
(435) 590-7569 (cell)  
(435) 867-5976 (home)  
[www.ironbeekeeper.org](http://www.ironbeekeeper.org)