

# Iron County 4-H Beekeeping News

Iron County, Utah  
August 2017

## Last month's club activity

At our July club meeting, we had 2 youth and 3 adults in attendance. We spent the evening harvesting honey without expensive equipment.

## Next club activity

The next 4-H beekeeping activity will be on Friday, August 18 at 6 PM at my home (714 South 1175 West, Cedar City).

We'll cover these topics:

- Process honey using an extractor
- Legalities of selling honey
- Preparing for the county fair

If you have honey to extract, bring it.

## August in your bee yard

The population of the hive is at its peak and they're ready to take advantage of next month's rabbit brush bloom. You might notice bees "bearding" up on the front entrance of the hive in the evenings. This is simply the bees way of cooling the hive on these hot summer days. However, too many bees may also be an indication of poor ventilation or a lack of room in the hive.

Continue to watch your hives for late swarms by checking them every 10-14 days. Although most swarming behavior stops in late June, some hives may swarm late. Swarms that appear in August will not have the time to build up enough strength and stores to survive the winter.

To alleviate crowding, to avoid swarming, and to encourage the bees to store more honey than they need, add a super as soon as 70-80% of the frames are full or the frame top bars are covered with bees when you lift the lid (whichever comes first). It's best to check your bees every two weeks and add supers *before* they feel congested. Also check your ventilation. Inadequate ventilation (too hot) can also cause them to swarm. Don't add too many boxes too soon or they



may not fill completely and the bees will have a harder time keeping the hive at the right temperature and the hive is more vulnerable to wax moth infestation.

Too much heat can cause the bees to spend more time cooling the hive than gathering nectar to make honey. Make sure your hives have some shade and easy access to water so that they can cool the hive effectively.

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 harvested.

The mite population will also be booming at this time (especially in second year colonies) so don't forget to check mite counts and be prepared to treat *after* the honey comes off. August is your last chance to get mites under control so your bees can survive the winter. Colonies that go into winter with a high mite count are usually weakened to survive the winter -- even if they have sufficient food stores.

August begins the period when your winter bees are being laid. The bees born in late August through September will be your spring bees. Ensure a strong winter colony by controlling mites and by checking the food stores (honey *and* pollen) starting at the end of this month. You want to see plenty of food in the brood boxes. Remember that a strong hive going into winter with plenty of food will ensure a strong hive coming out in the spring and that means more honey next year. A common mistake is to be too greedy at harvest time. Leave the equivalent of at least 7 full frames when you harvest. They'll add enough during the rabbit brush bloom to get them through the winter.

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

August is County Fair time. The schedule and rules are available at the County Extension office or online at [www.ironcountyfair.net](http://www.ironcountyfair.net). Entering products from the hive is easy and you might win a ribbon to show off at our September meeting.

#### **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.

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