



## Catch The Buzz

MABA  
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**Memphis Area Beekeepers Association** <http://memphisbeekeepers.com/>  
4852 Waycross Ave, Millington, TN 38053  
Meeting Location: 7777 Walnut Grove Rd # C, Memphis, TN 38120

**MEETING DATE & TIME:** October 8, 2018 – [MABA October 2018 Meeting](#) – Bob Whitworth will present “Preparing Your Honey Show Competition Entries”. Be ready to learn about the Honey Competition that we host every year in November, and what it takes to makes winning entries. See y’all there!

Make plans for the 2018 MABA Christmas Dinner and end of season celebration, which will be held during the December MABA meeting time, December 10, 2018. More details forthcoming!

Are your bees so productive that you need to harvest last time for this year? If you need an extractor please contact **Bob Haskett**, email: [RHas4852@aol.com](mailto:RHas4852@aol.com), phone: 901-872-0074

### NOVEMBER AND THE BEEKEEPER

- Although the work load is lessening, the work you do this month is critical.
- Check that your hives have enough honey stores to survive the winter; you need 60-100lbs of honey for your colony to survive. Check your hive by carefully lifting from the bottom back of the landing board; if the hive feels heavy and you can barely move it, you should be fine. If the hive moves easily and feels light, start emergency feeding so that the bees can store the food for winter use.
- Remember that winter feed is different from spring feed in that it is a 2:1 ratio (sugar/water).
- Feed until the first hard frost when the bees form a cluster or until they stop taking the feed, whichever comes first
- Take steps to prevent mice from getting into your hives, mouse guards or entrance reducers should do the trick.
- Add a windbreak to protect your hives if they are located in an area where winter winds are prevalent.
- Ensure that the bees do have some ventilation at the top of the hive for the release of the moisture produced throughout the winter - if the moisture does not leave the hive, it will collect on the inside of the cover/inner cover where it will condense, chill and drip on the cluster causing sudden drops in temperature and will cause the bees to struggle.
- Another affect of poor ventilation is mildewing and molding on the frames which can sour the honey and give the bees nosema (dysentery) which can destroy a hive quickly.
- Again: Check the hive’s honey stores, watch out for robbing. Configure the hive for winter, with attention to ventilation and moisture control. Install mouse guard at entrance of hive. Finish winter feeding. Attend bee club meetings.

### NOVEMBER AND THE BEES.

- The bees are busy gathering the last bits of nectar and pollen they can find. There are a few late blooming flowers that provide both of these (asters, rabbit brush etc) to help the hive prepare for the coming winter.
- They are also busy gathering propolis to seal the hive against drafts which can harm the colony while in cluster formation, drafts/cracks allow cold air to blow into the hive and can chill and kill the outer cluster bees and reduce the overall population which keeps the queen and colony warm.



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- The workers are now starting to kick out almost all of the drones to help reserve the honey stores for those bees that will actually help the colony survive. A few drones may be retained throughout the winter for reasons not completely understood so if you see them flying on warm days don't be concerned (unless you see lots of them, then you could have a drone laying queen or an egg laying worker).

**9/26/2018** National Honey Board Report: <https://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/ams/FVMHONEY.pdf>

**TENNESSEE:** The fall nectar flow has started in Tennessee. Bees are bringing in goldenrod and aster nectar. Honey harvests across the state this year were all across the board. Some areas made record amounts of honey while others reported making little to no honey. There was not much of a sourwood nectar flow due to all of the rain during the bloom time. Several beekeepers have sent their honey samples off to be tested for source to make certain that it was sourwood only to find out that it was predominately clover due to the weather, so they can't label it as sourwood and are instead having to sell it as wildflower honey in TN.

**ARKANSAS:** No report issued.

**MISSISSIPPI:** Most beekeepers have completed necessary treatments of the hives. The bees are reported to be in good condition and working the Goldenrod and native fields of flowers. Normal losses have been noticed for the summer, and the fall flow is expected to be decent for feeding later in the winter.

### **BEEKEEPING READING LIST**

**POLLINATING AS IMPORTANT AS HONEY FOR BEEKEEPING INCOME** - September 10, 2018

All was quiet in the pasture until Chad Price and Brandon Weatherly started moving bee boxes. Then the persistent buzz in the air was interrupted only by the whirl of a passing spray plane or the snap of nearby power lines. The bees haven't been producing much honey for about a month, Price said Sept. 10. But they'll stay out for another month or so on the pastures and prairie trails around Medina.

After the hives get cleaned up, they'll likely spend a few months in a "winter palace" that belongs to Miller Honey Farms in Gackle, N.D. The facility, new last winter, may help improve the health of honey bees by cutting down on moves, controlling the environment and possibly eliminating varroa mites with carbon dioxide. After a few months in the "winter palace," the bees will head west.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, North Dakota, with 37.83 million pounds of honey, was the top honey producing state in the country in 2016, nearly double what is produced by neighbors South Dakota, with 19.88 million pounds, and Montana, with 12.243 million, which rank second and third in honey production. Coming in fourth was California, with 11.16 million pounds. Many of the bees that produced honey



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in the Northern Plains also worked to produce the honey in California, as well as other coastal and southern states.

But these days, honey production is a secondary feature of taking bees to warmer climates. Beekeepers now rely as much on the income they generate from taking their bees across the country to pollinate crops as on the income they receive from their honey.

### **Focus on pollination**

“One in three bites of food that you eat required a honey bee to pollinate,” explained Jason Miller, vice president of Miller Honey Farms. Miller is a fifth-generation beekeeper. His great-great grandfather started the company in 1894, and they now have about 15,000 hives, making them a large commercial operation.

In the 1970s, Miller’s father, John Miller, brought bees to North Dakota. Jason Miller was born in Bismarck and spent his childhood summers in the state. Back then, a beehive would produce more than 200 pounds of honey. “When I was a kid, the bills were paid off of honey production,” Jason Miller said. “That’s how you ran a profitable beekeeping operation.” Now, the average is about 40 pounds per hive, Miller said.

The difference comes down to changes in the landscape. As fields that once were in pasture have transitioned to row crops like corn and soybeans, the forage necessary to produce honey has gone away. “What bees and pollinators benefit from has largely gone away in North Dakota,” Miller said.

At the same time, almond farms in California have grown from small operations that could be pollinated by native species to “massive monocultures” that require some help to reach maturity. Farmers pay beekeepers to bring bees to pollinate their crops. “The way beekeepers survive is by pollinating crops,” Miller explained. Along with almonds, beekeepers also take bees to citrus groves, apple orchards, and fruit and vegetable farms, among other types of farms, which makes beekeeping important to all aspects of agriculture, he said.

### **The ‘winter palace’**

This is Price’s second year beekeeping. He’s been learning from more experienced beekeepers, including the Millers, and operating his 3,000 hives around the Medina area. “There’s a lot to it, of course, like anything else,” he says. “Trying to keep hives alive is the biggest thing. It’s a lot to learn. What works, what doesn’t work.”

In his first two years, Price has had far from ideal conditions, with a drought in 2017 and extended periods of wet weather this year. Last year, Price took his bees from North Dakota to California for the almond season, but this year, he’s planning to try indoor storage for several months before heading west. Indoor storage, Miller said, is not a new concept. For many years, his family has been renting out potato cellars in Idaho to winter their bees. But that arrangement has several downfalls, he said, in large part because the cellars “are designed to store potatoes, not bees.” So, if the potatoes are stored longer than expected, the bees have to be kept in a holding yard.



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One of the biggest issues, Miller said, is that hives will lose about 2 percent of their bees each time they're moved. Some bees in North Dakota would be moved as many as seven times before they ended up in California.

Miller Honey Farms decided to build their own facility in Gackle, specifically designed for bees. The building, which they first used last winter, allows them to move the bees only three times. Miller said their company is "on the forefront" of such plans in the U.S., though companies in Canada have been doing the same thing for some time.

Miller said the best environment for bees to winter is the inside of a dead tree, where it's cold, dark, quiet and safe. "What we're able to do (with the new facility) is mimic that natural environment," he said. The facility is kept at 30 to 40 degrees, and there are controls to keep it from becoming too humid.

The "winter palace," as Miller Honey Farms refers to the building south of Gackle, also may help combat varroa mites, a major problem for beekeepers.

### **Keeping mites at bay**

Miller explained varroa mites are very large in relation to honey bees. "It's the equivalent of a monkey on your back, hanging on you and feeding on you," he said, noting multiple mites can be on one bee. The mites develop tolerance for chemicals, which makes dealing with them a "constant cat-and-mouse game," Miller said. "It's hard to kill a bug on a bug," he said.

Research into the best way to deal with varroa mites includes efforts focused on utilizing RNA interference and organic acids. Research at Washington State University suggests bees can survive a higher level of carbon dioxide than varroa mites can, which means a natural way to help cut down or eliminate mites is to keep the level of carbon dioxide higher.

The "winter palace" is equipped with carbon dioxide controls, Miller said. So the Gackle facility may improve hive health both by decreasing moves and providing a way to decrease mites when the bees winter there from November to January, when they move on to their pollinating assignments.

**Read or heard of good, science-based beekeeping articles? Please let us know, we will get them into the MABA newsletter.**



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### UNIT HONEY PRICES BY MONTH

**Retail-Average Retail Price per Pound** across all reporting regions - Data from <https://www.honey.com/honey-industry/statistics/retail-honey-price> used with permission. Based upon average price across all reporting regions. Assumes various sizes sold at the same rate.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>2018</b>	\$7.57	\$7.22	\$7.34	\$7.28	\$7.03	\$7.23	\$7.37	\$7.41	\$7.17			
<b>2017</b>	\$7.35	\$6.99	\$6.85	\$7.04	\$7.06	\$7.25	\$7.05	\$7.26	\$7.27	\$7.37	\$7.18	\$7.25
<b>2016</b>	\$6.74	\$6.91	\$6.79	\$6.79	\$6.72	\$7.12	\$7.01	\$6.88	\$6.88	\$7.12	\$7.04	\$7.39

**Average Wholesale Case Price Per Pound** across All Reporting Regions. Data from <https://www.honey.com/honey-industry/statistics/wholesale-honey-price> used with permission. Based upon average price across all reporting regions. Assumes various sizes sold at the same rate.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>2018</b>	\$5.30	\$5.18	\$5.22	\$5.31	\$5.21	\$5.31	\$5.12	\$5.42	\$5.24			
<b>2017</b>	\$5.25	\$5.32	\$5.38	\$5.27	\$5.13	\$5.46	\$5.39	\$5.35	\$5.44	\$5.27	\$5.19	\$5.31
<b>2016</b>	\$5.04	\$5.15	\$5.04	\$5.20	\$4.97	\$5.19	\$5.09	\$5.01	\$5.10	\$5.31	\$5.27	\$5.39

To subscribe to the National Honey board newsletter visit: <https://www.honey.com/signup>

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**October 12-14, 2018** – [The Pink Palace Crafts Fair](#)

Think about Volunteering to teach and sell honey at the upcoming festivals in September and October. We'll need help unloading, selling, demonstrating, and teaching the public about beekeeping, we hope to see you there!

Contact Bob Whitworth if you would like to sign up to volunteer, [bgw92143@hotmail.com](mailto:bgw92143@hotmail.com) or 901-569-3560.

**October 12-13, 2018** - The 2018 Tennessee Beekeepers Association Fall Conference will be held at the [Hyder Burks Pavilion at Tennessee Tech](#) in Cookeville. Confirmed speakers include Kent Williams, Joel Hausser, Dennis Barry, Mike Torda, Howard Kerr, Michael Wilson, and Kris Kinser. [Have a look at the 2018 TBA Conference schedule.](#) Plan for a couple of fun- and fact-filled days!

To learn more about beekeeping in Tennessee visit the Tennessee Beekeepers Association website at: <http://www.tnbeekeepers.org/>



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**November 12, 2018** – [MABA November 2018 Meeting](#) – Robert Hodum will present “Winterizing Your Bees”. If you have not prepared your bees for a successful overwintering then this is your opportunity to learn the “do’s and dont’s” for happy bees next spring. See y’all there!

**Need containers?** If you need glass jars or plastic honey bears please contact Robert Hodum, 901-603-6492.

**SEE YOU AT THE OCTOBER MABA MEETING, VISIT WITH YOUR MENTOR.**

### HONEY-BASED RECIPES

1. PUMPKIN MUFFINS WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING: Makes 12 muffins

#### INGREDIENTS

2 cups - all-purpose flour  
1 1/2 tsp. - ground cinnamon  
1 tsp. - baking soda  
1/2 tsp. - salt  
1/2 cup - chopped walnuts  
1 cup - solid-pack pumpkin  
1 cup - honey  
1/4 cup - vegetable oil  
2 - eggs, at room temperature, slightly beaten  
1/4 cup - low-fat buttermilk  
1 tsp. - vanilla extract

#### DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, stir together flour, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. Stir in walnuts.

In a separate bowl, blend pumpkin, honey, oil, eggs, buttermilk and vanilla until smooth. Pour pumpkin mixture over dry ingredients. Stir just until mixed.

Spoon batter into paper lined muffin cups, filling each to just below the rim. Bake at 350°F for about 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center of muffins comes out clean.

Let pan cool on rack for 5 minutes. Remove muffins from pan and let cool on rack completely.

Frost with Cream Cheese Frosting, if desired.

#### **Cream Cheese Frosting:**

In a small bowl, with electric mixer, beat 8 ounces cream cheese (softened to room temperature) with 1/3 cup honey, until fluffy.