



## *Catch The Buzz*

*Memphis Area Beekeepers Association* [www.memphisbeekeepers.com](http://www.memphisbeekeepers.com)  
P.O. Box 38028, Germantown, TN 38183  
Meeting Location: 7777 Walnut Grove Rd # C, Memphis, TN 38120

MA  
BA

**MEETING DATE & TIME: May 13, 2019 at 7 pm** – Bob Russell from [Red Belly Bee Farm](#) (Myrtle, MS – just before Albany, MS on US-78) will be presenting his experience in northeast Mississippi. Don't miss his discussion on Big Double stacks – two colonies working a single super stack. See y'all there!

### **MAY AND THE BEES**

- The hive is working at top speed, the Queen is laying and the bees are bringing in nectar and pollen. Give them room, give them space to store a honey crop. They'll be happy you did!

### **MAY AND THE BEEKEEPER**

- Keep up with the working bees by adding empty boxes underestimating how much equipment you need could cost you a honey crop and could enhance the swarming impulse. Make sure to keep an empty box on top during this time of year. Swarming continues as new bees continue to overcrowd colonies. Watch for Swarms, add empty Supers, attend Bee Meetings and update "Bloom Calendar" this will help the beekeeper remember when the major honey flow occurs.

**Equipment, equipment, equipment. Manage to prevent swarming by adding equipment.**

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**4/24/2019 National Honey Board Report:** <https://downloads.usda.library.cornell.edu/usda-esmis/files/m613mx60p/cr56n8226/vm40z1180/FVMHONEY.PDF>

**TENNESSEE:** Overwinter average losses look like they are going to be around 40% this year. The nectar flow is on in Tennessee. Redbuds, forsythia, willows, maples dandelions, henbit and other spring nectar and pollen sources are in full bloom. Colonies are building up rapidly. Swarms have already been reported in all areas of the state.

**ARKANSAS:** No report issued.

**MISSISSIPPI:** The bees are reported to be in good shape after a wet and cold March. Beekeepers are working with the hives and getting the broods separated and new hives put in place for the Spring flow. No major losses reported yet, and the bees are anxious to get out and about to forage as the weather starts to change to warmer days.



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### **BEEKEEPING READING LIST**

1) **Beekeepers Hit Hard by Theft of Hives**, from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/05/bee-thieves-cost-beekeepers-thousands/> (article truncated for the newsletter).

It was Wednesday night around dinnertime when Jeremy Kuhnenn realized something was wrong. A few days earlier, in preparation for pollination season, he'd temporarily parked a truckload of more than 280 wooden boxes vibrating with buzzing bees on a grassy knoll overlooking a vista of citrus trees in McFarland, in California's Central Valley. Now, standing on the hill, he felt ill, as if he might throw up—many of the boxes were missing.

Feverishly, he started counting. "I couldn't think. I kept messing up the count," he told me, sitting at a friend's kitchen table the next morning, shaking his head. He'd hardly slept. "Over half of them were gone, 160 boxes"—days before California's almond bloom, the biggest and most lucrative pollination event in the world. "Those thieves stole about \$70,000 from me," he said, tallying the insects, equipment, and lost pollination rental fees.

Kuhnenn, 39—tattooed, with a brown beard, and wearing a black "Right To Bear Arms" T-shirt and jeans—is a commercial beekeeper from Bantry, North Dakota. Like many others in his profession, he makes the bulk of his living from an annual pilgrimage to the Central Valley, where his bees help pollinate the state's almond crop. In the off-season, back home on his ranch, [Bulldog Honey Farms](#), he manufactures about 80 pounds of summer honey. Wintertime is almond season, and he'd been preparing for the bloom all year. His hives were ready to move into position in the almond orchards. Now was that time, and a bunch of his bees were gone.

Whoever did this knew what he was doing, Kuhnenn said, and had the right equipment.

"It's the perfect crime," said Butte County police detective Rowdy Jay Freeman, a member of the state's [Rural Crime Prevention Task Force](#) and a commercial apiarist himself. "You see a person in a white suit, and it looks like a beekeeper, but it could be a thief too—you'd never know."

Big bee heists are making global headlines. In April 2016, a few weeks shy of blueberry pollination season, thieves struck one of the largest family apiaries in the Canadian province of Québec. The beekeeper, Jean Marc Labonte, told [reporters](#) the crooks made off with [180 hives](#) worth an estimated \$200,000. Of two likely suspects snagged by police, one was [sentenced](#) to nine months' probation, including five months' house arrest, and a \$40,000 fine; the other was acquitted, according to reports by the [Canadian Broadcasting Company](#) and other outlets.



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In the days leading up to the bloom, an estimated [85 percent](#) of all the honeybees in the country are trucked into the valley. Budget hotels, Denny's, and IHOPs overflow with rugged out-of-towners, sweaty and dirty from working with bees 24/7. A commercial apiarist makes a modest (and sticky) living traveling the country pollinating dozens of different crops, but it's the almonds that pay mortgages and kids' college loans.

Lately beekeepers are having a tough time supplying the high demand for their bees. With almonds priced at about [\\$2.80](#) a pound, farmers are ripping out their raisin grapes and row crops and replacing them with almond trees. During the past 10 years, lands under almonds in California have grown from 825,000 to 1.33 million acres—a 61 percent rise, according to the state [almond board](#).

In 2014, Romance got a call from one of his employees who'd discovered that more than a hundred hives were missing from the inventory. Romance drove up and down Kern County looking for the missing boxes, hoping the thief had been reckless enough to place them near a road. He didn't find them. One day, he heard from a friend who said he'd met a guy offering some bees for rent and thought he'd seen some of Romance's equipment at his place.

"It was a lucky break," Romance said. He decided to go incognito to check things out. "I go over to the house with another friend who's like six four, and we pretend we're almond farmers," he recounted. He was met by two men. "I said, 'I'm paying \$225 a hive'—top dollar. The price at the time was about \$180. These guys were falling all over themselves saying they'd love to sell us some bees."

While they talked, Romance looked around and realized what was going on. "It was a chop shop. They were grinding the brands off the boxes and painting over them," he said. "That's like branding over cattle—you can't do that. Used to be a hanging offense! They were systematically stealing bees, painting the boxes, and reselling them." It's not uncommon for an employee to steal bees from the boss—bee crooks need to get training somewhere, Romance explained. "You don't go to school or read a book to become a beekeeper. It's a dirty, hot, stinging job. You have to have the chutzpah to do it."

In [2017](#), Solis and Torres managed to crack one of the [biggest hive heists](#) in California history. For three years in a row, an unusually high number of bee crimes were reported throughout the Central Valley—200, 300, 400 hives at a time in many different locations. "We knew it had to be someone in the business," Solis said. "They weren't just any crooks. They really knew what they were doing."

A few weeks after the almond bloom, the detectives [investigated](#) a report about a suspicious discovery: a vacant lot on the outskirts of Fresno with bee boxes in varied shapes, colors, and designs stacked and scattered about. At the scene, they found what appeared to be a chop shop, where boxes were being sanded, repainted, and stenciled with the name Allstate Apiaries Inc., a business operated by [Pavel Tveretinov](#), who was on-site tending to the bees.



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Officers arrested Tveretinov, a 51-year-old Ukrainian immigrant, and later an alleged accomplice, [Vitaliy Yeroshenko](#), 48. As the investigation progressed, the detectives uncovered similar operations at two other locations. They say they recovered some 2,500 hives worth \$875,000.

“It was like a spiderweb,” Torres said. “One person would go and ID their bees, then goes home and tells their friends they saw some equipment of theirs. Then they come and see someone else’s, and it kept going like that.”

[Kamron Koehnen](#), a beekeeper in Butte County, California, recovered some of his 240 hives, all of which were uniquely branded with the numbers 42-14. “Every frame, every bottom, every lid, every pallet, everything was branded,” he said. “We’ve never sold a thing. If someone else has it, they either picked it up off the road or stole it.” Recently, Koehnen was informed by the investigators that some of his equipment was found in North Dakota, where Tveretinov was allegedly making honey in the off-season.

Fresno County Deputy District Attorney Ryan McGinthy confirmed that Tveretinov and Yeroshenko are still under investigation and that more charges could be forthcoming. Tveretinov now faces [12 felony counts](#), including receiving stolen property and grand theft. Yeroshenko is charged with [10 counts](#) of receiving stolen property. Court records show their preliminary hearing is tentatively scheduled for [June 25](#). If found guilty, they could face prison time and thousands of dollars in fines. Both men maintain their innocence.

The California State Beekeepers Association [offers](#) a \$10,000 reward for information resulting in the arrest and conviction of a bee rustler. Torres said apiarists should report thefts to authorities immediately and be vigilant to protect themselves against crime. That includes registering their hives with the state and minimizing opportunities for thieves to snatch equipment by placing hives away from access roads, behind locked gates when possible. Unique hive designs are easier to identify and recover after a theft. Some beekeepers are meticulous about branding every moving part in the hive. A growing number are taking advantage of technologies such as GPS trackers and camera systems that can send text alerts when hives are moved. “If this is your bread and butter, you’ve got to protect yourself,” Torres said. “I tell everyone to put GPS trackers on their hives.”

Next February, as the winter stillness settles over North Dakota, [Kuhnhen will] load his bees on a truck and again make the 1,800-mile trip southwest to California, where money grows on almond trees.

**Read or heard of good, science-based beekeeping articles? Please let us know, we will get them into the MABA newsletter. [webmaster@memphisbeekeepers.com](mailto:webmaster@memphisbeekeepers.com)**



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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>2019</b>	\$7.28	\$7.54	\$7.86	\$7.66	\$7.66							
<b>2018</b>	\$7.57	\$7.22	\$7.34	\$7.28	\$7.03	\$7.23	\$7.37	\$7.41	\$7.17	\$7.34	\$7.51	\$7.46

**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>2019</b>	\$4.16	\$4.32	\$4.33	\$4.41	\$4.41							
<b>2018</b>	\$5.30	\$5.18	\$5.22	\$5.31	\$5.21	\$5.31	\$5.12	\$5.42	\$5.24	\$5.26	\$5.42	\$5.44

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

**June 10, 2019** - MABA June 2019 Meeting - Dr. Jeffrey Harris, Mississippi State University Associate Extension/Research Professor, will return to MABA for a practical, fact-filled presentation for beekeepers of all experience levels. You'll be sorry if you miss this meeting!

**July 8, 2019** – MABA July 2019 Meeting – Van Power will present The Art of Honey Extraction. Many of you are seeing the bees cap the honey in your supers, so this is a timely subject for many. You will not want to miss this!

**July 10-12, 2019** – [Heartland Apicultural Society 2019](#) meeting in Bowling Green, KY! HAS 2019 will be hosted by Belmont University. With 6 [keynote speakers](#) and 24 more great speakers this meeting will have everything you need at any level of beekeeping. Registration and more details forthcoming.

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

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



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### HONEY-BASED RECIPES

#### 1. BALSAMIC HONEY BBQ CHICKEN – Makes 6 chicken breasts

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
<p><b>For Balsamic Honey BBQ Sauce:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 cup - store bought BBQ Sauce</li><li>1/2 cup - honey</li><li>3 T - Sriracha sauce</li><li>2 T - balsamic vinegar</li><li>3 T - butter</li><li>2 tsp. - garlic paste or minced fresh garlic</li></ul> <p><b>For BBQ Chicken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 tsp. - salt</li><li>1 tsp. - garlic powder</li><li>1 tsp. - paprika</li><li>1/2 tsp. - ground black pepper</li><li>1 tsp. - sugar</li><li>6 - boneless chicken breasts</li><li>2 T - olive oil</li></ul>	<p>Preheat oven to 375°F.</p> <p>Combine all the BBQ sauce ingredients and simmer for 25-30 minutes.</p> <p>Combine the salt, garlic powder, paprika, black pepper and sugar. Lay out the chicken breast on a sheet pan, drizzle with the olive oil and sprinkle with the spice mixture. Bake for 20 minutes.</p> <p>Baste the chicken with the Balsamic Honey BBQ sauce and continue to bake for another 12-15 minutes until the sauce begins to caramelize and the juices run clear when the chicken is pierced with a fork.</p> <p>Serve alongside the remainder of the sauce.</p> <p>Top with 2 pieces green leaf lettuce, 3 slices tomato, 3 slices Spicy Honey Candied Bacon, and 1 fried egg.</p> <p>Spread 2 T avocado mash on second slice sourdough toast and place on top of sandwich to close.</p> <p>Slice diagonally, serve.</p>