

# AABA October Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2018/Arlington Echo Education Center

New Beekeeper Hour 6-7 pm

## Preparing for Winter

Hives should be reduced to wintering configuration, usually 2 deeps or 3 mediums. Do not rearrange frames as bees have been arranging stores for winter. Bees should be on drawn comb, not foundation, with frames of capped honey overhead. They will need 60-70 pounds of honey to winter (see Betterbee articles below).



<https://www.betterbee.com/instructions-and-resources/how-much-will-you-need-to-feed.asp>

<https://www.betterbee.com/instructions-and-resources/the-when-what-and-how-of-fall-feeding.asp>

## Winter Feeding

If your hives are light they need to be fed now and through the winter. With nighttime temperatures getting low, syrup is not recommended (remember to prepare earlier next year). Fondant, sugar blocks, or winter patties (from bee supply companies) can be kept on top of the colonies through winter if you add a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch feeding shim / [Imirie shim](#) (if you do not have shims, you can use an empty super and fill the space over the sugar with insulation or newspaper. Check periodically throughout the winter and add more solid sugar as needed, especially once they start rearing brood.

See Fondant recipe at <http://aabees.org/recipes/fondant-bee-sugar-candy>.

For a sugar block, moisten 10 lbs. of sugar with 6 ounces of water (apple cider vinegar may be used for part of the water). Mix well to moisten the sugar. Press firmly into cookie sheets lined with parchment paper. Score to size to fit hive before drying. Dry in low oven 150 degrees for an hour and then turn off the heat and let sit until cool, or allow to air harden for a week or so.

There are fancier recipes out there, but this works fine and gives the bees emergency food right over their heads. The sugar block will absorb moisture and is less likely to be carried out as hive trash as dry sugar might be.

## Wind Breaks and Insulation

There are many options. The key is to insulate the top so that condensation does not drip down onto the bees. In Maryland, we have so much humidity that it helps to have a small upper entrance to allow some to escape, but not too much because the bees will need that moisture to moisten sugar feed and raise brood. Hives should also be tipped forward with a 1 to 2-inch board under the back of the hive so that condensation runs to the front wall and down and rain drains out.

At Arlington Echo, the hives have wintered successfully with 1-inch rigid foam\* in the telescoping cover, the inner cover with the notch up (so bees using the upper entrance have to go through the oval and across the inner cover), and Bee Cozies around the hive bodies (from bee supply

company). The inserts are in the screened bottom board to limit air movement and the entrance is reduced to the 4-inch slot. There is a ¼ inch feeding shim below the inner cover for feeding fondant that we can check the status by lifting the telescoping cover and peeking through the oval entrance. The bees like to gather up there because it is warm. (\*use foil-backed insulation to limit bees chewing the insulation or turn the IC notch down and place a piece of tape over the oval center hole—you can still lift the tape to check fondant).

Another option is to use 2-inch rigid foam in the inner cover and to create a sleeve to cover all the sides. See <http://www.beeeculture.com/winter-management/> for details. Having insulation on all sides creates a more stable environment and allows bees to move to stores in the hive and cover a larger broodnest without large temperature swings.

A third option for insulating the top would be to add a quilt box that helps manage moisture and insulates. Many of the bee supply companies now offer options.

If your hives are on stands, election signs can be used to create a wind block around the base of the hives (we will have plenty of those shortly). Hay bales are also recommended, but be sure to use mouse guards.

### Monitoring for Varroa Mites and Fall Treatments

While it is better to test and treat (if needed) in the late summer so that the winter bees are healthy, it is better to treat late than not at all. This late in the year, we have lost the weather window for most treatments. Oxalic acid is a good option for a fall clean-up. Treat when bees are broodless (or nearly so) for best results—November to December in our area.

If you haven't done a mite test yet, you may want to test using an alcohol wash, sugar shake, or if you have screened bottom boards, put the insert in with a Thin film (NOT coating) of mineral oil/Vaseline for 3 days. I do not recommend doing an after test this time of year except for a follow-up mite drop, but test in the spring to see how effective the treatment was.

The **Honey Bee Health Coalition** (HBHC) has instructions and videos available for testing for varroa mites and for applying each type of mite treatment <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroa>. If you want to keep bees, you need to manage varroa. Treating for mites when indicated is required in the rules for organic certification of honey, and many treatments meet organic standards and do not contaminate honey (Randy Oliver, The Varroa Problem 6B).

### Fall Oxalic Acid Dribble Treatment

Brushy Mountain sells a kit or purchase wood bleach at store.

Pick a mild day that bees are not tightly clustered - 50's to 60's.

Safety gear: glasses and latex or nitrile gloves in addition to veil.

Weigh 35 g/1.2 oz. oxalic acid dihydrate (OA) using a scale and mix with 1 Liter 1:1 warm sugar syrup. Randy Oliver recommends mixing the OA with hot water first to dissolve the OA, then adding the sugar. Use distilled water if your water is hard.

Using a 60 ml syringe, draw up 50 ml of solution and dribble 5 ml (1 teaspoon) per seam of bees (the space between frames where bees are clustered) with maximum of 50 ml per hive for a

strong hive (weaker hives will take less). If bees are split between brood chambers, adjust dose per seam.

[Note: HBHC also recommends treating packages with OA and suggests feeding bees with plain sugar syrup 2 hours before treatment to lessen amount of acid ingested—it may be a good idea to try to feed in advance in the fall too, but I have used it successfully without the extra feeding.]

See Randy Oliver's page: <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/first-year-care-for-your-nuc>.

The mite sampling and treating is about midway down, but I recommend reading the entire section. Randy Oliver demonstrates his technique on his website:

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/how-to-perform-an-alcohol-wash>, and here with a hive inspection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewqWVguGRvc>.

For the most recent updates and Randy's discussion about foggers see:

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/oxalic-dribble-tips>

October Meeting 7-9 pm

Welcome and General Announcements

Arlington Echo Apiary updates.

2017 and 2018 Commander Mumford Awards

Karen Larson received an engraved hive tool for the 2017 Mumford award (Jim Larson accepted for her). Audrey Lee received an engraved hive tool for the 2018 Mumford award for her painted beehive.



Their names will also be added to the plaque that is kept at Arlington Echo. Thanks to Dave Mumford and Carl Guerri for their work on the new plaque after the original had been filled.

Main Speaker

Charles DeBarber, the Senior Beekeeper at [Filbert Street Garden](#), gave an informative presentation on Making Swarm boxes and how and when to deploy them to safely catch those free bees.

Frank Sullivan gave a talk about his trip this summer to the Eastern Apicultural Society Conference in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

### Elections for 2019 Board

The Board and Chairpersons remain the same except we now have Susan Huber as club photographer. Welcome Susan and thank-you for volunteering!

### Door Prize

Audrey Lee won a case of Muth jars—congratulations!

### Upcoming Events

Maryland State Beekeepers Association Fall Meeting and Honey Show.

It is free, and you can stay for as long as you like. See <https://www.mdbeekeepers.org/>.

Saturday, November 17, 2018 from 8:30 am – 4 pm

Maryland Department of Agriculture  
50 Harry S Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, MD

### 2019 AABA Regular Meetings

| Date                   | Start Time | End Time | Title of Meeting |
|------------------------|------------|----------|------------------|
| Tues February 12, 2019 | 7:00 PM    | 9:00 PM  | February Meeting |
| Tues April 16, 2019*   | 6:30 PM    | 8:30 PM  | April Meeting    |
| Tues June 18, 2019*    | 6:30 PM    | 8:30 PM  | June Meeting     |
| Tues August 20, 2019*  | 7:00 PM    | 9:00 PM  | August Meeting   |
| Tues October 15, 2019* | 7:00 PM    | 9:00 PM  | October Meeting  |

\*New Beekeeper Hour one hour before main meeting

### Apiary Registration

Maryland law states that beekeepers must register apiaries within 30 days of obtaining bees with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Registering honey bee colonies is important to prevent the spread of disease. Cybil Preston is the Maryland State Apiarist if you have any questions. Phone 410-841-5920 or e-mail [cybil.preston@maryland.gov](mailto:cybil.preston@maryland.gov).

The registration form is available online at:

[http://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/pages/apiary\\_inspection.aspx](http://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/pages/apiary_inspection.aspx)