

Iron County 4-H Beekeeping News

Iron County, Utah

July 2025

Last month's club activity

At our last beekeeping activity, we covered these subjects:

- Hive inspection with mite count
- Raising queens
- Equalizing colonies

Next club activity

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, July 19 at 9 AM at my home, 714 South 1175 West, Cedar City. Come right into the back yard through the gate on the south side of the house. Bring your protective clothing if you have them. I have suits and veils for those who don't have their own. As always, parents are welcome to attend.

We will cover the following topics:

- Use of protective clothing
- Lighting smokers
- Smoker fuels
- When and how to use smoke
- Hive inspection with mite count
- Equalizing colonies
- Harvest without an extractor



July in your bee yard

The population of the hive should peak near the end of the month provided they are a strong colony.

All colonies should be taking advantage of the July nectar flows as neighborhood flowers and gardens continue to bloom. Nectar flows are indicated by the following

- fresh white wax on comb and top bars,
- bees are easy to work,
- foundation is drawn out quickly,
- bees fanning at the entrance,
- large amounts of nectar ripening in the cells of honey supers.

With luck, you may be able to harvest an early crop!

Continue to prevent your hives from swarming by checking them every 10-14 days. Although most swarming behavior stops in late June, some hives may swarm late. Swarms that appear in July are, as

the adage goes, "not worth a fly" as they may not have the time to build up enough strength and stores to survive the winter.

A swarm in May is worth a load of hay.
A swarm in June is worth a silver spoon.
A swarm in July isn't worth a fly.

To alleviate crowding, to avoid swarming, and to encourage the bees to store more honey than they need, add a supper 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. However, 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 climate for the brood.

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

Keep an eye open for robbing wasps, hornets and honey bees from other hives. During the summer there may be dearths (periods of no nectar flow) that cause honey bees to look for weak hives to rob. A strong colony can usually repel invasion by wasps and hornets but watch for signs of struggle, locate the offending nest and destroy it.

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

Every time you open a hive, check for diseases and parasites. Remember that winter preparation begins in March by keeping mite levels below 2% all season long. Varroa mite populations typically peak in July, making prompt treatment critical. So, keep up those monthly mite counts!

If the mite count exceeds 2%, promptly use a treatment that is safe in high temperatures such as like VarroSan, ApiGuard or Apivar. Continue to do mite counts after every treatment to verify that they worked. I have found HopGuard to have very poor effectiveness. Our summers are too hot for the ApiLifVAR and formic acid treatments. Except for VarroSan, oxalic acid works best during a broodless period. If you see signs of disease or parasites harvest any surplus honey before you treat for mites or disease using a synthetic product or a product containing thymol.

Elected club officers:

- Adeline Kofford
- Vice President – TBA
- Owen McAfee

Other announcements

The 4-H registration year runs from October through September. **If you haven't registered as a 4-H member for the 2024-25 year, please do so right away at 4h.zsuite.org/.** If you need help with the process, call the Iron County 4-H Coordinator 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/htm/general-forms/portfolios/>).

When you've completed your beekeeping workbook and a full year of successful beekeeping, 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 <https://tinyurl.com/y587rsvr>) 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 and the Utah beekeepers' Association has a beekeeping webpage at www.utahbeekeepers.com. 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/.

Some free opportunities to learn more about beekeeping:

- Randy Oliver's First-Year Care - <https://tinyurl.com/sborlfg>.
- A 13-lesson YouTube course in beekeeping is available at www.tinyurl.com/nrzgbe9.
- Another online course is at www.ohiostatebeekeepers.org/beekeeping_class/.
- Brushy Mountain Bee Farm has some very good videos at <https://tinyurl.com/yyu5g9pf>.
- The Northwest New Jersey Beekeepers Assn has some great videos at <https://tinyurl.com/y2f5eo72>.

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 the Iron County 4-H Coordinator at 435-586-8132.

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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