



The Buzz

May 2017

Newsletter for the Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association
An Affiliate of Illinois State Beekeepers Association

May Meeting Update

Join us in welcoming **Petra Ahnert**, author of the DIY book, *Beeswax Alchemy: How to Make Your Own Soap, Candles, Balms, Creams, and Salves from the Hive*. Petra is the owner of [Beehive Alchemy](#), a small, woman owned business that specializes in products for body, bath and home. She is also a small scale beekeeper who specializes in varietal honey. Petra will discuss how she uses products from the hive, as well as provide a soap making demonstration. She will also have copies of her book for sale along with various kits such as wick sample kits, herb kits, etc.

Also, our very own, Neil Sexton, will continue his breakout sessions for newbees focusing on first hive inspections. This course is designed for first year beekeepers.

The next general meeting will be held on **Saturday, May 20** at Christ Lutheran Church of Clarendon Hills located on the northwest corner of Rte. 83 and 55th Street. The doors open at 6:30p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00p.m. Please consider bringing a snack to share with fellow friends.

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Save the Date

The CDDB **Annual June Picnic** will be held at the [York Woods](#) Forrest Preserve in Oak Brook on **Saturday, June 17**, from 11-3pm. The CDDB will provide entrées and members are asked to bring salads and desserts. **Please click [here](#) to RSVP online.** We hope you'll join us for this fun afternoon!
Note: There will not be a June Saturday evening meeting.



Chores of the Month

May is the beginning of the major nectar and pollen time in our area.

Make sure your bees have enough room and are kept busy. For a new hive, monitor how much comb has been drawn out in the hive bodies and add another body as they "run out of room." If necessary, move some of the undrawn frames in a space or two to allow the bees to draw comb there. Be careful though that you do not compromise the brood pattern. It may also be the time to reverse the hive bodies if you haven't done so already.

For an older hive, it may be time to review the frames and see if you can swap out some older pollen filled frames for new ones. This gives the bees an opportunity to be busy as well as increase some of the space in the hive and improve circulation.

Review the strength of your hive. By mid-May it will be time to remove the entrance reducer and allow the bees to have free access in and out; they are going to be busy and you don't want to slow down the movement of honey and pollen in and out of the hive.

Monitor the hive for queen cups and cells. It's especially important to watch for Swarm Cells. These cells usually are found at the bottom of the frame and are an indication that the hive may be too crowded and ready to swarm.

If feeding your hive, keep an eye on the volume, we are approaching a time when the natural nectar will take over and the need for feed drops to nothing. Remove the feeder if they are not taking any nourishment.

*Click [here](#) for more May monthly chores.



Wax worm caterpillar will eat plastic shopping bags: New solution to plastic waste?

Generally speaking, plastic is incredibly resistant to breaking down. That's certainly true of the trillion polyethylene plastic bags that people use each and every year. But researchers reporting in *Current Biology* on April 24 may be on track to find a solution to plastic waste. The key is a caterpillar commonly known as a wax worm.

"We have found that the larva of a common insect, *Galleria mellonella*, is able to biodegrade one of the toughest, most resilient, and most used plastics: polyethylene," says Federica Bertocchini of the Institute of Biomedicine and Biotechnology of Cantabria in Spain. A previous study (doi: 10.1021/es504038a) has shown that *Plodia interpunctella* wax worms, the larvae of diatom mealworms, can also digest plastic.

Bertocchini and her colleagues made the discovery quite by accident, after noticing that plastic bags containing wax worms quickly became riddled with holes. Further study showed that the worms can do damage to a plastic bag in less than an hour.

After 12 hours, all that munching of plastic leads to an obvious reduction in plastic mass. The researchers showed that the wax worms were not only ingesting the plastic, they were also chemically transforming the polyethylene into ethylene glycol. This is suspected to be the case in *Plodia interpunctella* as well.

Although wax worms wouldn't normally eat plastic, the researchers suspect that their ability is a byproduct of their natural habits. Wax moths lay their eggs inside beehives. The worms hatch and grow on beeswax, which is composed of a highly diverse mixture of lipid compounds. The researchers say the molecular details of wax biodegradation require further investigation, but it's likely that digesting beeswax and polyethylene involves breaking down similar types of chemical bonds.

"Wax is a polymer, a sort of 'natural plastic,' and has a chemical structure not dissimilar to polyethylene," Bertocchini says.

As the molecular details of the process become known, the researchers say it could be used to devise a biotechnological solution to managing polyethylene waste. They'll continue to explore the process in search of such a strategy.

"We are planning to implement this finding into a viable way to get rid of plastic waste, working towards a solution to save our oceans, rivers, and all the environment from the unavoidable consequences of plastic accumulation," Bertocchini says. "However," she adds, "we should not feel justified to dump polyethylene deliberately in our environment just because we now know how to bio-degrade it."

To read the full article, click [here](#).

Cell Press. "Wax worm caterpillar will eat plastic shopping bags: New solution to plastic waste?." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 24 April 2017.

Mark your Calendar

- **5/12:** Forrest Preserve District of DuPage County Plant Sale, Mayslake
- **5/13:** Seedling Sale, Garfield Park Conservatory
- **5/20:** Hands on Mentoring, Lyman Woods, Downers Grove
- **6/7:** Cook County Farm Bureau Beekeeping Round Table
- **6/10:** ISBA Annual Summer Meeting, Quincy, IL

Links:

- [DuPage Forrest Preserve Plant Sale](#)
- [Garfield Park Conservatory](#)
- [Lyman Woods](#)
- [Cook County Farm Bureau](#)
- [ISBA Annual Summer Meeting](#)

BeeCheck by FieldWatch

BeeCheck, created by DriftWatch, is a voluntary communication tool that enables beekeepers and pesticide applicators to work together to protect apiaries through use of the BeeCheck mapping program. It is not a substitute for any state regulatory requirements. Click [here](#) to sign up.

Beekeeping Research Buzz from UW-Stout

Professor and students identify bacterium that may kill honey bees. Read the article [here](#).

Interesting way to consider what a healthy frame should look like:



Honey Dill Coleslaw



Serves 4

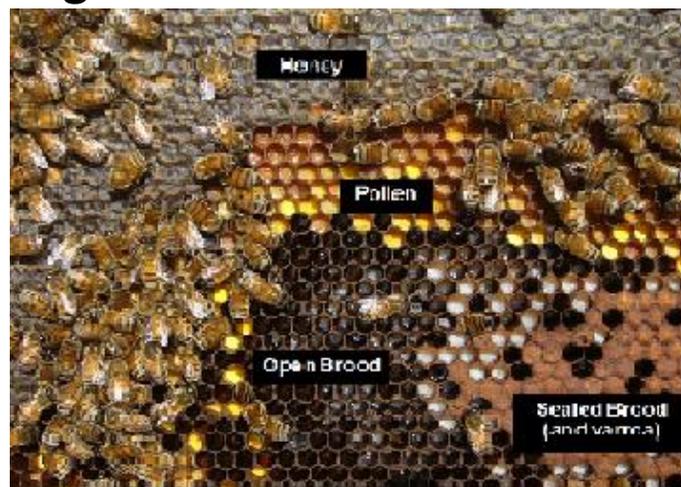
Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup - honey
- 1/2 cup - sour cream
- 1/2 teaspoon - dried dill weed
- 1 package (16 oz.) - coleslaw mix
- 1/4 cup - thinly sliced onion
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

In a small bowl, combine honey, sour cream and dill. In a large bowl, toss coleslaw mix with onion and honey-sour cream mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Diagram of a Frame



CDBA Executive Board

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Webmaster	Neil Sexton
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Sergeant At Arms	Ed Borsuk
Education	Omar Kamara
Hosts	Mary&Tony Duchinsky

Upcoming Meetings:

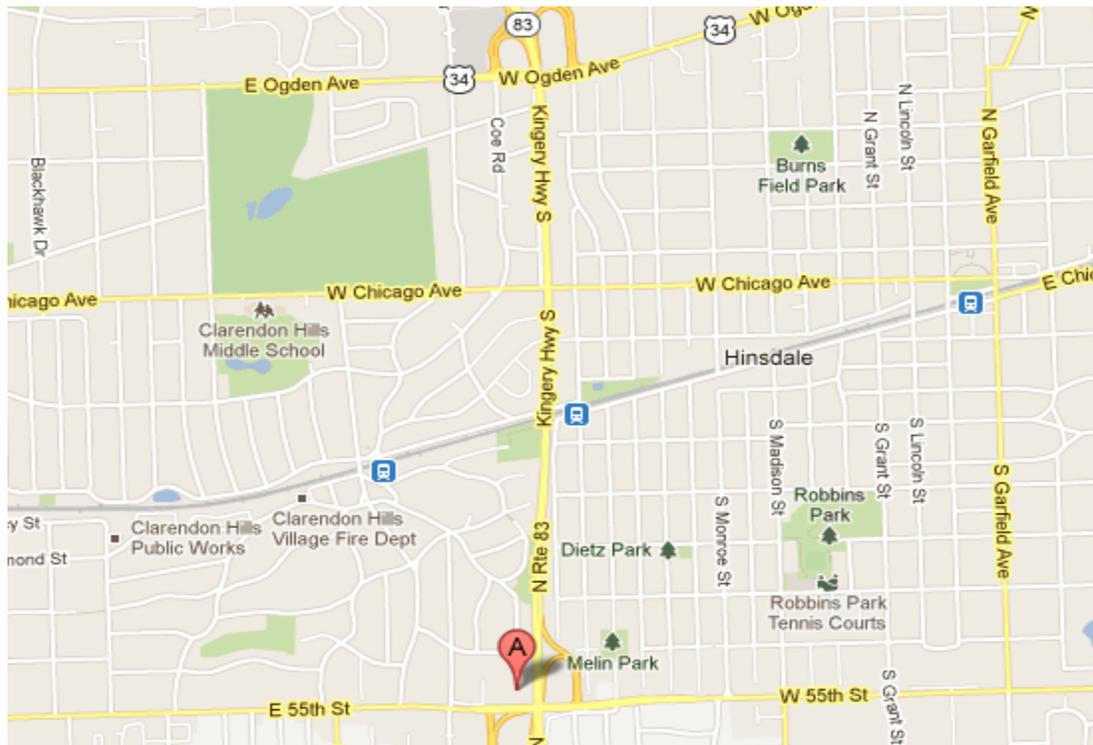
CDBA May Meeting, Saturday, May 20, 2017

Christ Lutheran Church of Clarendon Hills

Located at: 60 55th St. (At the northwest corner of Rte. 83(Kingery Hwy) and 55th St.)

CDBA Annual June Picnic, Saturday, June 17, 2017 at

[York Woods Forrest Preserve](#), Oak Brook



[Link to Church map on Google Maps](#)