Buzzword September 2025 Issue

Beekeepers helping Beekeepers!

Sudbury and District Beekeepers' Association - 50 years!

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Welcome back everyone! It was an unusual summer; very wet, very dry, very green and in some locations a challenge for foragers! By this time mite treatments should near completion. Many of us will need to feed 2:1 sugar syrup to bring the girls through the winter. Common wisdom suggests a typical hive needs 80 pounds of stored honey to get through the winter.

Minutes of Sept 17, 2025 meeting

7:08 pm Welcome: Meghan Mitchell

Approval of June 2025 minutes:

- moved/seconded by Otto/Eric approved

Approval of Sept 17, 2025 Agenda:

- moved/seconded by Denise/Rose approved

Show 'n Tell segment

Rose Aniol – beeswax candles

Beeswax melts at approx 60-65C. If you heat it too much it will lose aroma, become discoloured and potentially ignite. Rose presented her new wax melter (similar to a coffee pot) which makes the process much easier. She described pouring the wax into molds and the careful selection of an appropriately size (thickness) of wick depending on the candle diameter.

You can find Rose's candles by searching 100% beeswax candles on Facebook marketplace under the name Sydnee Winters or at Huckleberries Chocolatiers downtown.

Paul Adam – feeding with Mason Jars

Paul demonstrated the use of Mason jars to feed syrup. You can use a small drill bit or an awl to puncture several holes in the metal lid. Rough edges should be smooth or sanded down. Jars can be used with a Boardman feeder mounted at the entrance. Others invert the jar over the inner cover with an empty super on top. Both types of feeder discourage robbing because their entrances are internal to the hive.

Typical Boardman feeder

Otto – formic acid pads and propolis

Otto passed around a sample of formic acid pads to show how they can become heavily propolised and difficult to remove. He uses the mesh from onion or avocado bags under the pads which aids in removing them. Changes in the level of propolis in a hive could be a clue that something happened: disease, a new queen or some disturbance causing stress.

Otto also discussed a method he uses to replace queens.

1. *remove the old queen; wait 12 hours*
2. *cover the center hole of the top inner cover with a screen (#8 mesh or smaller)*
3. *Place new queen in its cage on top of the screen so that the bees have access to it pheromones*
4. *After 24 hours move the queen cage inside the hive where the bees will have access to it (just removing the screen will do)*

Christian Alvarez-Sierra – Christian is a grad student of Dr Matteus Pepinelli. Following up on Dr Pepinelli's presentation to our group about climate-induced changes across plant-pollinator networks (see Buzzword May 2025), Christian presented a newer version of their 3D printed eDNA sampling device. The improved version incorporated a removable plastic cassette which allowed quick removal of the sampling filter.

The sampling device is placed on the hive's inner cover hole and runs for about 5 hours. The embedded filter paper is sent to the lab for molecular analysis which reveals pollen, bacteria and other interactions in the hive. If any members are interested in sampling their hive as part of this research, they can email Dr Pepinelli at *mpepinelli@laurentian.ca*.

Meghan and Justin – honeycomb cassettes

Meghan and Justin demonstrated the Hogg honeycomb kit which incorporates 40 clear cassettes in a shallow honey super. The bottoms of each cassette is coated with beeswax to encourage comb building. When sections are full they are removed, providing a convenient package for cut comb sections.

Presentation*:* Alasdair MacLeod – European Foulbood

Alasdair discussed a case of European Foulbrood that he encountered this summer. The causative agent is ***Melissococcus plutonius,*** a non-spore-forming bacterium that infects the digestive track of honey bee larvae. The bacteria compete with the larvae for food which results in most larvae dying at 4 to 5 days old without being capped (this differs from American Foulbrood). It is easily spread by surviving larvae and nurse bees.

Some signs to look out for include:

- spotty brood pattern
- uncapped brood not developing
- larvae curled or twisted or discoloured?
- tracheal systems visible?
- Dead larvae scales present are easy to remove?
- Odour? (not always!)

OMAFA has a good page describing signs and symptoms as well as those of other brood diseases.

https://www.ontario.ca/page/european-foulbrood

EFB appears to be on the rise in Ontario.

If you suspect EFB you should contact your Bee Inspectors. In our area this is Timothy and Christina Greer Kristina.greer@ontario.ca They will submit samples for laboratory testing and the results will be back in a couple of days. If the results are positive for EFB a retain order is placed on your yard which means you cannot move or sell equipment until the yard is re-inspected or 2 years, whichever comes first.

Some key take home points:

- always do visual inspection of brood health *EVEN if you see eggs*
- If you sense population dropping? WHY?
- don't merge weak hives without knowing why they are weak
- feed if you need to even in the summer.
- Keep notes so you can go back and review the hive history
- always used good biosecurity practices (torch tool and use gloves between hives, don't purchase used equipment unless it's been inspected)

EFB could be present in your hive without you knowing and is not necessarily obvious in a strong hive. Good biosecurity practices and strong hives will help to mitigate the risk of EFB spreading.

Treating confirmed EFB: It seems the best approach is to remove and burn ALL frames with brood and eggs in order to **disrupt the brood cycle**. This is followed by treating with Oxytetracycline, an antibiotic that inhibits the bacteria's ability to grow. "Oxytet" used to be more widely available but because of the risk of antibiotic resistance, must now be prescribed by a Vet. Springer Animal Hospital in Sturgeon is receptive to help with this.

Coffee break

New Beekeeper Segment led by Meghan and Justin – *"Going with the Flow"*

This segment was about adapting your actions depending on what is going on in your hive.

Julien Montpetit described the importance of treating for mites early in the fall. Mite counts are often very low in the spring but can be extremely high by late August. Formic Pro is the only product that allows you to treat with supers on. A time crunch might result in having to remove supers early when the moisture content of the honey is still too high to extract. Some beekeepers place the supers in a room with a humidifier to bring down the moisture content. It is not always necessary to have all frames capped but generally at least 50% of the cells should be capped. Moisture content should be 18% or below.

Many beekeepers reported a high number of wasps this summer. It was thought this might be due to having a dry August. Locating and destroying nests and using entrance reducers can help with robbing.

Swag draw!

Each meeting signed in attendees are entered to select some SDBA swag. This meeting's winner was Rose Aniol.

Upcoming Meeting

Our next public meeting is **Oct 15, 2025** at LoEllen School.

Memberships

Thanks to those who renewed their memberships. **Memberships pay for our room use at the school, Zoom access, coffee, donuts and occasional honorariums for speakers** who have travelled long distances.

12-month Memberships can be paid in person at the meeting or by e-transfer to beesforfun64@gmail.com

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

- Seniors or students $15
- Individuals $20
- Family $25

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