Buzzword October 2026 Issue

Beekeepers helping Beekeepers!

Sudbury and District Beekeepers' Association - 50 years!

SudburyBeekeepers@gmail.com



Are we ready for winter yet?

New membership e-transfer address

Thanks to those who asked about paying their membership fees. **Our new e-transfer address** is SDBAmemberships@gmail.com If sending an e-transfer and paying for someone else or for a family membership, please leave some identifying details in the comments box. Memberships are due once per calendar year.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

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

Summary of Oct 21, 2026 meeting

7:00 pm Welcome: Meghan and Justin
Approval of:
Sept 2026 minutes: moved/2nded by Stephen/Yvonne
Agenda: moved/2nded by Otto/Paul

Honey contest: November

At November's meeting we will have our honey contest. Jars were not handed out at the last meeting so please **bring along a sample of your honey** in a small jar. Everyone in attendance is welcome to participate in judging! Samples are typically judged on aroma, clarity, absence of froth, absence of suspended particles, water content analysis and taste. Since jars were not supplied the container properly filled category won't be judged.

Open discussion

Drones – another 'weird bee moment'? Otto and a few other have noticed drones are still coming and going from hives which is a bit unusual for this time of year. Typically they are booted out in time for winter when conserving resources is critical.

Winterizing hives

Feeding -

If you don't have healthy winter bees heading into winter you are fighting a losing battle. Last month's buzzword discussed feeding. Bees tend to cluster in a ball, generally towards the bottom of the hive then slowly move upward over the winter as they consume resources. This is why it's important to have resources above and around the cluster.

Prior to wrapping, as an **emergency feeding source**, some add home-made **fondant**. Do not use icing sugar or self-dissolving products as they contain corn starch or other non-clumping agents which can be harmful to bees.



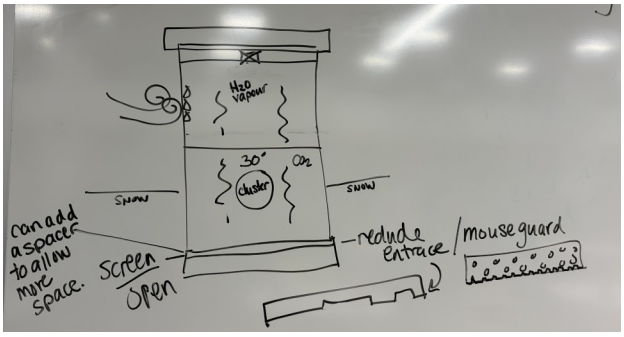
If you don't want to purchase or prepare fondant, even a layer of **dry sugar** over a sheet of newspaper directly on the top frames works. **Joanne** described her non-heated fondant alternative which was basically mixing dry sugar and water (4:1), and optionally adding (a pinch of

salt, some hive-alive, tea-tree oil and lemon oil). Note that pollen is not really needed as it will encourage brood-rearing. Some beekeepers add a small **wooden shim** to provide more space to accommodate the fondant.

Wrapping (insulating)

It's important to note there is no absolutely right or wrong way to insulate your hives. If you understand the **relationship between temperature, moisture and bee behaviour** you are well on your way to winterizing your hive appropriately! Moisture is required but can be a killer in winter if it drips directly onto the cluster. Warm moist air will **condense** into water droplets when it encounters a cold surface. On the outer walls of the hive this is less of an issue as it is away from the cluster. If it condenses on the inner cover, this is more of an issue. For this reason it's **important to well-insulate the hive above the inner cover**. Your approach can either be to ventilate out some moisture or insulate well enough that moisture condenses in a non-harmful way.

Regarding ventilation, there is actually some evidence that increased $C0_2$ accumulation in the winter is not detrimental and may actually help place the bees in a lower metabolic state. It may also help reduce mites. You are encouraged to



refer to videos by **Ettienne Tardiff** on this topic.

Things to consider

Top of hive – use at least a couple of sheets foam board (typically this gives about an R5 per 2" inches) over your inner cover. Other alternatives include an absorbent material such as wood chips or burlap or a combination of both. It is convenient to add a medium or shallow super to accommodate insulation. Burlap can be removed or replaced during a warm day and allowed to dry out.

Wraps – many beekeepers use 2" foam board around the hive or commercial products such as Bee Cosy or similar products. Tar-paper has little insulating value but will let moisture out while keeping precipitation out. Reducing wind exposure is another function of wrapping.

Hive configuration

Inner cover – many members notice that the bees try to propylize any gaps including the upper entrance. You may wish to invert the inner cover such that the **upper entrance** is effectively eliminated. If you use this approach ensure you have adequate top insulation.

Lower entrance – some members leave this wide open all winter. Others use a **mouse guard** or entrance reducer. This is a bit of a balancing act. If your hive has a lot of humidity going into fall it might be preferable to leave this open. If using an entrance reducer or mouse guard it's important to check periodically during the winter that dead bees are not blocking the entrance. A small pole or stick is useful to keep by to sweep out the bottom board.

Screened bottom board – many members leave this in place, some with or without the sticky board in place.

Upcoming Meeting

Our next public meeting is scheduled for November 18 at **Lo Ellen public school library.**

Memberships

Thanks to those who renewed their memberships! 12-month Memberships can be paid in person at the meeting or by e-transfer to SDBAmemberships@gmail.com

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Keep in touch with us!

On Facebook

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