

Ithaca College Apiary NEWSLETTER

June 8, 2021



Updates of the Week:

Keep an eye out for the next volunteer day...

We have some really strong hives in the apiary right now! When we arrived for our most recent inspection, we noticed a small swarm hanging from a sapling at the edge of the apiary. It was significantly smaller than an average swarm, which implies that this colony had already swarmed once and for some reason decided to swarm a second time. While inspecting hives, several of them appeared to be queenless, so we shuffled some frames around from our other hives to give them brood from strong colonies and provide the bigger hives empty frames to fill. Some of our strongest hives already have full boxes of honey that are ready to harvest, which is awesome considering how early in the season it still is. There was one hive that came from a bee removal last summer that started to fail, and when we opened it to see what the status of the hive was it was completely



dead with some confused workers still finishing their life cycle. The mold on the bottom frames gave a clear sign that this hive had too much moisture and the bees got sick. It was sad to see such a weak little ball of bees, but unfortunately that's just a part of beekeeping. We know now that putting a hive in that same spot is probably a bad idea without extra precautions to protect them from the humidity.

Meet the Menagerie:

June 3

Spring is in full swing and the baby animals are everywhere! When I pulled up to the apiary for our inspections, the first thing I saw was a mother deer and her young fawn running into the woods. I'm always impressed by how fast little fawns can be, considering how gangly and uncoordinated they are sometimes!

I kept going along the path, curious to see if the blackbirds were nesting just beyond the apiary. I didn't make it 20 feet before I saw two juvenile groundhogs playing together on the hill. I tried to walk slowly so I wouldn't scare them, but they were appropriately suspicious and ducked under a bush to watch me go by. At the swampy drainage area past the apiary, the Red Winged Blackbird nesting season seemed to be going strong. As I approached the cattails, several angry males began circling me and squawking. For a small bird, they can be rather intimidating! I didn't want to bother them too much, so I just took a quick peek into the cattails and was rewarded with this nest of darling baby birds. I can't rightfully call them cute...to me they kind of look like zombies...but they are sweet little creatures who I know will be very handsome one day!



-Ana