



Honeybees are back!

There are three hives set up with sugar water feeders inside of the hives. So the bees have a supply of food for now.

All three hives have bees in them. You can see them flying in and out when it's 40F or warmer.

This month and next are when most of the bees will make it or not. It all depends on how much longer the old queen goes on laying.

If the queen makes it to May and can replace her-

self, the hives will be good to go and we will have lots of honey this year (barring a drought on the plants).

Each hive will build up to about 30,000-40,000 honey bees in mid summer. The bees are all female and live about 30 days (except the queen who can live for years, but on average live six months).

They will start out with only a few thousand female bees and one queen, and increase in population each day.



They will also start to produce some male drones and extra queens in late April or May.

The beekeepers will watch for these extra queens and make "splits" (smaller hives).

The bees are Russian crossed with feral bees, and one hive is Italian bees from a swarm the beekeepers retrieved.

 Here is a great local [bee story](#).

*Bees never bruise their flower
But leave it having done
As fair as ever and as fit to use;
So both the flower doth stay and
honey run.*
-Excerpted from George Herbert



Eat Well

Click on the [Eat Well Guide](#) at this site to make sustainable, local and organic food choices in your neighborhood.

Just enter your zip code.

Special points of interest

- Honey bees are back!
- Learning opportunity
- Heirloom and organic seeds
- Eat Well
- Letter to editor
- Feed soil not plant
- Food-borne illness

Heirloom and organic seeds

Contact garden pal and master gardener, Pat Wyman, at 734-586-2869 for free seeds. In mid May Pat will offer 6" tomato transplants for fifty cents per plant. She will have about 50 plants available.

Local Harvest works with some of the country's most proficient vegetable growers. The seeds they offer are great for home gardens with an emphasis on flavor and quality. Check out their Web site, [Local Harvest](#), for heirloom and organic seeds.

More on growing vegetables

March 29, Monday, 6:30 p.m.
IHM Motherhouse, Room B-010

Jennie Stanger will be back to discuss seed and plant selection, plant spacing and care, support methods and harvesting of many popular vegetables.

Please sign up for this free hour-long class by sending an e-mail to: smcneil@ihmsisters.org.

Let's keep it on top of the table

Read my Feb. 25 *Monroe Evening News* Letter to the Editor on "Romanians might be on to something." I weighed in on the Romanian's plan to tax "fast food" while looking at how we pay for our junk food here: [Letter to the Editor](#).

Are too many coffee grounds bad for plants?

Read [this post](#) by Joe Lamp'l, PBS Master Gardener and author.

Food-borne illness = \$152 billion each year

An initiative of the Pew Charitable Trust examined government data on all food-borne illnesses, with known cause, and found Americans pay \$152 **billion** in health care costs. "The take-away message from the report is that this estimate demonstrates that food-borne illness is a serious burden to our society," said Sandra Eskin, director of Pew Charitable Trusts' food safety campaign. See the [full article](#).

Feed the soil not the plant

Maintaining a healthy soil is key for keeping plants healthy and disease resistant. The soil is like the human body.

The healthier we are the easier it is to stave off viral and bacterial infections or at least shorten their duration. Like our bodies, what we put into the soil makes a difference in plant growth and strength. Pests are attracted to weaker plants. Read

more at [OrganicGardenInfo.com](#).



"Food safety has deteriorated significantly, with some of the biggest recalls in U.S. history occurring in the last few years. If the government's going to subsidize any foods, it should be healthy foods."

Eric Schlosser, award-winning journalist and author of the book, *Fast Food Nation*

St. Mary Organic Farm

Sharon McNeil, Ecology Director
610 West Elm Ave.
Monroe, MI 48162
Phone 734-240-9720
Fax 734-240-9784
E-mail smcneil@ihmsisters.org
www.ihmsisters.org

