

What is a swarm of bees in May worth?

By Jim Eadie

A swarm of bees in May, is worth a load of hay.

A swarm of bees in June, is worth a silver spoon.

A swarm of bees in July, isn't worth a fly.

So goes the proverbial old beekeeper saying, except if you don't know much about bees it doesn't make a lot of sense.

There has been a huge resurgence in interest about bees, and possibly keeping a few hives of bees, according to Roz McCann an experienced local beekeeper.

'People have told me they would like to just keep a hive or two ? they don't care so much about the honey, just to keep the honeybee alive,' she said. North Hastings may be the perfect place to do just that. Most people here live a sufficient distance from large farms or other operations possibly using insecticides or herbicides that could be dangerous to bees.

'Local gardens could also be a problem,' she noted, 'as some people may use pesticides as well.'

On Friday May 15 the Friends of the Wollaston Limerick Library (FOWL) will be hosting McCann for their monthly community programming series at 7PM in the Coe Hill Royal Canadian Legion hall. FOWL spokesperson, Anne Ireland said that they have heard a lot community interest in getting more information about backyard beekeeping, which ignited the May event with McCann.

'I will bring an empty hive with me,' said McCann, 'and so people can see what it looks like.' McCann will also bring hive tools and other beekeepers equipment, but will leave the bees at home for this evening.

She will also cover information such as: what makes a good colony of bees, and where to get them, necessary start up equipment and costs, and hive management ?? even catching a swarm ? hopefully in May.

Before beginning a beekeeping project, McCann suggests that spending a few days with another small beekeeper is invaluable.

'Being able to spot disease problems in the hive, bee activity within a hive, what a drone or a queen looks like and why you need to know. This hobby may not be for everybody, and it is good to find that out early,' she said.

Admission to the event is free, and FOWL will also be providing free refreshments.

An evening with Roz McCann in Coe Hill will answer any lingering questions you might have about that 'old beekeepers proverb'.

For further information, contact the Wollaston Limerick Public Library at 613-337-5183.