

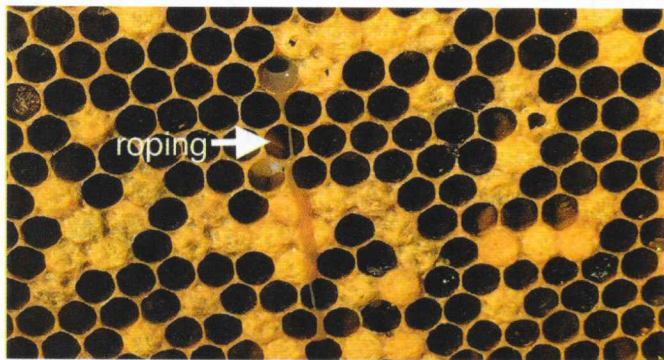
When someone says they inspect their hive, make sure they actually inspect. Offer to inspect their hive for them, explain about AFB, and definitely inspect a hive if it dies.

#### GET THE WORD OUT IN CLUBS

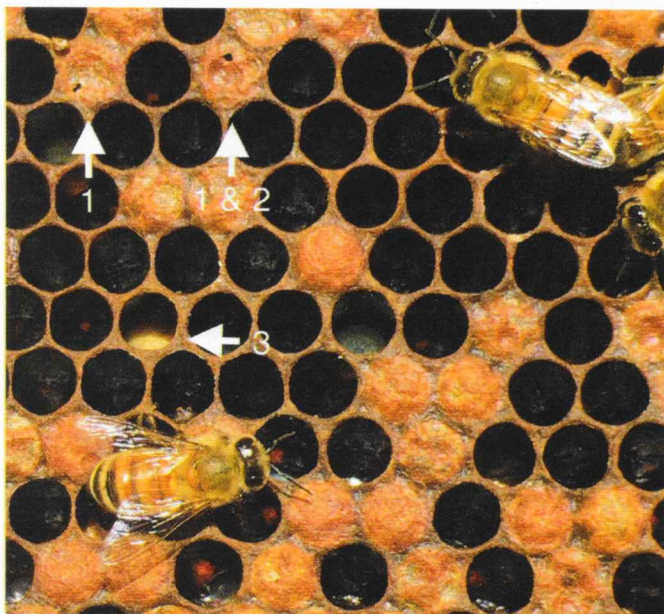
Oftentimes people are embarrassed to talk about AFB or feel ashamed for their bees having it. Make it safe to talk about AFB in your bee club. Show people a couple times a year what it looks like either in frames or in photos so people are reminded to check their hives for it. Have a couple of point people in your club who can recognize it, so people can bring in frames for them to inspect and look for it. Encourage people to get dead-outs inspected before using the equipment for new bees.

I was taught that AFB was rare, and I never saw it or heard about it in my first 10 years of beekeeping. That is not the case anymore. Backyard beekeepers need to be looking for it every time they inspect. If they do, we can make it extremely rare again.

#### HOW TO IDENTIFY AMERICAN FOULBROOD



With a toothpick or small stick, poke a hole in the capping and look for caramel-colored liquid. Pull the liquid out with the toothpick and see if it ropes out at least ¾ of an inch and snaps back. The frames will also stink, and once you smell it, you won't forget it. People say it smells like rotting meat. (Photo – Jennifer Radtke)



On frames of patchy brood, look for 1) sunken cappings, 2) off-center holes in cappings, and 3) melted larvae on the bottoms of cells. These are indications of American Foulbrood. (Photo – Jennifer Radtke)

#### EUROPEAN FOULBROOD (EFB)

European Foulbrood is less serious than AFB, and you don't have to get rid of your equipment. EFB doesn't produce spores, like AFB, that persist in the hive. EFB is similar to AFB in that it is a bacterial disease and you will see spotty brood. With EFB the larvae usually die before capping, and with AFB the larvae usually die after capping. Therefore, with AFB you will see the sunken cappings and holes in the cappings. With EFB you will see uncapped larvae melted or dried up and twisted in shape. You can get slight roping from melted larvae with EFB, but AFB produces a longer rope and it snaps back. If you are unsure whether you have European or American Foulbrood, you can send in a sample of brood comb to the USDA Research Lab (see below) and ask them to test for both.

To confirm you have American Foulbrood, you can:

Send a sample of the brood comb with sunken cappings and caramel liquid to the USDA Research Laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland. Testing is free. Wrap the comb in a paper towel or newspaper, not plastic. Here are more details on how to submit a sample: <https://www.ars.usda.gov/northeast-area/beltsville-md-barc/beltsville-agricultural-research-center/bee-research-laboratory/docs/bee-disease-diagnosis-service/>

Test it yourself with a Vita test kit which can be bought for under \$20 from any beekeeping supply business. Here are details from the manufacturer of how it works and how to use it: <https://www.vita-europe.com/beehealth/products/afb-diagnostic-test-kit/>

Test it yourself with the Holst Milk Test. All you need is milk and some of the decomposed larvae or scale at the bottom of the cells. Here are instructions and photos of the results:

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/sick-bees-part-18a-colony-collapse-revisited/#holst-milk-test>

Jennifer Radtke has been keeping bees for 14 years. Five years ago she created a beekeeping education program for urban backyard beekeepers at the BioFuel Oasis Cooperative in Berkeley, California. Check out her beekeeping videos and photos on Instagram: [instagram.com/jenniferradtke](https://www.instagram.com/jenniferradtke)



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