



# BEE TALK

Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

## GOING TO THE HEATHER 2020

**F**or some years members have had the opportunity to take their bees to the heather moors of the Derbyshire Peak District. This pilgrimage usually takes place during the first or second week of August and then about a month later are brought back. It is quite any easy journey; up the M1 and through Chesterfield to the moorland at the back of Chatsworth House.

A great deal has been written about preparing bees for the heather but essentially you need to consider the strength of your colony. It must have bees over every frame, and I do mean a good covering of bees over each one, be queen right, of course, and have at least two full brood frames of stores and I suggest feeding them. A high proportion of young bees with near wall-to-wall brood is ideal. Rearranging frames with unsealed brood to the outside and sealed in the centre allows the queen to lay in the centre as workers emerge forcing honey to be taken up into the super.

You need just one super, ideally drawn comb, but foundation will do. Thin unwired foundation is best as it allows you to make cut comb. The usual way hobby beekeepers extract heather is by cold pressing, so thin unwired foundation is also more economical and we are very fortunate in having a heather press in our extraction room.

In fairness to other beekeepers you need to be satisfied your bees are disease free and understand they will be placed on the moor amongst bees from other places with the risks associated in doing this. The farm we go to is about 1000ft up so the lighter coloured Italian bees and variations of them may not be suitable because when we are enjoying refreshing warm light rain at home up on the moor it is cold horizontal stair rods.

Your hive will need to have a travelling screen and be secured with two proper hive straps



Peak District Heather (Image  
Credit: James Grant Photography)

or ratchet straps. The floor, particularly the Thornes budget varroa floor, needs to be checked for leaks (of bees) with the entrance blocked with a strip of foam; not tape or wood etc. Pay particular attention to the back part of the floor for which Thornes give you a few drawing pins to fix the mesh in place. This is not good enough as when hive straps are tightened the mesh floor lifts and bees come flying out at the back. Staples or large headed nails are required to fasten it securely.

In the past we have taken members' bees for them. This is no longer practical but, as always in the past, members are able to take their own hives. The site is secure with reasonable access along a track to a field at the edge of the moor. However, the last part of the track is steep and rough leading to the field where we keep the bees which can sometimes be rather soft. Taking this into account the arrangements will be as follows:

- Inform Mike Townsend that you want to take bees. I would appreciate an expression of interest in the first instance by email only

please: [michaelatownsend@hotmail.com](mailto:michaelatownsend@hotmail.com)

- I will liaise with other heather goers to see if vehicle sharing is practical. This will take into account the type of vehicles beekeepers have with the opportunity to team up with others. Those with four-wheel drive/high clearance vehicles may help others get across the short last stretch of the field leading to the edge of the moor.

- I am exploring the possibility of leaving a barrow on site to make it easier for members who do not have four wheel drive/high ground clearance vehicles to carry their hives the short distance where ground conditions may be difficult.

- You will be given contact details and a map. The 'rent' paid directly to the farmer is one 1lb jar of honey per hive taken.

I hope you will want to try heather going; at the very least you will be able to use the trip as an opportunity to explore this part of the Peak District, which includes Chatsworth House just a few miles down the road.

**Mike Townsend**

# MESSAGE FROM WLBK'S CHAIR

**W**ell that was a short season! I am still hoping for another couple of glorious weeks with a strong nectar flow, but it's clear that my bees are entering the autumn. They are pickling a wide range of pollen, cramming stores into the brood boxes and contracting the nest size. No more wax is being produced and my swarming worries are over.

Near my apiaries, the bramble is long over and I don't have local balsam so, this has been an early season- but a good one. A nice spring crop was followed by a real summer bounty and I am glad it took it off in mid-July, before it could be taken down.

This year I have been lucky enough to get two very different types of honey- the usual light honey that seems to flow all year where I live, but also one bucket of a much darker honey that I don't usually get. Whether it is a medium honey or a dark remains to be seen. I had high hopes for this wonderful stuff in the Honey Show this year- I don't usually get to enter the medium honey category. The County Honey Show is cancelled, but the WLBK committee have yet to discuss our own show, so there is hope that we could arrange something safely. I am not bottling my precious bucket of dark/medium honey till I know! Fingers crossed.

I still have a couple of full supers left over from the Spring crop, which need to be melted out. Clive's Zoom session reminded me that the apimelter is the thing to get solid honey out. I was surprised to find that the extraction unit is getting booked up for August already and you might want to get your bookings in now.

I am still busy with feeding and storing supers but it seems to me to be the earliest autumn I can remember.

Enjoy your beekeeping this August and If you need help with your bees, contact me or any other member of the committee at [warleambees@warleambees.org.uk](mailto:warleambees@warleambees.org.uk). Stay safe!

**Jane Medwell, WLBK Chair**



## WLBK BRANCH BEES ON HOLIDAY

**I**t has been a varied season for the bees in their temporary homes. Several of the colonies were very feisty. Mike Townsend helped Jane re-queen a feisty colony and Chris Cox dealt with another. Everyone is working to ensure that the bees returning to the training apiary are calm and gentle. It is no fun inspecting bees that are dive bombing your suit, especially an experience to avoid for any new beekeepers we hope to encourage next season.

Most of the colonies have produced several supers of honey. Reports are coming in of these now being taken off the hives.



There will be plenty to pay for the rent and an excess hopefully to be sold.

As always we each have different ways of achieving our goals and the bees will be receiving different varroa treatments depending on where they went. In an ideal world they would all receive the same treatment but it may be interesting to see if there is any marked difference in varroa levels later on.

Feeding is also on our minds and the co-op have ordered Ambrosia to make this easy for us.

We need to consider returning the bees to the training apiary. As the lockdown restrictions are eased and we start to enjoy a little more freedom; it is time for the bees to return home and have a catch up with each other. Maybe they will compare notes on where you get treated the best on your staycation.

**Liz Gurney**

# IN THE APIARY

I have already treated for varroa (I used MAQs this year during the flow) but if you haven't you may want to do it after feeding (amitraz, pyrethroids, thymols) and/or during the broodless period in winter (oxalic acid- dribbled or vaped).

The big issue for August and September will be feeding the colonies for winter. We face the difficult decision of how early to do it. I don't want them turning all my Ambrosia into brood, but I don't want them starving.

Tasks for this month:

- Order and collect Ambrosia from the branch co-op if you haven't already.
- Remove any remaining supers at the point you think the flow is coming to an end.
- Replace supers above the crown board for a day or two to let the bees clean them up. Stored dry, supers are not at risk of wax moth.
- Do a full disease check- really look closely at the brood by shaking off all the bees. Make sure you do one inspection where you ONLY look at brood.
- Choose the queens you want to go into the winter with and unite the smaller colonies to achieve your target number.
- Feed your colonies. Use heavy syrup, ambrosia or fondant and make sure the colonies are well fed before winter- Nationals need to have around 18kg of stores. This might not need to be done yet- it depends on whether your bees need the food, so check.
- After the honey is removed you can use Thymols, Amitraz, Pyrethroids and other varroa treatments.
- Persist in the great wasp fight! Place traps and narrow hive entrances as small as they can go. In the photo above is a homemade wasp prevention entrance that Barry Meatyard made for me (go to our website for details on how to make it). This is a month of heavy lifting - removing cleaned frames for storage, taking ambrosia, syrup or fondant to the apiary, feeding and, possibly, uniting. Stay strong!

Jane Medwell



## OUT APIARY

We have been offered the opportunity of an Out Apiary at the Temple Fields Natural Burial Ground near Temple Balsall. With 17 acres in which to site beehives and bounded on two sides by nature reserves, this site would provide opportunities for several beekeepers. Security and access are both good and the owners are very supportive, even offering assistance in any levelling required, installing stock fencing and providing lockable storage. This is too good an opportunity to miss.

If interested please contact Bernard Brown at [bernardbrown@outlook.com](mailto:bernardbrown@outlook.com) in the first instance.

## HONEY SHOW

At present, discussions are ongoing as to whether we are able to go ahead with our WLBK Branch Honey Show this year, albeit in a modified format.

A decision will be made at the next Committee Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> August and members will be notified.

The County and National Shows have already been cancelled.

## CO-OP IS OPEN

Just a reminder that the co-op is open albeit with revised procedures to meet the current situation. Details of these are on our website.

We have eight tonnes of ambrosia in stock for autumn feeding which, this year, may well be required earlier than usual.

# HONEY EXTRACTION

So you have some honey to extract! Perhaps not enough to warrant using the extraction unit which, by the way, is up and running, albeit under restricted arrangements (see last month's Bee Talk or follow the links on the face page of our website). So how about borrowing one of our home-loan extractors?

In the interests of protecting subsequent users, there will be a three day gap between loans, which will obviously impact on their availability so it would be advisable to book now. You can do this by going to our website, clicking on the members area and then on "Resources and Contacts" where, under Honey Extraction, you will find a link to our complete 'list of equipment' available to borrow including the contact details of the custodian with whom you should make the necessary arrangements.

More than ever, under the present circumstances, equipment must be returned in a squeaky clean condition and, to be fair to those who have booked after you, the agreed loan periods must be strictly adhered to.

Clive Joyce

## BEE LINES

Part of our subscription goes to Warwickshire Beekeepers' Association (County) and, in 2019, totalled £1,740. Being a charity, County claims gift aid on our behalf which totalled £1,816 the same year. This is the second largest source of income after the introductory course for the branch and coupled with the Warwickshire Beekeeper Magazine, training courses, lectures, staging assessments and examinations, a honey show, various grants and guidance to branches on governance issues such as health and safety, GDPR, and safeguarding is, perhaps, not such a bad deal after all.



# ARNIA HIVE'S JULY REPORT



Sometimes in beekeeping it feels like a game of Snakes and Ladders. Earlier in the year, the Arnia colony took advantage of the Spring flow, and we were adding our third super (almost needing a real ladder!). After a difficult swarm season, it felt like we landed on several 'snakes' leading to a queenless hive with very little honey.

We now have a new Arnia queen to match the nice blue livery of her brood box, and she has been laying steadily, but the Summer flow has sadly been missed. Just like many football fans, we hope that next season will be better!

Our focus now is on preparing the hive for Winter and also setting up the solar panel to charge the batteries.

The Arnia business has been purchased by new owners and they are currently re-sourcing the equipment to lower cost manufacturers. They are potentially moving to a subscription based customer model, so we will need to see if our current free service



will continue. When combined with COVID-19 restrictions it has not been possible to source spare equipment to set up more Arnia monitoring hives.

If anyone has any questions about the Arnia hive, please get in touch: [aldeeley@btinternet.com](mailto:aldeeley@btinternet.com)

Alan Deeley

## UPDATE ON THE ASIAN HORNET

Velutina, also known as the Asian hornet, is an invasive non-native species from Asia. It arrived in France

in 2004 where it spread rapidly. As a highly effective predator of insects, including honey bees and other beneficial species, it can cause significant losses to bee colonies, and potentially other native species.

Since 2016, there have been 18 confirmed sightings of Asian hornet in England. This figure includes a total of nine nests, all of which were destroyed. The nearest sighting to Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers was in the Tamworth area in September 2019, where the nest was destroyed.

There have been no confirmed sightings of Asian hornet in the UK in 2020. So has the problem gone away? Certainly not, although the reduction in travel due to COVID-19 may have reduced the number of caravans and rucksacks travelling between continental Europe and the UK this year. However, the hornet can easily hitch a lift in goods travelling across the channel...and there remains a high chance that a colony is lurking somewhere in the UK, building up quietly and inconspicuously, only to appear if we let down our guard. The hornets are mainly active between April and November, peaking in August and September, which is now!



Please remember to sign up to BeeBase and check it is up to date if you have not visited the website for some time. If velutina arrives here, efforts to contain it will be seriously jeopardised if the National Bee Unit does not have a record of vulnerable apiaries.

### LEARNING MORE

There are a couple of good informative YouTube videos if you want to remind yourself of the horrors of this invasive beastie, put out by FERA on behalf of APHA:

- The first is this [training video](#) on the biology of velutina, and is quite detailed, lasting around 22 minutes.
- The [second video](#) is shorter, very recent, and gives much more about how the hornet got into the UK. This one is fascinating.

### YOU'VE SPOTTED VELUTINA! NOW WHAT?

So if you are unfortunate enough to find one in your apiary – what should you do?

- Notify the Non Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) immediately. Use the free Asian Hornet Watch App, available for both Android and iPhone. Download this app onto your phone as beekeepers are often the first to spot velutina hawking around their hives
- If this is not possible, use the NNSS online notification form.
- If all else fails, send any suspect sightings to the Non Native Species on [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk), including a photo, the location of the sighting and a description of the insect seen.

Liz Bates

# TIME OF YEAR: AUTUMN FEEDING

**F**or those new to beekeeping, Autumn feeding can be a bit of a mystery – Why feed?, When to feed?, What to feed? How to feed? and How much? So here is some guidance.

## WHY FEED

The aim of autumn feeding is to ensure that at the end of the foraging season your girls have at least 20kg of stores in each standard National hive to last them through the winter.

## WHEN TO FEED

The timing of Autumn feeding of bees is one of the “judgement skills” of beekeeping. However, each colony and apiary is different and, once the honey we are stealing has been taken off, you need to inspect the hive to establish the remaining stores situation. This year, most colonies should contain some summer stores, so we would not expect to feed until September/early October. If, however, your girls are light on summer stores then early emergency feeding may be necessary. The danger of early feeding is that the colonies can conclude there is a strong nectar flow and turn too much of what you supply into producing brood, rather than storing it but this is better than starved bees. This the very situation I am in, having to feed two of my colonies who seem to have forgotten how to go shopping.

## WHAT TO FEED

There are numerous products available. Some proprietary and some home manufactured.

Traditionally, **sugar syrup** was the staple feed for bees. This is made by dissolving white granulated sugar – NOT demerara nor brown sugar – in water and, at this time of year, in the proportions of 2lbs of sugar to 1 pint of water (1kg to 630ml). Using warm water speeds up the process but allow it to cool before giving to the bees. Sugar syrup can ferment and thus has a limited shelf life.

**Ambrosia syrup** is a specially formulated product made from a base of beet sugar with added fructose and glucose which has been found to be an entirely satisfactory alternative to making ones’ own sugar syrup. It has the advantages that it is ready mixed, has good keeping qualities, requires less work for the bees to store and has a lower odour than sugar syrup making one’s hives less attractive to robbers. Beekeeping suppliers charge £36 + for a 12.5kg jerry can but, through bulk buying, the branch co-op can sell this at £9.00 for 12.5kg. 12.5kg of ambrosia will fit easily into a standard 30lb honey bucket. We now have it in stock and orders can be placed via the members’ section of the website:

[www.warleambees.org.uk](http://www.warleambees.org.uk)

**Fondant** (the stuff cakes are iced with) can be used as an Autumn feed. It can be made in the kitchen but is conveniently available as Baker’s Fondant in 12.5kg blocks. Fondant as a feed, has several advantages. It is simply added under the crown board. You don’t

need specialist feeders.

There is no risk of spillages when putting on the hive which reduces the risk of robbing by other bees. The bees take fondant down more slowly which seems to avoid the brood box getting

packed out with stores which can leave the queen with nowhere to lay. Usually a once only application, fondant is a good option for an out apiary which cannot be visited frequently to top up syrup feed.

Fondant is also available through the branch co-op at £8.75 per 12.5kg block and can again be ordered via the members’ section of the website under “co-op purchasing.”

You can, of course, leave a **super of stores** over winter for your bees. Simply adjust the quantity of syrup feed to be given accordingly and make sure the bees have access to the stores in the super i.e. remove the queen excluder or, better still, put the super under the brood-box without a queen excluder.

## HOW MUCH TO FEED

How much to feed depends on how much honey is already available to the bees within the hive. Once this has been assessed it can be deducted from the 20kg target quantity to give the amount of feed to be given.

To avoid such calculations, beekeepers commonly continue to feed their bees until they will “take down” no more. They approximate how much to purchase but as a general guide, 1.5 units of 12.5kg of Ambrosia per hive should be sufficient if this approach is adopted. Any Ambrosia remaining can be stored and used as a stimulative feed in the Spring but be careful, as this can encourage early swarming in prolific colonies.

Others assess existing stores levels by estimating the weight of stores in each brood frame before feeding, totting it up and making up the difference between the total and the target of 20kg with syrup. For this exercise assume a full national brood frame holds approx. 2.5kg of stores, hence the bees need the equivalent of 8 full frames. A full 14 x 12 National brood frame holds 3.75kg of stores.

A further method is to weigh each hive using a luggage scale (it is accurate enough to weigh one side and double it) making an allowance for the weight of the hive and bees.

With years of practice, many beekeepers “heft” their hives in order to assess their weight of stores.

In your calculations you need to take account of the fact that sugar syrup and ambrosia contain 30% and 40% water respectively which needs to be evaporated off by the bees to 18%. Consequently 12.5kg of syrup does not lead to 12.5kg but 9.75kg and 12.5kg of ambrosia 11kg of additional stores.

## TIMING OF FEEDING

It is best to feed bees in the evening. This is partly because, when feeding, bees will do the “round dance” in the hive indicating that food is available somewhere in the general vicinity of the hive and



will tear about outside looking for it which they are less inclined to do at this time of day. They appear to have no means of telling each other that the food source is actually in the hive.

All colonies in an apiary should be fed at the same time to discourage robbing which is also deterred by late evening feeding.

### HOW TO FEED

There are proprietary feeders such as Rapid (right) and Contact feeders of various capacities for feeding syrup but equally successful and cheaper



are washing up tubs or ice cream tubs, placed on top of the brood frames, with chopped straw spread on the syrup's surface to provide a platform from which the bees can feed without drowning. Another method is to use "Click and Close" polythene freezer bags filled with the feed which are then laid on top of the brood frames and the upper surface slit with a sharp (Stanley type) knife. It sounds counter intuitive but the syrup does not flow out.

With fondant, cut the block of fondant in half lengthways. At the hive, place the fondant, cut face down, on the queen excluder. That's it. Job done.

Nearly all methods of feeding require either an eke or an empty super to accommodate the feeder under the roof.

### REMEMBER

Do not neglect Autumn feeding. The sight of bees with their heads in the cells trying to get at the last drop of honey and starving to death is a pitiful one. It can be avoided.

Originally penned by Tim Foden in 2016.

Updated by Bernard Brown.

# BEE FRIENDLY PLANTS: HIMALAYAN BALSAM

I love the Himalayan Balsam. As a little girl growing up on the edge of Dartmoor in Devon, I used to play in the streams during the summer holidays and a lasting memory is that almost sickly sweet fragrance of the Balsam lining the water's edge. At the time of course I had no idea that the perfume was from the masses of nectar it produces, and which is so attractive to honeybees.

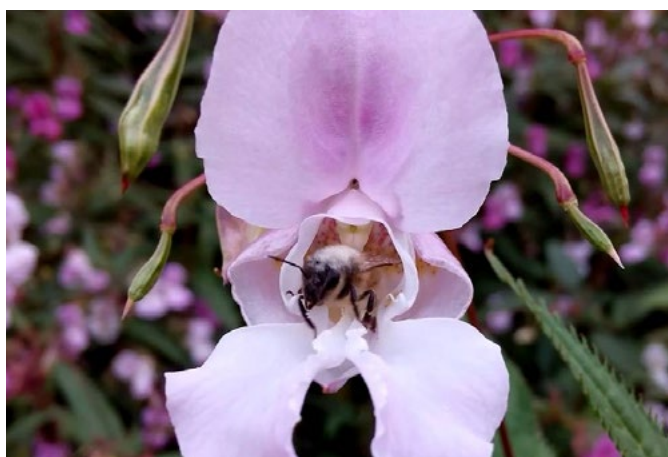


It is a large annual growing from 1 to 2 metres high along streams and riverbanks. Its botanical name *Impatiens glandulifera* refers to the small glands situated below the leaf stems which produce the sticky nectar. Flowering later in the season, it is a wonderful source of forage for our girls. The pollen, however, seems to be almost an irritant as the bees attempt to remove the characteristic white mark when returning to the hive.

Sadly, this friend of the beekeeper is a foe to the environmentalist and widely considered to be an invasive species. The genus name *Impatiens* means - as you might expect- impatient and refers to its method of seed dispersal. After flowering, the seed pods are formed and explode when disturbed, scattering their contents anywhere up to 7 metres away. Some Wildlife Trusts even organise "Balsam Bashing" parties to help control the spread.

Friend or foe, I still love this beautiful plant and so do the bees!

Maggie Curley





# 'TIS THE SEASON OF WASP WARS

**T**he blackberry is over and the rosebay willow herb is in flower and it is still July! These traditional indicators that the beekeeping season is past its peak serve to reinforce further the advanced state of the usual cycle of the natural world this year and some members have already been caught out by the early arrival of wasps with evil on their minds.

Wasps will attack your beehive anytime but especially at or just before honey harvest, when the smell of sweet honey acts like a dinner bell for not only wasps but robber bees as well.

Hives are at special risk if they are:

- new
- weak
- small
- battling mites or other pests

On the other hand, a strong colony will be able to defend itself better from attacking wasps.

Once a scout wasp finds your hive, it will return to its nest and tell all its wasp buddies about the awesome honey cache it has just found. Before you know it, your poor hive will be a wasp buffet.

The more the wasps break the honey cells and eat the honey inside, the stronger the honey smell will be—and will attract more wasps. Your honeybees will try to defend their hive and some will be killed. The scent of all those dead bees will also act as a lure for wasps.

So, here are some countermeasures that can be taken to help your girls:

## CHECK YOUR HIVE FOR POORLY FITTING COMPONENTS

Pay particular attention to the rear of the open mesh floor where it is fixed to the wooden rail with drawing pins. These have been known to fall out allowing the mesh to bow and providing a back door into the hive. Galvanised clout nails make a far better job.

## SHRINK YOUR HIVE ENTRANCES

Make the entrances to the beehive smaller by Inserting the entrance block. The hole, in most standard entrance blocks, is still too large so reduce this down to 2cm x 1cm. There are many ways to do this. Inserting a piece of foam is one but, if using gaffer tape, do avoid having the sticky side where bees can get stuck on it. A smaller hive entrance is easier for honeybees to protect and, despite the colony being near its peak population-wise, won't interfere with your colony's ability to come and go.

## MODIFY THE ACCESS TO THE ENTRANCE

The "Kewl" floor, much beloved of "The Apiarist", provides a dog-legged entrance which provides two constricted areas on the route in for the bees to defend. For details of its operation and how to make one go to <https://www.theapiarist.org/kewl-floor/>

Then there are beehive robbing screens. Installed in front of the entrance with a space between it and the hive, these screens deny direct frontal access to the hive. The wasps can smell the honey and spend their time trying to work out how to get inside the beehive. When/if they do, they have to negotiate two defendable entrances. Meanwhile, your own bees, being members of MENZA, figure out their way to come and go as they please. It may take them a little

longer to get in through the more constrained entrances, but this is actually a good thing as the honeybees, waiting their turn in line, will act as guards, attacking any wasps that try to enter. Proprietary screens are available from beekeeping equipment suppliers. They can, however, be easily and cheaply made. Member Barry Meatyard has devised one such (see page 3) – go to our website to find out how to make one.

## TRAP THE BLIGHTERS

Although you won't notice wasps as much during the spring, if you set out wasp traps early, you can catch the wasp queens before they have a chance to establish a colony. There are various proprietary traps available but again these can be fashioned from readily available recyclable materials details of which will be posted on our website. They work by attracting the wasps by the smell of some juice and once inside the wasps become exhausted trying to escape and fall into the juice and drown. Some rely on a home brewed concoction of something sweet but NOT honey. Left-over wine (who ever has that?), flat beer, discarded fruit juice, mashed, over-ripe fruit laced with a slurp of vinegar and a dash of washing up liquid works well, if a little indiscriminately, trapping hover flies and other beneficial insects as well. One which is more discriminate in its victims is "Wasp Bane". This consists of a trap containing a pheromone to attract wasps and nothing else. Hang traps 10 metres or so from the hives and keep a check on them. When full of dead bodies, replace the wasp juice.

## DECOY WASP NESTS

Wasps do have a beneficial role to play in the natural world in controlling aphids and other pests and some people may seek methods of deterrence rather than adopting the final solution. Allegedly, wasps are territorial and will not set up a colony closer than 200 feet from another.

Decoy wasp nests take advantage of this and are available on the internet. Made of paper on a wire frame these are suspended in the vicinity of the hive. Do these work? I will have to let you know as I am trialing them as I write.

## HOUSE KEEPING

Finally, be vigilant at honey harvest and be careful to not spill honey or, if you do, clean it up immediately.

**Bernard Brown**



# HINTS & TIPS

- Do you get fed up with smoker lids that are difficult to close and even more difficult to open? I find the following works for me. Next time you de-coke your smoker pay special attention to the outside of the rim of the body of the smoker and to the inside of the rim of the lid and get them squeaky clean down to the metal. I use one of those stainless steel wire scourers liberated from the kitchen. Keep the scourer in your bee box and each time after you have emptied the smoker and after leaving it to cool for a couple of minutes and before the goo dries, just run the scourer round both rims and - hey presto! - it's ready for next time. It takes about 30 seconds to do and is time well spent. It just goes to show that cleanliness is next to goo-lessness! (Thanks to Bernard Brown for this little gem of an idea).



- Opinions vary but on average a colony requires 20kg(45lb) of stored for the winter. With this in mind it is useful to know that a British Standard brood frame holds just over 2kg or about 5lbs, so 9 full frames, of stores will be needed. If you decide to leave a super of the colony's own honey then remember to remove the queen excluder until spring so that the cluster is able to move into the super easily as it will not leave the queen behind. There is a view that putting the super below the brood box is the best but, again, opinions vary!

- The eggs that the queen is laying in mid to late August will develop into the winter bees who will live for about 6 months. So it is important for the survival of the colony that these larvae are as disease free as possible. When the honey has been harvested put in the varroa board and count the mite drop and treat as necessary.

- When inspecting colonies in August take care to reduce the opportunity for robbing. This may be by wasps or other bees. Try to keep supers covered by a crown board and place them behind the colony, as robbers will be looking for the entrance. Work quickly and put in entrance blocks.



## HELEN ESSEX

If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to Helen on [h.essex@virgin.net](mailto:h.essex@virgin.net)

The editor of Bee Talk is Tanya Weaver. Please send content for the newsletter to her by the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month:  
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