



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

Skep Making Workshop Saturday 6TH October

We are holding another skep-making day this year and are inviting you to join us.



The cost is £30 and this price is for the purchase of the tool and sufficient straw and binder to enable you to complete your skep. The day will be from 10am until 4pm during which time you will be able to get well into making your skep, which you can then continue at home.



We will have an informal lunch where everyone contributes and this will be arranged at a later date. Soft drinks will be provided.

We can also offer a gift certificate if you wish to give this experience to a friend.

If you are interested, please complete the Google form on the home page of our website www.warleambees.org.uk and then make your payment as soon as possible.

Places are limited to 15 and there are always more people wanting to come along than there are places.



Mike Townsend
Mary Pemberton
Val Dillon

Bee Disease Insurance Ltd - Value for Money?

Our interest in the branch in the Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd (BDI) was aroused by a request for a donation towards a research project, the Revive Project. It seemed unusual to us that an insurance company would be asking for donations for research. The matter was covered to some degree in an article by the BDI President in the February edition of BBKA News.

BDI is totally separate from BBKA or any of the County Associations. It was set up in the 1930s to counter bee disease. Amongst its aims are education, research and insurance for loss of equipment required by an outbreak of notifiable disease.

Our branch investigated. We were concerned that BDI insurance gave very limited cover should equipment etc have to be destroyed. Yet in one year there was a surplus of approximately £50K

Should a hive have to be destroyed as a result of an inspection, then there is no compensation for the replacement of the colony of bees, or the brood chamber. Compensation for equipment is judged by the bee inspector according to the age and state. It is not 'New for Old'. Limited provision is made for a proportion of the honey destroyed. As one of our members said: 'I have spent over a thousand pounds on equipment for two hives. If I had to destroy my equipment as required then I would be unable to continue beekeeping'. One of our members sadly has had experience of foul brood with associated destruction of equipment and colonies. He said he received very little financial compensation, certainly nowhere near the amount required for replacement.

We took up the matter with the secretary of BDI. It was felt that: 'It was incumbent on the custodians of the company to ensure that the resources are properly protected' and by inference no change was required.

We feel that the insurance cover provided by BDI is inadequate. In addition a very large proportion of our BDI subscription is spent on research and education, a matter not known to many. We are investigating insurance cover from other sources.

Please let us know your views.

Peter Stanworth
Chairman

Autumn Feeding Guidance

We now have stock of Ambrosia syrup, so orders can be placed by following this link which is replicated on our Website

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRNRJPL_FksPMaXzAXj2205XPqrmcjYK7ba4B8SpT6gseYLQ/viewform#start=openform

To arrange collection, please contact Clive Joyce on 07792 222251.

The price is £9.00 per 12.5 Kg if you supply your own containers (buckets or previously used jerrycans) or £10.44 per 12.5 Kg if you also require a 30lb honey bucket with lid as a container. (A typical price from a commercial supplier will be in excess of £50 per 12.5 Kg incl container, delivered).

For those new to beekeeping, Ambrosia syrup is specially formulated 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.

The timing of Autumn feeding of bees is one of the "arts" of beekeeping. The aim at the end of the foraging season is to have at least 20 Kg of stores in each standard National hive. This year, most brood-boxes should contain some summer stores, so we would not expect to feed until September/early October but earlier if the bees appear to have no stores when honey is taken off. If your girls have little 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. Consequently you may have to feed again to provide winter stores.

For Autumn feeding it is more appropriate to use a rapid feeder, rather than a contact feeder.

There are various techniques for determining how much food each hive should be given:-

- Commonly, beekeepers continue to feed their bees until they will "take down" no more. As a general guide, it is recommended that 1.5 units of 12.5 Kg of Ambrosia is purchased per hive, and this is fed to the bees until they stop taking it from the feeder. 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 them up and making up the difference between the total and the target of 20Kg with syrup. For this exercise a full national brood frame holds approx. 2.5 Kg of stores, hence the bees need the equivalent of 8 full frames. A full 14 x 12 National brood frame hold 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.

If you intend to leave a super of stores over winter for your bees, you can adjust the syrup feed to be given accordingly as long as 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.

Note that "thick" sugar syrup (2lbs sugar to 1pint water) contains 40% water and Ambrosia nearly 30%. Whichever feed is used the bees need to evaporate the water down to about 18% before capping over the stores. Thus 1 Kg of Ambrosia will not result in an additional 1 Kg of stores.

Especially if hives are near properties, it is best to feed bees in the evening. This is partly because, when fed, 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 looking for it. They have no means of telling each other that the food source is actually in the hive. (I suppose in a few millennia, bees will invent the square dance to deal with this!!)

All colonies in an apiary should be fed at the same time to discourage robbing and the likelihood of robbing is further reduced by late evening feeding

The Branch Co-op will be arranging for supplies of fondant icing in 12.5 Kg blocks later in the year to order, which is a useful top-up feed if a hive becomes light over Winter or if we have a late Spring

Please order your Ambrosia (and buckets) using the order form in the Co-op section of our website

www.warleambees.org.uk Ambrosia can only be supplied if ordered in this way and paid for before collection is arranged.

As indicated in the order confirmation you will receive, collection is from (our honey extraction unit and resource centre at Hurst Farm, Crackley Lane Kenilworth

Jephson Gardens Glasshouse and East Lodge - The Bees are Back

Friday 27th July was the day when the Observation Hive was restocked with bees to allow visitors to the Glasshouse to see them at work. This hive is similar to the one that has been present on the first floor in the Market Place Museum, Warwick for 80 years. Visitors are encouraged to open the hive doors and look at the bees at work, including attempting to identify the one queen bee within the hive. One problem is that access to the Glasshouse can be a little hit and miss as the number of private functions held at the restaurant have increased and on each occasion the Glasshouse is closed to visitors. WHY?

As well as restocking the Observation Hive the traditional working hive in the East Lodge garden in Jephson Gardens was also restocked. This followed the colony collapse over the long cold/wet winter and on the completion of the building works on the East Lodge itself by Warwick District Council that prevented access earlier in the year. Already there has been considerable interest by visitors to the garden and the colony has already strengthened.



Mike Townshend supervising the installation of the bees and more importantly the anti-vandal measures which we hope will prevent any attempted interference and removal. His surplus sailing equipment spares have been brought into play.

As with the Glasshouse the access to this garden is limited as it appears to open at 10am and be locked at 5pm each day.

WLBK Frame Showcases

The Branch Honey Show is planned to take place on Thursday 13th September at the BBKA HQ at Stoneleigh. The Branch Committee are keen that new beekeepers take part if at all possible and to this end we have purchased a number of Frame Showcases to enable new members to exhibit with the minimum of fuss.

The preparation of honey for showing can appear a little daunting to new beekeepers, especially in their first year. The presenting a capped frame of honey is much more straightforward and in the past members have resorted to modified cereal boxes as a method of showing. This places new entrants at a distinct disadvantage (not sure this should be the case) when polished glass cases are brought forward by more experienced members. So the answer is at hand and one of the new cases can be borrowed to place the new member exhibit in a more competitive position.



Two cases have been allocated to the Apiary Training and the other four are available for loan (2 BS Shallow, 1 Langstroth shallow and 1 Dadant shallow).

Contact the Chris Cox at secretary@warleambees.org.uk. If you wish to use one of these Show Cases.

Vacancy for Management Accountant: Full time post 37.5 hours c £30 - 32 K

The British Beekeepers Association is a registered Charity representing over 25,000 hobby beekeepers. Last year our turnover was £850 K.

We are seeking an experienced management accountant who will be responsible for looking after our accounts and budget functions. See the job description for more details.

If you have experience using Sage 50 as well as excellent Excel skills then you might be the person we are looking for to join our small, experienced administrative team at the BBKA office on Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

This is a full time post of 37.5 hours per week (Monday – Friday 08.30 to 16.30). There will be a few occasions when the post requires some Saturday attendance when time off in lieu will apply.

If you are interested in working within the charitable sector, have an interest in the value of honeybees in the environment, please contact Leigh Sidaway, General Manager, for an application form or further information.

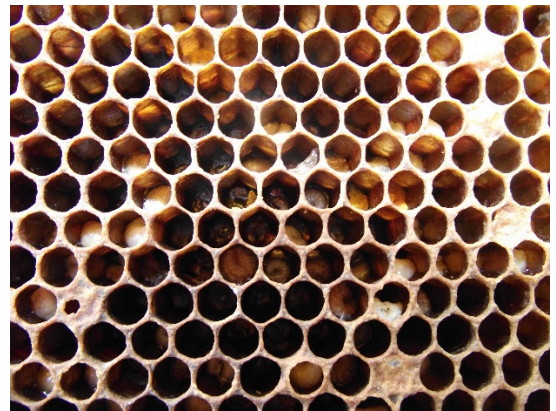
British Beekeepers Association
Stoneleigh Park
E-mail gen.manager@bbka.org.uk

An Inspector Calls our experience of EFB

Colony One came out of the winter strongly. Our hive records are positive in April “Queen seen – colony developing well”. Such joy! Then, in May “evidence of sac brood and a bit pepper pot-ish”, although by late May “brood looking better” – well, that’s a relief!

But by mid-June things were far from well. A cry went up “something doesn’t look right here” and we both agreed we needed to call the Bee Inspector. The pepper pot pattern had returned and creamy, distorted larvae were lying twisted in their cells. The frame looked exactly like the illustration on EFB in the BBKA Publication ‘The Healthy Hive’ (highly recommended reading for all new beekeepers).

Colleen Reichling, the seasonal bee inspector was incredibly helpful. She arranged an immediate visit and inspected all our hives in both our apiaries carefully and efficiently. Of course, the suspect hive had to be done last to minimise the risk of cross infection, so our hearts were in our mouths as she tested any suspicious brood. Fortunately, all the other hives tested negative.



Colony One was condemned and we had a traumatic evening despatching the sick bees with half a cup of petrol. Funny just how attached we get to our girls! Then came the bonfire. We had to dig a massive pit (1 metre x 1 metre x 600 cm) – not easy when the weather was so hot and the ground so hard and Colleen returned to supervise the burning of the frames. They’re burned in a pit so that any infected honey that survives the flames and leaches into the soil can be covered over to prevent robbing. One diseased frame escaped the inferno and was carefully sealed into a poly bag and transported, by Colleen, to the National Bee Unit to be used to train beekeepers in disease recognition. A dubious claim to fame for our bees, but we take solace from the knowledge that their downfall is benefitting education.

Colleen then flamed all the remaining hardware.

Bee Disease Insurance (BDI) came up trumps with the cost of the lost frames, crown board and queen excluder although, sadly, not for the loss of the bees – but they paid us promptly and efficiently.

The apiary was now issued with a ‘standstill’ notice, so no equipment came off site at all and our bee-suits, gauntlets and boots were washed to within an inch of their lives after each visit.

After 6 weeks Colleen arranged another inspection. We were massively anxious at this point because we’d noticed some dodgy brood in another colony, but to our great relief this turned out to be sac brood. Perhaps, by now, we were slightly neurotic!

On 7th August the standstill notice was lifted. We were overjoyed – but we still worry about the risk of re-infection, because, after all, we don’t know where the disease came from in the first place.

In summary, we were glad our hive records were fairly comprehensive, we were grateful that we’d had the opportunity to attend the County’s Bee Disease lectures, we were lucky to have studied the Bee Disease module and we were especially grateful to Colleen for her help. We didn’t see any need to ‘hush up’ the outbreak (although the Bee Inspectors observe very strict confidentiality) – after all if we can help other beekeepers by sharing our experience some good may come out of this unpleasant interlude!

Bernard and Jane Brown

Bee Library

Shock horror - Datestamp is to retire.

As many members are already aware, the branch keeps a library of books and DVDs that members are able to borrow. It is a rich source of information and enjoyment, not least for the person looking after the collection.

I have been doing this for the last few years but find that my commitments in Cannock are severely shrinking my available time, and I cannot get to many meetings. I am therefore seeking to "retire" and we now need a volunteer to take over.

The job entails keeping a couple of boxes of books at home, taking them to meetings and issuing them, filling in the spread sheet of books borrowed, sometimes chasing recalcitrant borrowers when they have kept a book for too long, and possibly the best bit, buying new stock. The branch allows a generous budget so keeping up with what is newly available or needed on exam lists is always fun. You also get to wield the date stamp (hence my nickname, above) which would be supplied with the spreadsheet etc when the new librarian took over.

The job does not take long between meetings, and once I have updated the spread sheet I often do not need to look at it again before the next meeting. Occasionally a members asks for a book between meetings, but again it is hardly an onerous task to deal with such requests. For my own peace of mind I sometimes do a stock check, but again this does not take long.

If you would like to discuss it with me then do please contact me, or a member of the branch committee. I will not be at the Honey Show but plan to be at the members' meeting on 20 September, and I will endeavour to be at as many branch meetings as I can over the winter. I do hope someone will come forward to look after the library. Whatever marvels the internet presents, a book still has attributes not to be found in an electronic device.

Could **YOU** be Datestamp II?

Jane Rigby, (bettabats@btinternet.com 01926 651420)

Hints and Tips

Many thanks to Mary Pemberton for the following:-

To get everyone in the right frame of mind and be able to put something into our Honey Show (which is not honey) I give you the following "Recipes" for you all to have a go at-Courtesy of Sue Carter.

LIP BALM

27.5g Sunflower Oil
11.25g Cocoa Butter
11.25g Beeswax

Melting everything together gently, add flavouring to taste, I use peppermint. Pour into tubes for lip balm. This is a fairly firm mixture, for pots or tins, use slightly less beeswax, to give a softer mixture.

HAND BALM

5 Parts Beeswax
3 Parts Coconut Oil (available online or Health food stores) Can use Almond Oil.
Drop of chosen essential oil for smell.
Melt together wax and oil. Add a drop of essential oil (geranium, lavender, ylang ylang are all good)
Stir. Pour carefully into ice cube moulds, I use heart shapes, as they fit in the hand nicely.
Leave to set overnight.
The heat of the hands will melt a little of the wax onto them and leave them soft.
(If you find the mixture too soft, re-melt gently and increase the beeswax content.)

Have a go, it is fun for the children to do in the holidays, and nice as presents. Especially with a small jar of Honey.

For Sale

I have a supply of Lip Balm tubes at 10p each anyone requiring some to have a go at the Lip Balm

Roger
roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk

LAST MINUTE TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR THE HONEY SHOW
(SEPTEMBER 13TH)

- *Ensure the jar is full! There should be no daylight visible, when the jar is held up to eye level, between the surface of the honey and the lid when in place.
- *Wipe the rim of the jar to ensure the thread is free of honey so the lid unscrews readily. Replace the lid if it is sticky on the underside.
- *Aroma is important so don't take the lid off just prior to the show.
- *Give the jar a good last wipe before placing it in the class, to ensure it is clean and free from fingerprints.

If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to h.essex@virgin.net...

Thank you Helen Essex

Bulk E-mails

Due to limits placed on the number of recipients and e-mails that can be sent by e-mail providers the previous system of sending out e-mails to our 260+ members has ground to a halt. To replace it we are trialling a different programme called mailChimp. This is an American programme which is a marketing tool for businesses and the bulk e-mail facility is just one of a load of features the rest of which are not relevant to our requirements. Thus far we have sent out one e-mail regarding the password for the members' area of the **COUNTY** website. The email will appear to have come from "messengerbee" and there will be reference to mailChimp in the footer .

Because mailChimp is a marketing programme some members' e-mail browsers may suspect it to be a bogus e-mail and filter it out into your Spam or Junk folders so please check these folders and make the sending address one of your safe ones so that you will receive future e-mails.

These are early days so please bear with us as we familiarise ourselves with the intricacies of the new programme system. If you do encounter issues please let Bernard Brown know on either messengerbee@aol.com or bernardnbrown@aol.com

Editor Roger Wilkes, email address is roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk or hard copy can be posted to him at: 12 Mercia Avenue, Kenilworth CV8 1EU. **Content to him for next month by September 27th latest.**

Please send in plain text, unformatted, using Microsoft Word or another common program.

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