



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

Bee Improvement for All

WBKA ("County") is hosting a "Bee Improvement for All" day to help and encourage beekeepers of all abilities to improve their bees using simple methods.

This is being held on Sun. 16th November 2014 9.00 for 9.30 – 4.30 approx. at Solihull School, Warwick Road, Solihull, West Mids. B91 3DJ. The cost is Adults £15, under 16 £7.50 (must be accompanied by fee paying adult)

To book, email Noel Parker at noelparker@btinternet.com for an application form

This course is being delivered by the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA)

Further details follow below:-

A whole day learning how to improve your bees.

Bee Improvement should be of interest to all beekeepers and for a number of reasons including temper, quietness on the combs and suitability to the locality.

The queen is an important factor in the characteristics of a colony, so colony assessment and queen selection need more attention than many beekeepers give them. This does mean queen rearing, but the bees give us many opportunities during the summer to raise queens with little effort needed by us.

"Bee Improvement for all" is a one day course that is designed to help beekeepers use these opportunities to improve their bees, as well as giving information to those who wish to raise more queens. Some speakers and books don't serve the beekeeper with a few colonies very well, as they often use methods that are beyond the needs of the ordinary beekeeper. This course is organised to help and encourage beekeepers of all abilities to improve their bees, using simple techniques without the need for specialist equipment.

Amongst the topics covered will be:

- Setting the criteria you want in your bees.
- How to assess your own and other people's colonies.
- Recording assessments using simple methods.
- Rearing queens from local bees to avoid relying on buying them.
- Deciding which colonies to use queen cells from and which queens to cull.
- Using natural queen cells the bees build.
- "Artificial" queen rearing for those who want more queens.
- Changing queens in colonies.
- Making up mating nuclei.
- Getting queens mated.
- Working with other beekeepers and the local BKA.

There will be plenty of information on colony management, with emphasis on understanding what is happening inside colonies and keeping things simple.

This course will help beekeepers to rear their own queens from local stock and not rely on imports.

"Bee Improvement for all" courses are organised by the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) on a nationwide basis, sometimes in conjunction with local BKAs or bee breeding groups. They are all day events, but the timings and cost will depend on local arrangements.

Further details can be found on <http://www.bibba.com> or <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/beeimprovementforallday.html>

Tim Foden

Skep Making Day 2014

Once again this was a full class, with 19 people who worked very hard all day to begin their skeps. Most were beginning to turn the straw up the sides of their skeps when the class finished.

I've heard since that 3 people stayed up till midnight on Saturday to get further along, only to stop when they ran out of binder, or were receiving threatening remarks from their other halves. Our youngest member, Daisy Carribine began her skep, then turned it into a pentagonal basket which she completed before the end of the day. Well done Daisy.



At this rate I hope that we will have some skeps or other basket work items to show at the Honey Show. The food was, as usual, exceptional and delicious and made a very welcome break in a busy day.

Mike Townsend
Mary Pemberton
Val Dillon

October Displays

Hill Close Gardens, Warwick is definitely the place to be on 19th October when they celebrate their Apple Day event to which we have been invited to display our craft. We still have opportunities for volunteers to man our display for both the morning (11.00 to 1.30) and afternoon shifts (1.30 – 5.00p.m.).

These gardens are rare survivals of Victorian gardens once used by Warwick's townsfolk living above their business to escape from the crowded town and today provide a splendid setting for events such as this.

We are also looking for someone to head up our display at St Mark's Church's Autumn Fair (Leamington), in aid of Myton Hospice on Saturday 25th October from 12.00p.m to 3.00p.m. Held inside the Church, this craft based fair will enable us to display and sell honey and hive products, promote bees and beekeeping, particularly our Introductory course, and subject to the weather, to display an observation hive. Full back up will be provided and we already have one volunteer to lend a hand to help an organiser.

If you are interested in volunteering for either or both of the above please contact Bernard Brown either at bernardnbrown@aol.com or tel. 01926843416.

Winter Walk

This year the Winter Walk will take place on Sunday 23rd November. I have selected a circular walk on field paths and parkland footpaths over what is described as gentle rolling farmland and parkland, starting and finishing in the village of Berkswell. The total distance is 5 miles, which takes about 2 1/2 hours to complete.

Assemble at 10.30am in the free car park, near the Church in the centre of the village, for an 11.00am start.

Lunch has been booked for 2.00pm at the George in the Tree Beefeater Restaurant close by in Balsall Common.

I need to advise the restaurant of numbers, it be helpful therefore if members wishing to take part on the walk or to join us for lunch could contact me on either 02476 467356, 02476 410011 or 07986307152 by noon on Saturday 22nd November.

Mike Radburn

Branch Library

New members may or may not be aware the tremendous resource of the branch - a library of books. The collection is brought to branch meetings and members are welcome to borrow them. You leave a contact e-mail address and the book is stamped with the date you take it out. We suggest a couple of months as being the maximum you should keep them, but this is flexible. Putting the date in the front does remind folk how long they have had the book. It is also suggested that members should only have a maximum of three or four at a time, unless it is for study groups etc. The books are returned at another members' meeting and that brings me to a bit of a moan.

Books have been dropped off on doorsteps and left at Stoneleigh in the past. This is not really very convenient either for the owner of the door step, the lovely ladies in the office or the wielder of the date stamp. Please do your best to return the books at meetings - if you have problems getting to them, please contact me and I will see if we have any very strong carrier pigeons coming your way. It also confuses this bear of little brain if books get passed from member to member so if you need to do that please let me know.

There is a list of books on the website and we are adding to the stock regularly. If you know of a particular book which would be useful do please let me know and we will see how healthy the budget is. Even in this world of e-this and downloadable that one cannot beat the enjoyment of a book - and maybe a cup of tea and several slices of toast and honey? Seriously though, do use this resource.

Jane Rigby bettabats@btinternet.com (01926 651420)

Coming Up

16 October	Branch Honey Show	BBKA	7.30pm
19 October	Hill Close Gardens	Warwick	12-3pm
24 October	Branch Annual Dinner	Cov Golf Club	7.00pm
25 October	St Marks Autumn Fair in aid of Myton Hospice	Leamington	12-3pm

In the Branch Apiary

The hives have been treated with Apiguard, now well into the feeding mode all the hives are on their third lot of 3 litres of syrup and expect to give them more the hives are beginning to feel quite heavy.

I have applied the woodpecker protection and will be putting on the mouse guards shortly.

Roger

Hints and Tips

Your colonies should have the required 20kg/40lb of stores for the winter by now. As the weather gets colder the bees find it too difficult to process the sucrose into stores. If you do still have a feeder on then check if the syrup is being consumed. If not, remove it and any empty brood or super boxes that have been used as feeder cases. Any remaining sugar will ferment and go mouldy and leaving empty boxes on top of the brood box will dissipate heat over the winter and so cool the colony.

The 20kg of stores will be consumed over the winter and if fully digested will generate some 20 litres of water. Some of this water will be recycled in the hive but most of it has to be disposed of outside the hive. It will be too cold for the bees to carry it out so the only means of reducing the humidity in the hive is through good air circulation. Ventilation is vital so check the roof ventilation mesh to make sure it is free of propolis and ensure the varroa board is removed once you have monitored the levels. Check you have taken the porter bee escapes out of the crown board and when you open the hive for oxalic acid treatment in December you can place a match stick under each corner of the crown board to further aid airflow.

Make time to prepare your entries for the Honey Show. There has been an annual show for over 50years. Such an event will only continue if members support it by entering. So go on, make an extra effort to get involved this year and help make it a success!

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

Editor Christine Kehrer, email address is ckehrer@gmail.com, or hard copy can be posted to her at:
13, Brookside Avenue, Kenilworth, CV8 1ES. **Content to her for next month by October 27th, latest!**

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

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