



BEE TALK

Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

IT'S TIME TO SETTLE INTO AUTUMN

The lovely September weather was something of a mixed blessing. The bees supplemented their feed with a powerful ivy flow and the hives all seem very heavy.

On the other hand, the day of our Honey Show felt like a sweaty day in mid-July! Helen organised a wonderful day (see page 6) and John Home had a good choice of entries to judge from. But we weren't expecting the intense heat (and I still maintain that my soft set might have won if it hadn't been so hot). Congratulations to all our winners!

Now that the heavy lifting is over, there are a great many talks I have missed over the summer. I have watched a few of the webinars from the our own **Warwickshire Beekeepers Association, BBKA** and also the **Welsh Beekeepers Association** and **Scottish Beekeepers Association**. There is a lot of interesting stuff from reputable and reliable sources that I aim to catch up on as the days get shorter. The WBKA talk by Marin Anastasov about spring build up is on the same evening as our next meeting, but I can watch it on catch up - its great. Somehow, dark evenings make these online talks even better.

The other thing on my agenda will be dealing with the piles of extracted supers (some the frames need boiling up), boxes which need to be flamed and floors, roofs and queen excluders to clean. I can probably displace these jobs for a few months yet. The task I really hate -but mustn't leave- is putting on the woodpecker guards and mouseguards.

I am looking forward to seeing you at branch activities this autumn. Rachel has organised our next on 14th October about Skep Beekeeping. In the last few years, Mike and Val have established a strong branch tradition of skep making, which few branches can emulate, so this couldn't be a better topic for us. Do come and eat cake together- and don't forget



The bees in Tanya's garden making the most of the ivy flow

your library books- Jane has loads of new books you might not have seen yet. The major beekeeping work is over for the year but there is a lot of fun to be had.

If you need help with your bees, contact me or

any other member of the committee at (warleambees@warleambees.org.uk). Our bee inspector is Colleen Reichling and her mobile number is: 07990 138898.

Jane Medwell

WLBK HONEY SHOW

**TURN TO PAGE 6
FOR THE RESULTS**

WELL DONE TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART!

BEEKEEPING TASTER DAY



There was a distinct buzz in the air the other Saturday at Kings Hill Nurseries and it wasn't coming from the training apiary but from the delegates on our Beekeeping Taster Day.

After a morning of presentations, honey tasting and, of course, honey cake, the 15 "wannabees" donned bee suits and were treated to a "bee experience" at the training apiary. Did they enjoy it? Well, the feedback suggests so, where the quality of the presentations and the friendliness of the members, featured frequently. Would they have said that anyway? Possibly, but it was still nice to see it committed to paper.

The purpose of a Taster Day is to provide an unbiased, objective view of beekeeping – a task which given the enthusiasm of our presenters, is very difficult to achieve. So, for this particular Taster Day, and with not a little apprehension, we introduced a presentation

entitled "Beekeeping: The Downside" highlighting the cost, time commitment, challenges of factors outside beekeepers' control, disappointing honey yields, stings, neighbours etc. etc. We need not have worried as the numbers of people already showing interest in attending next year's introductory course were swollen by 13 by the end of the day. Even those who do not intend pursuing beekeeping further, left with a deeper understanding of our craft and what they can do to help our girls.

So, all-in-all, a very encouraging outcome of all the hard work and bonhomie of the members who gave so freely of their time, enthusiasm and knowledge.

Seemingly, the popularity of our craft continues undiminished at least as far as Warwick and Leamington is concerned. I wonder why?

Bernard Brown

BEEKEEPING TASKS THIS MONTH

It's all about ensuring bees are well fed and protected this month.

- Check your hives have decent ventilation. Bees set up very efficient "air con" and can manage the circulation of air to prevent frames going mouldy. These days an open mesh floor is plenty. But if you are still using solid floors, remember to check the vents and put matchsticks under the corners of cover boards.
- Feed so that your colonies have around 20kg of stores. Plenty of stores in the brood box is ten times as good as fondant later in the year. It prevents isolation starvation.
- Be sure the bees have enough feed before the temperature drops. . Don't feed too late. Late syrup will cause dysentery and late fondant makes work for water carriers that they can't do in the cold.
- Fit mouse guards. A mouse can easily get through a standard entrance. And for me, one did last year. Luckily he went straight up to the fondant and filled up on sweeties (rather like me over Christmas) but if the mouse goes for your combs it causes a lot of damage.
- Fit woodpecker protection. Yes, they will go for poly hives AND NUCS- remember to put the wire over the unprotected top of polynucs.
- Prepare for the "big clean"- but maybe put it off for a while.
- If you are not treating varroa right now, It's a good time to put in the varroa boards and see how the mite drop is going into winter. It will tell you when to do oxalic acid.

Jane Medwell

ECOFEST REPORT

As you're all aware COVID has meant a radical change in the frequency of shows that occur and appropriate controls to look after exhibitors and visitors on the day. Ecofest, held on 4 September at Leamington Pump Room Gardens, was no exception as only 30% of the number of stall holders were there compared to the previous Ecofest two years ago which did not bode well for the success on this dry September morning.

Our Team (top right) all showed up ready to go and with the usual 'where's that?' and 'how do we do that again' jibes we set ourselves up in ample time for the 10.00 opening. The weather was kind, the music was good and the visitors, while never a crowd, were soon visiting every facet of our stand to purchase honey, look at skep making, roll a candle or see the observation hive.

The fascination with bees was very apparent with sometimes a queue of people to look at the observation hive where we display and talk about the fundamental structure of the hive and the visible frame in particular. Like us, there were frequent cries of joy as visitors spot the queen.

At the other end of the stall a lot of honey was on display at the start of the show in Pete & Di's capable hands but sales were good - there was a lot less taken home. We couldn't allow tastings of course but people had, as usual, their preferences for honey - there lots of options available and lots of questions asked.

Val did a great job of explaining the function and construction of a skep that she was putting together through the day. Candle making was also popular as it is a craft that most people, especially children, can master to have a well decorated item to take home for a nominal contribution.

Other members came to help through the day and we'd encourage other members to have a go as it reinforces how popular beekeeping is via our enthusiastic visitors and enables you to make a contribution to the beekeeping hobby and to the Warwick and Leamington Association

So the day was successful overall and, despite its radically reduced size we did very well - or so we thought! At the end of the show we set about carefully putting things away and loading them into vehicles again in order to clear the site. The key player in every show is Bernard who does a lot of the unglorious preparation for us all and who has a trailer that transports marquees and all the kit to and from the Dalehouse Lane storage facility. His welcome arrival on the park was slightly marred by crashing into the observation hive thus rendering it slightly dis-jointed and allowing a few thousand bees who had been pent up all day to have a few minutes freedom in the fresh air! Remaining members of the public fled and Council members guided everyone away as we mustered Steve (who had got a bee suit) to help to do a rescue mission. All was well in the end however and the queen was still there and unharmed.

David Faulkner



BEE SAFARIS

At its August meeting WKLBK committee agreed to re-introduce Bee Safaris into the 2022 programme. For the uninitiated, a bee safari is where a dozen or so beekeepers visit about 3 members' apiaries in a day, under the guidance of an expert beekeeper who provides a running commentary on what he finds during an inspection of some of the hives. Held sometime in June or July, these safaris are very popular amongst new and established beekeepers alike particularly as they tend to end with tea and cake and we all know what beekeepers think about cake! Dates have yet to be fixed but keep an eye on your inboxes come the spring.

SEE IT AGAIN

A video of the County's lecture on Himalayan Balsam is available now in the members' area of the County's website. Well worth seeing.

ON THE UP!

Our membership numbers are still increasing. Last month we have had another 12 folks join. All in all since the beginning of this year we have had 49 new members which is an all time record.

PAINT JOB



Our newly decorated Observation Hive. Distinctive or what!

Many thanks to Terry Dillon for this talented makeover.

PLANT OF THE MONTH: MEDLAR

I wonder how many medlar trees there are in Warwickshire? Certainly nowhere near as many as would have been found back in Shakespeare's day. It is known to have been cultivated in Britain since at least Roman times, and quite possibly in other parts of the world as long as 3,000 years ago.

From the rose family, it is compact in shape and can grow to about 8 metres – I think ours is about 5 metres. The official botanical name is *Mespilus germanica* which would seem to indicate a German origin but in fact it is indigenous to Iran, southwest Asia and southeast Europe. The white five petalled flowers are delicate and attractive with a welcoming central pollen store for the bees in the spring. However, the fruit which is produced has a most unusual appearance and texture. They are a dull reddish-brown with a very hard, rough feeling skin. The spiky sepals stay on the developing fruit around a central pit and this appearance has given rise to many vulgar names over the centuries. "Monkey Bottom" is one of the commonest and least rude! You wouldn't want to eat a medlar even when it is ripe as it is hard and acidic. You have to wait for them to be softened by the frost and look as if they are rotten. This process of leaving the fruit to become soft and wrinkled is called Bletting. During this time, the fruit's starches are converted to sugars and the acids and tannins decrease. The resulting contents look and taste a little like apple sauce and can be eaten raw with sugar and cream. Medlars do also make a lovely jelly much like crab apple jelly, which is delicious with cheese and cold meats. In medieval winters it would have been one of the few Vitamin C rich foods available to help ward off seasonal coughs and colds. It is said that the French thought medlar trees could protect their homes from witchcraft and sorcery!

In literature, the medlar has been used figuratively for centuries as a symbol of premature decay or destitution because the fruit is



rotten before it is edible. Chaucer alludes to it in the Reeve's Tale and Shakespeare makes mention of it in several of his plays – Timon of Athens, Measure for Measure, As You Like It, and in Romeo and Juliet. During the 16th and 17th centuries, medlars were the go-to fruit but have almost passed into obscurity in modern times.

It would be good to think that this ancient tree might become popular once more in the gardening world though I doubt we will be seeing piles of bletted medlars filling the supermarket shelves any time soon!

Maggie Curley

BEEKEEPING AT KINGS HIGH

Establishing a Beekeeping Society at the Paul Kerr Apiary at King's High has been an exciting learning experience for everyone involved. The project is a legacy of Paul's mentoring work at the School over a number of years. Although the School had some 'in house' expertise to draw on we have benefitted hugely from the support of the WLBK's education team over the last year and the donation of bees by Mrs Kerr. Many of the staff volunteers came to the hives fresh although we have been grateful for the expertise shown by a good number of our students.

With 21 staff and 60 students involved, it has been a level playing field for everyone and we began with the all important tasks of building our hives, checking our suits were sealed and learning how best to safely handle our frames. Younger eyes have proved invaluable when finding the queen amongst her thousands of workers and we were excited to mark two queens during the summer holidays. There was initial excitement too when the

opportunity arose only a few weeks in to catch a swarm and, although our visitors sadly moved on shortly afterwards, we all had a real sense of accomplishment at having taken on the task. Our first crop of honey is due shortly and it has been wonderful to see the confidence of all our beekeepers grow as they participate in both practical and theory lessons. We are now looking forward to caring for our five hives over the winter – fondant has already been provided from our catering department – and getting ready for next spring!

Caroline Renton, Senior Deputy Head, King's High School



Students at KHS examining their bees

BEE BLUNDERS



This month it is all a question of balance. I was well pleased with my 3 hive tramline stand. I had provided generous horns at the either end to enable it to accommodate the planned three hives. It worked really well until the day that I wanted to move two of them. Off came the central one and was relocated. The next one was a tad on the heavy side, so, following best practice in lifting, I braced myself, bent my legs, took a deep breath straightened my legs and..... the hive stand tipped up and the remaining hive crashed to the ground spilling bees and frames in great profusion.

Another lesson learned the hard way!

Ivan A Perry

HANDLING FONDANT

Fondant, being a gooey substance, has a tendency to spread outwards. So if you intend keeping your fondant for any length of time, the judicious application of a strip of duck tape on the box's vertical side joint – there is only one and it is about 3 inches long – and along the join in the bottom flaps will bring a little peace of mind and hopefully save a sticky fondant slide. Store the fondant so that the box is fully supported on a solid surface ensuring that it is well wrapped to avoid premature drying out and in a cool, dry, vermin-free place.

A TIP TO HELP CARVING SLICES OF FONDANT FROM THE MAIN BLOCK

Before you start, place a bowl of hot water and one of hand-hot water within reach. Place a length of cling film on a convenient table or worktop. Place your block of fondant on the draining board of the sink partly overhanging the clean and dampened bowl. Take your knife and dip it in the bowl of hot water. Peel back the blue plastic wrapping on the overhanging bit of fondant and saw away at the fondant with the hot knife returning it to the bowl of hot water to reheat it when the sawing gets tough. Allowing the fondant to overhang the bowl causes the cut section to fall away. Place the severed piece of fondant on the cling film. You can pummel it into the desired shape to suit the depth of your eke and wrap it up ready to be transported to the hive.

At the hive score one side of the cling film a couple of times with your hive tool, lift the crown board, add a shallow eke, move the bees away from the top bars and place the fondant scored face down, directly on the top bars over the cluster.

Bernard Brown.

NEW POST

BBKA are advertising for the post of **Schools and Community Liaison Officer** to promote the craft at the near complete BBKA apiary garden remodelled to provide the facilities needed for a visitor education centre in pursuit of their charitable objective 'to advance the education of the public and beekeepers in the craft of beekeeping and promote the importance of bees in the environment.' For further details either refer to the email sent out on Saturday 25th September or contact Leigh Sidaway at gen.manager@BBKA.org.uk

WBKA WINTER LECTURE

The next Warwickshire Beekeepers' County lecture will be on **Wednesday 20 October 7.30pm**.

The topic is:- **The Honey Island; Baskets of Bees** – an exploration of beekeeping; honey bee folklore within Britain and beyond.

The speaker will be Chris Park. Chris lives on an organic farm in the Vale of the White Horse where he keeps bees treatment free in an array of different hives.

You will need to register in advance for this webinar at:- https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ncy3nalBRBuXZq_KT7cNFA

FOR SALE



Fridge/Freezer. Will make an excellent warming cabinet. Free to good home. To be collected from Nuneaton. For further details contact Mick Smith at michael.smith670@ntlworld.com

BRANCH HONEY SHOW REPORT

The WLBK Branch Honey Show was held on 25th September at the Kings Hill Autumn Fair. It was a special celebratory event to make up for last year. The show was open to all paid up members of the branch. There was an entry fee of one jar of honey or cash equivalent of £5.00 (independent of how many classes entered). Honey was donated to Myton Hospice and cash to Bees Abroad. Following the event, £65 was donated to Bees Abroad and four jars of honey were donated to Myton Hospice.

Congratulations to all. Thanks goes to all who participated to make it a successful, enjoyable and informative event.

BELOW ARE SOME IMAGES FROM THE EVENT:



15 members entered 72 entries.



John Home, ably assisted by Ann Foden, carefully judged the exhibits.



There was interest from the public and the Honey Cakes (10 of them!) drew a crowd and the recipe was photographed many times!

2021 HONEY SHOW RESULTS

Class 1 Light Honey

1st Jane Ford
2nd Alex Wray
3rd David Faulkner
4th Jane Medwell

Class 2 Medium Honey

1st Chris Price
2nd David Faulkner
3rd Helen Essex
4th Bernard and Jane Brown

Class 3 Dark Honey

2nd Helen Essex
3rd Peter Stanworth

Class 4 Granulated Honey

1st Helen Essex
2nd Barry Meatyard
3rd David Faulkner

Class 5 Soft Set Honey

1st Jane Medwell
2nd Alex Wray

Class 6 Heather/Heather Blend

1st David Faulkner

Class 7 Beeswax Candle

1st Jane Ford
2nd Helen Essex
3rd Paul Stephenson

Class 8 Cut Comb

1st Helen Essex

Class 9 Frame for Extraction

1st Jane & Bernard Brown
2nd Peter Stanworth

Class 10 Cake of Beeswax

1st Jane Ford
2nd Helen Essex
3rd Bernard Brown

Class 11 Dry Mead

1st Helen Essex
2nd David Faulkner

Class 12 Sweet Mead

No entries

Class 13 Novice Class

1st Dawn Cowgill
2nd Jamie Hanna
3rd Chris Price
Elizabeth Holding

Class 14 Cottager Class

1st Helen Essex
2nd Paul Stephenson
3rd Elizabeth Holding
4th Alex Wray

Class 15 Honey Cake

1st Helen Essex
2nd Jane Ford
3rd Jane Medwell
4th Barry Meatyard

Class 16 Flavour only

1st Chris Price
2nd Helen Essex
3rd Maggie Curley
4th Chris Cox

Class 17 Decorated Lid

1st Helen Essex

Class 18 Photograph

1st Dawn Cowgill
2nd Barry Meatyard

Class 19 Gift Class

1st Jane Ford
2nd Helen Essex

NOVICE MAZER – Dawn Cowgill

NANCY WILTSHIRE ROSEBOWL- for
Honey Cake – Helen Essex

JACK TAYLOR PLAQUE-for Cottager
Class- Helen Essex

THORPE CUP- for most points- Hel-
en Essex

BERNARD COLLINS TROPHY- for
best in show- Chris Price for Medium
Honey



Dawn Cowgill being presented with the NOVICE MAZER



Helen Essex won the THORPE CUP



Chris Price won the Bernard Collins Trophy for BEST IN SHOW with his Medium Honey

WE ARE NOT AN ISLAND:

COVENTRY BRANCH

It is all too easy for branches to become inward looking, yet we are all part of the wider community of 8 branches making up the Warwickshire Beekeeping Association (the "County"). This series of articles profiles the other branches in turn from which we discover dynamic and innovative organisations dedicated to the welfare of our craft in their own ways and from which we can all learn. This month we profile Coventry Branch.



The inaugural meeting of the Coventry Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers Association took place on the 28th May 1932 in the Magnet Club Room at GEC in Coventry with 40 prospective members present. The minutes record 'It was resolved by Cllr S C Lee Gordon that the Coventry Branch of WBKA be formed and that Mr C T G

Baker be the first Chairman.' This resolution was passed unanimously and the branch was born.

As current Branch Secretary, I am fortunate to have custodianship of an archive of hand written minute books from 1932 through to 1988. There is then a whole chunk of Branch history missing before it picks up again in typewritten form in 2006. Browsing through the early hand written minutes takes you back to another time; everything is very formal, with people referred to by title, initials and surname. The branch committee appears to have been populated by the more 'well to do' beekeepers of the city and apiary meetings are referred to as 'at homes' as members visited each other's apiaries.

The branch does seem to have been keen to encourage everyone to join in with meetings however, and often arranged a charabanc to convey members without private transport to apiary meetings at various rural venues during the summer months. They also made proposals to the County Association that a scheme be set up both locally and nationally, to help 'cottagers and agricultural labourers' purchase beekeeping equipment they would not otherwise be able to afford. It is not recorded whether this proposal was successful or not.

It seems that many of the issues we deal with today in the beekeeping world have echoes in the past with the committee forever preoccupied with the part the weather had played in the success or otherwise of the honey harvest and the incidence of disease. This was before the advent of varroa of course, but EFB and AFB appear to have been rife in some years and the Branch 'experts' kept busy travelling from apiary to apiary giving advice to members and destroying stocks afflicted with brood disease. It appears that BDI was available as early as the 1940s and in some years, claims were made for 100+ colonies in the Coventry area



London Road Allotment – clearing the Branch Apiary site



London Road Allotment – after

which had been lost to brood diseases.

It wasn't long before it was decided that a Branch Apiary was needed both to produce honey to sell for branch funds and as a resource to demonstrate techniques and manipulations to members. The first Branch Apiary was set up in War Memorial Park in 1943 which went well for several years until complaints were received from the public following 'numerous, detrimental incidents'. The bad temper of the colonies was attributed to the 'throwing of stones at the hives by mischievous children.' In hindsight, perhaps a public park was not the best choice for an apiary. The colonies were moved to a new site at the City Training College, Charter Avenue but meetings here were very poorly attended. A further move to a farm site on Brandon Lane, Willenhall also proved to be unsuitable after the hives were vandalized and one set on fire! The poor bees were moved again to 'Mr Crawford's apiary at Bubbenhall' and then to a field at Ashow. The poor attendance at apiary meetings continued and I can't help thinking that this was because the sites were all fairly remote from Coventry itself and presumably inaccessible to members without their own transport, the days of the charabanc being long gone.

For many years the Branch Apiary was reduced to being run as a

source of income rather than as a learning resource for the members but eventually in 1986, the Ryton Gardens site was set up and Coventry Branch began their long association with Garden Organic. The apiary remained on the Ryton Gardens site until it was sold to Coventry University in 2018 when we decided to re-locate to the London Road Allotment site – at last, the branch has an apiary site within the boundary of the city and more easily accessible to all members. We look forward to beginning our meetings at London Road this summer after having to wait it out through the Covid pandemic.

Beekeeping it seems, was a very popular hobby (or a useful source of additional income) in the early years of the Branch and membership levels were in the order of 150 / 175 during the period of the 1930s until after WW2, but in the next decade, the popularity of craft began to wane and the Branch was at its lowest ebb in the mid 50s with membership falling as low as 36 in 1958. Falling membership put a financial strain on the Branch for many years and many committee meeting discussions centred on how existing members could be retained and new members attracted. I can only imagine that the general decline in the public's interest in beekeeping was probably even more keenly felt in Coventry as an urban area, than it was in more rural places. The city had to be re-built after the Blitz of WW2 and it expanded rapidly. Presumably, many suitable apiary sites disappeared under concrete and tarmac and most of the population had neither the time nor the resources to spend on beekeeping.

After many lean years, British life slowly recovered from the war years and the key to the gradual resurrection of the Branch appears to have included the introduction of better training opportunities for both new and more established beekeepers, an aspect which appears to have been rather neglected by the committee 'old guard.' Extra training meetings were arranged, both in summer and winter, bulk buying of equipment, honey jars and sugar was arranged and other practical assistance for members began to be offered. The Branch Honey Show began to encourage members to exhibit their produce and get involved. The Branch held joint meetings at times with Nuneaton and Atherstone and Warwick and Leamington Branches forging links with neighbouring beekeepers and Coventry Branch also became involved in supporting the BBKA during the time it was setting up its headquarters at Stoneleigh during the 1970s and when the National Beekeeping Centre was established there in 1982.

During the 1970s and 1980s the names of Coventry beekeepers I recognise myself, and many Warwickshire members will also know, start to make an appearance in the minutes and take their places on the Branch committee; R J Howe who published his book Practical Beekeeping in 1980. Morris Buer was already a committee member by 1970 and served as Chairman in 1980 and 1981. Stan Morris was Chairman in 1986 and 1987. Jim Hopkins was already a committee member by 1985 and held many meetings in his home apiary. Peter Spencer, after many years of service to the Branch and County is currently WBKA past President and well known to all Warwickshire members. On the current Coventry Branch Committee we are fortunate to have the services of Dave Bonner who is also well known to many as a retired Seasonal Bee Inspector, Master Beekeeper and member of the WBKA Education Committee as well as working with wife Cathy, for Bees Abroad. He also acts as our membership secretary and Apiary manager – definitely a life of beekeeping.

In recent times, and following the resurgence in the public's interest in all things beekeeping, Coventry Branch goes from strength to strength. We strive to encourage members to take part in the activities of the branch and the learning opportunities on offer. We hold an annual weekend Beginners Beekeeping Course and two Taster Days each year (on hold due to Covid last year and this), Dave Bonner runs a weekly meeting (currently on Zoom) for new beekeepers to teach them the basics and give guidance. We have made the move to our new Branch apiary site and it is almost finished and looks great. We look forward to resuming our regular apiary meetings from August and the postponed opening ceremony event sometime next summer complete with a visit from Lady Godiva – watch out for your invitation!

Julia Barclay
Coventry Branch Secretary

BEEBASE

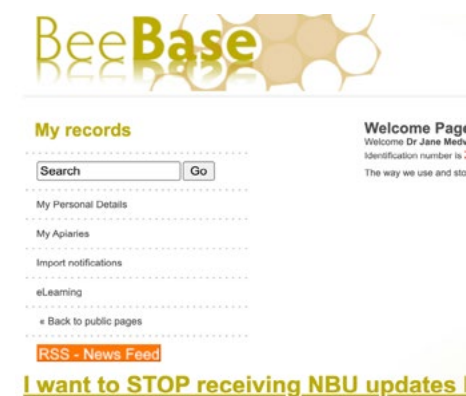
This is a good time to remind our members how to join BEEBASE and how to make sure you get disease notifications. These notifications tell you when the Bee Inspector has found a notifiable disease within three kilometres of your apiaries. It is a really useful service. The notification does not reveal identify of the beekeeper with the bad luck, but it does put you on alert.

To register on beebase [go to this page](#) on the internet and this is what you will see. Please make sure you click YES to the periodic notifications button right at the bottom. They will ONLY send disease notifications, starvation warnings and job adverts- no spam.



You must enter the locations of your apiaries when you register- they can only send you notifications if you do this, because otherwise they do not know where your bees are.

If you are already a member of beebase, when you log in you will see this menu on the left of the page when you log in.



Under "My personal Details" you can edit whether you are subscribed to receive personal updates. If you are subscribed you will get disease notifications so make sure you edit this detail if you are not subscribed. If you look under the "My apiaries" information, it also shows whether there has been a notifiable disease within 3 km of that apiary location.

Member of a beekeeping association?	Yes
Member of the Bee Farmers' Association?	No
Subscribed to receive updates?	Yes
Preferred method of contact by NBU	Email
Total colonies owned (as of today)	7

HINTS AND TIPS: MEAD RECIPES

Now that the honey harvest is in why not have a go at making something to celebrate your success..... even if you may have to wait a while to enjoy it!

DRY MEAD

- 3lb light honey
- 6pt water
- 1tsp yeast nutrient
- ¼ tsp grape tannin or 2tsp of cold strong tea
- Vitamin B1 tablet
- Juice of one lemon
- Campden tablets
- Mead yeast eg Chablis yeast

METHOD

- Dissolve honey in the water in a sterilised fermentation bucket
- Mix in the yeast nutrient, crushed vit B1 tablet, grape tannin and lemon juice
- Add crushed campden tablet to sterilise
- Cover with a clean cloth and place in a warm place
- After 48 hours agitate vigorously with a spoon to expel the sulphur dioxide
- Add yeast, cover and keep warm
- When fermentation is observed transfer to a sterilised demi john with air lock
- Top up to within 2cm of the bung when fermentation becomes less vigorous
- Continue to ferment to dryness at 15-21°C
- After completion rack off into clean demi john
- Add 1 campden tablet and store in the cool
- Rack off again if significant amount of sedimentation forms.
- Keep for 1 - 2 years before drinking..... if you can!

SWEET MEAD

- 4-4½ lb honey
- 6pt water
- 1tsp yeast nutrient
- ¼ tsp grape tannin or can use tea as for dry recipe
- Vitamin B1 tablet
- Level tsp citric, tartaric, and malic acid or lemon juice
- Mead yeast (ideally Sauterne or Tokay)

METHOD

- As for dry (using 3lb honey initially)then
- When put into the demi john check the specific gravity using a hydrometer, every 3-4 days. When it falls to 1.005 add further 4oz of honey. Repeat until all the honey has been used up or fermentation stops. Stop fermentation if necessary after last addition of honey by adding 2 crushed campden tablets when S.G. has fallen to between 1.010 and 1.015.
- Rack off after a few days into clean sterile demi joh. Top up with water to within 2.5cm of bung.
- Store in the cool
- Rack off in subsequent months to remove sedimentation as required.
- This needs 3 years to mature..... if you can wait that long!

AND there are always too few entries of mead in the Honey Show.... go on make the Judge's day by giving him /her a chance to sample more!

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

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