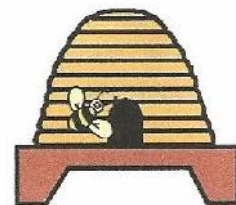


Herefordshire Beekeepers' Association



Newsletter
September 2017

Forthcoming events:

Saturday September 9th Apiary Meeting, 10 am-1 pm
Holme Lacy

Friday-Sunday September 15th-17th MSWCC
Cirencester

Saturday October 14th HBKA Honey Show,
Hellens Manor, Much Marcle.

Thursday October 19th Evening Meeting, 7.30 pm
Three Counties Hotel. Speaker Professor Les Baillie,
Cardiff University.

Association Garden Party

A few intrepid beekeepers met at Anna's lovely garden on August 18th. Despite the disappointing weather we managed to have a quick peek at the bees. Her swarm from her original colony had failed to develop and been overrun by wasps a few weeks before our visit. The swarmed colony had failed to produce a new queen. Various rescue attempts had been made through the summer with a cast being introduced above the swarm, and the introduction of a frame with young larvae and eggs into the swarmed colony. Eventually we replaced the swarm with a small nuc, and a queenright colony was introduced directly into the colony which had failed to make a queen. Both colonies were now queenright, and hopefully will be strong enough to survive the winter.

We later enjoyed refreshments and Pimms together with much Beechat. A big thank you to Anna and Pru for their hospitality.

Mary Walter



HBKA Honey Show

It is that time of the year again, when we showcase the work of our bees and beekeepers through the year. Now is the time to think about entering and preparing exhibits. You don't have to be an expert, and there are classes for cakes and fudge, photos and flowers as well as honey and wax. It does help to read the schedule carefully, and study the rules. Why not encourage the children and grandchildren to enter a drawing or model? This year we have included a class for a honey preserve, either sweet or savoury. If you enter at least one class in the show you are invited to bring honey or other items for sale. Honey will be sold for £6/lb and pro rata for smaller jars, with a 10% commission deducted towards the cost of running the show.

We will also need stewards to help on the day with explaining what beekeeping is about, and to help with honey sales. Please contact Andy (07788 622516) if you can help.





A wooden Ashforth feeder.

Topical Tip.

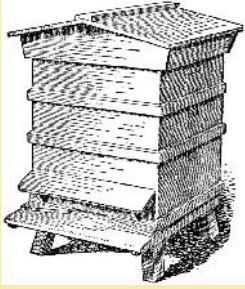
Time to stock up on sugar: when I last looked Morrisons have 2kg bags for 88p.

Ready made up syrup can also be bought from Bob Cross or the equipment suppliers, this is already inverted and will save the bees from having to ripen it unduly before winter. It has a high concentration of fructose which prevents crystallization, and a low water content which helps stop it going mouldy.

There are several types of bulk feeder available, wooden Ashforth or Miller, or large plastic feeders available from the equipment suppliers. These fit on top of the brood frames. Smaller feeders need to be encased inside an empty super to prevent wasps or robber bees gaining access.

Care needs to be taken to avoid spilling syrup in the apiary, feeding is best done in the evening once flying is over for the day. A small amount of syrup trickled down into the brood nest will help the bees find it.

Mary Walter



Bob's Beelines

September is now upon us, you should be well on the way treating your bees for Varroa. Do not rely on the drop off your tray, this can be misleading as this year the bees seem to be very strong and most of the Varroa will be in the brood.

Look out for wasp attack and close the entrance down to about 15 mm. Your feeding should be done by the end of September or the first week in October.

HONEY EXTRACTION DAY

August 12th and 19th was very disappointing out of 6 sessions I cancelled 3, out of all the 2017 beginners only 1 lady booked in. Due to the lack of support I will NOT be doing it next year. We gave up 2 weekends and a lot of hard work to put it on.

That's all for now

Bob and Kath Cross

I would like to thank Bob and Kath for their hospitality at the honey extraction meeting on the 18th of August.

Those taking part in the session thoroughly enjoyed themselves and appreciated Bob's skill and patience when demonstrating the methods of honey extraction. The attendees had either little or, certainly in my case, absolutely no knowledge in the processes needed when taking honey from the hive to the final stages of filling the jars with the beautiful honey.

The morning went by so quickly, chatting and getting hands on experience as we worked through the various extraction processes, all of which made things so much clearer than looking at a book or looking on line.

Thanking you

Diane Kent

East LAN meeting of the HBKA

3rd August 2017

The first rule of Fight Club is:

- **Use no treatments while you still have honey supers in place**

We are talking the fight against varroa.

Fight Club (aka Eastern LAN) met on 3rd August at Bob and Kath Cross's house to learn more about how to fight the might of the varroa mite. With honey supers now taken off, we were now getting into the new bee year.

At the first hive we learned that if you find a varroa drop of six per day then you probably have around 1000 varroa in the hive and action is definitely needed. Bob had already monitored this hive for varroa and there was not a major varroa problem, but we watched as we were shown how to use Apiguard. Two treatments were to be done two weeks apart with the aim to complete treatment before September. No feeding was to be done at the same time, and the solid floor was inserted below the varroa mesh to ensure that the thymol vapour circulated well around the hive rather than drifted off.

As the second hive we were shown how to apply ApiLife Var (not to be confused with ApiVar which is completely different). The fragile biscuits were to be broke in half, with one biscuit applied each week, for four weeks, the halves placed on top of the frames away from the brood. Again solid floor to be inserted first.

As we went round Dave Sutton and Bob shared with us advice and wisdom. The costs of treatments were around £5 - £6 per hive so the economics run at roughly:

One jar of honey per hive
To keep you bees alive

Apilife Var application



Mites spend four days on the adult bee, but most of the time and damage is spent in sealed brood.

At hive three we saw how to use Mite Away Quick (MAQS) strips. In this case the solid floor needs to be taken out and entrance opened up because of the potency of the formic acid on the strips. The formic acid vapour would penetrate into the sealed cells, unlike the thymol of Apiguard and ApiLife Var.

For the fourth hive, a possibly queenless nuc, the method for applying Apistan and oxalic acid were shown. First it was explained that Apistan is based on Pyrethroids, which varroa in many areas have evolved resistance, so this should be checked before using it (*look up the Beltsville test ed.*). Bob showed how the Apistan strip could be unwrapped and applied. Oxalic acid should only be used when there was no brood, so for the purposes of demonstration we used sugar solution, practicing trickling it over the frames of bees. Some retailers supplied oxalic acid solution at 6% strength, which was appropriate to Mediterranean bees, but twice as strong as what was needed for northern European bees. ApiBioxal remains the only oxalic acid treatment licensed by the VMD (Veterinary Medicines Directive) for use on bees in the UK.

In preparation for winter we should expect that each brood frame would hold around five pounds of honey, so each hive would need around seven frames of honey to see it thought to next year. Lack of nectar this year had meant that bees had been collecting honeydew, hence darker honey this year than normal

As we repaired to Bob and Kath's home for an abundance of tea, cakes and biscuits, Dave Sutton showed us a presentation on the life cycle of the varroa mites, the history of their arrival in the UK and the rapidity with which their short reproductive cycle enables them to multiply and devastate a colony. Thanks were expressed, and a round of applause given, for Dave's efforts and to Bob and Kath for hosting us so many times this year, enabling us to see how Bob's colonies developed though the season.

Fight Cub might not meet again until next year, but another meeting of the East LAN would occur before year end.

Thank you to Roger Gill for this report and photos.



North Hereford LAN Meeting, August 22nd

Peter Furneaux hosted our apiary meeting at Lucton on August 22nd. It was rather late for disturbing the bees, so we just looked at the one weaker colony which had not developed well over the summer. Peter had given them some new foundation in the brood box, but they had concentrated their efforts in the supers, and had failed to draw out the new comb. We suggested that he remove the supers and feed the colony in an attempt to encourage them to build comb in the brood box. It would be difficult to feed enough syrup for winter if they have nowhere to put it. During the winter the cluster of bees gradually moves over their stored honey, gradually depleting their stores. In the new year when brood rearing starts in earnest, food supplies can rapidly diminish, before the spring flowers start to bloom. One option is to remove the queen excluder and leave a super of honey under the brood box, but this should not be used to collect honey next year if it was on the hive when treated with a thymol varroicide.

Thank you for the hospitality, Peter, and for the splendid homemade cake.

Mary Walter

The National Bee Unit have published more advice on Autumn Husbandry on their website. See:
<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/News/news.cfm#190>

The Asian hornet has been in the news again. It is only a matter of time before it becomes established here. It has already reached the Channel Islands.

There are a lot of hornets about in my garden at the moment, but they generally leave the bees alone. The Asian variety are slightly smaller than our natives, they are darker and have distinctive yellow feet and one yellow abdominal segment. Unlike our hornets they do not fly at night. Last year they were seen picking off the insects foraging on ivy flowers. Keep your eyes open and monitor your wasp and hornet traps, though at this time of year, unlike wasps, they prefer a protein food source. Any sightings should be reported to Defra at alernonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

The hornet sightings reported in the Daily Mail (2 inches wide!) are almost certainly European hornets. Despite the sensationalist press reports when left alone these are not dangerous to ourselves or our bees.



Vespa velutina

Autumn Forage

Flowers are rather sparse at this time of the year, but the bees are making good use of the himalayan balsam down by the river, and on the roadside, and coming home with a distinctive stripe of white pollen down their backs.

Persicaria (bistort) is also visited by the bees, as are the single dahlias and hardy geraniums.



If foul brood is suspected, contact our RBI, Colin Pavey on 07775 119471 - or email colin.pavey@apha.gsi.gov.uk. At present, we do not have a local SBI.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

President	Peter Furneaux
Chairman	Andy Tatchell
Vice Chairman	Debbie Smith
Secretary	VACANCY
Treasurer	John Robinson
Membership Sec.	Mary Walter

Committee	Robert Cross
	Mike Healey
	Steve Utley
	Charlie Taylor

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East LAN:	Fiona McKinley
	Marlene Hewitt
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Examinations Sec.	Louise Sheppard