



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

April 2011

www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

Swarm Control

As in the previous spring, once again our March division meeting focused on swarm control. Ted, our treasurer, gave an excellent account on a method of artificial swarming, which was of great interest to members at the meeting especially to those who are novice beekeepers.

"Bees will swarm" Ted reminded the meeting. It's in their nature to do so and is nature's way for the colony to multiply their numbers. Our job as beekeeper is to manage the process in a way that is advantageous to us in terms of honey production. A weakened colony, through uncontrolled swarming, will not yield a good honey crop. "No bee, no honey – no honey no money!" is Ted's catch phrase.

Ted went on asking everyone to consider the important question of our main reason for keeping bees. Is it simply to have bees, or to maximise honey yield, or to create more colonies? In a situation, for example, where a keeper only wants to have a small fixed number of hives he suggested the method of using a Snelgrove board by which the same number of hives can be maintained once a colony has successfully been split by artificial swarming. Of course if one wishes, artificial swarming is also a good way to increase the number of hives. He also reminded us that when carrying out a swarm control we could place new frames in our brood box, and end up with a new stronger queen. Whatever we do we must be prepared (with spare brood boxes and extra frames) and be watchful of early warning signs of swarming preparation.

Many questions were asked and answered at the meeting. No doubt as the season progresses, many more will be raised. ⚡ contributed by Chi Chan

Hive Stands Working Day

Would you like a smart hive stand like the one in the picture? Ted Grad is arranging a working day to make stands. He will purchase the materials in advance, and the day would consist of cutting the timber to length, drilling and assembly of the components. You can then take the stand away in your car, and paint or stain it to suit your own requirements. The cost for the materials would be £25.



The stand is made of tanalised timber, and is big enough to accommodate two hives, with room in between to place the roof and supers while doing hive inspections. ⚡

If you're not gifted in carpentry skills but would like to purchase a fully assembled hive stand put together in your absence by the work party, and a charge of £25-00 would be charged in addition to the cost of materials and donated to the Epping Forest Division.

If you are interested in either buying or making a stand, please contact Ted Grad who will arrange for a suitable date and day of the week to set up a work party. ⚡

Diary dates – Advance notice

Please put these dates for summer meetings in your diary:

- 14th May – Wanstead Apiary – opening up the hive
- 11th June – Willow Cottage, speaker to be confirmed
- 9th July – Honey Extraction at Chapel Barn with Ted Gradosielski
- 13th August – preparation for winter at the Wanstead Apiary
- 17th September – Divisional Honey Show

Full details will be provided in newsletters, but make sure you're free on these dates! ⚡

Chair's Corner

I would like to say a big thank you to Ken for the beginners course which has just finished. Ken (and Jean) put an amazing amount of work into this and it certainly sets new beekeepers up on the right road to good beekeeping. Unfortunately this is the last year that Ken feels he is able to do the course. This leaves a large hole to be filled. If anyone would like to help set up next years course please Email me. No one person can replace Ken the course would be run as a team. Thanks again Ken and I wish everyone a good start to the season. **Helen Chadwick** ⚡



Next meeting – Thursday 21 April

Our next meeting will be at Chingford Horticultural Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford E4 6NH and as usual we will meet at 7.30 for an 8.00 pm start. This month Roy Cropley is going to lead microscopical examination for Nosema. Please bring some (dead!) bees from your own hive to examine under the microscope. Please note: this is the last indoor meeting until October. During the summer months, meetings will take place on Saturdays at various outdoor locations. ⚡

Policing genes

Division member Christine Poerschke came across a display in the windows of the Wellcome Trust about genetic modification, and the role that bees can play in detecting this. The display can also be seen online at www.thomasthwaites.com/policing-genes/ ⚡

Theft of Hives

Romford division have reported that five hives have been stolen from an apiary on Forestry Commission land. Two of them belonged to the division, the remainder to individuals. It's a sad reflection that the thieves must have been beekeepers, and quite possibly had local knowledge. If you have hives at an out apiary, ensure they are marked indelibly with your name and postcode. ⚡

Tips from the Bee Man

Lighting the Smoker: Egg boxes make good fuel; touch a piece with the lighter in the car to start the smoker; it will smoulder rather than flame. Rotten wood will last longer and the long dried strands of Goose Grass, rolled up in a ball make excellent fuel.

Supers: Wait until you have bees on all the brood frames before putting the first super on. Wait until the first super is well filled with bees before putting the second one on, underneath the first. The second super is the best one to get new frames drawn out. ⚡

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