



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

April 2015

www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

Struggling into Spring?

Your bees, that is. Often known as 'spring dwindling', colonies suffering from nosema may exhibit signs of dysentery and a failure to build rapidly. Alternatively, a colony may have died without apparent reason. Would you like to know why? Join us for a free drop-in testing session on **Thursday 23 April** between 6 and 8 pm

at Chingford Horticultural Hall, when all beekeepers are invited to bring 30 bees for a quick test from microscopists Chris Branch, David Mallandine and Roy Cropley. Options for treatment will be discussed and as always, tea and biscuits and good humour will be served. How do I collect 30 bees, you ask? On a day when bees are flying, block the entrance and hold a jam jar in that position until about thirty bees fly in; alternatively, sweep them in from the entrance as they arrive. Bees may also be gathered by drawing a partially-opened cook's matchbox across an outside frame, where older bees are more likely to be found. Make sure you know where the queen is! Put the jar or box in the freezer as soon as is practical and bring directly from the freezer for testing.

This examination is an ideal companion to the information on the Beebase website which gives details of the two types of infection. Please email Robin Harman at secretary@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk to confirm your interest in the Nosema Clinic, and to book a time to attend. ☘

An Evening of Mead

Ron Hunter's introductory Mead talk was well-attended and took us on a walk through the recipe book with a few hints and tips on the way. For those intending to give it a go, two firm pieces of advice were given: buy Acton & Duncan's book 'Making Mead' (second-hand from abebooks, or new from usual sources), and wait at least a year before sampling the result. The second suggestion might prove difficult, but mead improves with age and can be unpalatable when young.

A starter quiz was followed by a mention of varieties of mead: spiced mead known as metheglin (from the Welsh 'meddyglyn', meaning 'medicinal'), cyser (apples), pyment (with grapes), hippocras (spiced wine), and melomel (fruit), followed by a discussion of equipment and how to use it properly. Methods and ideas for avoiding stuck fermentation, exploding bottles, and hard water gave encouragement to those of us yet to experiment. ☘



Small Hive Beetle

DEFRA has issued a statement regarding Small Hive Beetle – no new infestations have been reported since December 2014 in Calabria, Italy. This year DEFRA will 'stress test' their early warning system with help from the NBU and Swansea and Warwick Universities. The BBKA continues to press DEFRA for a ban on the import of honeybees. ☘

Dates for your Diary

After the Nosema Clinic on 23rd April, meetings over the summer will be held outdoors on Saturdays. The first summer meeting will be Saturday 23rd of May when Peter Dalby will talk about supering. Don't forget to put 20th June in your diary too for this year's visit to Willow Cottage. Future summer meetings are planned for 18th July and 15th August, details to be advised in due course. ☘



Chair's Corner

Supers are on and the season is underway - I saw and tasted capped spring honey last week - but such good news may not apply to all beekeepers. If you have lost a colony this winter or have one struggling to thrive, come to our clinic on 23 April at Chingford Horticultural Hall and have your sample of bees put under the microscopes of Epping Forest experts. A simple test may reveal the cause. Try and find time this month to visit the BBKA Spring Convention, which is a worthwhile trip to attend lectures, workshops and see equipment on sale. Perhaps pick up some more supers? ☘

Eric Beaumont

Monthly Meeting – Thursday 1xth April

The next monthly meeting will take place on Thursday 16th April at Chingford Horticultural Hall on Larkshall Road E4 6NH. Martin Buckle is going to give a talk and demonstration of skep making. As usual please arrive at 7.30 for the meeting to begin promptly at 8.00 pm. ☘

Wax wanted

Roy Cropley will buy or exchange for foundation any amount of beeswax and even take old comb. The exchange price for foundation is some 30% below that of KBS' market price, and KBS are generally said to supply the best foundation in the country. This exchange system works if KBS is supplied with raw wax, so please help Roy to help you by contacting him on 01992.626668 or at roy.cropley1@tiscali.co.uk ☘

BBKA Spring Convention

There's still time to book your ticket for the Spring Convention at Harper Adams College near Telford – go to the BBKA Website to buy your ticket. This year there is a Day Ticket option for admission only to the Trade Show for £5 – tickets for the weekend including lectures and workshops are £20. There is a wide range of lectures and workshops as well as a large Trade exhibition. And don't forget this year's **Essex Beekeepers Conference** on 31st October at Burnham-on-Crouch, this year's lectures include Epping Forest Member Barbara Dalby on apitherapy. ☘

BBKA Membership

If you need to know your BBKA membership number contact Robin Harman who will be able to provide this – membership cards will arrive in due course. ☘

Tips from the Bee Man

Inspections should be taking place regularly when weather permits, as a spell of warm weather could see swarms emerging this month from strong colonies. Make sure you have sufficient equipment to carry out an artificial swarm when needed – don't wait until you see queen cells to order spare hive parts and replacement frames. ☘

Contacts

Chairman – Eric Beaumont
chairman@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk
Secretary – Robin Harman
secretary@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk
Treasurer – John Dutney
treasurer@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk
Newsletter – Olivia Burren
editor@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk
Tel: 020 8504 0664
Website – Kevin Cook
Tel: 0208 532 1584
webmaster@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk