



# Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers  
December 2014  
[www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)

## November Meeting – Plants and Pollination

Mark Patterson is the Forage Officer for the London Beekeepers Association and he delivered a fascinating talk about pollinators (not just honey bees) and their role in the ecology. Did you know that a colony of honeybees needs 500lb of nectar every year just to subsist, without producing a honey crop? This was a really interesting talk which covered the way in which insects see flowers, the way that flowers have evolved to attract them, and the

importance of having a wide variety of floral species. London has a lot of green space but it is being reduced every year by building, paving and hard landscaping. Some free packets of wild flower seeds were distributed at the end. Even the humble dandelion has its place, so if your lawn is less than perfect you can be proud that you're doing your bit for the environment. Mark has produced a beautiful calendar showing bees on different flowers. This won First Prize at this year's National Honey Show and you can buy it on eBay (search for [Honey Forage Calendar](#)) if you would like a copy. This would make a great Christmas present for a beekeeper! It was a very informative and interesting session with food for thought. ✂



## A good year for honey

The BBKA has released the results of the annual honey survey, and beekeepers generally have reported an increased yield. An average of 32lb per colony was reported, a 28% increase on 2013. Of course, the good summer had a lot to do with this but more and more beekeepers are receiving training and around 40% of those surveyed cited improved beekeeping skills as one of the reasons for an increased yield. You can read the full report on the BBKA Website. ✂

## Christmas Social – 11<sup>th</sup> December

This will be free to members and their children and £5 for guests. Hot food will be provided, but bring your own wine and beer. Please let us know if you would like to attend but don't be too slow as we were fully booked last year! As usual there will be a raffle - do you have any suitable items that you could donate as a raffle prize? If so - and to reserve a place at the party - please contact secretary Robin Harman. ✂

## Membership Renewal

Please don't forget that all membership renewals are now due. Forms can be downloaded from the Epping Forest Division website and payment can be made online, or you can fill out a form and pay by cheque if you prefer. Membership confers many benefits, not just this newsletter! It also gives membership of the BBKA, providing a discount to the Spring Convention and to some other events, Bee Disease Insurance, affiliation to the Essex Beekeeping Association and it helps this Division to provide lectures, training events and to run the divisional apiaries and other facilities for members. ✂

## First Prize

Congratulations to John Dutney who won two First Prizes at the National Honey show this year, following his success at the Divisional and Essex Shows. John has been keeping bees for a relatively short time, and this is a testament to his hard work and enthusiasm, and an inspiration for all of us to consider an entry for next year's Honey Show! Well done, John. ✂

## Monthly meeting – Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Social

This month's meeting will be a week earlier than usual. Come to the Chingford Horticultural Hall on Larkshall Road E4 6NH for the Christmas Social meeting, at the usual time of 7.30 pm – please book a place so that we know how many to expect (see details below). ✂

## Beginners Course

There are still a few spaces left if you know anyone who would like to attend this introductory beekeeping course. It takes place over four Thursday evenings in February and March, followed by two apiary visits. The course fee of £75 includes a book, all course materials and the loan of protective clothing for the colony inspections. ✂

## Events next year

The first meeting in January will be the AGM on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>. All meetings will be on the third Thursday of each month during winter, unless otherwise advised. We have a varied programme of talks for next year – look out for Mead Making and Skep Construction amongst others. Is there a subject you would like to know more about, or have you seen an interesting speaker that you'd recommend? If so, please tell our secretary Robin Harman for future bookings. ✂

**Christine Williams** who kindly allows us to hold a meeting at Willow Cottage each June has recently been in hospital. We extend our best wishes to her for a speedy recovery. ✂

## Tips from the Bee Man

We keep predicting winter conditions, but in fact bees were flying well on 29<sup>th</sup> November this year! Keep checking for stores because some queens have been laying much later than usual, leading to faster use of stores and a larger colony. Naturally these conditions have also allowed varroa mites to thrive and high counts have been reported, so make sure you have treated appropriately. ✂

## Chair's Corner

This is my last year as Chair of the Epping Forest Division, I will be handing over the reins at the AGM in January. The Committee has lots of talks and events planned for next year, and I will be at as many of these as I can attend. I hope to see some of you at the Christmas Social, best wishes for a happy Christmas and successful beekeeping in 2015. ✂

**Ted Gradosielski**

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