



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

July 2012

www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

Willow Cottage

The June meeting at Willow Cottage was, as always, one not to miss – the gardens were looking marvellous. Dr Tricia Moxey, local conservationist gave a fascinating talk drawing on her experience over many years living and working in Epping

Forest. One of the special attractions of this meeting is the tea, which was very efficiently organised by Mary West – many thanks to all those members who provided cakes and other food. As ever, we are grateful to Christine Williams for allowing us to meet in the gardens of Willow Cottage again. ☘

May meeting – Queen Rearing

Rain failed to interrupt an engaging presentation by West Sussex BKA tutor Roger Patterson on the practical elements of queen rearing and assessing colonies for that purpose. After the skies cleared, hives were opened and the talking points were put into practice.

Roger's main criteria for selecting a colony are even temper, calmness on the comb and prolificacy, as well as disease resistance and honey production. It was a surprise to some members to hear that non-prolific bees were recommended, but Roger suggested that in terms of management and feeding such bees may well be more suitable for the British climate, rather than those with prolific queens more suited to warmer regions.

Assessment of members' colonies was entertaining and illuminating: one colony was on the point of swarming and queens were heard piping; another had such an infestation of varroa that immediate treatment was recommended. At the end of an absorbing afternoon it was evident to Roger, with his forty-nine year experience of bees, and equally to the beginners present, that the colony most suitable for raising queens was that of Khalil and Salma Attan: calm on the comb, productive, and a delight to manipulate. ☘ contributed by Eric Beaumont

The Queen Rearing Group

This year has seen our first Queen Rearing discussion group, organised by Ted Grad. Six members of the Division met over a period of around six weeks to learn more about this fascinating aspect of beekeeping, and despite the poor weather which held up progress, they were able to raise about 30 queens. Thanks to Ted for the photos. ☘



Change of address

If you move – or change your email address – please don't forget to contact Membership Secretary Mary West on membership@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk, so that we can keep you up to date with all the news. ☘



Chair's Corner

Every year is different in beekeeping, but this has certainly been the most challenging one that many of us can remember, with the wet weather having an impact on both bees and on the available forage. It's at times like these that membership of the Division is most valuable, whether it's for help with catching a swarm, loan of the extractor or simply being able to attend one of the apiary sessions and talk about issues with experts and other beekeepers. One thing is certain – you never stop learning about bees, and I hope many of you will take up the opportunity to come and hear Alan Byham talk to us on 14th July.

Ted Gradosielski ☘

July meetings – 14th July at Wanstead Apiary and 28th July – Honey Extraction

Our next meeting will be on Saturday 14th July at the Wanstead Apiary for the summer BeeBQ. Arrive by 12 noon if you are attending the BeeBQ, for which tickets must be purchased in advance – please contact Helen Chadwick on 020 8523 5770 to reserve a ticket for £5 (no charge for children). If you're not attending the BeeBQ then come along for 2.30 to hear a talk by Alan Byham, Regional Bee Inspector.

Honey Extraction

There will be a meeting on 28th July on Honey Extraction at Ted Grad's honey shed in Nazeing. This event is usually very popular, and Ted is going to run two sessions – 10.00-1.00 pm, or 2.00-5.00 pm. If you wish to attend, please can you BOOK A PLACE by emailing Ted on ted.grad@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk – booking is essential so that Ted knows how many people to expect. Please bring a clean beesuit, as the sessions will begin with removing supers from hives. ☘

Honey

If you've got a honey crop this year, you're doing better than I am! A few reminders – the number for Salma Attan who looks after the Divisional Extractor is 07814 700 974. When you're bottling your honey, why not prepare a few jars for the Honey Show on 1st September? There are special classes for beginners. Make sure the jars are clean and don't label them, because of course exhibits must be anonymous. More tips in the next newsletter. ☘

Tips from the Bee Man

The weather has been very unpredictable lately, and bees are never predictable. It's not too late for swarms, so keep on checking your bees regularly. The wet weather has meant the bees have been confined to the hive much more than usual – keep an eye on stores, and look out also for disease such as nosema which may be exacerbated by the bees being inside so much. ☘

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