



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

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www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

A better Beginners' Course

By all accounts the re-engineered 2106 Beginners' Course engaged and delighted the thirty novices who turned up on a bitter April in Wanstead. The contents of the Big Shed had been culled and cleared by volunteers from the Wanstead Apiary and with the

agreement of our landlord, Mark Stephens. Chairs, tables and a projector screen were donated by Friends of Tottenham Marshes who had recently lost their meeting room, and a team of tutors were waiting to go.

We were determined to offer a more practical course this year and within the first hour hives were open; the group was split into two – half in the bees, half in the classroom where background topics - frame-making, biology, equipment - were covered in half-hour sessions, before the teams swapped over.

By May the weather had improved and we were able to demonstrate an artificial swarm, a method which is easier to learn by demonstration than from a book. We also took great pleasure in demonstrating the excellent baking abilities of Mary West, who provided cakes for the final session.

I extend my warmest thanks for their time and skills in making the course a success to Robin Harman, Ted Gradosielski, Chris Branch, and Khalil and Salma Attan; to John Dutney, Colin Smith and Mark Chambers for enjoying their first teaching experience, and especially to Don McHale for his commitment to catering. ✂



I had Queen Cells in my hive; what should I have done?

Swarms, and what to do with them, was the topic of the recent meeting at Wanstead and Robin Harman and Khalil Attan ran through various options available: how to reduce swarming by double-brooding, supering in advance, and keeping young queens. If that didn't work, how then to identify queen cups and select cells, carry out pre-emptive swarm control, and how to utilise good spare cells by making up nucs for use in re-queening or increase.

Robin demonstrated the most effective method of varroa control, the [Varrox sublimator](#) of oxalic acid, the latter now only legally authorised for use as ApiBioxal. This device fumigates a sealed hive and is ideal for use on a swarm.

The clipping of queens buys time for the beekeeper who misses a cell or an inspection: the queen will be lost but the bees will return to await the first virgin eight days later. Salma and Khalil demonstrated several techniques and many were soon clipping wings successfully and for the first time. The meeting ended late, which suggests that learning can also be pleasurable. ✂

Chair's Corner



The dust had only just settled on the Beginners' Course when the telephone began ringing for swarm collections and bees were demanding supers. The seasonality of beekeeping is one of its pleasures, and pretty soon the Honey Show will be upon us. Would you like to enter?

Two factors may help you decide: Jim McNeill from Romford, an experienced winner and competitor, will demonstrate how to prepare exhibits at our meeting at Wanstead on 18 June; the Honey Show itself will be held at the truly marvellous Copped Hall Apple Day in Epping on Sunday 9 October. No more persuasion is necessary, do you agree?

Eric Beaumont ✂

Monthly Meeting – Saturday 18th June – Honey Show Preparation
Experienced beekeeper Jim McNeill will talk about this at the Wanstead Apiary at 24 Langley Drive E11 2LL on **Saturday 18th June at 2.30 pm**. Come along and find out how to make the most of your exhibits and what judges look for. ✂

New Divisional Apiary!

A new Divisional Apiary will be available for use by members at [Picks Cottage Fishery](#), Sewardstone Road, Chingford, E4 7RA.

The fishery is a former farm and has landscaped grounds; the apiary is large and access is good, though some carrying of equipment will be necessary; no on-site storage will be available. The cost for use of the apiary is £15 p.a., as at Wanstead and Redbridge. Please contact Robin Harman at

secretary@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk and confirm your interest in keeping bees on this new site. ✂

Hive Stand Workshop

Another successful hive stand building workshop took place in May – thanks to Ted Grad for this and for the picture. ✂



Tips from the Bee Man

If you have any colonies on oilseed rape, extract honey as soon as it is capped as it will granulate almost immediately. If you have already taken honey from your hives, keep a close eye on stores and feed if necessary – a sudden cold or wet spell such as we have just experienced can lead to a colony starving in just a few days as the number of brood will be large at this time of year. ✂

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