



# Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

May 2011

[www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)

## Under the microscope

Our last indoor meeting of the spring was an opportunity to look at bee disease, and at pollen, with the use of microscopes. Roy Croyley introduced the session by showing us how to prepare a slide with pollen, and we were able to view these at different strengths and see how varied the pollen granules are in shape

and size. The purpose of the meeting was also to look for nosema, and one member of the division had brought along some bees from a weak colony for investigation. Roy mashed these up in a pestle and mortar with some water, so that a slide could be prepared for viewing. He was delighted to inform the unfortunate member that his bees had a very heavy dose of nosema! Whilst most of us will rely on observation of external symptoms, it's helpful to know how to identify this disease and we were all able to see the slide with the nosema bacteria in view.

The evening ended with a description of the way that honey bees collect and digest pollen, and its uses to them. This was our last meeting indoors until October, so please see the Newsletter for details of the various outdoor meetings over the summer. ☘

## Detached House To Let, Suit Large Colony

One of our members was invited to collect a swarm last week. 'The bees are hanging off the front of a birdbox' she was told. On arrival, there was no swarm ... but there was still a suspicious amount of activity around the rather handsome two-storey bird box.

Closer investigation revealed that the box has been occupied by bees for at least the last three years, and the colony was alive and well, just a little depleted by the recently departed swarm! The owner didn't really want a colony of bees living outside her window, and so this delightful



'hive' is now at the Woodland Burial Park in North Weald, where Division Member Julia Rolf is the Woodland Manager. At the moment it is alongside her existing hive of bees; the plan is to rehome the bees in more traditional accommodation in due course. ☘

## Bee Disease Insurance

All full members of the Division should now have received their BDI Certificate, either handed to them at the last meeting, posted with this newsletter or posted separately if you read the newsletter online. If you are an Associate member and have got bees this year, you should upgrade your membership to Full in order to get the benefit of the Bee Disease Insurance. ☘

## Still looking for bees?

There have been a number of swarms reported recently, and some of you may be starting your beekeeping career, or replacing any lost colonies in your apiaries with these. For experienced beekeepers, Ted Grad has mated, laying queens for sale at £18 each – the first of these should be available from around May 16<sup>th</sup>, so contact Ted to get your name on the list if you want one of these. He is also hoping to supply nucs to beginner beekeepers again this year, at a cost of £80 – again, please contact Ted for further information. ☘

## Chair's Corner

The season has really got onto a busy start with this lovely weather, I hope your bees are working hard filling up the supers.

There is an excellent article in the May BBKA news (page15) "Swarm Calls that turn out to be bumblebees". It tells you exactly how to deal with calls concerning bumble bees. I'm keeping a copy near the 'phone!

Sorry I've missed a couple of meetings, hope to see you all on the 14th.

**Helen Chadwick** ☘



## Next meeting – Saturday 14th May - 'Opening the Hives'

The next meeting will be at the Wanstead Apiary, at 2.30 pm, and is principally for beginner beekeepers. Ted and others from the Division will demonstrate what to look for when opening a hive, and there will be a chance for you to get some practical experience. Please bring protective clothing if you have it, although some will be available to borrow, and remember there are no toilet facilities at the site! ☘

## Future apiary meetings

**11<sup>th</sup> June** – Willow Cottage, speaker to be confirmed

**9<sup>th</sup> July** – Honey Extraction at Chapel Barn with Ted Gradosielski

**13<sup>th</sup> August** – preparation for winter at the Wanstead Apiary

**17<sup>th</sup> September** – Divisional Honey Show ☘

## Apiary Sites

A reminder to those who have hives at the Wanstead Apiary to check their bees regularly. We want to be good neighbours, and it is very important that the owners of properties adjoining this site are not troubled by swarms. We are running out of room on this site, so if anyone can suggest a suitable place for another apiary to be established, please contact one of the Committee. ☘

## Tips from the Bee Man

The best way to get brood frames drawn out is to use them as a honey super first. If you do not have the means to extract them you can remove them as soon as the bees have started to build the cells. Do not use them to house a swarm, it will panic and abscond because of the loose honey. Add them to established colonies if they have honey in them.

When removing full supers of honey, either directly or with clearer boards, do it as early in the day as possible. Nectar collected during the day can be as much as 80 percent water and just a few cells of fresh nectar will reduce the viscosity of the honey; a major cause of fermentation.

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