



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers
October 2014
www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

The Essex Show

There was no Divisional meeting in September as this was the month of the Essex Show at Barleylands near Billericay. The county Honey Show run by Essex Beekeepers was of course only one of the attractions there, which included a variety of agricultural displays. This year some Epping Forest members submitted their honey for judging, and the results were impressive. Between them, John Dutney and Ian Nichols took four first prizes (Light Honey, Dark Honey, Candles and Photograph) and two second prizes for Medium honey and crystallised honey. Ian also received a commendation for his soft-set honey. The two are pictured below relaxing after the stress of waiting for the judging. ☘

Thanks to Hannah Nichols for photos



An Inspector Calls

The favourable weather for bees this summer has also been good for their main parasite, the varroa mite. A beekeeper in another division recently had a routine visit from the Bee Disease Inspector. His bees were found to be free from notifiable disease, but the Inspector recommended urgent treatment for varroa because the level of infestation was so high. Varroa was first found in the UK in 1992 and is now endemic. It weakens colonies and makes them susceptible to diseases and viruses. Remember that a strong colony can have the highest infestation, and varroa population rises in the autumn at the same time that the colony size reduces, so regular monitoring is essential.

At this time of year a chemical treatment is the only practical option. Make sure you follow instructions carefully – thymol based treatments are popular but depend on temperature to be effective. MAQS, based on formic acid, is the most recent varroacide on the market but it should only be used on a full-sized brood chamber, and ventilation is essential. Whatever you do, only use products which are authorised for use on bees – and don't leave them on longer than recommended. More information can be found at www.fera.defra.gov.uk ☘

The Animal and Plant Health Agency

From 1 October, this agency (TAPHA?) will take over the inspectorate function of the National Bee Unit. This combined agency also incorporating the Plant Health & Seeds Inspectorate, the GM Inspectorate and the Plant Variety & Seeds Group is intended to prevent the spread of disease in plants and animals and will be better equipped to respond to emergencies. Plant and bee health research and diagnostics will continue to be delivered by Fera who will work closely with the new agency.

Small Hive Beetle

No doubt one of the first tasks of the new agency will be to make plans for the possible invasion of this pest. In September it was announced that the Small Hive Beetle had been seen in Southern Italy and its progress is being closely monitored – it is not likely to reach the UK for some time. ☘



Chair's Corner

This year's beekeeping season is almost over and apart from checking for stores and protecting the hives against winter there will be little more to do in the apiary. Please come along to our winter meetings however, we have a good range of talks planned to take us through to next spring and there will be opportunities to ask questions and to socialise with Division Members. I look forward to seeing some of you over the next few months at these meetings. ☘

Ted Gradosielski

Monthly meeting – Thursday 16th October

This month's meeting will be back at our usual winter venue of Chingford Horticultural Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford E4 6NH at 7.30 pm. The speaker will be Peter Dalby, who is going to share some of his experiences in other countries in a talk entitled 'Travels of a Beekeeper'. ☘

Annual Honey Survey

The BBKA are running their annual honey survey. This takes only a few minutes to complete and provides valuable information about this year's honey harvest and the impact of weather conditions and locality on honey production. You may already have received an email with a link to the website but if not, go to www.bbka.org.uk and follow the links to complete the survey. You could win £200 worth of beekeeping equipment for taking part but there is no obligation to give your name if you choose not to. The survey should be completed by 10th October. ☘

Thornes Sale Day

As usual, Thornes are having a Winter Sale Day at the Beehive Business Park in Rand, Lincolnshire. Sales start at 10.00 am on **Saturday 18th October**, but the canteen will be open earlier and factory tours start from 8.00 am. No booking is needed but if you wish to pre-order sale goods, do it by Tuesday 14th October. ☘

Tips from the Bee Man

The extended summer that we've all enjoyed is coming to an end, and feeding and varroa treatment should be completed within the next week or two. Once the weather cools down, there should be no reason to open the hive unnecessarily. Now is the time to fit mouse guards to the entrance, to prevent unwanted visitors to the hive over the winter. Remember that you'll need to visit your apiary during winter for checks, so take the chance to clear paths and cut back any vegetation that might make it difficult when the weather is less pleasant. ☘

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