



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2012

BOB's BIT

At our last meeting the question was raised "what is HMF, and do I care?" The short answers are: Hydroxymethylfurfural and no, not much. HMF is metabolised from fructose when heated, so it occurs in all sorts of foodstuffs while cooking. There are limits to the permitted level in food, but so high that we need not worry about it. The concentration of HMF indicates how much, and for how long, honey has been heated. It is measured by photometry. It is toxic to bees, which is a problem for American beekeepers, who use high-fructose corn syrup as winter feed. So be careful when feeding back honey to bees. If you heat it to sterilise it, as you probably should, then you risk poisoning your bees.

It is touching to note how often features in the press refer to the plight of agriculture, and bees in particular. This month, the magazine English Gardens devotes its free offer to bee-friendly plants. Of course I ordered them, under the direction of my Horticultural Consultant, and was amused to see that they were all perennials: Verbena bonariensis, Eryngium, Deutzia and Verbascum are in this collection, and I leave it to our Chairman to interpret them. Plant now, and next year you will have your own bee-loud glade.

Friends of the Earth on the other hand, have a more plebeian offer. For £4 a month you are encouraged to call on David Cameron to implement a National Bee Action Plan and to plant a free packet of oxeye daisy, birdsfoot trefoil, red campion and yarrow.

I am currently attempting to translate a 4-frame nucleus on 14x12 frames onto standard national frames. This involves surrounding the nuc frames with nice new standard ones, and perforce feeding them *ad lib.* with syrup. A round feeder is too slow, but among

APIARY MEETING
Saturday 8th September @ 2.30 p.m.
at South Wonston

**With Avril Burt and South Wonston
Beekeepers**

More details and directions will be provided in the September newsletter.

my souvenirs of Sparsholt hive-building days is a large galvanised frame feeder, holding about a gallon. They were made by Kingdons, whose shop was in the High Street with a workshop in Parchment St. (which was preserved when the site was developed). Truly, they don't make them like that any more.

APIARY MEETING – 7th July
With Trish and Nigel Bright, and Charlotte Smith.

Although the heavy rain prevented the opening of any of Trish and Charlotte's hives, some twenty members enjoyed a highly informative impromptu 'workshop' on beekeeping problems and possible solutions.

Under the chairmanship of Hugh Sykes, with additional expert input from Bob Geary and Avril Burt among others. The agenda was based on the concerns that Trish and Charlotte had with the colonies that weather had prevented us from inspecting, they included:

- Converting a Langstroth colony to a 'brood and a half' National. Leading to discussion of the methods, advantages and disadvantages of converting a standard National to a '14 x 12'.

- Oxalic acid treatments in winter.
- Swarming, supersedure, artificial swarming, shook swarming' (as a sac brood remedy).
- Extracting crystalised rape honey using a warming box/cabinet.
- The importance of using open mesh floors for varroa management for improving hive health and hygiene through better ventilation. The bees are more likely to die due to damp and mould resulting from poor ventilation, than from the low temperatures.
- Drone laying queens and workers.
- The importance of uniting weak colonies/'splits' with stronger colonies to ensure the resulting combined colony will be strong enough to go through the inter.
- The importance and benefits of hive notes.
- Discouraging bees from returning to the site of a swarm using Jeyes Fluid!
- Does the temporary addition of a collected swarm when you already have three colonies, invalidate your BDI cover? Watch this space for the answer.

In spite of the rain, all present felt it had been a most enjoyable and worthwhile afternoon. Many thanks were expressed to Trish and Nigel and Charlotte for hosting the meeting and their generous hospitality.



Clyde and Janet Cunningham in post-workshop discussion with Pauline and John Lailey.

INTECH 'DROP-IN' STAND, 7th July

On 4th July WDBKA were invited by Intech to provide a 'drop-in' stand for one of its monthly Adult Evenings. The scheme of the evening was 'taste', so in addition to Intech's honey tasting stand, we provided a hive, a super with frames of capped comb, beekeeping accessories (smoker, skep etc.) and display boards.

The stand, one of three for the evening, was based around Intech's Bee Cam base station. This featured live video camera feeds from within and outside your Editor's hives in Intech's grounds.



The WDBKA 'drop-in' display, with Intech's live Bee Cam base station.

SKEP MAKING DAY

Sunday August 5th 9.30am – 5.00pm, Warnford Village Hall, SO32 3LE

This skep making course will be lead by Martin Buckle, a beekeeper with over 30 years experience. To book your place, please send a cheque for £35 to Gill Atkins, 6 Victoria Road, BISHOPS WALTHAM, Hants, SO32 1DJ.

Contact Gill at Gillian_atkins@tiscali.co.uk or Jean Frost at jeantery@uwclub.net

IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES

HBA HONEY SHOW – Saturday 13th October at Hillier's Arboretum.