



LBKA NEWS

LBKA SUMMER SOCIAL: WHAT A GREAT DAY!

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the LBKA Summer Social such a success. We had a juggler who taught us tricks, a tarot card reader, a BBQ, bar and Hiver, a locally brewed honey beer to taste; and all kicked off by the monthly meeting held in the open air!



Thank you to Mauricio for taking these photos for us.



SEPTEMBER IN THE APIARY

Where should we be with our colonies at this time of year?

Many beekeepers view the new beekeeping year as commencing in August. The honey has been taken off and the beekeeper is now starting to prepare the bees for winter. The objective from now on in should be to put the bees in the best possible position to go into winter.

Preparing the colony for winter

The bee population will continue to decline in September but the new bees being born will need to live through to April, for 6 months instead of 6 weeks. They need to be healthy, free of varroa mites and associated viruses and with plenty of stores. Those members who diligently applied Apiguard throughout August should now be the proud custodians of newly born healthy bees.

Feeding the colony

This is the main job for September. A colony needs to have 35 lbs. of honey to see it through to next April. A National brood frame holds 5 lbs. and so the equivalent of 7 frames is needed. If, say, you estimate 5 frames of honey is currently in the hive then this is 25 lbs. and a further 10 lbs. is required. 1 lb. of sugar will make 1.25 lbs. of honey (honey is 80% sugar and 20% water). Therefore, using this example syrup should be made from 8 lbs. of sugar to complete the stores. Any surplus will not be wasted as it can be used next spring.



Feeding fondant in winter causes the cluster to break up and is an unnecessary disturbance. It is preferable to feed in September and so ensure that there are sufficient stores for the winter. Fondant in Winter should only be used as an emergency feed, not part of a planned strategy. The best time for winter and spring feeding is in the preceding autumn!

If feeding is left until October then the bees are unlikely to be able to evaporate down the water content to less than 20% and then cap the stores. This is likely to lead to the syrup fermenting over the Winter period. Sugar must be white granulated sugar. Any other sugar is harmful to the bees.

If the feeder needs to be topped up then it is essential to wear a veil. Bees may not appear to be very active if late in the month and cooler but they will surge through the feedhole if the feeder is disturbed or taken off.

Other action to be taken this month include the following:

Marking the queen

If the colony has a new queen born this summer then now is the best time to find and mark her. The colony is contracting with the brood limited to just a few frames and this makes it a much easier proposition. I tend to look for a big bee in the first instance and, as there are now very few drones in the colony, the size contrast is more specific. If the queen is marked then next season's swarm control will be so much easier.

Mouseguards

If it starts to turn cold then these should be fitted late in the month or in early October.



SEPTEMBER IN THE FORAGE PATCH

By now almost all of our native British windflowers will have stopped flowering and have gone to seed. A few still cling on trying to set those last few flowers but due to their evolved habit of setting seed in time for the annual hay harvest and coupled with the hot dry weather few still provide nectar for our bees. The exceptions are ivy and Michaelmas Daisy's which will start flowering shortly and provide the last glut of food before winter sets in. Other late summer flowering natives which may still be in flower include Teasel, Mallow, verbascum's and bramble.

At this time of year our parks, gardens and municipal areas are more important for forage than ever. Shrubs such as escallonia, autumn ceonothus, snow berry and hebe can be important sources of nectar and pollen.

Cultivated flowers in our gardens which will most attract bees at this time include single open dahlias, aster's, single chrysanthemums, sedum autumn joy and of course the bees favourite Agastachi 'black adder.' Right now in my garden the plant of choice is my large patch of helenium which is attracting all Manner of insects including slender mining bees and hornet hover fly. My tall sunflowers are also proving popular.

As we move in to September and the temperatures begin to cool we'll need to start supplementary feeding our colonies if we've taken all their honey from them in order to 'fatten' colonies up for winter.

From now until November is the perfect time to plant spring bulbs such as crocus and tulips which are prolific early sources of pollen for our bees. Plant crocus just beneath the surface and tulips 3x as deep as the bulb is high. Remember to plant with the pointy end up.

Hornet hover fly on Helenium



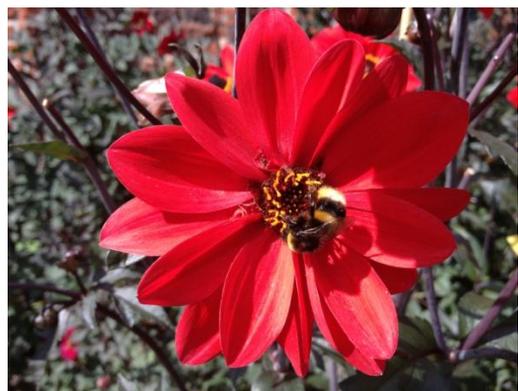
Honey bees on sunflower



Slender mining bee



Dahlia bishop of langdaff





EDUCATION MATTERS



Earlier in the year we conducted a survey amongst our members on a variety of matters. During the summer the committee has been actively addressing the feedback. On the education side members were satisfied at the level on offer but more experienced members felt we could do a little more to meet their needs. The monthly meeting has continued to have the monthly beekeeping task as the main theme but we have supplemented this with an additional topic. So far these have included monitoring for small hive beetle, transportation of bees and use of hive straps, and use of mini nucs.

In line with the survey feedback we have now made provisional arrangements with the BBKA to run a course leading up to the General Husbandry assessment.

General Husbandry Assessment

This assessment is open to anyone who has been keeping bees for a minimum of 3 years, has passed the basic and has a minimum of 3 queenright colonies and a queenright nucleus. The BBKA entry fee is currently £40. It is a demanding and challenging assessment, largely practical and covers a wide range of tasks. The syllabus is available for download on the BBKA website under the education section. Although demanding, it is an excellent way for the beekeeper to progress and get from where he or she is towards where he or she wishes to go.

FERA will provide funding for the training as part of its healthy bee programme but the course attendees are expected to contribute £37 towards the cost. Training is likely to be a 2 day course in London between January and April 2014 together with a ½ day practical session at an apiary. Before the course candidates are expected to familiarise themselves with the syllabus and acquire knowledge of its contents. We can supply information on this and guide attendees on reading matter. The trainer will be external to the LBKA with specific training on teaching the syllabus. Although it is hoped that attendees will take the assessment in summer 2014 or 2015 this is not a requirement to attend the course.

The arrangements are provisional at this stage, as we need to acquire a "critical mass" to run the course. If there are insufficient LBKA members I will circulate details to other Home Counties associations to try to make up the numbers. Arrangements will need to be made between the LBKA, BBKA, trainer and a suitable venue. These arrangements will take time and so it is important that people wanting to take advantage of the training respond at the earliest opportunity (in September).

It does not require any commitment at this stage but late October or November you will be required to pay the £37 subsidised fee to the BBKA. If the course did not proceed then this is fully refundable to you. Please email me at education@lbka.org.uk to register your interest.



2014 Modular Assessments

For those wishing to take a modular examination then it will be necessary to undertake some form of study during the winter months. Such studies are not onerous (about 3 or 4 hours per week) and details, including all syllabi, are on the BBKA website. If there is sufficient demand then I will arrange a revision course for modules 1 and 2. This is likely to be for 5 nights per module in January 2014. The course will be revision based and so it is essential that any person(s) interested undertake the 3 or 4 hours per week part time study in November and December

Anyone wishing to enquire about taking any module examination next spring please email me at education@lbka.org.uk

Howard Nichols

Fortnum & Mason promote London honey

The LBKA is very proud to announce a partnership with Fortnum and Mason. They asked us to help celebrate the urban honey harvest through September and October. They are buying members honey and giving each keeper the chance to take to the floor of their impressive honey emporium and talk to customers about the provenance of their honey and tell their story. We think, between a very good number of members, that we'll be passing over in excess of 1250 jars. We'll be there with an observation hive and it'll give us a chance to talk about the importance of planting for London's pollinators. You may well read about it in the papers in the coming days. Thanks to Jon Harris our Finance Officer in particular for organising this.



Angela Wood's beautifully labelled honey is off to F & M

Monday 16 September to Sunday 13 October
London Honey Festival
 Fortnum's rooftop bees will be on their mettle this week as a brand new range of twenty new London honeys are launched in the store. Never was September so sweet.
 Tuesday 24 September at 6.30pm
 Twilight Honey Tea

F & M's Honey Festival details are on their website



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thames Festival: 14th & 15th September (replaces monthly meeting)

The LBKA have a stand at the Thames Festival and this replaces our September monthly meeting at Fairly House – so NO meeting this Sunday 8th. Instead come and visit the LBKA stand near Tower Bridge.

Thank you to everyone who has answered my plea for help manning the stall, I really appreciate it.

2013 Essex Conference: Saturday 21st September.

Epping Forest Beekeeping Association are hosting the conference this year and have extended the invitation to LBKA members too. Here's a link to all the details:

<http://eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk/conference/>

London Honey Show 2013: Monday 7th October.

Lancaster London is delighted to announce it will be organising and hosting the London Honey Show 2013 on Monday 7 October 2013 from 6pm.

The highlight of the show will be the awards ceremony. The most anticipated award of the evening is the coveted "London Beekeeper of the Year 2013", in association with BeeCraft Magazine. Here's a link to all the details:

<http://www.londonbees.com/the-london-honey-show-2013-2/>



October Monthly Meeting: Sunday 13th October

11am at [Fairley House Junior School](#), 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY

How to treat colonies for varroa with oxalic acid in the depths of winter, followed by chat with coffee and cake.

Many thanks to Howard Nichols and Mark Patterson for all their contributions this month