



LBKA NEWS

LBKA COMMITTEE

Following the AGM in November, the Committee invited Mark Patterson to join them, taking on responsibility for forage, and invited Richard Glassborow to join with responsibility for the LBKA teaching apiaries. The Committee are delighted that both accepted and are looking forward to helping the LBKA deliver another successful year.

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK: A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Committee need volunteers to help them deliver all of the member services. These services include:

- Storage and stock control
- Courses
- Honey sales
- Looking after Nucs
- Help with the teaching apiary
- Design

Please email Jon if you are able to give any time, however little, to helping the LBKA and Jon will match you to a task treasurer@lbka.org.uk





LBKA NEWS

Declaration of Interests for Committee Members 2014/15:

- Angela Woods, Howard Nichols, David Hankins, Richard Glassborow, Jon Harris and Aidan Slingsby have no interest to declare.
- Karin Courtman maintains two hives at a recycling plant in London for a fee.
- Mark Paterson declared that as part of his employment for a registered charity he manages hives and a teaching apiary, but has no financial gain or honey from those hives

Single point of contact for members:

David Hankins, Committee member with responsibility for membership, is also taking on the role as the Committee's 'single point of contact' for any member to use to pass on ideas, advice or feedback to the Committee to help improve the LBKA and what we do.

David can be contacted by email at membership@lbka.org.uk

Are you looking for a site for your bees?

We have received an offer from a member of the public based in New Cross, who has a big garden in a housing co-op, for an LBKA member to site their hive(s) there.

Please contact Angela if you're interested in finding out more details (admin@lbka.org.uk)



JANUARY IN THE APIARY

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

January is a quiet time for beekeepers but an eye must still be kept on the apiary. Make sure that the roof has not been blown off by winds or that woodpeckers have not taken an interest in the hive.

The queen should now have started to lay again, albeit in a small way.

Varroa strategy.

Treatment in autumn with Apiguard may not have been enough to deal with the mite. Treatment with oxalic acid in late December or early January is a standard treatment for varroa. Oxalic acid is cheap to buy and the time taken to open the hive and administer is all done in less than 1 minute if bees are not flying. As always, it is essential to wear a veil when opening the colony to treat. Do not take chances.

Food stores.

If the colony went into the winter with 35 lbs. of stores then feeding will not be necessary. If stores are light then only candy or fondant should be used at this time of year. (Sugar syrup should be avoided as it will excite the bees and so disturb the cluster. The bees are also unable to process syrup in winter and it is then liable to fermentation). Feeding is not usually necessary in January, more of a March task as the bees are then flying and consuming stores at a considerably faster rate than in January.

New equipment

Those who have purchased equipment during the winter sales can assemble frames, etc. It is surprising how quickly events can move when the bees get going in spring and ready assembled equipment keeps the beekeeper ahead of any eventuality. Some suppliers do have a post Christmas sale so it is still worth checking out the websites.

Cleaning old equipment.

Best time to do this is immediately after it is taken out of use in autumn. If not done then winter is preferable to cleaning in the spring immediately before re use. Attention to general cleanliness and maintenance of old equipment is part of apiary hygiene strategy.

Candles and honey recipes.

For those who process beeswax then winter is the usual time of year for this activity. Honey foodstuffs can, of course, be prepared and eaten at any time of year.

LBKA events.

Keep in touch with others. Monthly meetings and winter lectures. LBKA has its winter programme of events and it is well worth making the effort to attend.

Education.

Education and practical experience are the 2 routes through which beekeepers develop their skills. Education may arise from a variety of routes but Beecraft is a substantial resource. If you do not currently subscribe to Beecraft then January is a good month take out an annual subscription.

Howard Nichols



JANUARY IN THE FORAGE PATCH

January is often the coldest month of the year when our bees are hunkered down to a tight cluster within the hive and outside there are few plants with flowers on them.

On warm days the cluster may break for brief periods and bees will take this opportunity to make cleansing flights to empty their bowels but may also forage for water and pollen. Whilst water is often readily available at this time of year there are not so many flowers available and in the cold bees will become sluggish and die if they stray away from the warmth of the hive for too long.

Plants that are actively flowering and of use to bees at this time of year include Mahonia, Viburnums, Wall flowers and Hellebores, particularly *Helleborus niger* the Christmas Rose. These can all offer pollen though they are unlikely to secrete nectar in low temperatures. Some winter flowering plants actually lack nectaries altogether so their sole enticement to pollinators is their fatty, protein rich pollen. Hazel and Willow may also be flowering in some areas.

To be of benefit to your bees at this cold time of year these forage plants need to be in close proximity to the colony as the foragers will not travel far. Generally bees in these cold temperatures will fly no further than a hundred meters or so before they start to cool down and become sluggish. Something to bear in mind when planning your winter forage planting.

Jobs to do in the garden include:

- Cutting back native hedges and shrubs
- It's still not too late to take cuttings from many shrubs for propagation providing free plants for future seasons.
- Cut down last year's foliage on Hellebores to allow the light to get to the emerging flower shoots. This will encourage rapid growth from the crown and opening of the flowers
- Cut down dead stems from last years hardy herbaceous perennials. Allowing the frost to get to the crown of hardy plants can kill off pathogens and pests giving them a good start to the year. The light reaching the crown also encourages growth.
- Not so hardy perennials often benefit from having the dead foliage left on until early spring to protect the crown from frost damage.
- Mulch plants with leaf mould or manure to feed, protect from frost and conserve moisture later in the season.
- Now is a good time to put up your solitary bee nest boxes to provide homes for solitary bees emerging in spring - which is not very far away.



Viburnum tinus



Christmas rose



Wallflowers



Mahonia



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January Monthly Meeting: Sunday 12th January

Bee disease and brood disorder

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

*Identification, advice and discussion about bee disease and brood disorders, based on BBKA slides, plus other topics. Followed by chat with coffee and cake. **Non-members are welcome to come and find out more about LBKA.***

Tuesday, 21st January: The Short Hair Bumblebee Project

19:30 at Kent House Road Leisure Gardens (opposite Woodbastwick Road)
[91a Kent House Road, Sydenham, Kent SE26 5LJ.](#)

We have been kindly invited by Bromley and Orpington BKA to this talk. Dr Nikki Gammans will talk about "The Short Hair Bumblebee Project"