



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

August, 2021

Welcome to this month's newsletter

Congratulations are in order for Rachel Dewhurst, Karlis Briedis, Kyle Moreland, Luke Wyatt, Katharina Bielenberg, Rodney Phillip, Sergio Ramos, Anna Gaudion, Annette Pearson, Sue Irani, Deborah Blythe, Khevir Jettoo and Andrew Hinton for passing the BBKA Basic Assessment. More details are on page 5.

We also have an excellent article from Adam on his bee sting allergy desensitisation treatment (p9) which is good reading in advance of Sunday's Monthly Meeting on the same subject. Richard updates us on where we are with School Food Matters on page 7. We also have some photos from Eugene, Janet and Richard. Thanks to the regular contributors for their regular contributions, including from Richard (p1), Howard (p8) and Mark (p12).

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Thank you to this month's contributors: **Adam Armstrong, Janet Evans, Richard Glassborow, Martin Hudson, Eugene McConville, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Kathy Stevenson.** Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me.

Happy beekeeping.

Aidan Slingsby, Editor, services@lbka.org.uk

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

I would like to take this opportunity to share with the whole membership a recent discussion amongst the LBKA Trustees.

The past 18 or so months have been extraordinary and atypical. LBKA has tried to respond positively and learn, of necessity, to do some things differently. In some cases, we have discovered benefits and new opportunities. e.g. online Monthly Meetings have potential for greater accessibility. Online 'tutorial' formats have shown potential to be an effective training tool and Q&A sessions allow all participants to contribute according to their personal needs, interests and abilities. Generating content for these brings the added benefit of creating a permanent online reference resource.

BeeBanter has continued to be intense but by and large well behaved. Importantly, it is not only an exceptional rapid response knowledge exchange but also, in the absence of face to face meetings, it has provided a social platform and has preserved or even enhanced a degree of community spirit. For the committee it also provides a sampled insight into the needs and interests of participating members.

The Winter lecture programme has been opened up to a much wider pool of speakers and, as with monthly



"First time I've actually seen a bee working on this white Passion flower - and first year I can see fruits. Maybe the local bumbles have worked it out. As usual honey bees all over the blue Passion flower." Photo and quote from Eugene McConville

meetings, geography is no longer a barrier to member attendance.

I think we all recognise that many of these new formats have potential to continue to play a part in what and how the LBKA delivers our charitable objects.

But these times have had a cost too. Some of the above formats are new to us and have involved a learning curve which is a fancy term for more effort and time. It has not always been possible to recruit assistance for practical tasks. It is one thing to see how some of these new tools can be good for us but they involve a lot of time and we are a voluntary organisation. They may take longer to materialise than we at first expect or would wish.

So, with Covid restrictions lifting (for the time being at least) and the AGM looming on the horizon, the Trustees took a moment to review, reaffirm our commitment to the core themes and activities of the Association, and reset our resolve.

LBKA Character and Direction will continue to be proactive and defined by Better Beekeeping; better public understanding of bees; better environment for bees and Londoners

The London Bee Situation cat is now out of the bag. Following the [Guardian article](#) we have started quite low key Tweeting links to our report and Position Statement. What responses we have had so far have been positive, including a public expression of support from the CEO of BBCT and as yet there have been no negative reactions.

Most of us are aware that there are caveats over data but there are no doubts over the general scale of the issue or the trend. The numbers of registered colonies in London keep growing and in some areas those numbers are beyond sustainable for the honey bees themselves, let alone other pollinator species with which they share the environment and resources.

We are continuing to work on data for other relevant issues such as disease, swarms and we are continuing to broaden our direct contacts, build alliances and try to influence the BEES narrative in London.

In the meantime, more studies are emerging, casting honey bees in a negative role. There is a real risk of a backlash and, more than ever, we believe this stand we are making is important both for the sustainability of beekeeping in London as well as for ecological reasons. But this is going to start taking up a lot more time.

This concern over beekeeping in London and the Covid constraints, have combined to prompt reflection on our Education offer. Our emphasis will shift towards improver training for existing members (novice to intermediate). We are looking at ways of delivering the big 4 (Swarm prevention and control; disease recognition and treatment; varroa management; feeding) as online

modules (free to members) with Q&A and online reference material and tutorials, etc.

This frees up Monthly Meetings from delivering the big 4 (inevitably repetitive year on year, which can conflict with the social dimension of such meetings). We can continue to broaden the scope of content even further than we have begun to do recently and hopefully widen the appeal and hold the interest of more experienced members who tend to stop attending by their 3rd year.

The 5th Big One, bee handling, has to be practical, and will remain the *raison d'être* of mentoring.

The public facing LBKA is primarily expressed through our website, Twitter and the schools programme, School Food Matters in particular. Whilst Twitter has a respectable following, it currently does not really bear our personality. The website is without doubt our most important public platform and we will be updating the content to better reflect the character and direction of the LBKA today.

Finally, our Bees and Flowers go Together initiative, to encourage corporates to help bees by planting flowers rather than unwittingly adding to the honey bee population in already saturated areas of central London, is going to need a restart after the ravages of lockdown.

While there have been some very worthwhile outcomes to the pilot Grants for Pollinators awards we have made, the pilot has proved hard work and uptake disappointing. But that's why we start with a pilot. We will persevere.

At the risk of repeating myself, all this is delivered by volunteers. To be an active, and especially a proactive Association needs active support from its members. That can be anything from time given to undertake practical task to simple words of encouragement.

For my part, I would like to thank the trustees and the membership for making this such an interesting and rewarding organisation to be part of.

Announcements

This is our official place for announcements. If you only read one section of the newsletter, it should be this one!

August's online Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

This month's Monthly Meeting will be on **Sunday 8th August** at 11:00 on the topic of **bee-stings and anaphylaxis**. It will be led by Will (who – as well as being resources officer – also happens to be a doctor)



Spotted by Richard: *“Talking of small bees, this *Lasioglossum* is on oregano. Steven Falk thinks possibly male *smeathmanellum*. Species level still beyond me for most wild bees but it seems to be generally acknowledged bee ID is not easy”. Photo and quote: Richard Glassborow.*

and Howard, hopefully with contributions from others. Adam has written an article in this issue (p9) from his experiences which is well-worth reading. The meeting will be at the usual Zoom link (in the [Members' Area](#) and in your email).

The **Pub Social** will be on **Tuesday 31st August** from 18:30 (Zoom link in the [Members' Area](#) and in your email).

September's Monthly Meeting will be on Sunday 12th August – topic to be confirmed

Hiring extractors

We have extractors which can be borrowed by members. We charge £10 to hire for up to 3 days and we ask for a £20 deposit which you'll lose if you don't bring the extractor back clean!

Please email resources@lbka.org.uk for more information.

Join the committee!

LBKA is a reasonably-sized organisation with (currently) over 200 members that is building a good reputation for its stance on beekeeping, the quality of its outreach activities and the quality of its advice. We need more committee members to enable us to do more. Don't worry if you don't know quite what role you might be able to fill. You'll find your place! Please contact any member of the committee (see back page) for a chat.

Paid opportunities for members

Every now and then opportunities for paid work relating to beekeeping come to the committee's attention.



Spotted by Janet: *“Jersey Tiger on raspberries”. Photo and quote: Janet Evans.*

It is policy to make these opportunities available to all members. However, from experience, the process of advertising the opportunities in the monthly Newsletter is not always timely for the work required. We are therefore proposing to use a “framework agreement” type process to identify members who are interested, able and have the relevant experience, skills/qualifications and resources (including insurances where relevant) to respond to different categories of services required on a hypothetical basis in advance of real opportunities arising. This will allow a more appropriate response time when specific requests for services come in but retain the openness and fairness to potential member suppliers.

In the first instance we are therefore inviting “expressions of interest” from members for the following categories of paid services should they be requested by potential client businesses, organisations (potentially including the LBKA), or individuals:

- Beekeeping, apiary management, consultancy and delivery, etc.
- Bee related ecological, environmental, land management, planting consultancy, design and delivery services
- Bee related educational consultancy and support, including content development and supply, etc

Any member wishing to respond to this invitation please contact Simon Saville in writing to development@lbka.org.uk, clearly stating which category/categories you are interested in and a brief CV of relevant experience and or qualification and any insurances held (if relevant). You may then be invited to respond in further detail to specific hypothetical requirements.

Are you “good” with social media?

If you are good at communicating with social media, then you could help LBKA!

LBKA has a presence on all the main social media channels - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram - but we aren't currently using these channels as effectively as we could. We are looking for a Social Media Officer to take the lead in how these channels are used. Ideally, we would co-opt you onto the committee so that you're up-to-



Spotted by Janet: Hornet mimic hoverfly. Photo: Janet Evans.



Spotted by Eugene: "If you look carefully you should see a female scissor bee (I think), it's Britain's smallest bee". Photo and quote: Eugene McConville.

date with the latest discussions on key topics of interest.

Our social media channels already have an impressive reach, but we aren't using them very proactively to manage our communications. This is a good opportunity to help develop a profile of a local charity and its charitable objectives.

- Twitter: [@LondonBeeKeeper](https://twitter.com/LondonBeeKeeper)
"Serving bee keepers & conservation enthusiasts in London"
7,000+ followers
5,000+ tweets since 2012
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/londonbeekeepersassociation/>
Recently set up; little activity so far
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/> (open site)
"Welcome to the open group London Beekeepers Association page. This page is not an official LBKA page but is managed by LBKA members

as a means of public engagement, sharing of information and for discussion about beekeeping in London."

Public group, 2,800+ members

These channels have excellent potential to help us get our messages to key audiences, especially to non-members who have an interest in bees and beekeeping. Along with our excellent website, they are the public face of the Association – who we are, what we do, and what we stand for.

Please get in touch with Simon if you have an interest in getting involved: development@lbka.org.uk and 07572 612722.

Contribute to the Newsletter

You'll see a few gaps in our regular contributions. If you can help with any of these (not necessarily every month) please drop me line. We'd welcome contributions from more members and would love it if you could propose a new regular feature. We usually end up with 300 or so members and the newsletters are [available to all on our website](#). Do email me if you can contribute anything including articles, photos and recipes.

We're looking for members to summarise the issues discussed in a digestible way. Please contact services@lbka.org.uk if you may be able to help in some months.



Spotted by Eugene: "Male Wool Carder Bee on a Digitalis parviflora". Photo and quote: Eugene McConville.



Spotted by Eugene: "Out gunned". Photo and quote: Eugene McConville.

Old announcements from July

Check our [previous newsletters](#) or contact services@lbka.org.uk for more details.

Welcome Stuart Kennon! The committee is pleased to announce the co-option of Stuart Kennon onto the committee. You can contact him at stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk.

Beekeepers wanted to try a feed supplement. Martin Kunz is looking for one or two beekeepers, with a few hives each, ideally near W3 (or at least in easy public transport distance from W3), to try out a novel bee feed supplement from the US. If you are interested, please contact m.kunz@beefriendlybeesuits.com.

Do you have any announcements?

If you've any announcements for the next issue of LBKA News, please send to Aidan at services@lbka.org.uk.

BBKA Basic Assessments

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

This year the BBKA Basic Assessments were held at the Mudchute apiary on Docklands. They were conducted over 4 Saturdays in the month of June. For those who do not know, the BBKA Basic is both a practical and oral assessment and lasts about 1 hour. Each candidate is asked to assemble a frame, light the smoker (including observing health and safety issues) then open a colony and demonstrate to the examiner that he or she can control the bees whilst, at the same time, answering a few straightforward questions about the colony contents. After going through the brood frames the candidate then reassembles the hive and goes on to the 2nd part of the assessment which is answering a series of straightforward questions about beekeeping, bee biology, swarm control and bee diseases. The syllabus is broad in its range but not too deep. Both the BBKA and the LBKA actively encourages its members to take this assessment as it is recognised as a substantial step forward in beekeeping education. Many allotment committees and other public bodies also now require the beekeeper to have this certificate before they are allowed to keep bees on the establishment's land. The BBKA entry fee is £20. The full syllabus is available



During a Bee Basic examination. . . with a long lens, by the look of it

for download on the BBKA website and within the education section.

The process started back in November with potential candidates being given electronic course notes for light Winter reading. These notes cover the syllabus from beginning to end. Formal study is not required, just a reading of the course notes over the winter months. In April we had 2 hour zoom revision session and went through major items in the syllabus. Usually this is done by 3 sessions, face to face, where we go through the syllabus line by line. By the last session we had the assessment dates arranged with the assessors and each candidate was allocated a date and time.

So, on to the actual assessments. Each day 3 or 4 candidates were assessed and this was done over 4 consecutive Saturdays. For the first 2 weeks our assessor was Ireneusz Gajowniczek from Twickenham. For the second 2 weeks it was Pat Allen from Upminster.

The 1st session was on Saturday, 5th June. The weather was good, no rain and warm sunshine. Candidates arrived and departed throughout the day; each candidate arriving 1 hour before the allotted time so ensuring the assessor would not be kept waiting if anyone was delayed. The first day commenced at 10.00am and finished about 4.00pm. It was repeated the following 3 Saturdays. On each day the weather held good. No rain!

The results of the assessments were as follows:

- Rachel Dewhurst (distinction)
- Karlis Briedis (credit)
- Kyle Moreland (pass)
- Luke Wyatt (credit)
- Katharina Bielenberg (pass)
- Rodney Phillip (credit)
- Sergio Ramos (credit)
- Anna Gaudion (credit)
- Annette Pearson (credit)
- Sue Irani (credit)
- Deborah Blythe (credit)
- Khevir Jettoo (distinction)
- Andrew Hinton (credit)

A major reason for this success rate is undoubtedly due to the commitment of all candidates. Another significant reason is the LBKA mentoring programme. Each year more experienced members freely give of their time to teach new members the craft of beekeeping. The newer member (mentee) assists the more experienced beekeeper (mentor) and so starts to learn a variety of skills during the course of a beekeeping season. This provides a solid foundation to the newer beekeeper. The LBKA would like to thank all its mentors for participating in this invaluable service.

On behalf of the LBKA, I would like to thank both of our assessors, Ireneusz Gajowniczek and Pat Allen. Both freely gave of their time and expertise so that all candidates could be assessed. It is greatly appreciated by all of us. Thanks also to Tristram Sutton



and the other volunteers who manage the Mudchute apiary.

Finally, anyone who has kept bees for a minimum period of 12 months and wishing to undertake this assessment in 2022 can register by sending an email to education@lbka.org. Further details will be given in an autumn newsletter.

School Food Matters 2021 Review (half way)

More updates from School Food Matters.

Richard Glassborow
education@lbka.org.uk

Here are a few moments from the LBKA visits to

schools and school visits to our Holland Park apiary. It has been quite a challenge to deliver at very short notice (blame Covid) and there are still more to deliver in September.

The visual props unequivocally make the connections between bees (all bees), flowers, and food. By the time we finish this year's programme we estimate we will have reached around 5,000 London families with a positive message about the importance of insect pollinators and the need to value and care for the natural world.

Huge thanks to all the LBKA volunteers who are making this possible, to our partners, School Food Matters and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and the sponsors, the Wholefood Foundation.



August in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

The calendar year commences in January but 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 for August (and September) should be to put the bees in the best possible position to go into winter. If the honey has not yet been removed and it is now "ripe" then this should be the first job of the month. The empty, extracted, supers are then put above the crownboard for cleaning by the bees, then removed and fumigated.

Preparing the colony for winter

A significant risk to the colony in winter having too many varroa mites in the hive. The most common form of treatment at this time of year is a Thymol based product such as Apiguard. This needs to be in the colony for a minimum of 4 weeks and is most effective when the outside temperature is greater than 15°C. Early August is the optimum time to commence

treatment as the honey has been removed and temperatures are still above 15°C. Other miticides are available. Apiguard has a high efficacy rate for killing mites but it does need to be administered properly to be effective. It is also a veterinary product and so it's essential to follow the application procedure strictly.

Hives can be checked that they are on a stable and level surface. There should be no leaks or gaps as the hive must be waterproof and draughtproof to withstand the extremely testing conditions of winter. August is also a time of robbing by other bees as the nectar supply is scarce. Wasps may also be a nuisance and so there should not be any gaps in the woodwork where they may gain entry. There should only be one way into and out of a beehive.

You can strengthen colony with young bees. Worker bees produced from eggs laid in August and September need to live for up to 6 months rather than 6 weeks. A feed of sugar syrup after the honey has been removed and a varroa treatment effectively completed will stimulate the queen into continuing her egg laying whereas, otherwise, she will be decreasing this activity.

Other action to be taken this month

Entrance blocks. Use entrance blocks to help bees defend the colony against attacks from wasps and from robbing by other bees.

Food. Check that bees still have sufficient food reserves after the honey has been removed.

Unite colonies where appropriate. A large colony has a better chance of coming through the winter months than 2 small ones. Beekeepers are often tempted to overwinter 2 smaller colonies with the view to having 2 honey producing colonies next year. This is sometimes a mistake.

Reuniting colonies If you successfully artificially swarmed a colony then the artificial swarm and colony of origin can be reunited should you so wish. Alternatively, if both are large enough to overwinter then you may choose to leave and so increase your stock.

Protect and store supers against wax moth. If you have the opportunity to put super frames in a deep freeze for 48 hours then this will kill all 4 stages of the Wax Moth lifecycle. Take care when removing the frames as they are very brittle until the wax reaches ambient room temperature again. Acetic acid may also be used but special care is required as it is corrosive. Burning of Sulphur strips is another method. These 3 methods may be summarised as follows:

- Freezing: effective against all 4 stages of Wax Moth
- Acetic Acid: effective against 3 stages of Wax Moth (not always against pupae)
- Sulphur strips: effective against 3 stages of Wax Moth (not always against eggs)

My own viewpoint is that used brood combs should be burnt and that retention is not compatible with running a hygienic apiary. Conversely, super combs are an extremely valuable resource and the beekeeper should make every effort to look after these on behalf of the bees until next spring.

Beekeeping with an allergy

Adam wrote an article about his allergy to bee stings on page 10 of [June 2018's edition of LBKA News](#). Here, he follows up after completing his desensitisation treatment.

*Adam Armstrong
LBKA member*

By the time this newsletter is published, I will have one remaining immunotherapy appointment, the last one over a three-year period. A great time to share my experience of working with bees while having an allergy, and it is the topic of this month's monthly meeting. This is a follow up to the [article I wrote at the beginning of the desensitisation programme](#).

When did it all start?

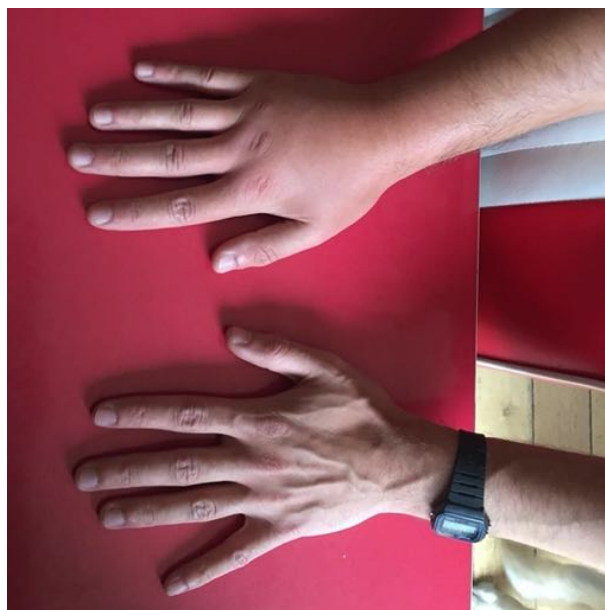
I have been keeping bees since 2014, having completed a year long course with a local association. Over the first two years I had been stung somewhere between 20 and 30 times, having never been stung before, each time with no reaction.

I consider myself to be very gentle with handling bees and with more time spent manipulating hives, the stings became less frequent.

The Sting

I was removing honey supers from one of my garden hives and the sleeve of my bee suit had pulled up (the thumb hoop had previously detached), a worker wandered up into my glove, I carefully put the super down on the kitchen worktop trying not to trap the bee. Knowing I would inevitably get stung, I thought I would give the bee a smack to avoid the sting, just as I started to motion towards my hand I felt the sting, I couldn't stop once I was in motion. As you will know, when a worker stings, the stinger and venom sack are left behind, you can see the venom sack pumping the venom in, the venom is not administered instantly, it takes 30 seconds, perhaps longer (I have never left a sting in to find out!). As a result of squishing the bee (and the venom sack), all the venom was administered instantly and direct into a vein!

Prior to this sting, I would experience little reaction



The swelling a few days after the sting, it took over a week for the swelling to subside.

when stung. I can only make an assumption but I believe the combined factors of not having been stung in a year, being stung into a vein and the speed of which the venom was administered is what caused me to develop the allergy to honeybee venom.

The symptoms

Almost immediately after the sting the area around the sting (on my wrist, right arm) became very pronounced, within a minute the palm of my right hand began to itch, I quickly closed the hive. By this time, the palm on my left hand also began to itch also, this is when I became more concerned that I was having an allergic reaction so I took an antihistamine (a must for your beekeeping kit), shortly after my scalp became itchy, this sensation then spread to every part of my body where there is hair! Realising I was experiencing a more severe reaction I started to focus on my breathing, I was aware I may have to seek help if breathing became difficult. At this point I was burning up, I took my clothes off and my body was red and blotchy. I started to feel tired so decided to lie down, at this point I was completely focused on my breathing, fortunately I had no breathing difficulties, I started to drift off, I tried to keep my eyes open but in 30 mins I had fallen asleep, obviously my body was fighting against the reaction.

I had woken up an hour later feeling much better, the area around the sting was swollen but all other symptoms had gone. During the night my arm became more swollen, very hot and incredibly uncomfortable. The next morning my arm had become like a club, it felt heavy and was throbbing.

Allergy Consultant

I went to an allergy consultant who advised that I had experienced an allergic reaction and that future stings could result in anaphylaxis, reactions can become



Allergy skin test. The consultant had no bee venom available, but a blood test confirmed the allergy.

worse. The consultant said I'm not going to tell you to stop working with bees, but you need to be extremely careful. I had invested much time in beekeeping and most importantly as you know, it is fascinating! I would not consider giving up something I take so much enjoyment from. The consultant suggested going through desensitisation and that unlike many other allergies, it works, the allergy could be 'fixed' and the success rate was high.

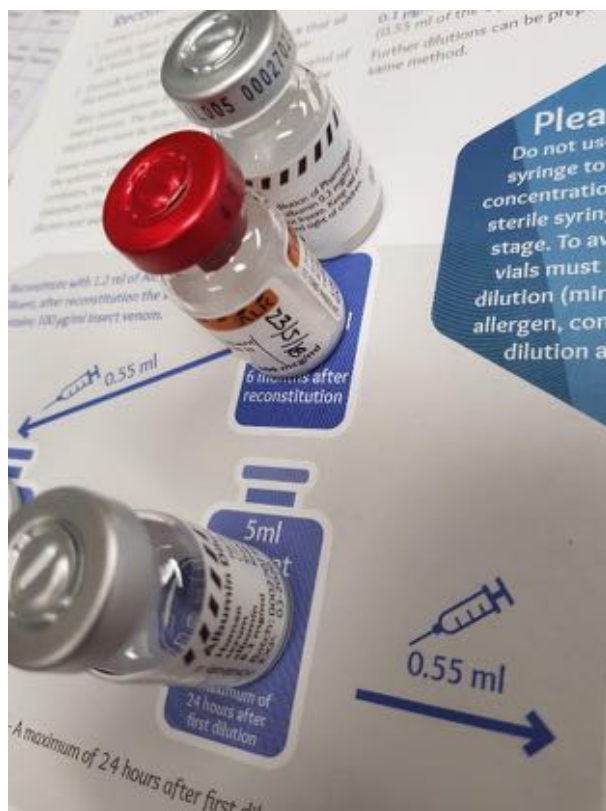
Immunotherapy appointments

As I had no intention of giving up beekeeping and not having to rely on EpiPens alone, I started the immunotherapy course, it is a three-year commitment. The 'initial phase' consists of weekly visits, to build up to the maximum dose of 100 μ g (micrograms) of honeybee venom. The first dose is 1000 times lower than the end concentration. Each dose is increased by a factor of 10 until the final concentration is reached. Once the maximum dose is reached the 'maintenance phase' begins, monthly injections of the maximum dose over a period of 3 years to keep up the immunity.

The supplier/manufacturer of the treatment changed during the maintenance period; the new instructions are for doses to be given in intervals of 6/8 weeks. The venom is ready mixed with dilution and does not need to be prepared prior to being given to the patient.

Before I leave for my appointment, I am required to take an antihistamine. Prior to the injection I take a peak flow test, and then I am observed for an hour (if an anaphylactic reaction was to occur it is usually within this period), before a second peak flow to ensure there has been no changes in lung function before being sent on my way. As a result of the pandemic, the peak flow testing has been suspended.

After the first two injections I had no reactions but



Freeze dried honeybee venom and dilution vials being prepared.

after receiving the 4th injection (Week 4), a dose of just 10 μ g of venom, I experienced redness and swelling around the area of the injection. As you can see that this is a small amount of venom when the maximum dose is 100 μ g, the maximum dose being equivalent to two or three bee stings (or so I am told). As the venom dosage was not tolerated, at week 5, I was required to repeat the dose given at week 4. At week 6 the dose was increased to 10 μ g of venom again, this time the dosage was split between 2 injections on each arm to help reduce any possible localised reaction. From this point onwards there were no noticeable reactions all the way through the initial phase.

Inspecting Hives with an allergy

I had inspected many times between having the reaction and was then told that the next sting could potentially kill me! During my first inspection, knowing I had the allergy, I was careful but not overly worried, taking my time and inspecting when people were nearby and at my out apiary, I inspected my colonies with the support of other beekeepers.

It is important to be prepared before inspecting honeybee colonies with or without an allergy, take your time, particularly at out apiaries, particularly in a field and on roof tops where access can be difficult and where no people are around. I have observed handling of bees which has aggravated the colonies, resulting in many stings to the beekeeper (along with a lot of cursing) which I think could have been easily avoided with more care.



The reaction from a dose of just 10µg of honeybee venom a few weeks into my treatment.



The lining of the Bee Pro suit, the mesh is thicker than the length of a sting.

A few extra precautions were taken to allow me to continue beekeeping safely:

Good Bees. I requeened the more aggressive hives with queens from a reputable supplier, the queens reared for their good temperament from good stock. This is good practice for any beekeeper. Throughout the treatment I have continued to keep bees in my garden.

Bee Suit. I purchased a suit from BJ Sherriff (Beepro) specially lined for extra protection against bee stings, the lining thicker than a bee sting. The suit also has a hood with a bar in the top to keep the veil away from your face, the sleeves have Velcro straps to provide extra protection and a special pocket designed for an EpiPen. The suit worked well throughout the period when I was most vulnerable but with the extra lining it was heavier and in the middle of summer extremely hot.



The Beepro suit by BJ Sherriff. The hood of the Bee Pro suit with the extra mesh lining, a bar to keep the veil away from the face and easy reach pockets on each sleeve, one for your mobile phone and the other for an EpiPen.

Gloves. With my suit I received a free pair of leather gloves, these were thicker offering extra protection but were extremely difficult to clean, eventually I put them in the washing machine as soda water alone was not effective, they shrunk in size and became hard. These gloves made it very difficult to avoid squishing bees during inspections and I quickly reverted to using washing up gloves (Marigolds), although these didn't offer the protection from stings, I was less likely to trap a bee which could result in a sting. I like the tactile feeling when inspecting.

EpiPen. I was advised to carry three EpiPens, one for me to carry around at all time, one to keep in the car and the one other for me to carry around in my beekeeping kit. Fortunately, I have never had to use one. An EpiPen has a short life, it is very important



EpiPens and a training Pen.

to make sure yours are in date. During the pandemic there became a shortage and advice was to continue to use EpiPens 6 months past the expiry date if a new one could not be sourced, this is no longer the advice now they are more readily available.

Antihistamine Tablets and Cream. I would recommend keeping Antihistamine tablets and cream in your beekeeping kit. It will help reduce any reaction to a sting whether you are sensitive to stings or not.

What3words App

Many of our members have apiaries in secluded areas, in fields, allotments or rooftops where an address will not necessarily point to the right location. I would recommend downloading an app called what3words, this app gives every 3 square metres a unique 3 words. This accuracy could mean the emergency services can get to you more quickly if you did require assistance. It may only be only a matter of minutes from a being stung to becoming unconscious. It may also be worth sharing the three words with family or friends.

Bee stings during Immunotherapy

I have been stung 3 times throughout the immunotherapy course, each time the stings were quickly removed and each time there was little to no reaction. I document each sting and report back to the immunotherapy team.

End of Immunotherapy

As I approach the end of the immunotherapy programme, after more than 3 years of hospital visits, I am very thankful to the NHS, making it possible for me to build up my tolerance to bee venom and to the staff who made it possible for my treatment to continue even through the pandemic.

Even though I can now tolerate bee venom as I did before the allergy developed, I am now very aware how quickly things can change, I will still take great care when working with these amazing creatures. I would ask others who experience unusual symptoms from a bee sting to seek advice from a specialist, be safe!

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article is the one we used last year.

Mark Patterson
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Late summer for the bees is one of the most desperate times of the year when they can struggle the most to find enough food to eat. Many people find this fact difficult to believe if the weather is often hot and sunny and presumably great for the bees but it is in fact often one of the leanest times for the busy insects. At this time of year colonies are large with many mouths to feed and as the beekeeper has removed the honey crop the flowers are also diminishing in abundance meaning the bees can struggle to replace honey which has been taken off. For this reason it's crucial not to be over-greedy and take all the honey leaving the bees with no stores for themselves.

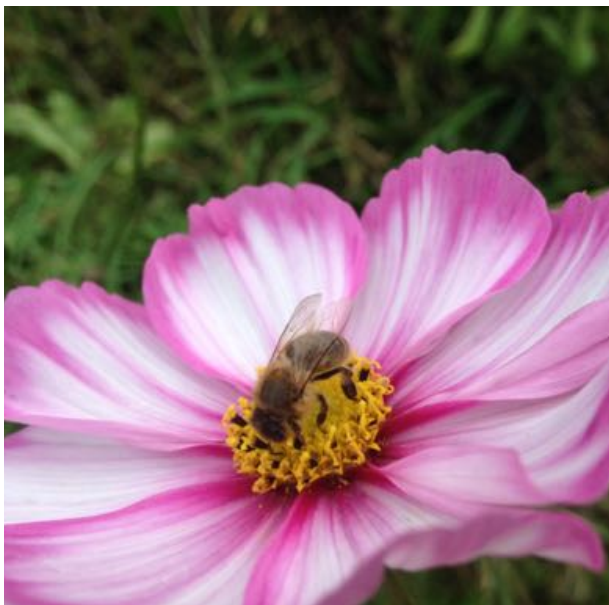
Come late summer the majority of our nectar-rich native wild plants have ceased flowering and gone to seed, especially woodland and meadow flowers whose flowering period is in rhythm with the closing of the woodland canopy and cutting of meadows for hay. **Bramble** and all our native trees have also long since finished flowering and are now sporting fruits and seeds leaving little for the bees.

Away from **heather** moorland and **heath**, the only real bountiful sources of forage from native wild plants are **Greater willow herb, thistles, ragwort, bindweed** and **hogweed** – though many of these are early this year and already going over. Along water courses **purple loosestrife, marsh woundwort, water mint** and the invasive **Himalayan balsam** provide welcome relief but not all colonies are in range of such localised sources of forage.

Late summer is one of the largest gaps in forage during the beekeeping season and ends with the brief glut of nectar provided by **ivy** flowering in the autumn. Ivy is the last opportunity for our bees to stock up for winter and for wild pollinators a chance to fuel migrations south to warmer climates or for females to fatten up in readiness for hibernation.

Research conducted by our friends at the University of Sussex has demonstrated that honey bees fly furthest to find forage in late summer with record flights of 12km being undertaken in August. In the case of the Sussex research it was found that honey bees were flying 12km to visit gardens in town centres where domestic gardens and public parks planted with bee friendly summer flowers were providing much of their forage needs. This goes to show just how important our urban gardens are for bees at this time of the year.

Many garden plants that are great for bees in late sum-



Cosmos.



Helianthus.



Sunflower.

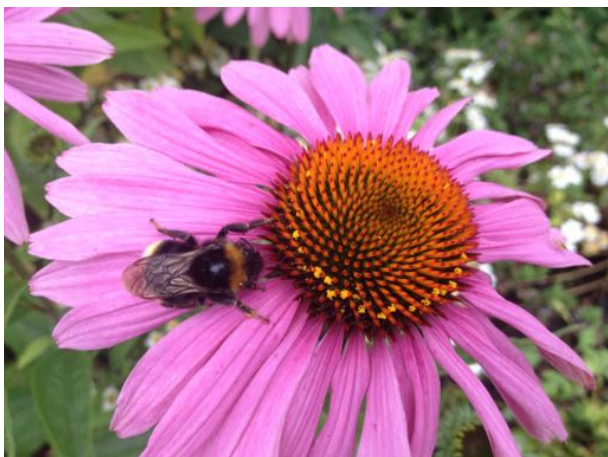
mer originate from North America where they grow in prairie habitats and have evolved to flower late in the summer and autumn avoiding the extreme heat experienced earlier in the season. Some good examples include **rudbeckia**, **echinacea**, **solidago** (Golden Rod) of which there are hundreds of varieties, **gallardia**, **penstemons**, **helianthus** (perennial sunflowers), **verbena** – particularly the species *bonariensis* and *hastata*. Probably the most attractive of all the North American plants grown in gardens for bees are the **heleniums**. Known as sneezeworts these late summer flowering perennials come in a variety of colours ranging from yellows, orange and intense reds. They are a magnet for bees and very easy to grow even on relatively poor soils. If ‘Chelsea-chopped’ in June they can provide a succession of blooms from late July right through to the first frosts of autumn.

Other plants attractive to bees include the **South African Eucomis** or “Pineapple Lily”. These plants are bulbous sporting a rosette of fleshy green leaves in summer followed by spikes of pineapple looking flowers in late summer and autumn. They come in a variety of colours from lime-green to pink and purple, some with flecks of red on the petals and flower stalk. Bees relish the pollen and nectar they provide and they are very easy to grow, being surprisingly hardy for such an exotic looking flower. Other South African plants attractive to bees include **knifophia** – the red hot pokers and Agapanthus. Knifophia have very long flower trumpets which have evolved to be pollinated by sunbirds. The flowers are hot shades of yellow, orange and red specifically to attract these birds which have very long bills and tongues equipped to pollinate the flowers. Whilst none of our native bees have the equipment needed to pollinate the blooms they can still extract the rich nectar from the flowers as it often drips and runs out of the flower trumpet and down the flower stem. **Agapanthus** are of limited usefulness to our native bees but the Common Carder Bumble Bee does seem to like them and I have often seen them foraging on Agapanthus in my own garden.

From South and Central America **cosmos**, **dahlias** and **zinnia** flowers are very attractive to bees providing nectar and pollen. The best varieties of course are the single open flowered types such as the Bishop series dahlias. My person favourite is “Bishop of Llandaff” with its bright red petals and dark centre covered in bright yellow pollen.

From New Zealand one of the best garden plants this month and widely planted in amenity spaces are the shrubby veronicas we know as **hebe** bushes. Right now hebe “Great Orme” is in flower on housing estates all across London and you can seldom walk past a specimen that’s not covered in pollinators. Later on nearer autumn the variety “Autumn Glory” come into its own with its darker purple blooms that persist well beyond the first light frosts of autumn.

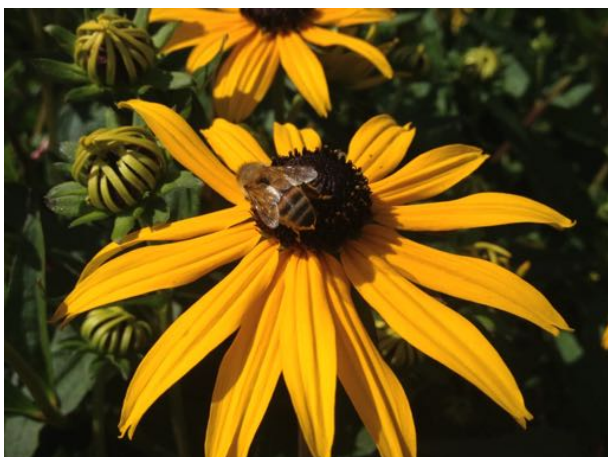
From China the *Sedum spectabile* “Autumn Joy” is a staple of gardens across the country in September when



Echinacea.



Golden rod.



Rudbeckia.

its cheerful pink heads of flowers brighten up the garden attracting bees, butterflies and hoverflies in abundance.

Another source of forage for bees in late summer comes in the form of overripe fruits. I have on several occasions witnessed honey bees sipping the sweet juices from bird damaged figs, **blackberries** and **plums** on my allotment alongside wasps and flies. This is probably not a widespread habit among honey bees nor a substantial source of forage for them but it's interesting to see how the bees do take advantage of the most unsuspecting resources during lean times.

This past week whilst walking down a south London street I came across a tall **hibiscus** bush in bloom that was covered in foraging honey bees. This was the first and only time I've ever seen a bee on a hibiscus bush. I have a beautiful purple flowered variety planted in my garden (on the burial site of my long deceased parrot who had purple wings) which fails every year to attract any bees at all and elsewhere I've never seen any bees on hibiscus. This bush I saw the bees foraging on was a white coloured variety with semi double blooms. The bees appeared to be collecting nectar but were getting a good dusting of pale pollen at the same time.

Members' marketplace

This section is for members offering beekeeping items or services to members or requesting items. Items could include nucs, wax and honey. Email services@lbka.org.uk to add something here.

Let me know if you want anything listed.

Upcoming events

Sunday 8th August: Monthly meeting: Bee stings and anaphylaxis

11:00-13:00 at Same zoom link as usual (in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email).

This month's Monthly Meeting will be on the topic of bee stings and anaphylaxis.

Tuesday, 31st August: Pub Social

18:30 onwards at via Zoom (see your email for a link)

Our ONLINE pub social in the historical surroundings of your own home. Bring your own beer. Using the usual Pub Social Zoom link in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email.

Sunday 12th September: Monthly meeting: TBC

11:00-13:00 at Same zoom link as usual (in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email).

This month's Monthly Meeting will be on a topic to be confirmed.

Tuesday, 28th September: Pub Social

18:30 onwards at via Zoom (see your email for a link)

Our ONLINE pub social in the historical surroundings of your own home. Bring your own beer. Using the usual Pub Social Zoom link in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email.

Committee

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee if you have any questions, requests, suggestions. We are:

- **Chair:** Richard Glassborow, chair@lbka.org.uk
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, treasurer@lbka.org.uk
- **Secretary/Events:** Annie McGeoch, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Development:** Simon Saville, development@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Will Fry, resources@lbka.org.uk
- Stuart Kennon, stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk

Our website is <http://www.lbka.org.uk/> and the pictures are in the same order as the names above.

