



# The London Beekeepers' Association LBKA News

## February, 2024

Sunday's monthly meeting will continue our journey to tackling the Asian Hornet becoming established here. Please do come to this and the March one. Luke and Sharon are run these and Luke has just become a BBKA trustee – congratulations!

As we look forward to the new beekeeping season, we have also advertised out Introduction to Beekeeping courses. Please help promote through our booking page (<https://lbka.org.uk/courses>). For old hands, Howard is again providing help to get people through the BBKA exams (p5). We used to win awards for the proportion of members who'd done their BBKA Basic assessment. Now barely any of our members take it. Please do take advantage of this opportunity.

In the newsletter this month, Richard's "From the Chair" makes a very welcome return. As usual, we have Howard's reliable advice what to do in the apiary at this time of year (p5), Mark's excellent series about forage (p7), George's photographs, an article about trapping Asian hornet from Jersey (p7) and do look at the things for sale including a lot of beekeeping equipment from LBKA (p9).

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Thank you to this month's contributors: Sharon Basse, Alastair Christie, Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols, Martin Kunz, George Kozobolis, Annie McGeoch, and Mark Patterson. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me.

Aidan Slingsby, Editor, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)

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## From our Chair

*Richard Glassborow*  
[chair@lbka.org.uk](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk)

Group behaviour is a fascinating if somewhat mysterious thing to observe.

Apparently, one of the reasons Asian hornet is so devastating to honey bees is not so much the predation – the actual killing of individual workers as they leave and return on foraging trips – it's a phenomenon known as forage paralysis. The presence of the hornets outside the hive changes the group behaviour of the colony and the bees inside stop going out to forage. As a result, they are unprepared for and therefore do not survive winter. Apparently. It's "a thing".

A human trying to understand the hive-mind of the honey bee is usually a tough ask but on this occasion it is perhaps not difficult to imagine that going shopping becomes less attractive if you have to dodge Godzilla every time you leave your front door. Quite what the



*Viburnum tinus*. Source: Mark Patterson

group dynamics are I have not been able to find out but maybe this is a point of view worth further exploration as we search for ways to help our honey bees learn to live with this invasive predator. Think like a bee. Or to be more precise, think like a bee colony.

I am not advocating anthropomorphic analysis or projections, IMHO, they are usually silly or worse, dangerous. *H. sapiens* and *A. mellifera* are completely different in all respects beyond the drive to survive genetically (though even that one does have to wonder about given the human capacity for existential destruction!)

With that in mind, I found myself wondering how we would behave in similar circumstances, perish the thought. And then I thought of Covid and the widely reported post-covid phenomena of a drop in engagement / attendance, etc. It appears to be right across the board, employment, school attendance, all manner of organisations, are reporting a drop in engagement since the pandemic years, and not just in this country. It has been commented on a lot in our own and other beekeeping associations. Could this be group behaviour responding inappropriately to adversity?

What ever it is, like forage paralysis, it is not an effective strategy and we could do with getting our act together if we are to learn to live with Asian hornet. I am not suggesting for a moment that Asian Hornet is of the same order as the Covid-19 pandemic. But our ecosystem is about to undergo a sudden change. Beekeeping will change! Ergo, beekeepers must change.

There are grounds for optimism. LBKA member, Sharon Basse, raised the alert back in August. Since then, a growing number of members have been building the knowledge-base and skills needed if beekeepers are going to learn to live with Asian hornet.

But here's the thing: whilst success may require dedicated individuals to take a lead, in matters like this it also requires ALL of us to step up and be the change. LBKA members have to regain some of the social spirit and cohesion that Covid seems to have suppressed. In spite of a bit of a reputation for beekeeping to be for "loners", we are a social animal and we are more successful when we lock our social antennae and act as such. It's more fun too.

So please, let's make 2024 the year when we find what it takes to start meeting again. Asian hornet is not something that can be left for "the committee"!



**Spotted by George.** "Pot Luck! Bees foraging on Oregano blossom move so fast from flower to flower making it very hard to photograph them." Photo and caption by George Kozobolis.

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## Announcements

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

### February's Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

February's Monthly Meeting meeting will be on **Sunday (11th February)** at Battersea Children's Zoo and will be about Asian Hornet spring track & trace training; focus on theory. As last month, it will be a workshop run by Sharon and Luke, our Asian Hornet Gurus. We will discuss Wick Stations for Asian Hornets: how to make them, how to label them, how to monitor them, where to site them, how to record their locations and how to record activity on them. We will also have the Trappit bait available for purchase. No need sign up this month.

The **Pub Social** will be at the [Rising Sun](#) (44-46 Ebury Bridge Rd, Pimlico, SW1W 8PZ) on Tuesday 27th February.

March's Monthly Meeting will be at Battersea Children's Zoo – will on **10th March** and will also be about the Asian Hornet spring, with details to be confirmed.



**Spotted by George.** "For every pollinating insect the danger is never too far away. A spider has built its web right between the leaves of a sweet bay bush setting a trap for the unsuspecting visitors. An unfortunate wasp gets stuck in the web and caught up it hangs upside down. One of the many dangers that honey bees face on their daily travels, too." Photo and caption by George Kozobolis.

## Luke Whyatt has just become a BBKA Trustee

Sharon Bassey

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that our fellow LBKA member and my very good friend Luke Whyatt has been elected to join the BBKA as a Trustee, amongst his many duties, he is to Chair the Asian Hornet Committee and also he will be the BBKA London representative. Luke and I have worked together for some years now and I know he will make a great impact at the BBKA.

Good luck Luke.

## Spare hives

Someone in Kilburn is no longer able to look after his hives and is looking for someone to donate them to. If you're interested, please contact Simon on [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk).

## See "members' area" for members' goodies

LBKA members can log in via the members' area on the website and see videos of past talks and meetings

## Old announcements from January

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




**Spotted by George.** "A bumble bee buries its proboscis deep into a late autumn marigold flower and sucks up the abundant source of nectar. I say "abundant" because it was feeding on this flower for an unusually long time and was only changing position very slowly around the same flower. Its long proboscis certainly gives this wild bee an advantage over the smaller honey bee when it comes to this kind of flowers." Photo and caption by George Kozobolis.

**Beekeeping opportunity.** St Patrick's Church, Wapping is seeking a lead person of BBKA Basic competence, or higher, for its 3-hive apiary located in the adjacent yard/garden, to succeed the current lead, hoping to retire before the commencement of the 2024 season. If interested, for details please contact Len Mole on 07715564569.

## Old announcements from November/December

**New trustees.** The Trustees and committee comprise Richard Glassborow (Chair), Simon Saville (Secretary), David Hankins (Treasurer), Aidan Slingsby (Membership), Howard Nichols (Education), Tristram Sutton (Apiaries), Will Fry (Resources), Elliot Hodges (Mentoring), Annie McGeoch (Events), Stuart Kennon (trustee only) and Sharon Bassey (Asian Hornet).

**Congratulations.** Congratulations to Lucie Chaumeton for passing Modules 6 and 8 and obtaining an Advanced Theory Certificate, Adam Armstrong for passing Module 3 on pests, disease and poisoning, us for getting second place in the "Newsletter" category at the National Honey Show and Adam Armstrong (again) for winning four prizes at the National Honey Show.




www.nonnativespecies.org

Produced by Lucy Cornwell, Cliff Booy (NNSS), Gay Morris, Mike Brown (National Bee Unit) with assistance from Corbett O'Flynn (National Biodiversity Data Centre Ireland) Stuart Roberts (BWAWS)

## Asian Hornet

**Alert!**

Report sightings of this species to: [altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)



### Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Vespa velutina*  
**AKA:** Yellow-legged Hornet  
**Native to:** Asia  
**Habitat:** Nests usually high in trees and man made structures, sometimes closer to the ground; hunts honey bees, other insects and also feeds on fruit and flowers.

Not easily confused with any other species. Dark brown or black velvety body. Characteristically dark abdomen and yellow tipped legs. Smaller than the native European Hornet.


Introduced to France in 2004 where it has spread rapidly. In 2016 the first UK sighting was confirmed in Gloucestershire. High possibility of introduction through, for example, soil associated with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden items (furniture, plant pots), freight containers, or in/on untreated timber. The possibility that it could fly across the Channel has not been ruled out.

A highly aggressive predator of native insects. Poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators.

**Do not disturb an active nest. Members of the public who suspect they have found an Asian Hornet should send a photo to [altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk).**

### Key ID Features

**Asian Hornet Queen**

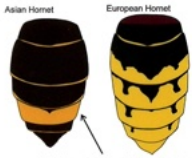


Queens up to 30 mm, workers up to 25 mm long


Entirely dark brown or black velvety body, bordered with a fine yellow band

Legs brown with characteristic yellow ends

**Asian Hornet**      **European Hornet**



Asian Hornet abdomen is almost entirely dark except for 4th abdominal segment





Asian hornet, 'hawking' for honey bee prey

Photos from: J. Haasine, Rachel Scopes and Nigel Jones; Richard Ball

### Similar Species



**Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) for comparison** Actual size

- Queen up to 30mm long, worker up to 25mm long
- Legs yellow at the ends
- Dark brown / black abdomen with a yellow / orange band on 4th segment
- Head dark from above, orange from front
- Dark coloured antennae
- Entirely black velvety thorax
- Never active at night

**European hornet (*Vespa crabro*)** Actual size



- Queen up to 35mm long, worker up to 30mm long
- Legs brown at the ends
- Yellow abdomen marked with brown on the upper part, not banded
- Head yellow from above, yellow from front
- Yellow antennae
- Thorax black with extensive brown markings
- May be active at night

Roger Burgess

**Giant woodwasp (*Urocerus gigas*)** Actual size



- Larger than Asian hornet, female up to 45mm long
- Legs yellow
- Distinctive yellow and black banded abdomen
- Long cylindrical body unlike Asian hornet which has an obvious waist
- Long yellow antennae
- Female has an obvious long sting-like appendage (ovipositor) which it uses to lay eggs in trees

Q. Rome

**Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*)** Actual size



- Abdomen has more yellow stripes than Asian hornet
- Legs darker than Asian hornets
- Only one pair of wings (hornets and wasps have two pairs)
- Large, globular eyes

Dieder Deacouens

**Median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*)** Actual size


- More extensive yellow and orange colouration on abdominal segments than Asian hornet
- Yellow markings on thorax unlike Asian hornet

Q. Rome

### Field Signs

Active April-November (peak August/September). Mated queens over winter singly or in groups, in various natural and man-made harbours – underneath tree bark in cavities left by beetle larvae, in soil, on ceramic plant pots – potentially any small, well-insulated refuge. Makes very large nests in tall trees in urban and rural areas, but avoids pure stands of conifers. Will use man made structures (garages, sheds etc.) as nesting sites.



For more information visit:  
[www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)  
[www.nationalbeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeunit.com)

**Alert!**

Report sightings of this species to:  
[altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)

**Consider joining Cambridge, Somerset and Kent Beekeeping Associations.** Annie is an associate member of [Cambridge](#), [Somerset](#) and [Kent](#) BKAs. She enjoys the excellent talks and other activities they put on and thinks their £7 membership fee is great value.

**LBKA book lending library.** We now have a library and librarian! See members' area of the website at <https://lbka.org.uk/library>.

### 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](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

## February's Committee meeting

Here, we keep you up to date with what the committee discusses at our monthly committee meetings (and what keeps us awake at night). Let us know if you can help or have any suggestions that might help.

*Aidan Slingsby*  
[services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)

In the Trustee part of the meeting, we discussed **succession** again with a some members of the committee looking to step down. It is very important to find members to replace them. We also discussed the remit of the **Asian Hornet subcommittee**, its budget and how we collate and retain materials of interest. David provided the current planned **budget**, items that need to be purchased and our reverses policy.

In the Executive part of the meeting, we confirmed that we are close to agreeing the **calendar for the year** and will be able to share it with members. The venues for the **Introductory Course** are booked, we've advertised if (4 takers so far) but need to advertise more widely. Elliot debriefed us on the **BBKA ADM** and the trustees send their **congratulations to Luke Whyatt** on his appointment as a trustee of BBKA. We have a new **Pollinator Fund** application which is likely to be accepted. Richard updated us **School Food Matters** and the trustee agreed LBKA's willingness to take part.

# February in the Apiary

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

*Howard Nichols*  
[education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)

February is a time of increasing activity for the bees. Although cold and rainy on the outside, and, to all appearances all appears to be very quiet, a lot is happening inside the cluster. Brood rearing is increasing and this requires use of additional stores as the temperature in the centre of the cluster is increased from 20°C to 35°C. Bees also consume relatively few stores in Winter but when they start to fly more in late February / early March the consumption substantially increases. Therefore, the main job of the beekeeper is to keep an eye on stores. Bee colonies are more likely to die out in February / early spring due to starvation, not due to the cold. My own personal view is that, as a beekeeper, I make various mistakes but simply letting my bees die of starvation through my neglect should not be one of them. As the weather has been warmer I assessed my colonies on 3rd February. I did not even need to disturb them by opening. They were all flying and bringing in pollen. I took the roof off (but not the crownboard) each colony and lifted the hive. I could tell that 1 colony was light on sugar and so have fed fondant to that 1 colony only at this stage. I intend to take off the mouseguards in next 2 weeks with a view to doing the 1st proper inspection early March if there is a warm day. I went into the winter with 5 colonies and still have 5 colonies which, although good news, is still too early to be confident. February and March are more demanding months than October through to the end of February.

The queen will now be laying at an increasing rate. The empty cells inside the cluster will have been prepared and more eggs are being laid. The temperature of a broodless cluster is maintained at 20°C but a cluster with brood requires a 35°C temperature. This, again, also consumes more stores.

If feeding is necessary then fondant is still the best bet. If, on a warm day, the bees are flying and emergency stores are required then feeding liquid stores is now a possibility. Bees carry and metabolise nectar at 50% concentration. 1kg of sugar dissolved in 1 litre of water will give this concentration and so involve the bees in the minimum amount of work. If stores are not required then it is better not to feed at all so not to cause any disturbance.

On a warm February day the bees will fly for forage. Main sources in February include snowdrop, crocus and early flowering hazel. The latter provides an abundance

of pollen. If your bees have been foraging hazel then they will be coming back to the hive drenched in surplus bright yellow pollen. All these sources provide pollen only. Not nectar.

Late February and early March is a challenging time for bees. The winter bees are now old but need to work at an increasing rate to feed larvae and young bees. Many of these older bees will be dying off and a disproportionate number will die in the hive. It is not unusual to find a large quantity of dead bees in front of the hive or behind the mouseguard. Just lift the mouseguard and brush out. This should not normally be cause for concern and does not mean that the colony is dying out. If you keep your hive on a concrete or stone floor then the quantity of dead bees may appear to be alarming. If kept on grass then there may well be just as many dead bees but they will appear substantially less. You may not even notice them at all.

## Other jobs to do

**Plan.** Formulate an outline plan for the forthcoming season. Have a strategy to develop or improve a particular beekeeping skill during the forthcoming year.

**Equipment.** Assemble frames and ensure you have sufficient equipment for the season.

**Site.** New beekeepers who have not yet found a suitable site should try to do so by the end of the month. Once the beekeeping season starts then life can move at an alarming pace.

**Meetings.** Do not forget the LBKA monthly meetings on the 2nd Sunday of the month.

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## Education Matters

Howard reviews LBKA's educational offerings last year. This is repeated from last month.

*Howard Nichols*  
[education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)

Reading through the BBKA written exam results in the October 2023 issue of BBKA News, I could not help noticing the quantity of names of successful candidates from all around the country. Some counties had an impressive number of names, some over 12 with the largest being 18 in number. The alphabetical list of counties started with Avon and ended with Yorkshire. London's name did not appear at all as we did not have any member whatsoever taking any BBKA modular examination. There were 2 of our members who were successful candidates as members of neighbouring associations, one of whom, Lucie Chaumeton, passed 2 modules and both with Distinction. Well done Lucy! Myself, I have been a BBKA tutor for the modular ex-

aminations for a number of years but now only seem to tutor other association members via BBKA correspondence courses, not our own members. There was a time, pre Covid, when the LBKA had educationally interested members actively taking these examinations and many taking the Basic assessment. The burning question is what has happened? In the past we had an active and participating membership, attendance at monthly meetings was both high and enthusiastic. At those meetings members forged friendships and communicated with each other. People would discuss (amongst many other things) educational matters, both BBKA and LBKA, resulting in large numbers taking the Basic assessment and several of these going on to learn with the modular examinations. This no longer happens yet appears not to be a problem in other county associations. Last year only 2 members took the Basic assessment. I would ask our members to inwardly reflect upon this. The BBKA education system is a massive resource available to us. Many other countries do not have anything like this structured opportunity that we have. Many other beekeeping associations' members avail themselves of this resource as the recent published examination list attests.

As usual we will make tuition available and facilitate the opportunity for our members to take the Basic Assessment and a modular assessment should they so wish. Details are as follows:

### 2024 BBKA Basic Assessment

Both the BBKA and London Beekeepers Association encourages members to take the BBKA basic assessment where possible. The BBKA requirement for entry is that the applicant has been keeping bees for a minimum period of 1 year and is a BBKA member. The assessment is fairly straightforward and the syllabus can be downloaded free of charge from the BBKA website. Follow the dropdown menu for "Members" then "examinations and assessments". The cost is £20 and entry forms can also be downloaded at the same time. There is no need to pay the BBKA entry fee at this stage.

Any LBKA member who has been keeping bees for a minimum of 12 months and wishes to take this assessment please confirm by email to [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk). I will then be able to let you have some electronic course notes to read at your leisure over the winter months. The BBKA website should be sufficient to deal with any queries regarding the assessment. Alternatively, ask another LBKA member who has taken it. Preparation for the Basic is an interesting way of continuing your beekeeping activities through the winter months. Even if you have been keeping bees for several years but not previously taken the assessment then please do seriously consider taking it in 2024. It is well worth the effort.

London Beekeepers Association will also run a revision course in the spring for members wishing to take the examination. This is likely to last for 3 evenings (2

hours per evening) in early April. The assessment is both practical and simple oral questions. It lasts about 1 hour. We cover the theory on the revision nights and, for those wanting it, also offer a practical session at an apiary beforehand.

The assessment is not difficult, is within the capabilities of anyone who has been handling bees for 12 months and who is willing to download the syllabus and undertake some background reading. We also supply free course notes in electronic format.

### 2024 BBKA Modular examinations

We will run a 3 evening Module 1 revision course (dates to be decided) in February 2024 if a sufficient number is interested.

The Modules are written examinations, each on a different aspect of beekeeping, and will be held in March 2024. The LBKA usually offers tuition to members wanting to take one of these examinations and will continue to do so this winter. A lot of information is on the BBKA website. Anyone who is interested in developing their beekeeping knowledge by this route should first look at the BBKA website under the education section. There is a lot of information including a FAQ factsheet. Simply enter "module" in the search engine on the website. Then contact me by email on [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk) to register your interest. I will then communicate directly with you. People who have taken the Basic in 2023 may be particularly interested in pursuing this.

Please note that a certain amount of commitment is required, both by me as tutor and by the candidates. It is not something that can be decided and pursued at the last minute. Those who may be interested should contact me now. Any revision course in February will not be sufficient to take a person who has not undertaken their own study up to examination standard by mid March. The course will be aimed at condensing and improving the knowledge already obtained by personal study during the winter months.

# Setting Up and Managing a Spring Asian Hornet Trap

Annie suggested we include this in the newsletter. It's advice is from the Jersey Government and is used with permission.

*Alastair Christie*  
Asian Hornet Coordinator  
Jersey Government

As queen hornets emerge from hibernation, and whilst they are building their Primary nest they need plenty of energy! They can therefore be attracted to and caught in an appropriately baited trap. Catching a queen in the spring potentially saves us tracking her nest later on in the season with 2000 hornets in it!

A vitally important aspect of spring trapping is to try to ONLY catch Asian hornets and minimise harm to other insect species that are beneficial to our ecology. This is done by:

- Having 6mm escape holes in the trap that many insects can escape through.
- Ensuring that there is no liquid attractant for insects to drown in by ideally using a mini-wick pot inside the trap OR having a piece of kitchen towel to absorb the attractant.
- Checking the trap frequently, ideally daily, and releasing any non-target, "bycatch" insects.

If you are inexperienced with Asian hornets, one of our volunteers (termed an Area Manager) will help you set up the trap and give you instruction and guidance on managing it. Some important points to bear in mind are:

- The perfect site is where it can be easily inspected, ideally in full sunshine, about 1.5 to 2m above the ground.
- If the trap isn't catching wasps, it probably won't catch hornets. A good idea is to move the trap. Even a small move 10m away can make a difference, we find.
- The mini-wick pots can be topped up when empty and a bit of string around it makes it easier to remove. Kitchen towelling only needs to be moistened with about three tablespoons of attractant. It can be topped up if the trap seems dry.
- A small rock in the trap, on top of the towelling will weigh it down so that it does not swing so much in the wind. It also provides a non-sticky place where insects can settle.
- When assembling the trap, the holes in the lid must run longitudinal to the tunnel formed by the trap holder.

- All traps in public places MUST have a label, with the name and contact details of the person managing that trap written on it. Standard labels are available from your liaising volunteer or the coordinator.
- Keep traps sited away from children and pets as the traps may contain stinging insects etc.
- The trap should be inspected daily (unless the weather is cool and wet) and any friendly bycatch, such as bumble bees, moths, wasps, flies etc. should be removed and released.
- After looking inside the trap to check what is in there, carefully remove the trap from the holder and gently remove the lid. Beware of any sleepy wasps inside the lid. Lay the trap down on the ground to release any bycatch. You can "encourage" reluctant insects out with a stick. If windy, stand upwind to avoid insects being blown onto you.
- The pink attractant liquid is known as Trappit or Suttera and is a natural, sweet attractant product, and is "food safe". If it gets on your hands, simply wash off as soon as you can.

If you suspect that you have caught an Asian Hornet contact [asianhornet@lbka.org.uk](mailto:asianhornet@lbka.org.uk) for advice. In order to confirm the report, it is a good idea to take a photograph. They usually don't pose! but a clear picture through the trap is usually good enough. DO NOT attempt to deal with a trapped Asian hornet yourself without clear and specific advice that you are completely comfortable and confident in following.

## Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article is reprinted from last year.

*Mark Patterson*  
[forage@lbka.org.uk](mailto:forage@lbka.org.uk)

There are valuable pollen sources that are making an appearance in February.

**Winter Aconites** (*Eranthis hyemalis*) are beginning to appear. Their bright lemon yellow flowers are attractive to bees which will collect their pollen. They are members of the Buttercup family.

In gardens **hellebores** are also flowering, offering much needed pollen. Hellebores come in a wide variety of colours. The hybrid hellebores are particularly hardy and easy to grow as are the native stinking hellebores (*Helleborus foetidus*) which can be found in gardens and in wild areas too.

**Winter heliotrope** (*Petasites fragrans*) is a relative of our native Butterbur but flowers much earlier. It's not a UK native and can be quite invasive when established



*Hellebore*

in the wild but is a great garden plant for bees in late winter. The flowers are shaped like a toilet brush and pink in colour.

The first **daffodils** (*Narcissus sp.*) are beginning to bloom. Despite their attractive flowers, daffodils and other narcissii are poor forage for bees. I have never seen a Honey Bee visit them and only occasionally have I seen desperate Bumblebees alight on them.

**Wallflowers** (*Erysimum*) are flowering now and will continue to do so right through till late spring. Bees will visit both the popular bedding type wallflowers as well as the longer-lived everlasting perennial types. Their purple and orange 'bowls' are particularly good for bees as they have a very long flowering period and will bloom almost continuously all year round.

Off the ground there are several shrubs and small trees which are now flowering and these may offer rewards of nectar on warm days alongside the pollen they produce. These include **Mahonia** or **Oregon Grape** which grows in our towns and cities in abundance and flowers throughout the winter providing nectar and pollen for bees. In southern towns and cities **Buff Tailed bumblebees** (*Bombus terrestris*) continue to be increasingly active throughout the winter, surviving largely on this plant. Around 75% of winter flowers visited by bees are Mahonia. The variety 'winters sun' is particularly attractive. Bees taking advantage of Mahonia blooms in winter have few other insects to compete with and can fare better than some colonies active in summer.

**Viburnum** shrubs include a number of deciduous and evergreen species which flower during the winter months. They are relatives of our native **Guelder Rose** (*Viburnum opulus*). Some of bees' most popular Viburnums include the evergreen *Viburnum tinus* whose sweetly scented cream blooms flower from November through to March, and *Viburnum bodnaatense* whose pink flowers bloom from around Christmas to March.

Several **Clematis** species are useful forage sources to bees in winter. *Clematis amandii* and *Clematis cirrhosa* both have creamy white flowers and bloom in winter.



*Mahonia.*

Honey and winter active bumble bees will visit them for pollen.

**Winter Flowering Cherry** (*Prunus subhirtella*) flowers from late November to February producing pale pink flowers. I've very rarely seen any bees on the blooms but have often seen flies on them. In the absence of better forage like Mahonia bees will visit the flowers.

**Sweet Box** (*Sarcococca confusa*) is a short growing evergreen shrub which produces extremely fragrant blooms (reminiscent of hyacinths) from late winter into early spring. It's one of those plants that you almost always smell long before you see it. **Winter Heather** (*Heaths Erica sp.*) produce tubular blooms in shades of white to pink throughout the winter. They are coming to the end of their flowering period now but still providing forage for bees brave enough to venture out.

**Winter flowering Honeysuckle** flower during winter, some of which are climbers and some are shrubs. One of the best is *Lonicera fragrantissima*.

**Daphne** shrubs are beginning to flower now and their intense perfume-like scent will attract bees to collect their pollen.

**Hazel** (*Corylus avellana*) is flowering now and the long male catkins drip with pollen. On warm days Honeybees may visit the catkins to collect pollen, though the plants are wind pollinated and do not need the bees to reproduce.

Other trees that produce catkins may start to make an appearance in February include **willows** (*Salix sp.*) and



**poplars** (*Populus sp.*) though they are usually a little later flowering.

## 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](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) to add something here.

**Martin Kunz:** is giving away: (a) a second-hand size extra-large beesuit (used by a 6'1" person) which is fully ventilated and has a fencing top, but is 100% artificial fibre and needs a (hand) wash; (b) medium beesuit, new, cotton & polyester blend; (c) new, medium canvas/leather gloves. Pick up in W3 only, please mail [m.kunz@diversityhoneys.com](mailto:m.kunz@diversityhoneys.com) for a convenient time. First come first serve.

**Martin Kunz:** Martin's company Diversity Honeys Ltd. is prevented by the UK government to sell honey from *A. cerana*, *A. dorsata*, and *A. florea*. However, **they are on offer in Germany**. But it **can** sell wax wraps made from the wax of *A. dorsata* (the 'rock bee' which is why these wraps are far superior (tough and flexible) than any others on the market. *A. dorsata* combs are up to 1.5m across, hang in high, exposed locations so their tensile strength (by definition) has to be extreme. LBKA members get discount of 10% with discount code "dorsata" [here](#). The discount actually applies to all products in [this range too](#) (developed by Martin).

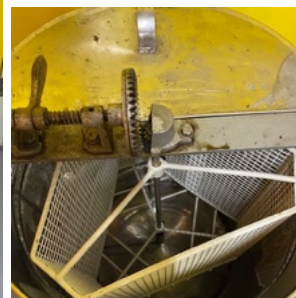
**Martin Kunz:** For sustainably minded beekeepers. Martin has put together supply chains for bee suits made from certified organic cotton, including ventilated ones, under his brand 'BeeCool'. A small selection is available [here](#). The same company also sells roof insulations made from felted wool (supplied by Diversity Honeys Ltd.) from India's first flock of certified organic sheep. More information is [here](#). Purchase them from [here](#). These roof insulations are particularly important to help the bees keep cool in summer, when the heat



*Apis cerana* beekeeper.



The veil in BeeCool bee suits.



Large 6 frame tangential manual extractor - EH Taylor (broken lid handle otherwise working well): £90

beats down on the hive: Sheeps' wool has kept the animals cool for 1000s of years, even on the roof of the world (Himalayas).

**LBKA:** We have a number of items that are surplus to our requirements so are looking to sell to our members. See the photos and contact Will Fry on [resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk) if you're interested in any of them.



Martin Kunz's company.



Small thorne tangential 4 frame manual extractor (requires small bolts to attach cage to bucket): £50 (RRP £120)



Small 3 frame tangential manual extractor (no lid): £70 (RRP £120-200)



Large 12 frame radial electric extractor (presumed working order - drum out of alignment): £300 (RRP £900 new).



Electric stainless steel uncapping tray (presumed working order): £100 (RRP 320).



Stainless steel Settling Tank with strainer (good condition): £100 (RRP £150-600).



Left: Burco water boiler - presumed working order: £30 (RRP £100 new). Right: Buffalo water boiler - presumed working order: £30 (RRP £100 new).



Small water boiler - presumed working order (needs a clean): £50 (RRP £200).

## Upcoming events

See our [website](#) for an up-to-date list.

### Sunday 11th February: Monthly meeting: Asian Hornet spring track & trace training; focus on theory

11:00-13:00 at Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Battersea Park, London, SW11 4NJ (meet at the main entrance)

Asian Hornet spring track & trace training, with a focus on theory.

### Saturday, 17th February: Asian Hornet Conference

The Asian Hornet Conference will be held Saturday 17th February. We are just finalising the speakers and more information will be sent out to members in the New Year.

### Tuesday 27th February: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at Rising Sun, 44-46 Ebury Bridge Rd, Pimlico, SW1W 8PZ

Our monthly trip to the pub will be to the [Rising Sun](#).

### Sunday 10th March: Monthly meeting: Asian Hornet

11:00-13:00 at Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Battersea Park, London, SW11 4NJ (meet at the main entrance)

More details to be announced soon.

## Trustees

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](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk)
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, [treasurer@lbka.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@lbka.org.uk)
- **Secretary:** Simon Saville, [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk)
- **Education:** Howard Nichols [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)
- **Events:** Annie McGeoch, [events@lbka.org.uk](mailto:events@lbka.org.uk)
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, [apiaries@lbka.org.uk](mailto:apiaries@lbka.org.uk)
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, [mentor@lbka.org.uk](mailto:mentor@lbka.org.uk)
- **Resources:** Will Fry, [resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk)
- **Asian Hornet:** Sharon Bassey, [asianhornet@lbka.org.uk](mailto:asianhornet@lbka.org.uk)
- Stuart Kennon, [stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk](mailto: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.

