



LBKA NEWS

LBKA East London teaching apiary coming soon

We are delighted to announce that as part of our long term plan to serve all parts of London, we will have a teaching apiary at Mudchute Farm in East London from 2014. This is good news on several fronts:

- We have an increasing number of members in East London and have struggled to meet demand for mentoring and networking in the area
- Mudchute Farm is a 32 acre site in the Isle of Dogs, with amazing views of the City. It's a Park and Farm that's open to the public and has care for the environment and community at its heart. Their values reflect ours and we are really looking forward to working in partnership with Mudchute Farm. It's a great place to visit, here's a link <http://www.mudchute.org/about-us>



- Our corporate sponsors, Ashurst, have enthusiastically embraced the project too, and are generously funding the apiary's building work. Thank you from all at the LBKA.

ashurst



LBKA's FORAGE PROJECT

Keep November's Monthly Meeting data in your diary

Promoting forage for London's pollinators is one of LBKA's objectives and with Mark Patterson's enthusiasm and knowledge we're doing well and getting the message out as often as we can through the media; our courses; facebook; website and of course Mark's monthly forage section in this newsletter.

But now all us can put our money where our mouth is and get our hands dirty with our very own forage project.

LBKA forage projects

We will be holding our first LBKA-funded forage planting project after our November monthly meeting. This will be open to all members, and we'll be planting 100's of crocus bulbs in Archbishops Park, to help our bees in Spring. Archbishops Park is just behind Fairley School where we hold our monthly meeting so bring a trowel with you on November 10th!

We have Helen Lees to thank for organising this for us. Helen is not only a LBKA member, but also Chair of the Friends of Archbishop's Park.

Here's a link to more information about the Park:

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Environment/ParksGreenSpaces/Parks/ArchbishopsPark.htm>





JULY IN THE APIARY

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

July beekeeping work has 2 distinct parts. These are dealing with the July nectar flow then, at the end of the month, removal of honey.

During May and June there is relatively little nectar flow and the bees utilise this period to swarm. There is now a lot less inclination to swarm and the bees direct their attention towards capturing the flowing nectar from the summer flowers.

Nectar flow

Exact timing of the nectar flow depends upon weather and locality but will be in July.

How do I know when it has started? There are at least 2 ways. The first is to keep in contact with other local beekeepers and association members. This is an advantage in joining an association – you become part of a pool of knowledge and experience. The second is to watch the colony entrance. The coming and going becomes a lot more purposeful when the nectar flow starts, bees leaving the hive entrance in a determined and focussed way. They have the appearance of knowing exactly what they are doing and where they are going. As the nectar flow progresses then, of course, the supers also become heavier but, by this time, the flow is well underway.

LBKA pollinator mix doing well at Mark's community garden



Adding supers. Regular inspections are still needed but the beekeeper's attention should now be directed towards checking there is enough room in the supers. A cursory glance in the top super should be sufficient. When the frames in the top super are covered with bees then it is time to add another. Many beekeepers move the frames around a little by putting a few combs of honey and nectar into the newly added top super as this encourages bees to continue onwards and upwards. The nectar flow can also be used to draw out new combs from foundation.

Removing honey from the hive

A comb of honey should only be removed when it is at least 75% sealed by the bees. This is to avoid fermentation of the final product. There are several methods of clearing the bees from the supers. These can be grouped into physical methods (bee escapes, etc), chemical methods (repellents available for purchase from bee equipment suppliers) and mechanical methods (blowers which blow the bees off the frames). Some beekeepers have concerns relating to the use of chemicals and mechanical methods are more akin to commercial beekeeping, not hobbyists. It is only the physical methods detailed here. The 2 most common physical methods are Porter bee escapes and shaking the bees off the frames.



JULY IN THE APIARY

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

Porter bee escapes

Most of us use Porter bee escapes incorporated into a clearing board. These work well provided they are used properly and the metal escapes are clean and not stuck with propolis. After about 48 hours most of the bees have gone down through the valve and there are relatively few bees in the super.



Place bee escapes into crownboard (you should still have another crownboard to cover the supers) then place crownboard (incorporating the bee escapes) below the supers and wait 48 hours.

Better to use a crownboard with 2 bee escapes. If 1 malfunctions then the other is still in use.
<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/port.html>

Make sure there is plenty of space for the bees below the supers. If necessary then insert another empty super with frames below to house the bees.

Ensure the bees cannot come back up into the supers being cleared. Ill fitting, non bee spaced equipment or defective Porter bee escapes are the usual reasons for failure.

Shake and brush

Another method is shaking the individual frames to remove as many bees as possible then brushing off the remainder. An extra super is needed to hold the shaken frames and this should be placed on the upturned hive roof and covered with a sheet or large cloth.

This method causes a certain amount of disturbance to the bees and may not be suitable for a hive in close proximity to people. Its advantage is that it is quick and only involves 1 visit to the apiary.

Other action to be taken this month include the following:

- Once the nectar flow starts then most colonies abandon the idea of swarming as it is now not in their interests to do so. There is still a small risk of swarming and this is increased if the bees do not have enough room to store nectar. Another reason to ensure that enough supers are on the hive.
- Reduce colony entrances when the nectar flow ceases.
- Plan your varroa treatment for next month. Decide your strategy and buy any supplies you will need.
- Reserve your use of an extractor next month if you usually hire LBKA equipment.

Howard Nichols (education@LBKA.org.uk)



JULY IN THE FORAGE PATCH

July is typically a midsummer month, though this year due to the late spring many colonies are still at a stage that could lead you to believe we're still in spring. If like all of my colonies you have yet to get supers on your hive then the sad reality is you're unlikely to get a honey crop this late in the season in inner London where we are far away from late flowering Heather and Balsam. The main sources of nectar which fuels the honey flow such as Chestnut and Lime are well over, and come end of July most of our wild flowers will be finished for the year too. From this month onward bees are highly reliant on railway sidings and brown field areas which often provide Bramble in abundance along with Thistle and Teasel.

Bees will gather bramble nectar and pollen with enthusiasm and if like me your bees are within flying range of large stands of it (such as Wormwood Scrubs) you may be lucky in getting a small crop from it. Bees are also heavily reliant on domestic gardens and amenity spaces around housing developments and public spaces from July onwards. Here they they will find summer herbaceous plants and flowering shrubs such as Escalonia, Lavender, Hebe and Snow Berry.

As we look ahead to late July and August we enter the hardest, leanest time of the forage year for our bees and a time when we take our honey harvest from them. In effect we rob our bees of their hard earned honey stores at the time of year when they are struggling the most to feed themselves. The reason for this struggle is colonies are large at this time of year so have many mouths to feed and a colonies calorific needs are extensive. It's also the driest time of year when plants nectaries may dry up and many flowers cease flowering all together resulting in a dearth in forage.

We also subject our bees to Varroa treatments in summer in preparation for autumn so we really put our bees through allot during the latter half of the summer. To make life easier for them we can help by planting nectar and pollen rich flowers which will provide the nutrition needed for colonies to produce healthy bees to go into autumn and winter. Plant Echinacea, Rudbeckia, Lavenders, Helleniums, Aasters,Verbena's, Echinops and Eryngiums now to provide forage in late summer.



Fork Tailed Flower Bee on Knapweed



Common Carder Bee visits Snap Dragon



JULY IN THE FORAGE PATCH

Things to do:

- Water herbaceous plants during dry spells to encourage the continuation of flowers and ensure nectaries don't dry up.
- Regular dead heading of spent blooms to prevent going to seed will prolong the blooms of most flowers while Some herbaceous plants such as hardy Geraniums, Perennial Corn Flower and Nepeta can be hacked right back to the crown, fed and well watered will often produce a second flush of foliage and flowers.
- Late summer is also a good time of year to start thinking about autumn bulb planting. Start looking at bulb catalogues now and get your orders in by August to ensure your bulbs arrive in time for planting in September to November.

Update on Mark's bee friendly hanging basket experiments

In May I planted up a hanging basket with mixtures of Wall flower, Tagettes Star Fire mix (RHS perfect for pollinators variety), Nasturtiums, Creeping jenny, Snap dragons, Geums and Nemesia.

The aim was to create an attractive fiery hot hanging basket that would also bring in the bees. Sadly thus far I have not seen a single honey bee visit the basket though a few bumble bees and sweat bees have been seen regularly visiting the Wall flower, Nasturtium and Snap dragons.

I'm often asked what can be planted in hanging baskets to help pollinators, and recently have been asked by gardening magazine editors and local councils. As the season continues I'll persevere to create a perfect pollinator hanging basket and will keep readers updated.

Mark Patterson, LBKA Forage Officer



Honey Bee on Verbena Bonariensis



Honey Bee on Oregano



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

July Monthly Meeting: Sunday 7th July

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

An opportunity to meet up and catch up on how others are managing with their bees at the moment. With an 'in the round' session led by Karin talking about honey extraction

Talk on gardening for pollinators: 16th July

Mark Patterson is giving a talk on gardening for pollinators @ Fulham Palace. The cost is £8 with all proceeds going to the Fulham Palace Trust. More details on Fulham Palace website. <http://www.fulhampalace.org/visiting-whats-on/events-adults/>

Open Day & Plant Sale : 27th July

Westcott Park Community Garden, located at the end of Perry Avenue W3 6YP. There is on street parking nearby or the nearest tube is the central line East or North Acton stations

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST...

We would like to thank committee member **Sharon Bassey** for the last three years of hard work for the LBKA as she stands down from her role as Member Services. Sharon has tirelessly supported members and helped mentor over thirty new keepers with expertise and good humour. Sharon is still an active member and hot on the heels of being awarded Beekeeper of the Year she is concentrating on community projects that involve education on pollinators and plating for them. We wish her well.



Sharon sharing her knowledge at one of our Introduction Courses

Many thanks to Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Angela Woods and Mauricio Molizane De Souza for all their contributions this month