



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

April, 2020

Welcome to the first newsletter since the COVID-19 lockdown. Of course, a lot has changed in the past month. We are now avoiding face-to-face contact and as a result have had to cancel all our face-to-face activities. Thank you to those who had volunteered to help.

We want to emphasise the importance of keeping in touch, whilst maintaining our distance. The WhatsApp 'Bee Banter' group is very active and a great way to keep in touch with our fellow beekeepers. Members can also share their details with each other on our website and this might be a way to help form local networks.

I'd also be interested to hear from people with direct experience of running webinars and conference calls.

This newsletter is a bit light this month, we hope you find the content useful and interesting. Do offer to contributions if you can!

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A big thank you to this month's contributors: **Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson and Simon Saville**. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, do contact me.

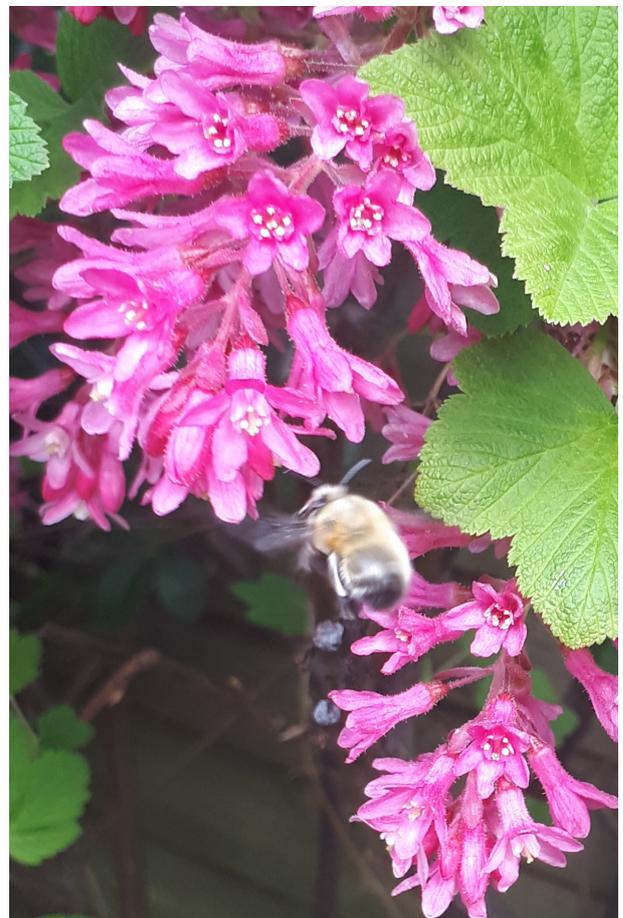
Aidan Slingsby, Editor, services@lbka.org.uk

From our Chair

First of all, I hope we are all well, coping, surviving.

These are extraordinary times! Social isolation, a ban on meetings of more than 2 people, social distancing, instructions to stay at home etc., means that the LBKA has had to cancel or postpone all planned face-to-face meetings, training, publicity and events, normal arrangements for training, mentoring, etc.

This does not mean however, that the LBKA ceases all activity. It is very uncertain how long the current restrictions will persist but at this point it is probably prudent to work on a premise of three to six months. However, the bees are still there, and our core objectives



Bee on flowering currant. Photo: Aidan Slingsby.

are still there, so we need to explore alternative ways of doing what we do.

First of all, it is vital that we comply with the public health measures to contain the Coronavirus pandemic. But it is also important that we do our best to see that our bees are well-managed. There are 4,844 registered colonies in London, many more that are not registered, nobody knows how many feral colonies, it is April, we know what happens next. The prospect of swarm prevention and control being withdrawn on that scale does not bear thinking about. This has been recognised by the government and Defra have requested that beekeepers continue to tend their livestock.

Members should be aware, however, that that particular government exemption may not always be recognised by the authorities (police) at street level. We are going to provide a document that we hope will help but suggest that wearing your bee suit is as good as it gets when needing to state your purpose. Paradoxically, I find a bee suit as good as an invisibility cloak? it will get you in anywhere! But be polite too, it is difficult for everybody at the moment.

And I reiterate, please take every bio-security precaution against being a vector for the spread of coronavirus when leaving your home. Wear appropriate PPE, rigorously observe social distancing, avoid touching your face and wash your hands thoroughly and often.

There may be some of us who, for various reasons, including perhaps being indisposed at some point, are not going to be able to get to our bees in a timely way. We recommend trying to plan in advance for this eventuality by using the membership network, particularly the WhatsApp group Bee Banter, and finding a “bee-buddy” who will be able to go in your stead. Alternatively you may prefer to contact a committee member to talk over your concerns and see if they can find a solution.

The Trustees have cancelled this year’s introductory courses and we are not looking at ways of providing any training from scratch for the time being: we don’t see how that would be responsible in the circumstances. However, we are taking the opportunity to find means to focus on improving our beekeeping at novice and intermediate levels remotely. This obviously involves the internet and there is a lot of technology out there. We will try to find online ways to deliver monthly meetings, mentoring, demonstrations, perhaps even masterclasses. This is a time for a give-it-a-go approach so please bear with us if it’s a bit rough at times. And of course, if you have ideas, expertise and experience that might be relevant, please do contact us.

Sadly, the missing ingredient will be the social element but, in the meantime, our ‘Bee Banter’ WhatsApp group seems to be taking up some slack there. I do urge members who have not yet joined to please give it a try. It is by far the most effective communication platform we have, but there are only 109 members on it at time of writing so still many missing out.

Announcements

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

Monthly Meetings and Pub Socials are cancelled

As you know and as one would expect, we have had to cancel our monthly meetings, pub socials, courses and all other face-to-face activities for the foreseeable future. We are looking into ways to provide online alternatives for some of these. Please contact us if you have some ideas.

Online replacements for activities?

We are investigating ways in which we can provide online alternatives to some of our activities. Help and advice from anyone with experience of this, particularly if you have direct experience of, for example, running a Zoom webinar, would be welcome – please email services@lbka.org.uk.

Maintaining beekeeping networks

Beekeeping is much easier when there is a local network who keep in touch and help each other out. This is why beekeeping associations are organised into local branches.

This is even more important during the current COVID-19 pandemic, whilst – of course – adhering to UK Government rules on social distancing. For example, some members – if self-isolating or otherwise incapacitated – may not be able to inspect and attend to their bees on a regular basis, especially if their bees are located at an out-apiary. It may be appropriate to have contingencies in place in case in such cases. Let us know if you can help, or the suggestions below.

LBKA encourages and tries to facilitate members forming local network. Ways of doing so include:

- **Bee Banter:** Being on the ‘Bee Banter’ WhatsApp group or members-only Facebook page and offering and asking for help when needed.
- **Sharing contact details:** Seeing [details of members](#) who’ve “opted-in” to share their contact details. If you want to opt-in, you can now do so in the [members’ area](#)
- Maintaining contact with former mentors or mentees, if applicable.

The [members’ area](#) on the website has more details. Email us if you need any help and we’ll see what we can do.

LBKA Beekeeping Education and Courses

We've had to cancel courses and BBKA Basic assessments. Howard was hoping to try to run the Basic course and assessments late in the 2020 beekeeping season but it is clear that this will not be possible. BBKA's Education Board set out the situation in an email they sent on 13th March:

It is less than a week since my last email but things have already moved on with more restrictions and requirements for social distancing and isolation. Officials are now warning that periods of social distancing could be a feature of our lives for at least a year. With so much uncertainty the Exam Board has decided to cancel all practical assessments until September. This will apply to Advanced Husbandry, General Husbandry, Bee Breeding, Bee Health, Basic and Junior Certificates. We will review the situation in September 2020 regarding the Microscopy Assessments.

Candidates who have applied already will receive a free transfer to next year or a refund if they prefer.

LBKA Pollinator Fund

The LBKA Pollinator Fund aims to support small community groups to improve their local environment for the benefit of bees and other pollinators. LBKA will offer grants of up to £500 from this fund for small stand-alone projects, or as match-funding or seed-funding towards larger projects. In the latter case the larger projects must aim to benefit pollinators.

Proposed projects need to be delivered in London and should help promote better beekeeping, better public understanding of bees, and/or a better London environment for bees and Londoners. While forage planting projects have been favoured in the past, applicants need not be confined to that particular activity – other suggestions would be welcome. And a suitable project need not be fully funded, as LBKA's charitable status and growing profile offers greater opportunity for donors with similar aims as ours to be matched with projects requiring modest funding.

Project proposals which promote the conservation of wild bees and other pollinators through provision of improved forage and breeding habitats will be of particular interest. Projects that include planting early and late season forage for honey bees will be assumed to benefit other pollinators too.

Priority will be given to projects in publicly accessible spaces. If your space is on a housing estate, allotment or other site with restricted public access, you might consider how receipt of a grant could enable you to

increase public access to the site in future. Greater public access to improved pollinator habitats is an opportunity for public education and information-sharing, so installing interpretation boards explaining the project and its aims, or providing more general information about London's pollinators, would be seen as a significant public benefit of any project.

If you belong to another organisation, know of a local group, or are aware of an opportunity that might fit the above criteria, please contact treasurer@lbka.org.uk for further guidance and an application pack.

Old announcements from March

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

Looking for beekeeper(s) Someone's looking for beekeeper(s) near Brockley to share an apiary on an unusual site. Please contact Natalie Cotton for more information at admin@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from February

Mark Patterson is LBKA's Forage Officer: His email will continue to be forage@lbka.org.uk. Thanks to Mark for taking on this role!

Old announcements from January

Consider getting more involved: Join our members' only "Bee Banter" WhatsApp group, join our members' only "LBKA-Forum" Facebook group, opt-in to sharing details with members, volunteer, read the newsletter. Contact Aidan on services@lbka.org.uk if you need any help with this.

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.

April's Committee meeting

Here, we keep you up to date with what the committee discuss 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



www.nonnativespecies.org

Produced by Lucy Cornwell, Olaf Booy (NNSS), Gay Marris, Mike Brown (National Bee Unit) with assistance from Colette O'Flynn (National Biodiversity Data Centre Ireland) Stuart Roberts (BWFARS)

Asian Hornet

Alert! Report sightings of this species to: alernnonnative@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 alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.



Key ID Features

Asian Hornet Queen



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

Asian Hornet vs European Hornet



Similar Species

Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) for comparison

- 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*)

- 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



Giant woodwasp (*Urocerus gigas*)

- 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



Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*)

- 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



Median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*)

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



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 www.nationalbeeunit.com

Alert! Report sightings of this species to: alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Asian Hornet Identification leaflet. Source: BBKA website.

This was our first online committee meeting. Not sitting in the same room certainly make it more challenging – we have a lot to learn! However, we did manage to usefully discuss some issues.

The agenda was quite short this month. We discussed our plans for adapting the association to provide more online delivery and we agreed some actions to work towards being able to provide some content online. We also discussed and agreed a quarantine micro-apirary agreement that swarm collectors might use to formalise arrangements for neighbours temporarily hosting swarm colonies before they are passed on. We also talked about the importance of beekeeper local network – especially in the current situation – and how we might help facilitate this.

Last month's Monthly Meeting: Microscopy for Nosema testing

What happened at our meeting last month.

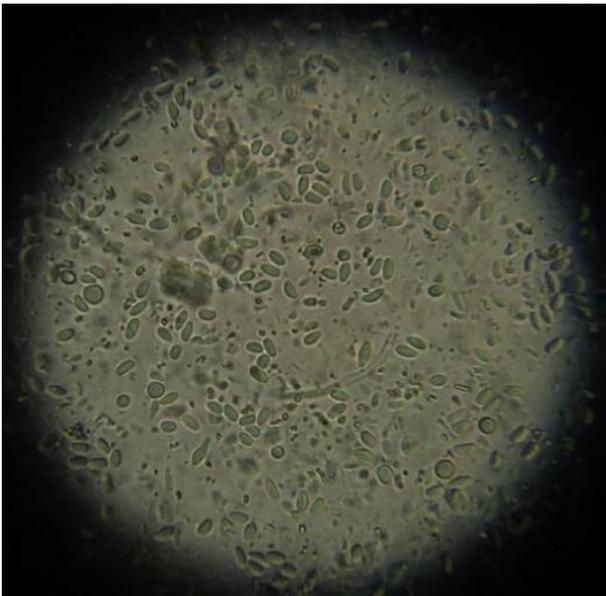
Aidan Slingsby
services@lbka.org.uk

The March hands-on session enabled members to bring along 30 or so freshly-killed (formerly) flying bees to test for nosema. Catching returning foragers means that these are almost certainly bees that have been in the hive all winter, which is what we wanted.

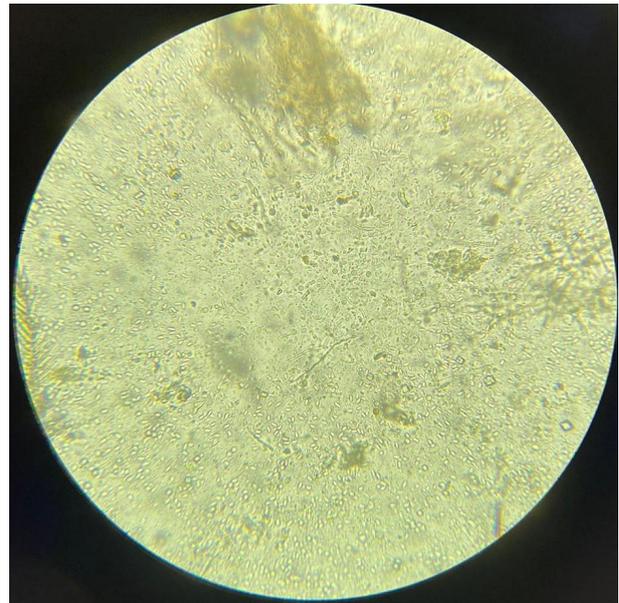
Howard showed us the slightly grisly task of preparing the bees by grinding them up with a small amount of water to extract the contents of the gut, smear onto a slide, put a cover slip on and then inspect under the microscope. We were looking for the short rice-shaped shapes that are nosema spores. Large numbers of these indicate it prevalence in the colony.

Nosema causes colonies to build up more slowly in Spring. Dysentery is a common symptom that manifests itself as brown diarrhoea streaks on the inside and outside of the hive. It can be a problem in Spring because some colonies may be weaker than usual and because bees will have had less opportunity to go on cleansing flights. This can be caused by other conditions and the microscopy test is a more reliable diagnosis. Accidentally crushing bees with nosema when inspecting can make the problem worse because the gut contents where the fungus resides, cannot be removed without spreading it further amongst the bees.

Weak colonies that are struggling with nosema may recover, but colonies often don't fully recover and may



"Kathy Stevenson gets the prize for well prepared slide of nosema". Photo by Richard Glassborow



Kevin Gibbs' slide. Photo by Kevin Gibbs.

not survive. Fumidil-B is the only medicinal treatment for nosema, but it is no longer legal to sell. All you can do is reduce the space within the colony with dummy boards, feed and hope for the best. Since weak colonies are unlikely to fully recover, it may not be worth trying to save them.

The London Bee Situation

Simon connects our "Bees and flowers go together" thinking (see last month) with our concerns about high densities of honey bees in London.

Simon Saville
development@lbka.org.uk

Many of you will be aware that LBKA has been promoting an initiative called "Bees and Flowers go together". This was prompted by the observation that there is a relatively high density of honey bee colonies in central London, but much less good quality forage than in the outskirts. We hear anecdotal evidence of low honey yields as well. The initiative encourages people to think about the needs of bees – all bees – for nectar and pollen. We suggest that people plant more flowers, improve green spaces for wildlife, and do what they can to create more green spaces.

The interest in keeping bees in the capital shows no sign of abating, and we continue to get approached by companies and individuals. Many are motivated by a desire



Dysentery, a common nosema symptom. Photo by Felix Martin

to "save the bees". While it's true that honey bees are probably suffering as a result of the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, they are not in decline – globally, in the UK or in London. It's estimated that there are perhaps 5 trillion honey bees worldwide: that's about half a million for every man, woman and child!

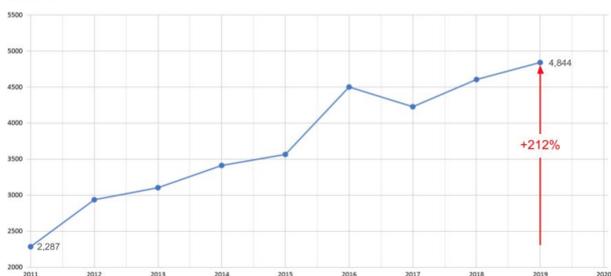
In London, the number of registered honey bee colonies continues to rise. According to the NBU, there were 4,844 colonies in 2019, double the number only 9 years ago. The actual number of colonies could of course be much higher. We just don't know.

What's also apparent is that the colonies are very unevenly distributed. While some areas have very few colonies, others have very high densities. For example, this 6x6km area had 370 registered colonies – an average of 10.3 colonies per square km, compared with the average for London as a whole of around 3 colonies per square km.

This raises the obvious question of "when are there

Registered Honey bee colonies in London

Source: NBU



Number of registered honey bee colonies in Greater London. Data: National Bee Unit.

19	24	10	2	6	0
11	7	4	21	4	7
0	12	12	3	11	54
9	7	0	28	12	2
1	22	15	11	2	6
5	4	4	35	0	0

Number of colonies in a 6x6km grid square last year. Data: National Bee Unit.

too many colonies?" The answer is that we don't know.

However, it's likely that, at some point, a high density of honey bee colonies could be detrimental to honey bees themselves. For example:

- Does a shortage of forage lead to weaker colonies that are more susceptible to robbing?
- Do bees have to fly longer distances for forage?
- Are honey yields lower?
- Does stress related to high densities make bees more susceptible to pathogens?
- Do pests and disease spread more easily between densely-packed colonies? Is there a correlation between apiary density and disease outbreaks?

And there are increasing concerns that high densities of honey bees could have impacts on wild bees and other pollinators. For example:

- There is some evidence that honey bee pathogens might affect wild bees
- Some scientists report that honey bees compete with other bees for nectar and especially pollen, reducing their abundance near apiaries
- The Bumblebee Conservation Trust has recently published [its own position on managed honey bees](#),

which concludes that: "establishing populations of honey bees does not automatically equate to conservation of wild pollinators, and may in some circumstances be detrimental to wild pollinator species".

We don't know the answers to these questions yet.

It's important that any positions adopted by LBKA are based on well-established data. So Richard and I are continuing to gather data to find out about these things. We recently visited Prof. Francis Ratnieks and Dr. Karin Alton at the Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects (LASI) at the University of Sussex to get their perspective.

Mark Patterson, LBKA Forage Officer, wrote [an interesting blog post](#) about this topic recently (his views, not necessarily those of LBKA.)

Against this background, what can we all do? We suggest that people follow the LBKA Guidelines for Responsible Beekeeping in London, summarised as:

- Be considerate of the social context, other beekeepers, all bees and other wildlife
- Get good training
- Keep nice bees
- Practice swarm prevention and control
- Manage bee health
- Maintain good apiary hygiene
- Register and insure
- Join a Beekeeping Association
- Prepare contingency plans for adversity: absence, disease control orders, onsite destruction orders, etc
- Plant appropriate flowers

Each of these topics deserves a chapter in its own right, but that's for another day! Meanwhile, happy beekeeping for the season ahead.

March in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

It is in April is that colony populations substantially increase and drones start to appear. There should normally be sufficient available forage for the bees to be self-sufficient if the weather holds good. Stores are currently lower than usual in my own hives due to the very mild winter. The most important job for the beekeeper in April, given the weather, is to ensure that the colony is not starving.

Other actions to be taken this month

Remove mouseguards. Remove mouseguards and replace with a clean, sterilised entrance block.

Mark the queen If the queen is unmarked then this is an ideal time to find and mark her. The colony is now going to continue to expand in numbers up until July whereupon it will start to contract. Swarm control is considerably easier with a marked queen.

Colony build up. Is the colony continuing to build up? A significant benefit of keeping colony records is that the number of frames of brood is recorded.

Varroa mites. Check mite drop if not already done in March.

1st full inspection. If not done in March then the 1st full inspection and spring cleaning of the hive should be carried out. The 1st entry can then be made into the colony records. From then on regular inspections should be made.

What to look for when inspecting

When inspecting a colony, 5 questions should always be asked and actions taken if appropriate.

Is the queen present and laying? You do not need to find the queen. If there are eggs and these are only 1 egg per cell, or newly hatched larvae, then this is evidence that she has been in the hive and laying 3 or 4 days ago.

Has the colony enough room? This is a 2-part question, being enough room for the queen to continue to lay eggs and enough room for the colony to store nectar. If not then provide room by adding a super.

Are there any queen cells? Queen cups are to be expected and should be ignored unless containing an egg or larva. Queen cells require swarm control action by the beekeeper. If the colony has insufficient space (question 2 above) then swarming becomes more likely as the pheromones do not freely circulate. Add a super if necessary.

Are there signs of disease? This is a comprehensive question but the strategy is best approached by being familiar with healthy brood. Anything that does not fit this description is, prima facie, suspicious. Healthy unsealed brood is pearly white in colour, evenly laid, segmented and lies in a 'C' shape in the cell. Healthy sealed brood is light brown in colour, evenly laid and with slightly raised dome cappings.

Are there enough stores until the next inspection? The equivalent of 2 full National brood frames is regarded as more than sufficient at this time of year, even if there is a serious and prolonged downward turn in the weather.

Life is currently challenging for all of us and will continue to be so during the spring and summer. Those who have out-apiaries are likely to be more challenged than those with home apiaries. I do hope we all rise to the challenges of current times and have a successful, albeit modified, beekeeping season for 2020. ?

Focus on Forage

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

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

As we enter April many of our true heralds of spring have begun to flower. Among them the pretty pink **Cuckoo Flower** *Cardamine pratensis*. This dainty little pink flower is a true sign that spring 'proper' has arrived. It's an important nectar plant for many pollinators and the main food plant for the larva of the **Orange Tip Butterfly** – a species sadly in decline.

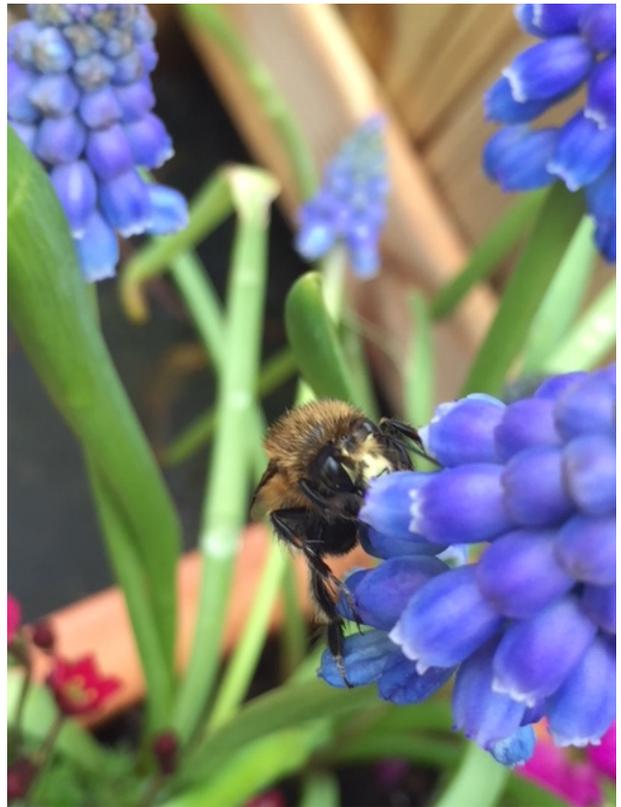
Deadnettle, Dandelions, Coltsfoot, Primulas, Wood Anemones, Green Alkanet, Comfrey and Lungwort are at last now coming in bloom 2-3 weeks later than last year. The latter 2 in particular are popular with the **Hairy Footed Flower Bee**. Another flower I'm noticing lots of **small solitary bees** on at the moment, is **Lesser Celandine**. This plant is unusual in the buttercup family (*Ranunculaceae*) as it is one of the few buttercups that is attractive to bees. Most other *Ranunculus* have nectar which contains the toxin protoanemonin which bees cannot digest and can lead to poisoning. Lesser Celandine, however, is popular with many of our early solitary bees and occasionally Honey bees. Many of the **Micro Andrena** solitary bees feed on the golden yellow flowers which form vast carpets among cemetery, churchyards and beneath hedgerows. Another member of the buttercup family which bees may visit at this time of year is the **Marsh Marigold**.

Most of the **tulips, crocus and Winter Aconite** have now long gone over but there are still **Daffodils** in flower (though they are of little use to our bees), **alliums, wild garlic and Muscari** (Grape Hyacinth) in bloom.

This time last year, across much of southern England, **bluebells** were making an appearance. They are later this year and so far I've only seen signs of the fresh green leaves, but no flowers yet. In another few weeks, they should be out putting on a gorgeous display of blue. Blue bells may be visited by Honey bees and can produce a honey crop but they are also popular with some of the longer tongued solitary bees. Most Bluebells in



Marsh marigold.



Muscari.



Pulmonaria.



Celandine.

London will be the invasive Spanish bluebell, but a few locations still hold stands of the native species.

During the last few days **Flowering Currant** have started to bloom. This plant is a reliable indicator that spring proper has arrived and for me a timely reminder to undertake first proper inspections. I'm writing this 24 hours after doing full inspections on several colonies where I have had to add supers because the brood bodies are full of sealed brood and honey. If a flow starts now and the colony runs out of room they could begin swarm preparations.

Other important sources of forage this month are the willows. The catkins of willow bear copious amounts of sulphur-yellow pollen. If your honey bees are returning to the hive dusted in yellow they will most likely have been visiting willow. It's not just honey bees that visit willow. Many bumblebees and Andrena bees will also collect willow pollen, and seem to time their emergence with Willow catkins. Unlike the earlier flowering catkins of **Alder** and **Hazel** willow will also produce nectar. Other trees coming into bloom right now include **Field Maple**, **Sycamore**, **Poplar** and **Ash**. April is when we normally expect to see **Cherry Laurel** blooming in abundance but across much of the country this evergreen shrub is delayed flowering due to the recent cold. On the 4th April I saw the first inflorescence about to burst into flower. Many of the small solitary Andrena bees rely on this shrub for pollen and nectar.

As we progress through April we should expect to see the first **Horse Chestnut** blossom. Chestnut produces very distinctive dark brick red pollen which honey bees



Tulips.

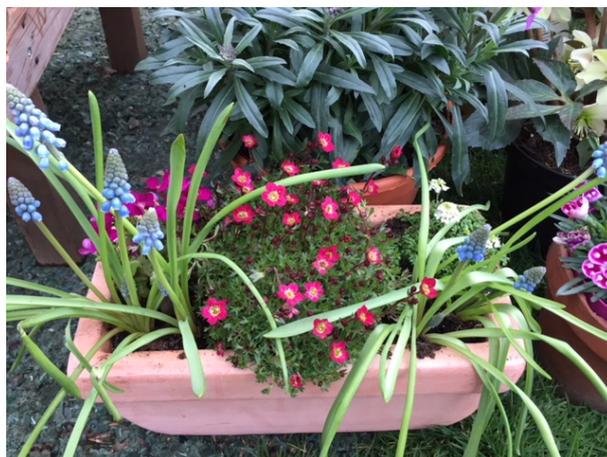
will collect with enthusiasm. Chestnuts are one of the best examples of how plants communicate with their pollinators; the individual blooms of the flower stalk change colour as they are fertilised to inform the bees that they need not bother to visit that particular bloom. Other trees coming into bloom will include Cherry, Plum and Apple. Currently the Blackthorn is putting on a good show of blooms and on warm days the bees may bring in a crop from this nectar source. At one of my apiaries my bees have access to about 45 hectares of mostly **Blackthorn** scrub and they bring back copious amounts of the brown coloured pollen and can fill a super with honey in little over a week.

One of the larger gardens where I keep my Honey Bees includes a 34 tree fruit orchard. So far the **nectarines**, **peaches** and **Mirabel DeNancy plum** are the only trees to have flowered. The **pears** should begin to bloom shortly followed by the **apples**, **Victoria Plum** and **Greengage**. Worryingly the half dozen Crab Apples planted around the edge of the garden to cross pollinate our cultivated apples have already bloomed which begs the question what will our apples pollinate with this year? The varieties planted were supposed to flower in unison providing cross pollination and better fruit set with the heritage apple varieties which unlike many modern cultivars do not self-pollinate.

On the outer edges of the city **Oil Seed Rape** will be starting to come into bloom and will flower well into mid-May. Beekeepers either love it or hate it for it can produce an abundance of honey but the grainy texture and trend to crystallise rock hard in the comb



Peach blossom in Fulham palace walled garden.



The pollinator friendly window box we took to Ascot.

are drawbacks. Our member Geoffrey Hood produced a lot of Rape honey in 2015 and when I find time I intend to use it as seed honey to try and make Creamed Honey. If I'm successful you can expect a write up about that.

Jobs to do in the garden

From now on, weeding will become a regular chore in the garden. For the past 3 weeks I have been meticulously pulling out the seedlings of **Germander Speedwell**, the first shoots of **Bindweed** and **Common Cleavers** which every year threaten to take over my garden. Keeping them in check requires constant attention. Weeding is a garden chore I like the least – if only it could all be about planting flowers!

Prune back damaged branches on shrubs and fruit trees. Storm Katie has battered quite a few trees on my allotment which will now need pruning. Remove dead or damaged tissues cutting to the branch bark ridge.

Plant out summer flowering bulbs once threat of frost has gone.

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.

Martin Kunz: I own [Diversity Honeys Ltd](#), that supply certified organic cotton bee suits (with/without ventilation). There's a discount for LBKA members in the [members' area](#).

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:** Natalie Cotton, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
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Our website is <http://www.lbka.org.uk/> and the pictures are in the same order as the names above.

