



# The London Beekeepers' Association

# LBKA News

## January, 2024

Happy New Year!

Our next three Monthly Meetings are planned to be Asian Hornet related as Spring comes and the Asian Hornets – that are becoming established here – start their lifecycle. This week's (Saturday 12th January) is about Asian Hornet trap making. Please come and please register on the Eventbrite link in your email. See Annie's piece on the Asian Hornet Roadshow (p3). Also don't forget our Winter Lecture on 24th January – again, sign up on Eventbrite.

See the newsletter for a beekeeping opportunity in Wapping (p2) and an LBKA clear-out of surplus equipment (p11) where you can grab a bargain!

See Howard's advice what to do in the apiary at this time of year (p4) and also my Oxalic Acid treatment advice (p2). Also see Mark's excellent article about forage and new year's resolutions (p6).

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Thank you to this month's contributors: Howard Nichols, Annie McGeoch, Mike Pallett and Mark Patterson. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me.

Please help make the newsletter better by providing content – photos, articles, reflections, advice, recipes. . .

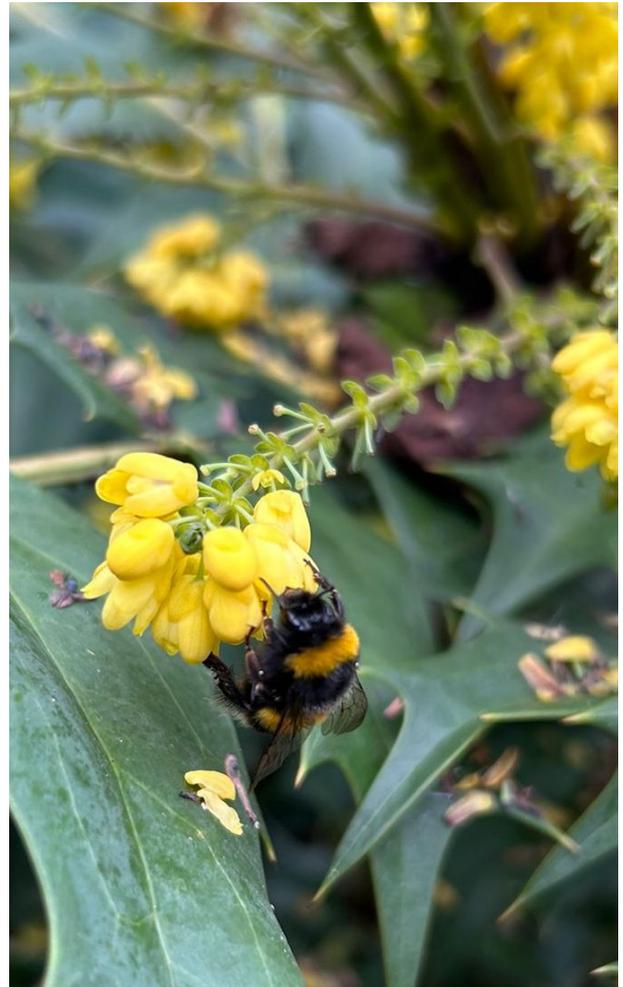
Aidan Slingsby, Editor, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)

## Announcements

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

### January's Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

January's Monthly Meeting meeting will be on **Saturday (13th January)** instead of the usual Sunday. It will be at Battersea Children's Zoo and will be about getting ready to tackle the Asian Hornet and a trap-making workshop. We're luckily to have experts within our group, so let's listen to them! Numbers are limited so please sign up here on the link in your email. . . or please cancel if you can no longer make it.



Bumble Bee on Mahonia. Photo: Mike Pallett.

The [Pub Social](#) will be at The Lamb (94 Lamb's Conduit St, Bloomsbury, WC1N 1EA). An old favourite.

February's Monthly Meeting – also at Battersea Children's Zoo – will on **11th February** be on Asian Hornet spring track & trace training with a focus on theory.

## Winter Lecture: Bait Hives by David Evans

Our Winter Lecture will be on 24th January. [Sign up here](#) and pass onto anyone interest, but please don't post widely on public websites.

"Bait Hives" by David Evans will cover theoretical and practical aspects of swarms and bait hives. Starting with a brief overview of honey bee colony reproduction, he will cover the role of scout bees in identifying a new nest site, the process of swarming, bivouacking and then relocation to the chosen location. After a brief digression into capturing swarms, he will then discuss setting up bait hives, the choice of box, its location and contents. This covers both scientific studies and how these findings can best be applied to practical beekeeping. Discussion of the contents of the bait hive necessitates another digression into using foundationless frames, which offer particular benefits for bait hives. The talk closes with a discussion of what you can expect to observe when scout bees find and favour your bait hive, and the things you need to do having attracted a swarm. These include moving it somewhere else and managing the Varroa that also arrive with the swarm.

David Evans is Emeritus Professor of Virology in the School of Biology, University of St. Andrews. His research interests included the replication and evolution of human and animal viruses, and the biology and control of both Deformed wing virus (DWV) and Chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV) of honey bees. He has kept bees for many years and writes a well respected blog every Friday.

## 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 (07715564569)

## Varroa treatment with Oxalic Acid

As the days get longer, window for applying Oxalic Acid as a varroa treatment is fast closing. If you haven't yet, this weekend may be a good time as the temperatures have been low and so likely to be not so much brood. The easier and safest way is to buy the liquid form of Api-bioxal or mix the powder form yourself with sugar syrup (see instructions on the packet) and "dribble it" along the "seams" (gaps between the

frames. Always wear eye protection, gloves (and your beesuit!) as Oxalic Acid is dangerous and skin contact should be avoided. Sublimation is the more effective technique that uses less product, but this is more dangerous and you will need a the right kind of specialist mask that will filter out the fumes. Check on the Members' Area of the website for past monthly meetings that discuss.

## 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 November/December

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

**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.

**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).



www.nonnativespecies.org

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

# Asian Hornet

**Alert!** Report sightings of this species to: [alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto: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](mailto:alernnonnative@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

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

**Asian Hornet vs European Hornet**

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

Asian hornet 'hawking' for honey bee prey

## Similar Species

<p><b>Asian hornet (<i>Vespa velutina</i>) for comparison</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen up to 30mm long, worker up to 25mm long</li> <li>Legs yellow at the ends</li> <li>Dark brown / black abdomen with a yellow / orange band on 4th segment</li> <li>Head dark from above, orange from front</li> <li>Dark coloured antennae</li> <li>Entirely black velvety thorax</li> <li>Never active at night</li> </ul>	<p><small>Q. Rome</small></p>
<p><b>European hornet (<i>Vespa crabro</i>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen up to 35mm long, worker up to 30mm long</li> <li>Legs brown at the ends</li> <li>Yellow abdomen marked with brown on the upper part, not banded</li> <li>Head yellow from above, yellow from front</li> <li>Yellow antennae</li> <li>Thorax black with extensive brown markings</li> <li>May be active at night</li> </ul>	<p><small>Roger Burgess, National Bee Unit</small></p>
<p><b>Giant woodwasp (<i>Urocerus gigas</i>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Larger than Asian hornet, female up to 45mm long</li> <li>Legs yellow</li> <li>Distinctive yellow and black banded abdomen</li> <li>Long cylindrical body unlike Asian hornet which has an obvious waist</li> <li>Long yellow antennae</li> <li>Female has an obvious long sting-like appendage (ovipositor) which it uses to lay eggs in trees</li> </ul>	<p><small>Q. Rome</small></p>
<p><b>Hornet mimic hoverfly (<i>Volucella zonaria</i>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abdomen has more yellow stripes than Asian hornet</li> <li>Legs darker than Asian hornets</li> <li>Only one pair of wings (hornets and wasps have two pairs)</li> <li>Large, globular eyes</li> </ul>	<p><small>Didier Descouens, Alan Morgan</small></p>
<p><b>Median wasp (<i>Dolichovespula media</i>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More extensive yellow and orange colouration on abdominal segments than Asian hornet</li> <li>Yellow markings on thorax unlike Asian hornet</li> </ul>	<p><small>Q. Rome</small></p>

## 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.nationalbeehiveunit.com](http://www.nationalbeehiveunit.com)

**Alert!** Report sightings of this species to: [alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)

Asian Hornet Identification leaflet. Source: [BBKA website](http://BBKA website).

# January'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 the need for **new trustees**, given that some of the current trustees are planning to step down before long. We will approach some members, but would also like members to volunteer their services. We also discussed the Terms of Reference of the **Asian Hornet Steering Team**. The next three Monthly Meetings are due to be Asian Hornet-related. We are in talks with **School Food Matters** about our involvement with them in 2024. David talked us through the **budget** for this year and our expected main sources of income and reasons for expenditure.

In the **Executive** part of the meeting, we did some more planning for the **Introduction Courses**. We plan to run two two-day courses this spring broadly following the pre-COVID format. Reasons to run them are to upskill a new generation of beekeepers, to bring new members on board, and to raise revenue. We will need plenty of volunteers to be able to deliver these. We considered the **draft calendar** of events of 2024 and will publish it in full this month. We also have one compliant **Pollinator Fund** application which we approved. Richard and Elliot plan to attend BBKA's ADM on 13th January.

# Asian Hornet roadshow

How LBKA will be helping get the Asian Hornet message out.

Annie McGeoch  
[events@lbka.org.uk](mailto:events@lbka.org.uk)

LBKA have commissioned 5 pull up banners so we can have a roadshow that will go to markets, open gardens, fetes, bird societies and public events.

The public can help by spotting Asian yellow legged hornets and taking a photo and sending it to [Asianhornet@lbka.org.uk](mailto:Asianhornet@lbka.org.uk). if we identify it as an Asian hornet we



LBKA's shiny new pull-up banners.

can alert the local AH team to try and spot the nest and message the NBU so nest can be removed.

It sounds simple but we will need help. If you are part of a garden or bird club and would like posters let us know. If you can host the roadshow at your event or help on the days we go to events please get in touch. We will start with Sunday markets in SE London and build up. We have some Identification posters from National Bee Unit and I have requested small cards from Beecraft who are donating them .

Please contact me on [events@lbka.org.uk](mailto:events@lbka.org.uk) if you can help out.

## January 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)

January is a quiet time for beekeepers but an eye must still be kept on the apiary. Make sure that the roof has not been blown off by winds or that woodpeckers have not taken an interest in the hive. With the warmer winters of today woodpeckers are becoming less of an issue as the ground is not usually frozen hard enough for them to turn their attentions to beehives. Check behind the mouseguards for dead bees and remove if necessary.

### Food stores

If the colony went into the winter with 35lb of stores then feeding will not be necessary, even in this exceptionally mild winter with the bees flying. If stores were light a couple of months ago then it may be an en-

tirely different matter. We have had yet another exceptionally mild autumn and winter so far. If feeding is necessary then only candy or fondant should be used at this time of year. Sugar syrup should be avoided as it will excite the bees and so disturb the cluster. The bees are also unable to process syrup in winter and it is then liable to fermentation. I personally would only feed my bees at this time of year if they were in danger of starving.

## New equipment

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

## Cleaning old equipment

Best time to do this is immediately after it is taken out of use in autumn. Attention to general cleanliness and maintenance of old equipment is part of apiary hygiene strategy. Please do check for evidence of wax moth and place frames in a cold place wherever possible.

## Candles and honey recipes

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

## LBKA events

Keep in touch with others through our monthly meetings and winter lectures. This month's January meeting is at Battersea Park zoo on Saturday and we will learn how to make Asian Hornet traps.

## Education

Education and practical experience are the 2 routes through which beekeepers develop their skills. Education may arise from a variety of routes but Beecraft is a substantial resource. If you do not currently subscribe to Beecraft then January is a good month take out an annual subscription. Those who are also registered with the BBKA will receive the monthly BBKA News by post.

## Registration with Beebase

We believe that all or virtually all of our beekeeping members are registered on Beebase. However, it is possible that a few newer members may not be. It is important that everyone is registered in case a notifiable disease or pest is found in your location. The Bee Inspectors are dependent upon them knowing the location of your hives and apiaries so that they may help you. Please do ensure you are registered as the high level of EFB in London is likely to be a continuing problem for 2024.

# 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 examinations 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



*Helenium, the best garden plant for attracting bees*



*Bellflower, the sole pollen source for Bell Flower Scissor Bee and Harebell Blunthorn Bee*

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.

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## Focus on Forage

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

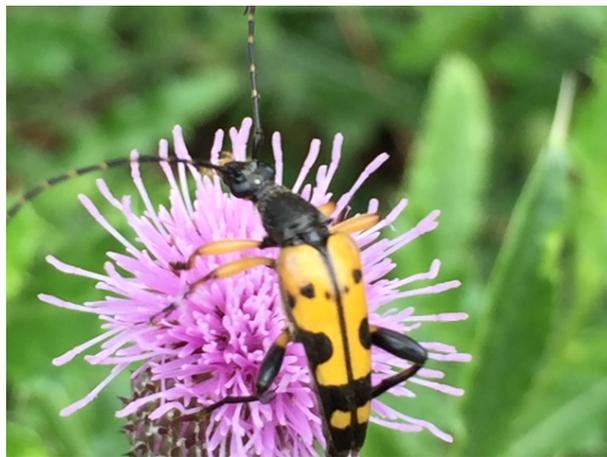
*Mark Patterson*  
[forage@lbka.org.uk](mailto:forage@lbka.org.uk)

### Bee friendly gardening New Year's resolutions

This month's forage blog takes a different direction. There's not much to write about in terms of seasonal forage for bees in the depths of winter when little is in flower and our bees are dormant so for a change my



*Oregano, the best butterfly plant. The awesome bee-attracting plant also supports other common and scarce species*



*Cirsium (thistles) are the highest yielding UK native nectar plants and super-important bee forage. Here one is being visited by a male longhorn beetle *Retpela maculata*.*



*Knapweed, one of the highest yielding nectar plants. Its cultivated cousin *Montana* is equally as good and has a very long flowering period lasting all spring through to autumn.*



*Golden rod *Solidago*, the only plant I've ever seen Sharp Tailed Bees frequent*

blog takes a look at what we can do to make our gardens better environments for bees all year round going forward into a new year.

### Create Habitat for bees

Bees need places to forage and find pollen, nectar, water and propolis and this can be done by planting the right types of flowers for them and incorporating a small water feature into your garden where bees can gather water.

Another sort of habitat bees need is nesting habitat where they can raise their offspring. For Honey bees this is a hive but for other bees this can be piles of decaying logs in which they excavate a nest burrow, a patch of sandy soil or clay bank for mining bees to dig out a nest tunnel, or bundles of hollow plant stems and cardboard tubes for the likes of mason and leafcutter bees. These nesting habitats can be conveniently catered for in the form of the many pre-fabricated bee nesting boxes available from garden centres and online shops or you can make your own [see my guide how to make homes for solitary bees](#).

Other ideas you could try include making a nesting cylinder for ground nesting bees. You need to invest in a sheet of perforated metal sheeting which you bring together at the ends and fasten together with nuts and bolts to form a cylinder. This is then filled with sand or free draining soil to provide a medium which bees can burrow into. This design allows bees to nest in the top of the planter by burrowing downwards but they can potentially also excavate lateral burrows entering through the many perforated holes in the metal sheet. Try using soft and sharp sand, cactus compost or John Innes loam based soil with added sand. You can plant drought-tolerant flowering plants in the top too to provide cover as some bees prefer some vegetation cover near their nests whilst others prefer a more open aspect.

Lastly the final habitat that bees need is over wintering habitat. For bumble bees this is often a shallow hollow excavated in dry soil beneath tufts of grass or piles of decaying vegetation, compost heaps or hollow plant stems for solitary bees. Try not cutting back all your herbaceous perennials in autumn, so leaving some stems intact for insects to hibernate inside the hollow



*Holly, the Male plants are coming into flower now and will continue through spring when the separate female trees also bloom.*

stems. Many solitary bees over winter in their nest chambers.

### Plant useful things in your garden

My gardening mantra is either the bees can eat it or we can. If a plant can't fulfil either of these two requirements then it doesn't get a look in! Of course most of the things that we can eat are also beneficial to bees and other pollinators as the majority of vegetables do also flower and the fruits we eat need the bees to pollinate them.

### Plant the best plants for bees

Not all flowers are equally attractive or beneficial to bees and other pollinators. Attractiveness and benefit to pollinators varies a great deal with some plants being 100 times more attractive and useful than the worst. To complicate things not all plants are equally beneficial to all insects due to the shape and morphology of the blooms which may prevent all but a few dedicated visiting bees whilst others contain toxins, the effects from which only certain bee species are immune. Great examples are the foxglove *Digitalis Purpurea*, Comfrey *Symphytum officinalis* and Everlasting Pea *Lathyrus latifolia* which are among the top 10 UK plants for sugar content in their nectar and the amount of nectar produced per hectare (kg of sugar/ha/year). These 3 plants should be a magnet for all bees having the greatest rewarding nectars among British plants. However Fox Glove and Comfrey are plants with deep tubular flowers which prevent all but the longest tongues from accessing their nectar, meanwhile Everlasting Pea has both a deep nectary and tightly lipped flowers which require a long tongued bee with a robust body to enter.

Bulking up your gardens by planting the most attractive and beneficial plants for a broad range of insects will provide the most benefit to pollinators, whilst adding plants which are attractive or of benefit to only a small number of species helps provide food for more fussy specialists – often the species most at risk. There are



*Solitary bee nest planters.*

many bees which are not generalist and will only feed their offspring pollen from a small number or a single species of plant. Plant a mixture of broadly attractive and specialist plants and choose plants which will offer flowers over a long season or plan a succession of flower types throughout the season. See the tables on pages 9 and 10. There are lots more planting suggestions on my [plants for pollinators](#) pages along with download guides for plants for different types of bees. There are also lots of resources on the [LBKA website](#).

### Reduce your reliance on pesticides

Pesticides do have their place but only as a final resort once other means of defeating pests and disease have been exhausted. Try mulching with compost and recycling garden waste to feed plants rather than chemical feeds, try companion planting to ward off unwelcome pests and attract beneficial insect predators over chemical sprays. Pesticides find their way into pollen and nectar and accumulate in social bee colonies where they can exhibit a wide range of symptoms including reduced reproductive success, decreased life span of the individual insects, compromised immune response and tolerances to environmental stressors and increased mortality rates. When buying plants for your garden try and find out from the seller or the grower whether neonicotinoid pesticides have been used in the plant's production – these pesticides are harmful to bees and long lived in

Plant variety	Flowering period	Pollinators attracted
Helenium autumnal <sup>a</sup>	July to October	Honey bee, Lasioglossum bees, Hoverfly, 4 species of Butterfly
Oreganum vulgare <sup>b</sup> or Oreganum onites	June to October	Honey Bee, Lasioglossum bees, Andrena bees, Bumblebee, Melitta bees, Hylaeus bees, Hoverfly, 9 species of Butterfly
Agastache foeniculum <sup>c</sup>	July to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, 4 species of Butterfly, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Hoverfly, Flower Bees
Calamint	July to August	Honey Bee, Bumble Bee, Megachile Bees
Lavender Gross Bleu	July to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, Lasioglossum Bees, Butterfly
Nepeta	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, Megachile Bees, Wool Carder Bee, Flower Bees, Butterfly, Mint Moth, Osmia Bees
Echium vulgare	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, Megachile Bees, Osmia Bees, Wool Carder Bee, Flower Bees, Hoplitis adunca, Lasioglossum, Pollen Beetles
Veronica spicata	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees, Hylaeus Bees, Hoverfly, Butterfly
Teucrium hiricanum	June to October	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Flower Bees, Lasioglossum Bees, Hoverfly, Butterfly, Mint Moth, Swollen Thigh Beetles, Pollen Beetles, Wool Carder bees
Sedum Spectable	August to October	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees, Butterfly
Solidago <sup>d</sup> and Golden Rod	July to October	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Xylocopa Large Carpenter Bees, Coelioxys Sharp Tailed Bees, Lasioglossum Bees, Butterfly, Beetles.
Hyssopus	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees
Eryngium	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bee, Hylaeus bees, butterfly, hoverfly, pollen beetles, Solitary wasps
Echinops	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees, Hylaeus Bees, solitary wasps
Centaurea <sup>e</sup> (Napweeds and Perennial Cornflower)	May to November	Bumblebees, Lasioglossum Bees, Megachile Bees, Osmia Bees, Hoverfly, Butterfly, Pollen Beetles
Cirsium (thistles) <sup>f</sup>	June to September	Bumblebees, Honey Bee, Andrena Bees, Halictus Bees, Colletes Bees, Flower Bees, Long Horn Beetle, Swollen Thigh Beetle, Pollen Beetle, Butterflies, Solitary wasps

*Examples of some of the best plants to attract a broad variety of pollinators. Suggestions based on several years of data collection in studies into flower attractiveness to pollinators conducted by LASI and Rosybee Plants supplemented with results from the Agriland Project along with our own observations over the years in our London Garden.*

<sup>a</sup>The most attractive garden plant for bees in 4 years of trials By Rosybee

<sup>b</sup>The most attractive plant for butterflies by LASI and top 10 plants for bees by both LASI and Rosybee trials.

<sup>c</sup>The most attractive plant for bees in trials by LASI.

<sup>d</sup>Shown by Rosybee trials not to be very attractive to bees however in my own garden I have 3 varieties which attract large numbers of predominantly solitary bees, blue butterflies, solitary wasps, hoverflies and pollinating beetles. On regular visits to the prairie plantings in London's Burges Park and on my regular travels around North America I have witnessed Golden Rod visited by an extraordinary range of pollinators. Solidago is the only plant in my garden on which I have seen sharp tailed bees visit.

<sup>e</sup>Centaurea nigra (black napweed) ranked 4th by Agriland project for abundance of nectar produced per Ha and Centaurea montana (perennial cornflower) consistently in top 20 most attractive plants by Rosybee – in addition Centaurea species have long flower season and prolonged usefulness to bees.

<sup>f</sup>UK native Plant producing the most nectar according to Agriland Project.

Plant variety	Flowering period	Main benefitting pollinator
Everlasting Pea	May to August	Megachile Bees
Stachys	May to September	Wool carder bee (collects hairs from the plant to carder its nest) Fork tailed flower bee
Bell flowers	May to September	Chelostoma campanularum, Melitta haemorrhoidalis Bumblebees, Honey Bee
Achillea (Yarrow)	May to September	Colletes davisianus wool carder bee (collects hairs from the plant to carder its nest)
Alliums	April to September	Hylaeus Bees Honey Bee, Bumble Bee
Lamium maculatum	March to November	Bumblebees and Hairy Footed Flower Bee
Pulmonaria	March to May	Hairy Footed Flower Bee
Astrantia	April to August	Hylaeus Bees
Asteraceae	April to October	Hylaeus Bees, Colletes bees, Swollen Thigh beetles
Foxglove	April to July	Garden Bumble Bee
Yellow Loosestrife	June to August	Yellow loosestrife Bee Macropis europaeus
Hawksbeard	June to September	Pantaloone bee Dasypoda hirtipes, Red Tailed Bumblebee, Honey Bee, Andrena bees, Osmia Bees

*Some examples of plants which are beneficial to specialist species and are a good way to provide for fussy flower visitors to your garden.*



*Tim Lover awarded MBE in the Queen’s New Year Honours (a few years ago).*

the plant and surrounding soil meaning they can have effects on wildlife for many years to come.

### Stop being so tidy in the garden

Try not to be too much of a compulsive tidy upper in your gardens. Try leaving small hidden away messy areas where vegetation is not cut back and things are left a little wilder. This will act as a refuge for invertebrates which are less tolerant of disturbed areas.

### Learn to plan ahead

If you want to provide for pollinators in summer then the time to plan your planting activity is now. Decide what space you have, plan what you intend to grow and start placing orders now so that come spring you can have plants delivered and planted that will flower come summer. Planning ahead is especially important for spring bulbs which are best planted when dormant in autumn, 5-6 months before they will come into flower.

### Give no dig gardening a try

Spreading composts and biodegradable mulches onto your soil and allowing worms and other detritivores to take nutrients down into the soil is much more beneficial to most soils over conventional digging in. By refraining from deep digging and only adding organic material to the soil surface we replicate what occurs in nature by creating a nutrient rich, moisture retaining top layer above increasingly mineral based layers of soil. Most plants have the majority of their roots within the top 30cm of soil, even very large trees seldom have roots penetrating deeper than 2-3 feet and they are mainly for anchorage rather than water and nutritional absorption. The benefit to bees in no deep digging is that solitary species nesting in the soil don’t have their burrows disturbed and plants flower better. Digging frequently disturbs the buried seed bank meaning weed species can take hold, whereas no dig gardening results in far less seed bank disturbance and therefore a reduced weed problem. In the United States it has been found that many ground nesting solitary bee populations can triple on no dig farms compared to conventionally tilled crop fields as a result of fewer nest burrows being damaged.

## 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.

**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.



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



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).

## Upcoming events

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

**Sunday 10th December: Monthly meeting: Christmas quiz, social and honey tasting**

11:00-13:00 at The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR

This month's meeting will be a Christmas Quiz (with an amazing one-of-a-kind prize up for grabs) and festive social with food and drink. We will also have honey tasting! So - if you can - please bring along some of



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



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



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

your honey for tasting. The variety of honey across London is always wondrous.

### Saturday 13th January: Monthly meeting: Asian Hornet queen trap workshop

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

Asian Hornet queen trap workshop

### Wednesday 24th January: Winter Lecture: Bait Hives by David Evans

19:00 at Via Zoom - [book your free ticket here](#).

This talk covers theoretical and practical aspects of

swarms and bait hives. Starting with a brief overview of honey bee colony reproduction, he will cover the role of scout bees in identifying a new nest site, the process of swarming, bivouacking and then relocation to the chosen location. After a brief digression into capturing swarms, he will then discuss setting up bait hives, the choice of box, its location and contents. This covers both scientific studies and how these findings can best be applied to practical beekeeping. Discussion of the contents of the bait hive necessitates another digression into using foundationless frames, which offer particular benefits for bait hives. The talk closes with a discussion of what you can expect to observe when scout bees find and favour your bait hive, and the things you need to do having attracted a swarm. These include moving it somewhere else and managing the Varroa that also arrive with the swarm.

David Evans is Emeritus Professor of Virology in the School of Biology, University of St. Andrews. His research interests included the replication and evolution of human and animal viruses, and the biology and control of both Deformed wing virus (DWV) and Chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV) of honey bees. He has kept bees for many years and writes a well respected blog every Friday.

### Tuesday 30th January: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at The Lamb, 94 Lamb's Conduit St, Bloomsbury, WC1N 1EA. An old favourite!

We're back in North London this month. A nice pub with lots of space that serves food.

### 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/p>.

## 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.

## 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)
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- **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.

