



18

MAY
2019

tauntonbuzz

the newsletter of Taunton & District Beekeepers

Inside this issue...

- It's a busy time in the apiary: observations & tips
- Jersey Asian hornet hunter declares "This is war"
- Guide to making furniture polish
- Researchers need your help
- Club news
- Dates for the diary



Letter from the Chair

I am writing this after one of the most glorious Easters we have had in many a year. The sun shone, the bees were busy, and the blossom was an absolute picture. However I am now wrapped up in a down jacket as we have returned to wintery temperatures and are waiting for Storm Hannah. I just hope that there will still be some blossom left on the trees once it has passed through.

The bees have responded strongly to the early blossom and warm weather by bringing in lots of nectar. I am hearing reports of 2, 3 and 4 supers being filled, and I am very excited to report that my Flow Hive super is at last filling up with honey! I am looking forward to extracting the honey by simply running it from the hive into clean jars – I'll report back when it happens.

Of course the warm weather means that people go on holiday, and this increases the risk that an Asian Hornet queen may come back to the UK as a hitchhiker in a caravan or motorhome. Please keep vigilant, looking out for Asian Hornet queens on flowers and also small embryo nests in sheds or garages. Take a photo and report anything you see on the Asian Hornet Watch app. If you are not sure what you are seeing contact one of the Taunton AHAT team or email asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk.

Keep an eye on your monitoring trap, which should be hanging by your kitchen window or somewhere easily seen. I have noticed several native wasp queens using my trap as a café – going in, having a drink then going out again.

If you have a monitoring trap, can you let me know the postcode of its position, so that we can make a map of coverage in the Taunton area, and then work out the gaps where we need to put some extra traps.

Until the next issue, here's wishing you more glorious weather, and very happy bees.

Lynne - Chair

lynneci@hotmail.co.uk

Items appearing in Taunton Buzz are not necessarily the views of either the editor or Taunton and District Beekeepers' Division.

Buzz artwork:
Very kindly sponsored by
Josh Beadon of Toucan Design www.toucandesign.co.uk

Taunton and District Beekeepers' Division,
The Teaching Apiary, Heatherton Park,
Taunton TA4 1EU, UK

www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Editor's Letter



'A swarm in May is worth a load of hay;
A swarm in June is worth a sliver spoon;
A swarm in July isn't worth a fly.'

There is some truth in the saying, as the earlier you catch a swarm and settle it, the greater it will repay the individual who collected it. But this mid-17th century proverb needs an extra line to cover the start of the beekeeping season, as swarming was well underway in April this year. If you can think of an appropriate reward, do let me know!

This is undoubtedly the most exciting – and demanding – time of year for beekeepers. Read on for advice about managing, or at least attempting to manage, the bees' natural desire to swarm as well as making the most of an early honey crop.

And if you have any stories and photos you'd like to share, send them in! The deadline for our next issue is: June 16.

Anne Pike, editor
anne@ashford-media.co.uk



Keep up to date with what we're up to by following us on Facebook

Check out our Facebook page @

TauntonDistrictBeekeepers for snippets

of news from the apiary, events and beekeeping chat.

Our cover shot is of a honeybee on pear blossom and was taken by Anne Beadon using an iPhone 6.

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Barbara Drakeford
Chris Harries
Simon Jones
Lynne Ingram
Dave Parry
Anne Pike



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Taunton Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT)



In response to the growing threat from Asian Hornets, Somerset has set up an Asian Hornet Action Team, part of a national network of AHATs. The Somerset AHAT comprises representatives from each division. The Taunton team includes the following members:

Lynne Ingram

T: 07846165877; 01278 786307

Vanessa Woodford

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Peter Maben

T: 01823 433708; 07887 853799

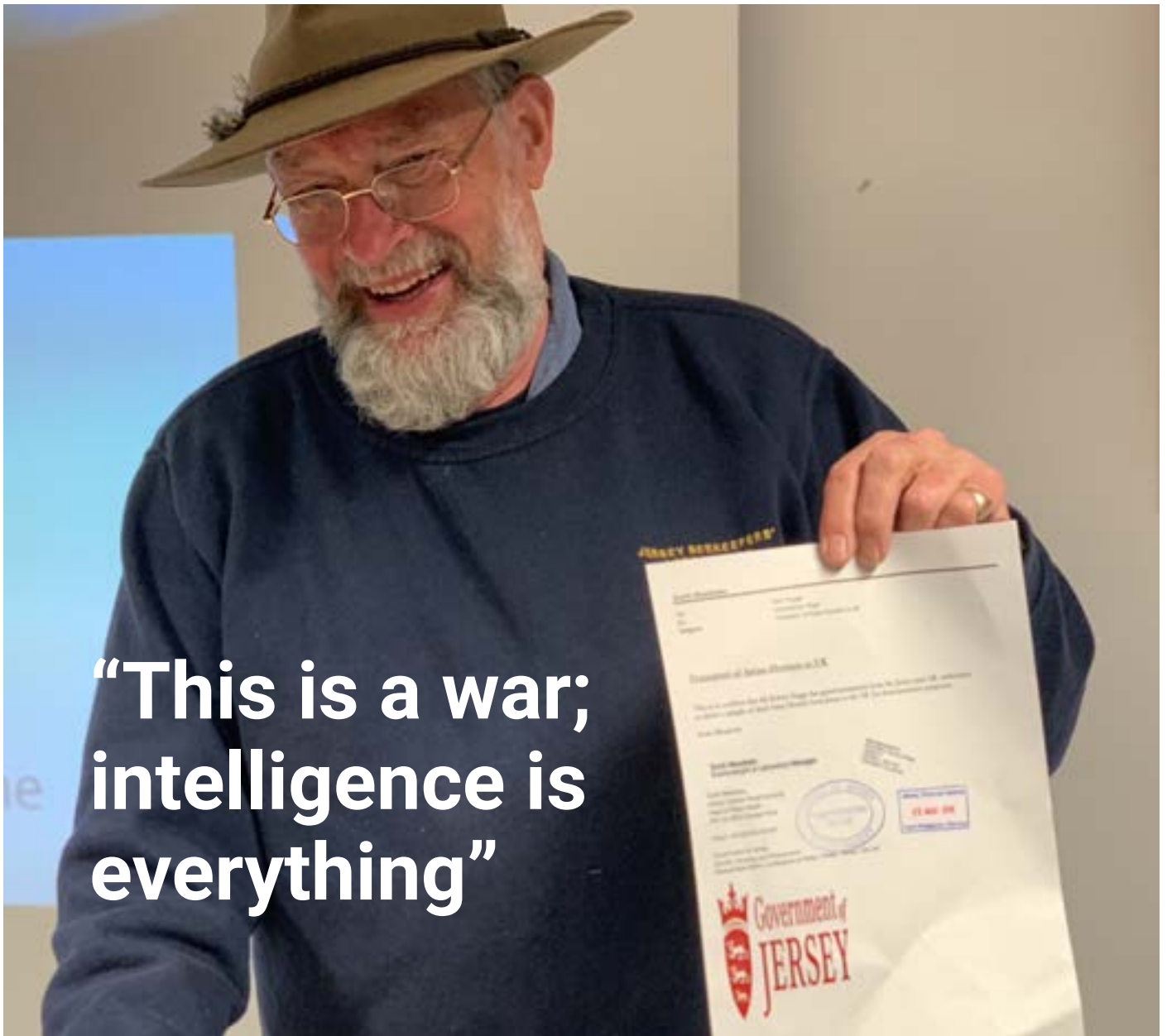
Mary Adams

T: 01823 432287

Andrew Perry

T: 01823 660294

If you spot an Asian (yellow legged) hornet, take a photo and report it on the Asian Hornet Watch app or on alert@nss.gov.uk. If you are struggling to get a photo or are unsure if it is an Asian hornet then contact one of the Taunton AHAT team who will do their best to help you.



**“This is a war;
intelligence is
everything”**

Jersey beekeeper Bob Hogge didn't pull any punches when he visited the Club to talk about his experience with Asian hornets (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*).

Jersey beekeeper Bob Hogge didn't pull any punches when he visited the Club to talk about his experience with Asian hornets (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*).

He told the story of how his life had changed since the first Asian hornets were discovered on the Channel Island in 2017.

After being one of the first to spot the non-native and highly invasive species in 2017, he has developed tracking expertise and knowledge of these predatory insects including:

- A hornet travels at 3.2 metres per second
- Suterra (bait) is 'tastier' than tree sap

In the coming season the Asian hornet team will be testing to see if the insects are attracted to old nests, which are being erected in boxes across Jersey, and if a CO2 lance can kill a nest without the need to use insecticides, which could kill other insects.

“The arrival of the Asian hornet will change our ecology,” he said. “This is a war; intelligence is everything.”

If you haven't picked up your free Asian hornet monitoring traps, supplied by Somerset Beekeepers' Association, then come to the Apiary. Check the programme to see when there will be someone 'at home' for you to collect yours! Note: available to full members of Taunton and District Beekeepers division only.

Bargains galore at beekeeping auction

At the end of March our auction of second hand beekeeping equipment had fewer lots overall than last year, but still contained some good quality and very usable items, writes our secretary, Barbara Drakeford.

“You could have bought a national hive for £88 or a full WBC for £100. In fact you could have set up a complete kit for significantly less cost than buying everything new, and there were plenty of experienced beekeepers on hand for advice.

There was however one thing missing: we were all sorry that David Pearce was forced, for the first time in years, to miss the Auction. Both he and his wife Joan, and their sales table, were very much missed – even though there were plenty of seats!

Thank you to all members who came and supported the event.

The date for next year’s auction is March 29, 2020.



News in Brief

Anyone for tea?

We'd like to say a huge thank you to Joan Pearce, who has very kindly made a tea cosy which is big enough to keep the large teapot warm at the clubhouse.

Joan must have spent hours making this wonderful cosy out of a patchwork of different fabrics all featuring bees.

And if you'd like to see it for yourself, pop in for a cuppa!

Time saving tips for practical beekeepers

Will Steynor came up from South Hams on April 11 to show us some of his gadgets for saving time for the practical beekeeper, writes Barbara Drakeford.

Adding clips to hold supers on to the brood box so that they don't move during transit was one idea.

It was intriguing seeing his suggestion for using a stainless steel sink top to make an uncapping table!

I'm not too sure about electrical regulations, but the use of a kettle element was interesting, to say the least.

Judging by the number of people who went to ask Will questions after his talk, it had gone down well.

Car parking at the front of the Apiary

Since the planting of the Community Woodland, opposite the Apiary at Heatherton Park, we have become aware that the public is using our parking area.

The committee are considering what we should say on an information sign for the front of the building, perhaps warning drivers that they park at their own risk.

When we are using the Apiary, please park as tightly and close together as you can, so that we can fit as many cars on to our space as possible.

We do have overspill access, but we want to be considerate to the needs of the residents of the whole of the Heatherton Park site.

Lend a hand at the Royal Bath and West Show

Somerset Beekeepers' Association volunteers run a popular stand at the county's largest annual event on May 29 to June 1.

If you're interested in helping to set up or steward, please contact Ken Tredgett as soon as possible on 01373 228226 or e-mail tredg@talktalk.net

The rota for Stewards is either a half day from 9.00am to 1.30pm or a whole day from 9.00am to 6.00pm. Stewards receive a free ticket for the day/s they are involved.



In print

Beekeeping features in the latest publication by celebrated local photographer Matilda Temperley in what she describes as 'a love letter to Somerset'.

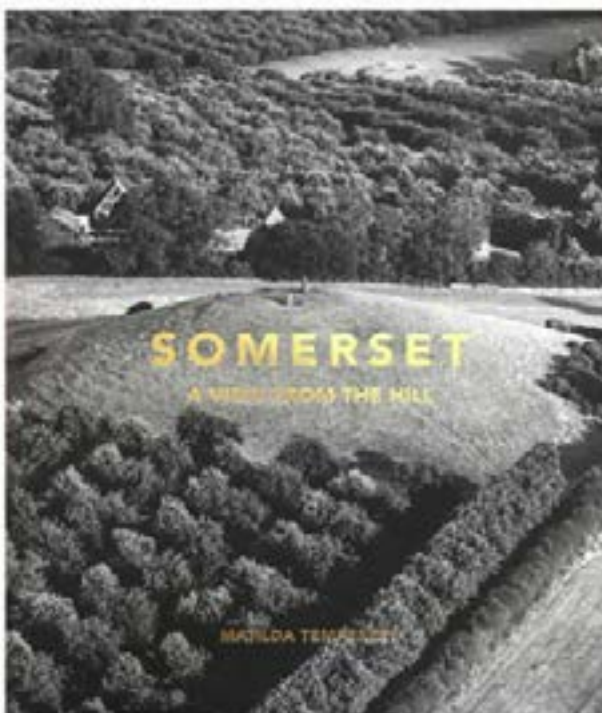
She spent a year documenting the area where she grew up through portraits of the industries synonymous with the Levels, such as elverers, peat-diggers, cheddar cheese makers, cider farmers (like her father Julian), withy growers and beekeepers.

And the beekeeper in question is our very own Chair Lynne Ingram!

SOMERSET: A View FromThe Hill

Published by Burrow Hill Books at £27.00

<http://www.matildatemperley.com/>



News from our training apiary

As I write this we have now moved into May, in the last issue of Buzz we were talking about keeping our bees alive and healthy during the colder months, that seems a long time ago now. The focus is now on giving them room to store what we think is mainly oilseed rape nectar, there is some growing within range.

The foraging bees have been working hard and Andrew and I spent the whole of a recent visit on April 20 putting on queen excluders and supers, the two strongest hives now have three supers each, the season is off to a good start for us.

The bees were busy and this made the task of opening and going through the colonies much easier. We were checking for queen cells, disease and anything out of

the ordinary, we are happy to report all is well and the bees were in good temper. I realised that I had a ripped glove towards the end of the inspections, handling frames with a bare thumb is a good test of a colonies mood, not recommended though! Let us hope that the apiary remains a pleasant place to work with the bees, I think it will while the flow remains. All our colonies had nice drones and plenty of forage coming in so the swarming season is now with us!

We still have two nucs, one is now in a double brood box, we think that a shook swarm from this nuc will start our flow hive quite nicely, so that is our plan for the very near future.

Dave Parry Apiary Manager

↓ **Kurt Jackson:** Worker honeybees, Cornwall, September 2013 on a beekeeper's record card



← **Wolfgang Buttress:** Reverie



Amy Shelton: Florilegium: Honey Flow 1 Spring (February-April) 2013;

← **Bee bricks:** Since October 2018, Cornwall County Council has required 50 per cent of all new builds to include a bee brick or block, alongside other wildlife measures.

← *Bees Under the Lens* featured stunning electron microscopy images of the native dark honey bee from the University of Plymouth and Falmouth University.

Honeybees reflected in science & art

Contemporary artists Kurt Jackson, Wolfgang Buttress and Amy Shelton, with the Universities of Plymouth and Falmouth, have been directing their creativity to the work of bees.

The resulting exhibition, Plan Bee, at the Eden Project earlier in the year, focused on the story of native dark honey bees alongside the extraordinary lives of bees and the threats they face.

Artist, environmentalist and beekeeper, Kurt Jackson: "We started keeping bees on our land with a beekeeper, bought hives and we got involved so we started learning about that.

"And then I started making the work so drawing the bees, drawing inside beehives, wearing all the gear so I could get up close, going out on walks and looking for the social bees, the solitary bees and trying to draw them in situ.

"And then you've got all these worries and concerns about what's going on in our world and how it's hitting bees and therefore it's going to hit us."

Artist Wolfgang Buttress ('The Hive' at Kew Gardens) installed a multi-sensory sculpture linked to the live vibrational sounds of honeybees from an Eden Project beehive.

Amy Shelton has created a series of lightbox artworks that trace all the plants that are important to honeybees across a whole calendar year.

"The whole point of this work is it brings to light the quiet work that happens within a hive and shows what bees really are pollinating and the plants that support them."

The exhibition was a magnet for beekeepers, who were involved in the stewarding, and, of course, there was a lot of beekeeping chat!

Anne Pike



Photo credit: Little Silver Photography

The apiary in May and June

by Master Beekeeper
Lynne Ingram

Well the season has started well with beautiful weather and astonishingly floriferous trees. Trees seem to be coming into bloom earlier than normal and the bees have benefited from this by building up strongly. At the end of April people were reporting two, three or even four supers filling up, even without oil seed rape nearby.

There have also been quite a lot of reports of swarms, so make sure you give your bees plenty of room, in order to lessen the chance of your hive becoming congested. Adding extra supers gives them space to 'hang up' the nectar while they are evaporating off the water, and gives them room for honey storage rather than clogging up the brood chamber with stores and reducing the space for the queen to lay. Remember that some nectar can have up to 90% water content, and honey should have less than 20%, so lots of room is needed for the nectar before it becomes honey.

Giving the bees plenty of room also helps when the weather changes for the worst and the foragers are forced to remain in the hive for a period of time. You will often see swarms emerging after a period of confinement when the queen pheromone cannot be spread around, and swarm preparations have begun. Once the weather lifts the swarms start emerging

Your need to be inspecting weekly at this time of year, checking carefully for queen cells. The bees are very good at hiding them away in nooks and crannies, so once you have found one cell and identified a good one to keep (mark the frame with a drawing pin), it is worth shaking the bees off of the other frames as you inspect so you can see them more easily. Hold the frame over the hive and shake sharply into the gap between the frames. Try not to shake the frame with the chosen queen cell on, as it can dislodge the larvae in the cell.

Have a plan in place, for what you will do if you do find queen cells in your hive. Have all the equipment you might need ready to hand, plus if you need it, a laminated card with the procedure you are going to use written out, if it's the first time you are trying it. Remember to make sure that a colony has the means to make a new queen in the form of eggs or a queen cell, before you knock down queen cells. There are a number of good resources to refer to but I like the methodical thinking in this downloadable booklet '*There are queen cells in my hive*' by Wally Shaw from the Welsh Beekeepers Association.

www.wbka.com/wp-content/.../There-Are-Queen-Cells-In-My-Hive-WBKA-WAG.pdf...

Another resource from Wally Shaw is '*An Apiary Guide to swarm control*'.

www.wbka.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Swarm-Control-Wally-Shaw.pdf

Hopefully you will have had time to do a health inspection by now. If you haven't, then wait for a warm day, and do an inspection that focuses on the health of the bees and brood, as described in the last issue of Buzz. Remember too to register on the Bee Health Day on June 15th at Castle Cary, led by the Simon Jones and the South West Bee Inspectors.

Finally, if your bees have been working on oil seed rape, then you will need to take your supers off very quickly in order to be able to extract the combs, and prevent the honey from setting in the comb. Sometimes the honey is ripe but not capped. If so hold the frame horizontally and give it a sharp shake. If no honey comes out then it should be ripe enough to extract.

Wishing you all a sunny and bountiful couple of months

Invitation to contribute to the COLOSS winter losses survey

The non-profit honeybee research association COLOSS has written to us asking for help with their survey for winter losses in 2018.

Dr Anthony Williams, survey coordinator for England at De Montfort University, said that they were keen 'to get a better handle on data for the Taunton area'.

"In the last decade, elevated losses of western honey bee colonies have been observed, mainly in Europe and North America, but the underlying causes still remain unclear. In 2008, European and USA honey bee experts formed a network "COLOSS" realising that efforts by individual countries to identify the drivers of losses were unlikely to succeed, given the current consensus that causes are complex and can be different between regions and between the years. Now more than 1,000 scientists are working together in this network in specific working groups.

"The epidemiological working group have [sic] developed a standardised questionnaire to identify the underlying causal factors of losses and provide beekeepers sustainable management strategies."

He added: "With your data we can estimate the relative risk of colony losses for beekeeper decisions such as Varroa treatment, migration of colonies and comb replacement. We also aim to identify differences in relative mortality risk between regions. This will enable follow up research projects in specific regions."

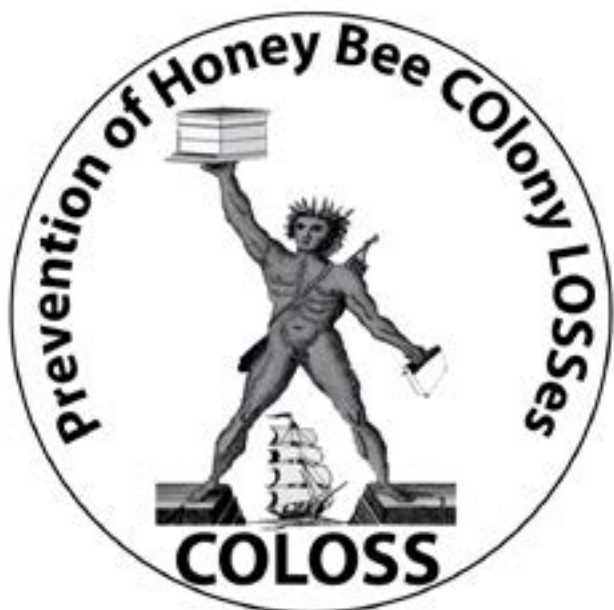
The survey is available online: <https://www.bee-survey.com/index.php/368949> and closes on **June 5, 2019**.

Dr Williams mentioned that in 2017 overall winter losses were, on average, 28 per cent for England and 16 per cent for Europe. A detailed note of winter losses will be presented shortly in the Journal of Apicultural Research.

For further information about the COLOSS colony loss core project and past results: <https://coloss.org/core-projects/colony-losses-monitoring/>

The results paper for 2016-17 can be found here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/00218839.2018.1460911?fbclid=IwAR1oGIZledonLwSH7Jepw7AyB5K2KN1g2MR6FKn7bWLStpdwxwBuAqMT52w&>

Note: The COLOSS survey is independent of the NBU's.



<http://www.bee-survey.com/index.php/368949>

Monitor Honey Bee Losses Spring 2019
Please complete survey by using the above link.

Emulsion Polish or Furniture Cream

by Jenny Gammon

An emulsion is a mixture of two liquids which do not normally mix.

Furniture cream is an emulsion of wax and turpentine solution (the wax phase) and a soap and water solution (the water phase). The secret of success lies in the thorough mixing of the water phase into the

wax phase when both are at the same temperature. Emulsions clean and polish in one operation and are easy to apply.

Recipe

125g (4.5 oz) beeswax [the wax phase]

500 ml (1 pint solvent)

13g (0.5 oz) soap flakes [the water phase]

500ml (1 pint) water

Method

a) The wax phase:

Place wax in double pan until melted. Add solvent. Raise temperature to about 80 degrees C (180 degrees F).

b) The water phase:

In pan with pouring lip dissolve soap flakes by pouring over hot water. Adjust temperature to 80 degrees C (180 degrees F). Remove from cooker. Pour wax phase into warmed plastic container (to avoid scratching your pan). Begin to stir. Use a hand-whisk gently or an electric mixer at slow speed (insert one paddle). Very slowly pour the water phase into wax. Continue stirring for several minutes after a good emulsion forms. Pour into warmed bottles (**DO NOT USE HONEY BOTTLES** in case you mix them up with creamed honey) or you can use small plastic containers. Use a funnel to avoid spills.

Beeswax melts at 63 degrees - 65 degrees C (143-145 degrees F). So is one of the harder waxes. It binds into a solvent and is by far the best wax for forming an emulsion. It gives a soft, satiny sheen to wood.

The University of Plymouth Beekeepers' Survey



UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH



The B4 Project



Saving Our Native
Black Honey Bee

Get involved with a citizen science opportunity

The University of Plymouth is running a citizen science project to assess colony level traits across the UK and beekeepers are invited to get involved.

Victoria Buswell, a PhD student at Plymouth University, said: "The four-year project to study honey bees across the UK aims to investigate the relationship between traits of local adaptation, levels of subspecies hybridisation and diversity in honey bee populations.

"The research relies on an active collaboration, with beekeepers keeping some basic records of the behaviour of their bees throughout the season for us, after which we will select colonies to investigate the level of diversity through genetic analysis.

"This is a great opportunity for beekeepers to be part of a large-scale experiment and to get some detailed genetic information on the provenance of their colonies.

You are invited to get involved with the four-year PhD study to investigate suggestions from beekeepers

that different sub-species have a suite of different behaviours and characteristics in comparison to other sub-species and that these might be highly regional in their nature.

The project will measure these differences, and match those with genetic signatures to confirm the lineage of bees showing different traits. It also aims to identify the parts of the genome that might be under rapid change in these sub-species.

The project is run in partnership with B4 (a community interest company: Bringing Back Black Bees) and funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

If you're interested in taking part in the survey, email your name to beesurvey@plymouth.ac.uk in addition there is a Facebook group 'University Of Plymouth Beekeepers Survey 2019'.

Calendar dates

Saturday, May 18

Doolittle Method for making up a nucleus

Time: 2:30pm - 4:30pm

Location: The Apiary

Taunton member (and SW Regional Bee Inspector) Simon Jones will be talking about the method he uses for making up a nuc. (This photo doesn't show how to do it - but it is of Simon in action!)



Thursday, June 13

Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Time: 7:30pm

Location: The Apiary

Daisy Headley will talk about the plight of the bumblebee and what can be done to halt their decline. In the last 80 years our bumblebee populations have crashed.

Two species have become nationally extinct and several others have declined dramatically.

Bumblebees are familiar and much-loved insects that pollinate our crops and wildflowers, so people are rightly worried.

The Trust has a vision for a different future in which our communities and countryside are rich in bumblebees and colourful flowers, supporting a diversity of wildlife and habitats for everyone to enjoy.



Saturday, June 15
Read the Comb Day



Time: 9am
Location: Ansford Academy,
Maggs Ln, Castle Cary BA7,
UK map



Run by South East Division, this hands-on training event is designed to help us know what to look for when we inspect our colonies - to know when all is well and, conversely, when it is not. As you may be aware, there is a particular strain of EFB in Somerset which is virulent and difficult to eradicate. SBKA is committed to helping members identify disease and to support them in eliminating the incidences of EFB in the county. As part of this commitment we have arranged a practical day course, kindly organised by South East Division.

The programme will be delivered by SW Regional Bee Inspector Simon Jones with the seasonal bee inspectors and former National Bee Inspector Richard Ball.

There will be an opportunity to safely handle diseased combs so beekeepers can see for themselves what to look for. Topics will include:

- BeeBase
- Notifiable pests and diseases-recognition
- Control and management of minor pests and diseases
- Asian Hornet (national policy requires the Bee Inspectorate to deliver a workshop on this subject at every Bee Health Day this season)
- Varroa- lifecycle, IPM and approved treatments
- Apiary hygiene and barrier management

The cost is £5 per person with tea and coffee provided; bring your own lunch. To purchase tickets send a cheque with SAE or contact for online payment details
Christina Kennedy, SBKA Treasurer
Allways, West Shepton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5UH
Treasurer@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk
Or buy your ticket online:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/read-the-comb-disease-recognition-day-tickets-54800973186?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Saturday, July 13
President's Day

Time: 2:30pm
Location: The Apiary

This is a very special day in our annual calendar held in honour of this year's President Chris Harries.

Enjoy a relaxed afternoon and a scrumptious tea!

Speaker: Beekeeper, honey show exhibitor and keen gardener, Andy Willis will talk about '12 months of forage'.



Saturday, July 27
Taunton Flower Show - getting ready!

Time: 1pm
Location: The Apiary

It takes a team to get ready for our biggest public event of the year - Taunton Flower Show!
Come and lend a hand getting everything we need to stage our popular Bees & Honey Feature which includes the Taunton and County Honey Shows.
It's hard work - BUT it's fun!



Friday & Saturday, August 2 & 3
Taunton Flower Show

Time: all or part of the day
Location: Taunton Flower Show, Vivary Park

Our "Bees and Honey" marquee is one of the most popular at Taunton Flower Show. We stage the Somerset Honey Show in addition to our own Honey Show. Help is required!

Contact Barbara Drakeford: email@drakelilles.co.uk



Notices

Corfe Farmers Market

Judith Richard writes: I want to create a Corfe Farmers market in our village of Corfe as we have neither shop nor public transport in the village. There is a huge appetite for such a venture so with that I hope a Taunton beekeeper could and hopefully would like a pitch. This would be a monthly event and in the first instance if be hoping for a Saturday.

To find out more: mail@judithrichards.co.uk

Hestercombe Gardens needs bees!

Hestercombe Gardens, near Cheddon Fitzpaine, Taunton would like to provide space for several colonies and sell the honey in its shop but needs the support of a local beekeeper.

If you're interested in working with Hestercombe, get in touch with Chris White on 01823 410131 or chriswhite@hestercombe.com

Classified adverts



Beekeeping veil repairs

Tel: 01823 270465

For Sale - Tel: 01823 270465

National Hive – Vented floor, Brood Box, Queen excluder, Crown board, Super, Feeder, Roof **£60**

National Hive – Varroa floor, Brood Box, Queen excluder, Super, Crown board, Feeder, Roof **£60**

National Nuc – Floor, Brood Box with frames, Crown board, Feeder, Roof **£45**

National - 2 feeders with floaters **£15**

National - Snelgrove Board **£10**

National - 2 supers with starter strips **£25**

Classified adverts

If you want to buy or sell beekeeping equipment, you can do it here! We're offering free classified ads for Members and their families.

Email your advert to:
anne@ashford-media.co.uk

Remember caveat emptor – it's your responsibility to check out the goods/buyer! Plus, clean any beekeeping equipment thoroughly if you're selling or buying to prevent the spread of disease.