

NEWSLETTER # 187 – September 2013

The Presidents Tips And Tricks for the month of September

There are many ways to keep your bees. Each month I intend to give some tips and tricks to help you keep your bees thriving.

It really is time now to finish preparing the bees for winter. So here is a check list:

1. Is the colony queenright? No point in feeding if it is not, so unite queenless colonies to ones that are queenright. Just one caveat: some colonies may be superseding, so if there are queen cells (including recently hatched ones) leave for now and check again later - when you may find a brand new young queen in residence.
2. Feed. Dark native bees will probably survive on 20lbs or so of food; yellow bees may need up to 60lbs. Use the grunt test - if it makes you grunt when you heft the hive then they are probably OK, but remember that food means honey or honey equivalent (fondant or sugar syrup).
3. Varroa. You should be well into your treatment program by now if you expect your bees to survive. (50% of beginners lose their bees in the first winter).
4. Wasps. The worst is probably yet to come! Keep entrances very small and unite weak colonies. Nucs are particularly at risk.
5. Inspect your colonies thoroughly before feeding. That means having a good look at the brood - and to do that you will need to shake off at least some of the bees from each frame. What are you looking for? AFB, EFB and failing queens. Sealed brood should have flat dry cappings and unsealed brood should be pearly white in a 'c' shape - anything different should ring alarm bells and you need to call in the bee inspector. If you are not sure then have a look at the pictures on the BeeBase website. Domed cappings popping up in the middle of worker brood indicate a failing queen - so knock her on the head now and unite the colony to a good one. (foulbrood has been found to north and the south west of our area).
6. Make sure that hives are weather proof and that roofs are secure from autumn gales – use a couple of bricks or some hive straps around the hive.
7. Mouseguards will be required when the weather turns cold, so be sure that you are ready.

Honey Course

On Saturday 24 August 2013, Cameron and Janet Macallum attended an SBA, Honey Processing Workshop, at Thornes, Newburgh. The day was fully subscribed with around 20 students, and commenced at 10am with a short lecture by Ian Craig on honey production. Discussed were the various types of honey available geographically and seasonally, including the pros and cons of rape and heather honey's. There followed a practical demonstration of harvesting, extraction and Filtration techniques. A selection of radial and tangential extractors were available (as supplied by Thornes) and a discussion as to their differences. Enid Brown kindly demonstrated her 20 frame extractor as to the upper end of producing honey in volume. There were plenty of frames for uncapping using a selection of cold and electric uncapping knives. There was an emphasis on hygiene and producing a high quality product. Further inputs from Ian Craig included producing honey for show, and how to show your honey. This was delivered as what a honey judge would look for. Ian emphasised that the honey you sell should be the same standard as your show honey. The whole idea of honey shows should be to raise standards and keep them high. A further lecture on labelling and marketing, raised a few eyebrows regarding major retailers (House of Bruer) and the labels used in their marketing were close to the bone in terms of legality. This is what the small producer has to contend and compete with. The consensus was keep it right, state what actual honey is contained, and take personal pride in your high quality product. The parting word was PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION HONEY SHOW AND THE LARGER NATIONAL AND HIGHLAND SHOWS. The day concluded around 4pm and a good day it was. Cameron Macallum

FILM!

An award-winning documentary 'More Than Honey' explores the decline of honeybees. The film is now being shown in cinema's in the UK and is due to be shown in Edinburgh on the 1st Oct at the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Amazon is also due to release the DVD at the end of Oct for those who miss the cinema showing.

The director Markus Imhoof has put together some amazing film of the honeybee. I personally liked the Austrian woman beekeeper with her rather big cigar who uses it as her smoker and the filming of a queen being mated in mid air.

If you would like to see a trailer of the film click on www.morethanhoney.co.uk Jim McCulloch

FOULBROOD

As well as an outbreak of American Foul Brood in the Stranraer area over the summer another outbreak has been reported from the Inverness area.

All these outbreaks just highlights the need to source bees within our own area and not to purchase Queens or Nuc's outwith the area unless they come with a bee inspectors report that they are disease free.

See below the information on the Inverness outbreak from the Scottish Government.

American Foulbrood detected in Inverness.

A case of American Foulbrood (AFB), a disease affecting colonies of honeybees, has been found in an apiary in Strathglass in the Inverness area.

The disease was confirmed today following laboratory diagnosis by Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA). Outbreaks of AFB have previously been reported and dealt with in this area over recent years.

The AFB infected hive has been destroyed as there is no permitted treatment for the disease in the UK. There are no risks to public health from AFB and no implications for the quality and safety of honey. The movement of bees and related equipment into or out of the affected apiary are under specific controls.

Bee farmers and beekeepers are being urged to be vigilant for signs of the disease, to maintain good husbandry practices and to notify any suspicion of disease to BeesMailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

In order to assist Scottish Government Bee Inspectors to control this and other diseases, beekeepers are urged to register on BeeBase, the national bee database. This will give them access to up-to-date information on the control of AFB and bee related issues.

Jim McCulloch

Honey Jars

Neil Sandison is intending to buy in bulk shortly please contact him at neilsandison@gmail.com if you want any. I understand that he is prepared to accept orders for as little as a dozen jars. Alastair

MEETING PROGRAM FOR 2013/14

Date	Title	Speaker
26/09/2013	What makes a good association	Mike Thornley
24/10/2013	Members Evening with Honey Tasting	
28/11/2013	Microscopy	Alan Riach
23/01/2014	AGM	
27/02/2014	Commercial Beekeeping	Murray Macgregor
27/03/2014	Beginners Perspective	Donald Doull
24/04/2014	Equipment	Various members
22/05/2014	Members Evening	

HONEY FROM CLUB APIARY

Neil will be selling honey from the club apiary at the next meeting on 26th Sept. £4 a jar (up to 2 jars per member). The balance will be sold to the Buffet Shop.

NOTES FROM LAST COMMITTEE MEETING

- Committee met on 28 August
- I regret to inform members that Ian Taylor has resigned from the committee. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his work on the committee.
- As far as the committee is aware, all those wanting bees within the association got them from either the association or other members either from splits or swarms
- As far as the committee is aware, all members wanting mentoring were paired with a mentor.
- Lack of interest in courses through the summer was disappointing. Committee wondered whether successful mentoring had reduced the demand for training?
- Basic Beemaster course will be run this winter – see details on next page (precise dates and schedule to be agreed).

Helensburgh and District Beekeeping Association

Evening Beekeeping Course: February – March 2014

Aims of the course

The aim of the course is to consolidate the knowledge of members who have taken up beekeeping in the last 3 years. This will also prepare members who have kept bees for a minimum of 1 year to sit the Scottish Beekeepers Association's Certificate Basic Beemasters examination if they wish. In addition, for people who are thinking of taking up beekeeping, the course will provide a more detailed introduction to beekeeping than our normal beekeeping 'taster' night.

Venue and Time

The course will be held on Thursday nights commencing at 7.15 pm in the Hall at Rhu Church. The sessions will last a maximum of 2 hours including presentations and any practical activities. Tea, Coffee and biscuits will be provided. Also there will be plenty of time for questions.

Charge

The course fee is £15.00 (for both individuals and 2 family members). This will cover the hire of the hall and other expenses.

Programme

The course takes the Basic Beemaster Certificate syllabus as its structure

- Course Introduction and Equipment
- Natural History of the Honeybee
- Manipulation of the Colony
- Disease, Poisoning and Pest
- Practice of Beekeeping
- The year's work in the apiary and the management of a colony throughout the season

Any Other Information?

Course reading list and handouts will be provided to members

Course members are not required to bring any equipment although a notepad and pen will be useful

If you have any queries or questions please phone me 01436 831 664 or e-mail jmcculloch1@btinternet.com