HDBA Helensburgh & District Beekeepers Association

NEWSLETTER – November 2013

The President's tips and tricks for the month of November

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.

Time to ensure that your hives are well-battened down for winter with mouseguards and roofs well secured (one brick may not be enough) and plenty of winter stores.

A note on fondant: it must go on a queen excluder directly over the brood box – there is no point in putting food in a hive unless the bees can reach it when it is very cold. Bees will not break cluster under these conditions and will starve with food just inches away

Next Meeting

Thursday 28th November 2013, 7:15pm Rhu Church Hall.
Alan Riach Bee Microscopy - hands on use of microscopes on the night.

Also, Oxalic acid treatment available for collection.

Manuka May Not Be The Best - Heather Honey From Scotland Scores

By Alan Harman

New Zealand's manuka honey has a new competitor with UK research finding that Scottish heather honey is even more effective as a medicinal treatment. Keen beekeeper Patrick Pollock, an equine surgeon at the University of Glasgow's School of Veterinary Medicine, was interested to know if honeys other than manuka might make effective anti-bacterial wound dressings. Pollock says although manuka has been the most studied honey source to date, he figured other honey sources may have valuable antimicrobial properties as well. It was a project that fitted in with his work at the university. "Honey is useful in wound healing, particularly on wounds to the equine

limbs," he says. "There is not much tissue on the lower half of horses' legs, and wounds can take a long time to heal, or even never fully heal at all.

"Honey helps to promote healing, cleaning the wound and keeping it infection free. If vets were able to use locally-sourced, cheaper honey as a wound dressing, it would be very beneficial particularly in poorer countries." Pollock and his team report in The Veterinary Journal they took 29 honey products, including gamma-irradiated and non-irradiated commercial medical grade honeys, supermarket honeys and honeys from local beekeepers. To exclude contaminated honeys from the project, all honeys were cultured aerobically for evidence of bacterial contamination. Aerobic bacteria or fungi were recovered from 18 products. The antimicrobial activity of the remaining 11 products was assessed against 10 wound bacteria, recovered from the wounds of horses, including methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Pseudomonas aeruginosa. Eight products were effective against all 10 bacterial isolates at concentrations varying from less than 2% to 16%.

Overall, the Scottish heather honey from the Inverness area was the best performing product and inhibited the growth of all 10 bacterial isolates at concentrations ranging from less than 2% to 6%. It killed MRSA microbes and three other types of bacteria at concentrations of 2%.
"Honeys derived from one type of flower were shown to be the most effective, and while manuka is currently the only medical grade honey, the study reveals that other honeys may be just as suitable for such purposes," Pollock says.

Honey Heating Cabinet

This has been donated by David Brown and is just the job for reliquifying crystallised or partially crystallised honey. Contact Alastair Cameron if interested.