



WAVENEY BEEKEEPERS GROUP NEWSLETTER Jan/Feb/March 2012

Chair:	Bob Spruce	01508 492963	sally47spruce@hotmail.co.uk
Secretary:	Will Dudman	01502 714001	waveneybeekeepers@gmx.com
Treasurer:	John Hayward	01728 832487	jvhayward@suffolkonline.net
Newsletter:	Gerda Gibbs	01502 732200	gd.gibbs@btinternet.com
Member	Fred Willis	01502 586511	Sally Spruce 01508 492963
	Duncan Cole	01502 587638	Richard Emery 01502 731676
	Tony Rainbird	01508 548630	
Regional Bee Inspector	Keith Morgan	01485 520838 / 07919 004215	keith.morgan@fera.gsi.gov.uk
Seasonal Bee Inspector	Sylvia Pettitt	01638 500378 / 07775119432	sylvia.pettitt@fera.gsi.gov.uk
	Sandra Gray	01787 211465 / 07775 119430	sandra.gray@fera.gsi.gov.uk

A member of Suffolk Beekeepers' Association www.suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk

Any member of the committee is happy to give beekeeping advice by phone

The Bee Centre known affectionately as Esmerelda's is at Grange Farm.

Directions are from Beccles on the B1062 towards Bungay turn first left after the top of the hill where the Sunflower is signposted to Ringsfield, then first right into Hall Road and park in the large Farm Yard that comes up on your right

Dates for your diary:

Monday 16th January 19.30 at Grange Farm.

"The WBG AGM"

We hope as many members of WBG will attend this important annual meeting. It is your chance as members of the WBG to ask questions and have your say in the running of the group. We have a few vacancies on the WBG committee and we would welcome new members to consider joining the committee. Please contact Bob for further information.

Monday 6th February 19.30 at Grange Farm.

"My Tool-Box" by Jill Tinsley

Monday 19th March 19.30 at Grange Farm

"A Talk about beekeeping in the former Yugoslavia" by Peter Beckley"

Saturday 14th of April 14.30 at Grange Farm

"Opening Up Bob Spruce at the Apiary Bee Centre"

Sites offered for out apiary:

Two sites are available for out-apiaries in the Diss area. Contact Will Dudman for further details.

The Spring Convention:

The BBKA Spring Convention has moved to a Harper Adams University College this year with a programme packed with talks, workshops and new courses. The new venue promises facilities for bigger and better tradeshow, microscopy course in the University's laboratories and includes activities for non-beekeepers as well.

Tickets are available from January at a reduced price to members.



Friday, 20th, Saturday, 21st and Sunday, 22nd April 2012

Harper Adams University College, Edgmond, Telford, Shropshire TF10 8NB
Advance tickets will be available from the middle of January 2012 by post from
Mrs. Christine Hayward, 19 Kings Road, LEISTON. IP16 4DA.
A valid membership number must be given for each ticket.

They will also be available from the BBKA website where the membership number will automatically be checked

Previous events

Monday 7th November at Grange Farm.

"A life with bees"

Don Cooper gave us an excellent talk of his years of experience as a beekeeper and bee inspector. His talk was followed by a very useful discussion time where Don was able to answer many pertinent questions from the audience.

Monday 14th November at Grange Farm.

Film night "Disappearing Bees"

Bungay Community Bees invited the WBG to the showing of the film: 'Disappearing Bees'. The film discussed the various factors associated with the demise of honeybees in Europe and America and focused mainly upon the suspected results from insecticides and neonicotinoids and the intensive farming methods in the States!

Thank you to Bungay Community bees for a very interesting evening.

Monday 28th November at Grange Farm

"Killer or Tropical Evolved Honey Bees"

John Everett gave us a most interesting talk of his life in Uganda in the late 60s where he met his wife, Ruth and then of their return to Uganda earlier this year to celebrate a major Wedding Anniversary.

John compared the European honey bee: *Apis mellifera mellifera* with the African honey bee: *Apis mellifera scutellata* and explained how these differences affect beekeeping activities in Africa.



A collection pot was available for us to donate money for "Bees for Development" and £144.40 was collected.

Oxalic Acid Treatment:

John continued his talk by explaining the need to treat our hives with Oxalic Acid. Although not approved by veterinary medicine, it is widely accepted even by FERA for a suitable treatment for varroa in honeybees.

Oxalic acid is an organic acid $(\text{COOH})_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ poisonous and therefore sensible handling is needed; do not breathe in fumes and wear plastic gloves.

Use in beehive when brood number is at its minimum i.e. January/February and for a newly hived swarm.

Do not use when honey supers are on hives to prevent contamination of honey.

Oxalic acid crystals and solution, plastic gloves and syringes are for sale at Applebee.

Evaporating method:

Evaporate 2-3 g oxalic acid into each hive in December/January. Do not breathe in fumes!

Cost: 5p per hive + evaporating tool approx: £120

Tricking method:

Use a maximum of 50ml of Oxalic acid in a 3.2% solution per hive. Remove crown board and, using a syringe, trickle 5ml between each brood frame that has bees on it. Remember to check the Crown board for the queen. Do this on a still day in December/January.

Cost: 50p per hive.

Sunday the 4th of December

A Practical demonstration of administration of Oxalic Acid.

Both the evaporating and trickling method were demonstrated by Bob and team at Esmeraldas.



Saturday 10th of December

The Waveney Beekeepers' Christmas Social.

An evening of fun, food, games and good company was held at Esmeraldas.

Remember to ensure your bees are not running out of stores:

Bob reminds us all that, as our bees have been active well into late November we will need to be extra vigilant to ensure that they have enough stores to last the winter.

Bob recommends that if you find one hive lighter than expected; you can give your bees a block of candy. Candy is made by mixing icing sugar and a small amount of water to a stiff consistency; cover this with clingfilm, cut a few slits in the clingfilm and place the block of candy on the top of the brood frame.

Remember protection against woodpecker damage:

One problem: many solutions!

John Everett uses plastic sheets around his hives. He attaches this with a staple gun; it is cheap and does the job perfectly.

Tony protects his hives with mouse-guard and plastic which is held in place with baling twine, wire hooks and a piece of inner-tube as elastic. (see photo).

Another option is surrounding the hives with chicken wire placed at least 3cm away from the hive.

Gerda uses the soft green plastic "chicken type" wire mesh available from garden centres as this is easier to store during the summer months. (it doesn't cut your hands or become damaged when rolled up).



National Bee Unit Autumn Update from the Eastern Region Associations.

The following Inspections have been carried out in Eastern Region for the Beekeeping Season 2011

<i>Activity</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
<i>Apiaries Inspected</i>	<i>1653</i>	<i>1596</i>
<i>Colonies Inspected</i>	<i>7658</i>	<i>7883</i>
<i>Beekeepers Visited</i>	<i>1059</i>	<i>988</i>

2011 County Totals for Notifiable Disease shows that Norfolk and Suffolk has the highest incidence of European Foulbrood. These figures remind us that we need to be extra vigilant in our disease inspections and hope for an improvement in the EFB figures for 2012. However the good news is that there was no American Foulbrood

County	EFB Colonies	EFB Apiaries	AFB Colonies	AFB Apiaries
Norfolk	76	29	0	0
Suffolk	35	15	0	0
Herts	0	0	0	0
Cambs	1	1	0	0
Essex	12	6	0	0
Beds	0	0	0	0
Lincs	28	13	0	0
Leics		1	3	1
Rutland	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	152	65	3	1

For sale:

Fine mesh similar to the mesh around the Apiary at Grange Farm is on sale by Mike Ovenden 01502 560400

Hot tips from John Everett

Honey

One of the things that make our honey bees unique is their ability to gather an excess of food during times of plenty and then store the surplus for a rainy day (or prolonged winter). In the insect world very few other insects make similar provisions- exceptions being some termites and ants.

Plants usually make nectar to attract insects; nectar is normally water, the sugar mainly sucrose $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$ and a minute cocktail of substances that will give the nectar both smell and taste. The concentration of the sugar in nectar varies but 20 - 40% is good average.

Nectar is frequently used immediately as food but excess is stored. Dilute nectar will ferment so it has to be processed.

Workers add digestive enzymes to their nectar/food that digest starch (enzyme diastase) to sugars and sucrose (enzyme sucrase formerly called invertase) to glucose and fructose.

They then evaporate the nectar until it is about 82% sugar.

At this point even osmophilic yeasts will not grow and cause fermentation (beekeepers say the honey is ripe).

Most honeys have similar amounts of glucose and fructose. Glucose is less soluble than fructose so a glucose rich honey like rape or ivy sets (crystallises) quickly whilst fructose rich honey (heather and blackberry) sets slowly.

It's someone's law that if all the honey you have in bottles is either all set or all liquid customers always want the opposite. Set honey can be changed into runny honey by warming carefully.

You need a slow warmer – I use a box with two 60watt light bulbs that you can keep the honey below 52°C. Warm honey flows easier than cold honey, its viscosity goes down, and so can be filtered and bottled more easily. If all the seed crystals are dissolved, it will remain liquid for several weeks before re-crystallising.

Overheated honey goes darker in colour as it starts to caramelise, the enzymes it contains are denatured (killed in the lay person talk) and a chemical called hydroxymethylfurfural formerly hydroxymethylfurfuraldehyde abbreviated to HMF is formed.

I read somewhere that HMF is poisonous but cooked sugary foods are rich in it e.g. treacle, toffee and jams. Tropical honey has a much higher proportion of HMF than UK honey because of the difference in air temperature.

I have found that I need to heat stored honey to filter and bottle it, I have to warm some jars so I have both types on the shelf but I try not to overheat my honey

Useful temps:

Above 30°C honey does not readily crystallise

All honeys will be liquid at 52°C

Up to 62°C for a minute dissolves seed crystals -

15 – 16°C honey crystallises quickest.

In a deep freeze honey stays liquid - useful for storing cut comb

Applebee Apiary Rockland St Mary

Large stocks of beekeeping equipment
always in stock

Economy cedar hives in the flat
or made up

Sugar in sacks

Apiguard £2 per tray, Thymol crystals,
Fumidil B

6 frame nuclei and mated queens

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb and 1lb jars

Bookings now being taken for 2011
beginners and queen rearing courses

Email or ring for details 01508 538 231

everettapplebee@hotmail.co.uk

www.applebeeorchard.co.uk

In the bleak mid winter or why I use oxalic acid by John Everett:

Varroa destructor was first found in the UK in 1992. It was thought that it killed colonies of honey bees by sucking haemolymph (blood) and a colony would only die when there were vast numbers of mites (90k-100k). We now know that the viruses spread by the mites do more damage than the mites themselves and colonies will collapse with much lower numbers of mites. The viruses that show the most obvious symptoms in bees are deformed wing bee virus and the paralysis bee viruses.

The approved way of reducing varroa is to use a thymol based product like Apiguard in August after you have removed your honey crop. Thymol knocks down most of the varroa but not all of them figures quoted vary from 80% to 95%.

Last autumn 2011 the weather was ideal for the bees to continue brood rearing (where the varroa mites breed) so one can imagine that the varroa population this winter will be quite high.

Oxalic acid treatment in December or January is very cheap and a great way of getting rid of some more varroa. Your bees are much less likely to have a varroa problem in the following bee season if you use oxalic acid. I have used both oxalic acid solution and oxalic acid evaporation with good varroa drops. None of my colonies died in the winters of 2008/9 or 2009/10 so I can confidentially say that oxalic acid used correctly does not kill bees.

All my colonies overwintered on varroa floors with the inspection tray removed - with open bottoms the way bee colonies would be in wild sites like hollow tree trunks.

Whilst researching the poisonous nature of oxalic acid for this article I noticed that it is much less poisonous than thymol to mammals. Getting things into perspective oxalic acid is a natural ingredient in honey and thymol is used in some mouth wash. Both would kill you if you ate large amounts just like over the counter medicines like aspirin and paracetamol and other chemicals we use in our normal lives.

The New WBG Website.

The WBG website has been refurbished and brought up to date with lots of helpful information for new as well as experienced beekeepers. We all want to thank Roger for his efforts over the years in supporting the existing site. The new website is ready to be launched as soon as possible and Roger is in the process of helping us swap the domain name over to the new site.

The WBG wishes all its members a very Happy New Year with many successful beekeeping activities.

We look forward to seeing you all again in 2012

(please refer to the attachment with the list of the WBG's diary of events.)



HELEN DIXON - ALLBEES

Beekeeping Supplies

Good Stock of Thorne's & Maisemore equipment
Hives, Frames, Smokers, Veils, Foundation,
Extractors, Honey Jars, Varroa Mesh Floors Etc.
Both Economy and Top Quality Items- It's nice to
have a choice!

Alby Craft Centre, Cromer Road,
Erpingham, NR11 7QE

07967 792042 helen@worldofbees.co.uk

WEB SITE: www.worldofbees.co.uk

open Wednesday to Sunday inclusive

DON COOPER

Contact Don for sales of full colonies, nucs,
30lb buckets of honey & advice on all things bees!
Pipiriki, Chapel Road, Roughton NR11 8QP

01263 761517 don@pipiriki.co.uk

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