

BOURNEMOUTH & DORSET SOUTH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

March 2023

Notes from the Chair

As most of you are probably aware the day before our AGM there was a fire at the West Parley Memorial Hall. Thanks to the prompt action of Natalie Sewell a zoom meeting was set up and the AGM was able to be held. We hope the necessary repairs will be finished in time for our first meeting after the summer.

In the meantime we have been fortunate in being allowed to hold our February and March meetings in the Winton Baptist Church. The February meeting was very well attended and all agreed that the Church was most comfortable. Clare Densley and Martin Hann from Buckfast Abbey gave a thought-provoking talk. I hope that none of us find ourselves facing the sort of problems that they explored.

As often happens at an AGM we said farewell to members of the Committee who have served us well. David Brooks has been an excellent Secretary for several years. We shall miss his steady presence around the table. Likewise Fred Sedgeley, who now has a young family, has stepped down from being our Honey Show Organiser. He too will be missed. My thanks to both for their giving of their time and effort to our Association.

Others have stepped up to the plate. Joanna Bellis has volunteered to be Secretary and Lesley Morton Honey Show Organiser.

I, of course, have just completed my first year as your Chair. It has been a pleasure to have received the support of your excellent and hard-working Committee.

Finally can I remind you all that there are still spaces on the Wannabee Day and the Basic Assessment Course. If you know anyone who might be interested in learning a bit about bees then do recommend the

first. If you would like to improve your beekeeping skills, and have not already taken the Basic Course, the second could be for you.

David Aldersey

April 15th – Wannabee Day

Basic Assessment Course starting Saturday 22nd April 2022 and running for 6 consecutive weeks.

Association Diary Dates 2023

Winton Baptist Church

7:00pm to 10pm

March 21st - Andrew Gibb

Introduction to queen rearing methods

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Thank you.

Lesley Morton

Speakers secretary

speakers@bads-bka.org

Dear Members – Your Contributions please

The next Newsletter will be in June. I don't mind what you would like to send in so long as there is a bee theme...good or bad experiences, some ideas on how to do things better, anecdotes, interesting photos, honey based recipes.

Also, I invite you to send me the story of one of your mistakes! I have made plenty over the years and in this newsletter I have authored number 1. Please

contribute and don't feel embarrassed. If you want your piece to be anonymous, it will still be acceptable!

Thank you

Adrian Rozkovec newsletter@bads-bka.org

..... How NOT to feed a swarm

The usual advice is not to feed the swarm for the first 24 hours and then feeding on the grounds of enhanced building up of comb (always hive a swarm on frames fitted with foundation, NEVER on comb) and helping with brood energy requirements BUT...

Swarms take several days supply of food with them. As there is no comb, the colony needs to draw some, initially using the nectar and honey it brought with it, and subsequently from nectar the foragers collect. Notwithstanding this, to ensure rapid and even drawing of comb always add between 1 to 2kgs of thin syrup no later than the evening of the day after the swarm has been hived. This is usually all the feed required.

Even if the queen starts to lay soon after the swarm occupies its new home, it is going to be 6 to 8 days before the first batch of brood feeding and the energy required will usually be matched by foraging of nectar. If there is a nectar flow when hiving, a large swarm will often draw a brood box of foundation into comb and fill it in a week. Where there is no comb build up is if the swarm is "old" or there is little forage or the weather prevents foraging. In these circumstances additional feeding might exceptionally be required. If the swarm queen is a virgin then brood production will be delayed by 10 to 14 days and there will be time to store a reasonable amount of food before the brood requires feeding.

The food a swarm brings with it can be infected. By not feeding the bees artificially for the first day, they have to use the stores they transported from the old colony for comb building (assuming they are hived on foundation) rather than depositing as food storage in the new hive.

If you choose to feed, when should you stop? Your first brief inspection should be 2 days after you have

added the syrup. If comb is being drawn, then remove the queen-excluder installed above the floor when the swarm was hived. The next inspection should be brief to see if eggs are being laid in new comb, and the brood box is filled with bees. If these conditions are met, then depending on the size of the colony, add a further frame of foundation next to the brood-nest or add a super.

If you continue to feed, as I did, for 2 weeks from installation, on the basis that they kept taking down the feed, then you can end up with the majority of the comb drawn, but full of processed sugar leaving little or no room for the Queen to lay. The picture is of the feeder showing comb build up on the feeder, the bees having used up all the space in the brood box! I sought advice (thank you David A for this, and also amending my piece with your approach), stopped all feeding, removed several food frames and replaced with frames with foundation. The colony has survived!

Bottom...



Top...



How to decide if a “lonely” Bumble Bee needs rescuing...

As we come into early spring there will be more and more queen bumbles about. There are a few things to consider before making an informed decision about whether or not a bumblebee really is in need of rescue...

A bumblebee's diet

First and foremost a bumblebee's diet is made up of pollen and nectar from flowers, so the best way to help bumblebees and other pollinating insects is to grow plenty of bee-friendly flowers, especially during bumblebee season (between March and October). Pollen and nectar contain all of the essential nutrients bumblebees need, as well as providing protein for growth and carbohydrates for energy.

Is the bumblebee stranded or just resting?

If you find a bumblebee which appears to be struggling, it may be that it is just resting, particularly if the bee is a queen in early spring. Recent research

from Queen Mary University of London has shown that bumblebee queens spend the majority of their time resting on the ground between very short dispersal flights, with very little feeding. This research suggests that rest is an underappreciated part of the bumblebee life cycle and that providing areas of long grass and undisturbed leaf-litter in early spring is important to help ensure bumblebee queens have adequate cover. If you find a bumblebee queen resting in the road or on a pavement, when it is safe to do so, you could gently move it to a more sheltered location or on to a nearby bee-friendly flower. There are some occasions where bumblebees are genuinely in need of an energy boost, for example if a bee has been caught out in bad weather or has been grounded for a long time. The above-mentioned study found that bumblebee queens rested for an average of about 30 minutes and sometimes up to almost 45 minutes. Anything over that could mean the bee is in trouble, in which case you may want to help move it to a nearby bee-friendly flower.

How to prepare sugar water

If there are no bee-friendly flowers around, mix 50/50 white sugar and water to give the bumblebee a one-off energy boost, providing the carbohydrates it needs to fly. Simply offer a drop or two of sugar water up to the front end of the bee on a teaspoon or an upturned drinks cap in a sheltered place and allow the bee time to recuperate. Providing bees with sugar water is only ever a temporary fix. Never feed brown sugar as it is hard to digest. Do not give bumblebees honey as this can contain pathogens (which is why honeybee keepers never feed shop-bought honey to their bees).

If you are still unsure after reading this whether a bumblebee is in need of rescue, ask yourself these three questions:

1. Is the bumble bee in a place where it may be trodden on or run over?
Yes When safe, move it to a sheltered place.
No Question 2.
2. Has the bee been in the same place for a long time?
Yes Question 3.

No Give the bee time to recuperate, check back in 45 minutes.

3. Are there any bee friendly flowers around?

Yes Gently move the bee on to a flower and give it time to recuperate.

No Mix up 50/50 sugar solution and offer a couple of drops to the bee in a sheltered place. It is important for bumblebees to be left outside to complete their life cycle, so don't be tempted to take them inside.

Peter Darley

Spring Recipe

Banana and Sultana Porridge Bars



Ingredients

3 ripe bananas (unpeeled weight 400g)
150g smooth peanut butter
2 tbsp honey
1 egg
1 tsp ground cinnamon
250g jumbo porridge oats
100g sultanas
Prep: 15 mins | Cook: 25 mins

Method

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C/Fan 160°C/Gas 4. Line the base of an 25cm x 32cm baking tin with baking paper.
2. Peel the bananas and break them into a food processor. Add the peanut butter, honey, egg and cinnamon. Add a small pinch of salt, then blitz together till smooth and combined. No food processor? Break the bananas into a bowl and mash till smooth. Add the other ingredients and beat together till combined.
3. Scoop the banana mix into a bowl. Add the oats and sultanas and stir to combine. Scoop the oaty mixture out onto the baking tin, flattening it down to make a smooth rectangle. Slide the baking tin into the oven and bake for 20-25 mins till golden brown.
4. When the oats are golden brown, take the tin out of the oven and slice into 18 bars with a butter knife. Set aside to cool and when completely cold, transfer to an airtight container. The bars will keep for up to 1 week in the tub.

Bee Supplies – Mike and Liz Duffin

If you need bee equipment or supplies please be aware that the Duffins, are the local agents for Thornes (EH Thorne Beehives Ltd), a major national Beekeeper supplier. They are very helpful, keep a good stock and you don't have to pay for packaging and postage!

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