

NORTHERN LIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH DEVON BRANCH
OF THE DEVON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2011

www.northdevonbees.org



Chair Chat

Well, it's time for most of us to remove the honey crop so here are some notes for beginners. To avoid your honey fermenting, check that at least 75% of the honey is capped to ensure that there's less than 19% water content. If you're planning to use a bee escape, you can gently smoke the bees down before the escapes go on. Do this late in the day to make sure that the bees are not stuck in the super when it's hot. You can then remove the supers early next day. Let the bees clean up the wet supers after extraction. At this point you can start to evaluate the hives. Small colonies can be united to give them a better chance of surviving the winter and if you're going to re-queen, this is the time to do it. Once the honey for human consumption has been removed, you can then treat the bees for varroa. There are several thymol based products to choose from at this time of the year - I'm sure Derek will advise you at the shop. In terms of feeding, bees do best when left with a generous super of their own honey - sugar is very much a second best - sometimes necessary when feeding a swarm or small colony which hasn't produced sufficient honey.

Wishing you a good harvest,

Chris

From the education section.

We will be holding a taster session at Horestone on Sunday 4 September between 13.00 and 16.00hrs aimed at people interested in starting beekeeping. If any member would like to support the event your assistance will be most welcome, just let me know.

SELLING HONEY

Do you sell honey? Do you know your legal obligations? For the sake of all beekeepers, if you sell honey please do so in a correct and commendable manner. I have seen some honey for sale recently on Barnstaple Pannier Market and in a shop in Butchers' row which did not carry any form of label. This practice is not only illegal, but does not favour beekeeping generally and lets down beekeepers as a whole. Also the seller risks being in trouble with the trading standards officials. So if you sell honey and are unsure about your legal obligations or you are about to start selling honey, read the very informative BBKA leaflet titled "Selling Honey"

http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/selling_honey_b10_1306864705.pdf

Jack Mummery jackmummery@mypostoffice.co.uk
Education Officer

Horestone Notes.

We did not have as many hot sunny days in July as we would have liked, the last few days of the month being the exception. At Horestone on Tuesday we had hoped to remove a few supers of honey but they were not completely sealed. Hopefully the last few hot days will have made all the difference and we should have some honey to extract soon. There is still plenty of forage around with borage, rosebay willow herb and blackberries. We have had discussions on the latest date that supers should be removed and generally it was thought that they should be removed around about the end of the first week in August to give plenty of time for varroa treatments to be given before the autumn feed. However, if the frames are not sealed adequately the water content will be too high and the honey likely to ferment.

Although we have not seen quite so many wasps around the colonies as last year, we will be putting out wasp traps from next week. These are simply made using a jar with some jam and water, with a hole in the lid. Wasps entering the jar cannot get out.

We have over the last month or so, welcomed several new faces to our Tuesday gatherings. We are pleased to say that they have already added their names to the beginners course for next year.

The gardens too have benefitted from extra willing hands - it does make such a difference. Thank you. *Sylvie*

Study/Discussion Group

Chris Utting has asked Sylvie and me if we would run this self help group this winter for people wanting to widen their beekeeping knowledge and possibly take some of the BBKA Module Exams.

We propose to hold 8 evening meetings at the Castle Centre in Barnstaple between Sept and the end of February to study Module 1, Honeybee Management based on the format of the correspondence course for this module. The group will be held on Monday evenings - we will give out the dates as soon as they are confirmed. We hope the evenings will be enjoyable with the topics for discussion benefiting from a group sum of knowledge!

Costs will be kept to minimum with just the basic expenses (hire of hall, copying of handouts) shared between the participants.

We do need to know how many people would be interested in joining this self help group. If you are interested please email me as below.

Julie jelkin@btopenworld.com

NORTH DEVON BRANCH NOSEMA DAY

SATURDAY 13TH AUGUST 10.00am TO 2.00pm

AT THE CASTLE CENTRE, CASTLE STREET, BARNSTAPLE

Bring along a sample of at least 30 dead bees from your colonies.
They will be examined free of charge by the branch microscopists for Nosema.
A donation will be appreciated.

The invitation is open to all DBKA members.

Sampling instructions and paperwork will be found on the next page of this Newsletter. Please complete the details requested on the form clearly and bring it with the samples to The Castle Centre.

If needed, you will be able to purchase the treatment, Fumidil B, during the day.

Light refreshments will be available during the day.

Further information from

Julie Elkin 01598 710 986 or Chris Utting 01237 474 500

If you are free and would like to help with the refreshments please contact Julie.

Why bother with Nosema ?

The Nosema apis problem - a few facts

- 1. Infected bees show no outward signs of the disease.**
- 2. Infected bees live only half as long as healthy bees in colonies in Spring and Summer**
- 3. Infected bees do not fully develop their hypopharyngeal glands that normally produce food for larvae**
- 4. 15% of eggs in badly infected colonies fail to mature**
- 5. Infected bees cease rearing brood**
- 6. Infected queens cease egg laying and die within a few weeks - but this is rare**
- 7. Death of colonies or serious damage is rare**
- 8. Infected colonies have a reduced honey yield**
- 9. A colony infected in the Autumn may fail to survive the Winter or early Spring**

Nosema is one of the causes of 'Spring Dwindle' where the colony fails to build up and finally dies

(sources: 'Honey Bee Pathology' by Bailey & Ball / 'The Honey Bee Inside & About' by Davis)

Beekeepers spend a lot of time and money on learning about the craft and buying bees, books etc and going on courses. Since I was appointed as Branch Microscopist at the AGM last year I have not received a single sample to examine. Why is this ?

Chris Utting – Branch Microscopist

North Devon Branch of Devon Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity Number 270675

Nosema Sampling Day 13th August 2011

Name..... Telephone.....

Address.....

..... Post code.....

Email

Apiary Names / Locations

SAMPLE 1 Beekeepers reference..... RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 2 Beekeepers reference..... RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 3 Beekeepers reference..... RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 4 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 5 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 6 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 7 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 8 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 9 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 10 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAMPLING:

1. Thirty (30) mature bees will be needed for the test. Choose a day and time when the bees are flying actively.
2. Close the entrance for a while until returning bees are crowding the entrance. Use a polythene bag and brush 30+ bees into it. Seal the bag and label with hive reference and place in a freezer immediately.
3. Remove the bees only on the day of the test to minimise decomposition.
4. Bees and details can be sent with a fellow member on the day (on a separate form).
5. Please complete the details requested on this form clearly. Continue on reverse or new sheet if required.
6. Please deliver the samples between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm to

THE CASTLE CENTRE, CASTLE STREET, BARNSTAPLE ON 13TH AUGUST 2011

You will be notified of the results either by 'phone or email

DONATIONS TOWARDS BRANCH EXPENSES WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

DIARY DATES

North Devon Show—3rd August at Umberleigh Barton Farm, Umberleigh, EX37 9DX. Tickets for the show can be pre-ordered on www.netaticket.co.uk or telephone 0845 2305177 - at a cheaper rate.

August 13th - Nosema Testing Day at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple. This is your opportunity to have your bees tested for Nosema and give you time to treat them if necessary, before the winter preparations are complete.

Rosemoor 23rd August - Great Garden Adventure: All Creatures Great and Small.

Sunday 4th September - Horestone taster session for people interested in starting beekeeping. 13.00 - 16.00 hrs.

BRANCH HONEY SHOW 22—23 October - St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple.

?? skittles



Bitz4Bees
Derek Hunter
01769 561033

A plea from your Newsletter Editor

Please do send me your beekeeping related stories and any photos you have taken. Not everyone can make it to Horestone on a Tuesday and the newsletter helps us to keep in touch with one another.

I have heard several new beekeepers wondering if its worth all the hard work, what with swarming colonies and absconding queens. Perhaps a few articles from our more experienced beekeepers might help them realize that it takes time to really understand the fascinating world of the honeybee.

How about a few stories about your honey harvest. A sticky story or two might be fun. Or any information that you have gathered on supersedure would be interesting.

Thank you

Sylvie

Raspberry oat traybake - recipes from the Mail

150g punnet of raspberries

2oz butter, plus extra for greasing

3oz clear honey

7oz rolled oats

2oz ground almonds

Half tsp almond extract.

1. Heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7.

Grease a 20cm x 20cm baking tray. Mash the raspberries roughly in a bowl and set aside.

2. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter and honey with a pinch of salt. Take of the heat, then stir in the oats, ground almonds and almond extract. Mix until they are coated in the butter and honey mixture.

3. Press half the oat mix in an even layer in the baking tray. Spread the mashed raspberries on top, then spoon the remaining oats on top and smooth with the back of a spoon. Bake for 10 – 12 minutes or until golden.

4. Remove from the oven and leave to cool before slicing into 16 pieces.

Supersedure: taken from Beekeeping Study Notes

The definition of supersedure is the requeening of the honeybee colony without the colony swarming. There are two types of supersedure as follows:

1. Perfect supersedure—whereby the new queen becomes mated and starts laying in the colony together with the old queen before the bees dispose of the old queen. Occasionally the two queens are seen. We have only observed it once or twice.

2. Imperfect supersedure—whereby the bees dispose of the old queen before the new queen is laying.

Signs of supersedure:

The signs within the colony are often very similar to swarming but the number of queen cells tends to be less than with swarming. The same queen cups, built during normal colony development, are used.

Note the difference in the position of swarm and supersedure cells which are identical, when compared with emergency queen cells which are built on worker larvae amid worker brood. Some books indicate that the queen cells are at the top of the brood next for swarming and at the bottom for supersedure; we do not consider this to be a useful guide.

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