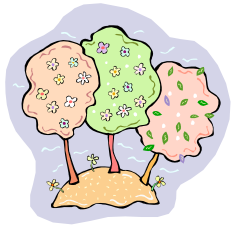
NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

MAY 2011 *www.northdevonbees.org*



Chairman's Chat

Well, May is here and the warm weather that we 've been experiencing has produced a phenomenal range of wild and cultivated flowers for the bees to feed on. However, mindful of the fact that we need to protect all pollinating insects, we've noticed a number of exhausted bumble bees in need of help. The most effective way seems to be placing the bumble bee on the palm of the hand and dripping a few drops of sugar water in front of it. It's fascinating to see the proboscis find its way to the sugar and the long tongue emerge to lick up the liquid. Usually within a few minutes, the warmth from the hand and the sustenance of the sugar is sufficient to enable the bumble bee to take off again. Very satisfying.

Even more satisfying was seeing the Beginners at the end of their Course at Horestone - all enthusiastic new beekeepers having gone through a basic course in bee husbandry. It was a privilege to talk to them and hand out the well-earned certificates and I should like to thank the Education Team at the Apiary for all their hard work, organisation and knowledge in putting on such a course. In fact, thanks to everyone who works at the apiary and creates the conditions to enable our student beekeepers to learn our craft. The new fashionability of beekeeping has been a two-edged sword as we frequently hear of people who are taking on the responsibility of bees with no training or knowledge. This is bad news for the bees and also for other beekeepers in their area as the neglected, mismanaged hives are proving to be a local reservoir of infection and varroa. I'm so glad that the Club is doing its bit to help new beekeepers start to acquire the skills and information needed to manage healthy colonies. ***Chris Tozer***

HORESTONE IN APRIL/MAY

The warm weather has continued throughout April and into May. The colonies have benefitted from the abundance of nectar and pollen in the gardens and surrounding areas. They are building up well and we have already performed Pagden Artificial Swarms on 3 of the colonies A couple of others are being encouraged onto double brood boxes.

Some of the colonies have been supered. The White Team is hoping to produce some cut comb this year and frames have been made up using thin, unwired foundation.

All the colonies were tested for Nosema at the County Nosema testing day. The results were NIL for all but one colony which had a light result. This colony will be re-sampled in a couple of weeks time to see if it has managed to clear itself.

Queen rearing plans are under way. The apideas have been prepared ready for the introduction of sealed queen cells that we plan to produce using the Jenter system.

To make sure it's not all work and no play, we are planning an open day for branch members, families and friends on the afternoon of June 5th. It is an opportunity for us to meet up socially and catch up with each other. Hopefully the gardens will be bathed in sunshine and we will have afternoon tea and cakes to look forward to. Please make a note in your diaries and come along for a visit.

Sylvie

NORTH DEVON BRANCH

An open afternoon for members and guests
At Horestone Apiary

Afternoon tea and Plant Sale
Sunday 5th June
2pm - 5pm

Do join us if you can.

If you have any spare plants please donate them to out Plant Sale. Proceeds towards the upkeep of our beautiful Apiary.

BEGINNERS COURSE 20011- HORESTONE APIARY

After attending the Apiary at Horstone for a year I enrolled on the beginner's course starting in February at the Castle Centre, the first two weeks we learnt about the anatomy of the bee and the different stages in the life of the bee. The course then moved to Horestone Apiary where we learnt about **pests that effect bees, brood diseases, swarm control and apiary hygiene.** Then for the last two sunny Sundays in April it was hands on where we put all that we had learnt into practice. It was a very enjoyable and informative course and we would like to thank all of the instructors for their time and patience. *Cliff*

Some of the tutors and students of the 2011 Beginners Course

The 10 weeks went so quickly. Although there's a lot to learn, it was all delivered with patience and humour by the instructors, particularly when answering the hundreds of questions we beginners fired at them! Spending time at Horestone was particularly valuable - the practical experience was very welcome. Many thanks to everyone who made it all so enjoyable. I'm now looking forward to putting the experience into action with a new hive of bees! *Cathy*

I enjoyed the beginners course at Horstone - mostly so that I could realise that there were others stumbling along hoping to make enough sense of a bees brilliant life, to feel we could be honoured with asking them into a hive in our gardens and not completely mess it up for them. Hopefully the beginning of good relationships with our bees and our new human bee-loving friends.

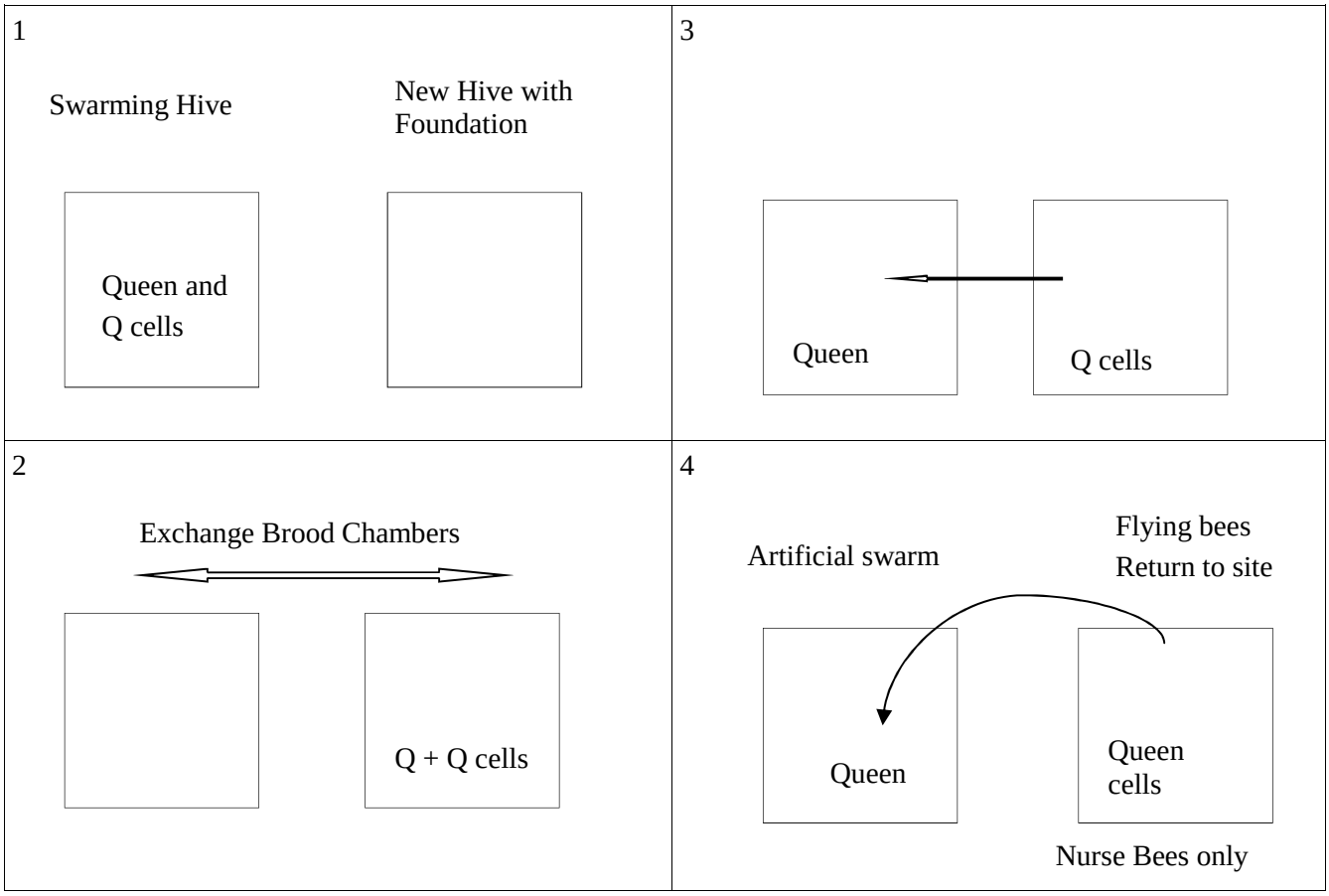
Thanks for all the time and energy all the tutors put into the course. *Bridget*

Horestone in April - toiling slab layers

PAGDEN ARTIFICIAL SWARM METHOD

ONLY WORKS WELL IN GOOD WEATHER

WITH STRONG STOCK & GOOD NECTAR FLOW: NEEDS FEEDING



The Pagden Artificial Swarm Method This method has been used for a long time but there are several variations. It is virtually 100% successful. You must become very familiar with the artificial swarm method if you are going to keep bees successfully and produce a honey crop. In simple terms the original site will have a new hive containing the old queen, one frame of brood and all the flying bees. The old hive is moved to a new site a few feet away containing the queen cells, the rest of the brood frames and all the non-flying bees.

Step One Assemble a new hive on a stand 6 feet to one side of the colony with queen cells. The new hive consists of a floor, brood box containing 10 or 11 brood frames of new foundation, a crown board and a roof.

Step Two Exchange the two hives.

Step Three Take a brood frame with the old queen, destroying any queen cells on the frame and put it into the middle of the new brood box that is on the old site.

Step Four This is carried out by the bees. The flying bees will return to the old site with the old queen. The younger non-flying nurse bees will stay with the queen cells on the new site. If there are supers of honey place these on the old site. The new site with the queen cells must be fed with medium strength syrup as they cannot yet forage and the entrance is reduced to discourage robbing. *Notes from a Basic Beekeeping Course*

Summary: For those wishing to make increase and at the same time discourage swarming the artificial swarm is simple and widely used. The principle behind the artificial swarm is to separate the brood from the queen. The created situation mimics that of the natural swarm situation. The method attempts to fool the bees into thinking that they have already swarmed.

We end up with two colonies that can be described as “swarm” and “parent”. The colony on the original site has the old queen, all the flying bees that have returned to the original site, and very little brood. This is the artificial swarm.

The parent brood box (called the parent colony) which is in the new position has no laying queen, brood of all ages, queen cells that are about to emerge and a depleted number of flying bees. This is a similar situation to a colony after a swarm has left.

SWARM CONTROL WHEN YOU CAN'T FIND THE QUEEN

If there are numerous and well developed Queen (swarm) cells and you can't find the Q and are unlikely to be around to catch the swarm when it emerges a simple division of the colony into 2, akin to an Artificial swarm can work.

Method.

- Move the colony several feet to one side.
- Place a new floorboard and brood box ½ filled with frames of foundation on the original site.
- Take out ½ of the brood combs from the original colony to place in the new box.. Ensure that 1 good Q. cell (open with larva visible) is left in each box and that each box has a frame(s) with eggs in it.
- Fill spaces with frames of foundation either side of brood combs.
- Place Q excluder over brood boxes and divide any supers/ stores between the 2 hives.
- The Q is most likely to be left in the original box but you cannot be sure and if she is in the one to which the flying bees are returning they could still swarm! You can reverse the position of the hives after 5 days to even up the numbers of bees and reduce the potential to swarm.
- Examine both in 7 days when the Q less colony will have drawn out Q cells and the Q right one should have eggs and new brood.
- Practise Q spotting (it's fun) and don't assume a marked Q is always easier to find!!

BRANCH HONEY SHOW

Our North Devon Branch Honey Show is on 22nd and 23rd October, 2011
At St John's Garden Centre, Barnstaple.

We have been very fortunate that for over a decade the Horticultural Society has invited us to join their annual show.

We are given the wonderful opportunity to show and display our honey and wax products, and to have fun with the cookery and mead sections.

The Horticultural Society and St John's Garden Centre give their time and space, free of charge. A venue that we could never afford on our own.

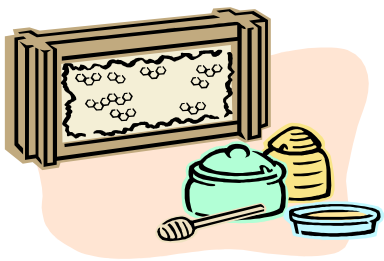
We thank them by putting on a good Show.

So please put the date in your diaries today and get your wax and honey ready for the show.

Further details and entry forms will be part of Northern Lights starting in September.

We have photo, art and cookery sections - something for every one.

Barbara Carlyle



DIARY DATES

May 19/20/21 Devon County Show - a few more volunteers are needed - if you could spare some time please contact Barry Neal 01805 601715

Sunday 5th June - Branch Open Afternoon

See information on front page.

August 13th - Nosema Testing Day

at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple. Further information nearer the date.

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Further information nearer the date.

National Honey Show - Weybridge

27th October - 29th October.

International classes and beekeepers lecture convention.

Garden Forage for May

Budleia globosa, Berberis candidula, cherry, rosemary, forget-me-nots, damson, various apples and pears, ceanothus, roses, brooms, pyracantha, blueberries, horse chestnut, sycamore, bluebells.

Do all you can to get your bees onto clean new comb!

At Stoneleigh this year, Professor Keith Delaplane said that nurse bees prefer queens to lay in new comb. If they have the choice bees use old comb only for honey storage.

When a bee larva changes to pupation mode it eases its bowels before spinning its cocoon. The cell is cleaned by the worker bees, but it is no wonder that queens prefer to lay in new comb; and no wonder that bee diseases have multiplied. Use frame management to provide the bees with fresh foundation to pull.

LEMON CURD ICE-CREAM DRIZZLED WITH HONEY

Ingredients

- 1 unwaxed lemon
- 284ml Double Cream
- 3 tbsp runny Honey
- ½ x 500g Natural Yogurt
- ½ x 325g jar Luxury Lemon Curd

Method

1. Finely grate the zest and squeeze the juice from the lemon. Reserve a little of the zest for decoration.
2. Very lightly whip the cream with an electric or hand whisk until it is just starting to thicken but has not yet formed into stiff peaks. Using a metal spoon, fold in the lemon zest and juice, honey and yogurt. Gradually fold in the lemon curd then pour into a 1 litre freezer proof tub with lid.
3. Place in the freezer for 4-5 hours until fully frozen. Remove every hour or so to stir with a fork, making sure the more frozen edges are mixed in. If making in advance, take out of the freezer and place in the fridge for 15-20 minutes to soften slightly before serving.

Serve drizzled with a little extra honey and decorate with lemon zest.

Adapted from a Waitrose recipe

Bitz4Bees

Please note that the shop will not be open on Tuesday 17th MAY I apologise for any inconvenience this causes.

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All contributions welcome, copy by 23rd of month for publication in following month's newsletter.