

NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

SEPTEMBER 2009 www.northdevonbees.org



Chair Chat

Now that the beekeeping season is coming to an end we reach an important event in our year, our Honey Show. This is your Show so please make every effort to support it by putting in as many entries as you can. Even if you don't have much honey, try to manage a couple of jars - and if you don't have any honey there are still plenty of other Classes to enter. There are the cookery classes, wax and mead, and of course photography - something for everyone. Enclosed with this months

Northern Lights is the Honey Show schedule. Please read through this carefully and plan your entries. It's great fun and first timers often surprise themselves by winning. Remember we can't have a honey show without entries so you are a very important part of the show. Jack Mummery is our Entries Secretary and he will also be running a workshop/discussion on preparing items for Showing. This will take place on Tuesday September 29th from 2pm till 4pm at Horestone - join us if you can. Chris Tozer will be running a wax workshop on Sunday 4th October, 10 am till 3pm. Also, it would be great to have a few more volunteers to help set up, stage, run/dismantle the Show. Please contact either Margaret or myself if you can help.

This years AGM will be on Sunday November 22nd, 2pm at Horestone Apiary. I do hope as many of you as possible will come to the meeting and maybe some of you would like to consider standing for office. Further information will be in next months Northern Lights.

Finally, good luck with preparing your colonies for winter.

Sylvie

Apiary Managers Update

The stormy autumn winds have blown away what little summer we enjoyed, so it's now time to prepare our bees for the winter. Liz Wilson demonstrated the honey extraction process to a fascinated audience, leaving our supers ready for the bees to fill with the stores to last throughout a possible long hard winter.

This season we have introduced the use of icing sugar to improve the bees hygienic behaviour and recorded the subsequent varroa mite drop. We recently changed this application to Apiguard, and have compared the effects of both treatments.

Interestingly, both applicants have produced similar results: Our highest drop from icing sugar was 9 fold, and on apiguard indicated a similar drop. I appreciate for those reading this with a scientific approach, that holes can be punched into the entire process: beekeepers have varying visions! With some trays it is sometimes difficult to count all mites: time/weather/colony size etc all play a significant role. However for purpose of planning next years' IPM, it offers a fascinating topic for winter discussions!

Prior to the start of the basic Course for new bee-keepers in January, we have held two Taster Days, and a third one is planned later this month. The very interested prospective bee-keepers have thoroughly enjoyed a glimpse into our absorbing craft, and many signed on for the course. 5 students from previous courses took the basic examination last month, on thankfully a fine day, and we wish them well as they anxiously await their results.

The apiary received compliments from the examiner, so Many Thanks to the entire team for all your hard work!! It's wonderful to have gardeners, scorchers, woodwork repairers arrive on a Tuesday morning, keen to show their appreciation for our site, by offering their time and energy to keep it looking great.

I think we need a little explanation on the Loans System. The extractor and screen for showing slides, all offer financial reward for the beekeeper, so it's obviously only fair that if money changes hands, that the apiary has a little cut! (is the Treasurer listening?!) However, if an item of woodwork is needed urgently, bee-keepers are very welcome to loan items, and lists are kept of what, when and by whom these are borrowed. Unfortunately, over the last year items have been 'borrowed' by side-tracking the loan system, for example 12 nucleus boxes are still at large, and as everyone appreciates, we need to keep the funding of our apiary to a practical minimum. So Please: the amnesty is still open for the return of any of Our Equipment

On the extractor front: this is the time of year when many members want to use this. Please can we respect other members and return the extractor on time and with the £5 loan fee -----to keep everyone happy, including the 'arranger'!

We look forward to seeing many of you who have to work during the week, at our Sunday workshops, which have been organised to meet everyone's needs. All ideas gratefully received for future days!

Happy autumn colony preparations and leaf-scrunching!

Flora

HONEY FUDGE

INGREDIENTS

2lb or 900g Granulated sugar
½ pint or 280ml Milk
½ tea spoon Salt
4oz or 110g Butter
4oz or 110g Honey

METHOD

1. Prepare an 11 inch x 7 inch or 275mm x 175mm Swiss roll tin by lightly greasing it OR lining it with Silicone paper.
2. Soak the sugar in the milk for one hour stirring occasionally
3. Use an 8 inch or 200mm diameter, thick bottomed sauce pan. Melt the butter so that the pan becomes greased
4. Add all the ingredients to the pan and bring to the boil stirring until the sugar is melted
5. Boil rapidly, stirring frequently, until the temperature reaches 115°C or 240°F Take care as splashes could burn you. The temperature should be just over softball for about 3 minutes.
6. Once the temperature is reached, stop further cooking by cooling the pan slightly by placing the bottom in a little cold water for a moment
7. Beat the mixture with a wooden spoon until it starts to thicken and turns creamy
8. Pour into the prepared Swiss roll tin and allow to cool. When nearly set score the surface with a sharp knife into 25mm squares
9. When completely cold, cut into neat 25mm squares and present your best 8 pieces for judging.

HONEY FUDGE (the recipe that Beryl uses)

To make your honey fudge, try to set aside a morning or afternoon when you will not be interrupted

First, collect up the things you are going to need.

An electric mixer with strong beaters, a large bowl, and a lid

Spatula and a Swiss Roll tin, VERY lightly oiled

Large heavy saucepan, thick base

Sugar thermometer

Measuring jug

Kitchen scales

A ruler and sharp ended knife

A wooden block, or a trivet for high temp.

Big washing up bowl Wooden spoon

2lb white granulated sugar 4oz salted butter

4oz honey (run or set) Half a pint milk

Put the half pint of cold milk into the saucepan and note the time

Channel into the milk the 2lb white sugar. Leave this to soak for 1 hour, stirring quite often. After the hour, you can warm it all up over low heat, stirring a lot more until the sugar is dissolved, more or less, and adding the butter and stirring, then the honey and keep stirring. As it warms and dissolves, have your thermometer hooked over the side of the pan, the other end in the sugar etc. Turn up the heat for a full boil, keep watching the rising temp. You are trying to reach the softball temp, about 240 degrees F. It does not take long to get the temp up, but that last bit to reach between softball and hardball seems to take ages. Don't overdo it. Don't reach hardball.

The temp must be just over softball for about 3 minutes, if you fail here you will produce toffee. Too long or too short and the fudge will not set properly. It's all a matter of your experience and judgement, and every time is different. When you think that's it, remove from the heat and set the pan on the trivet for a short cooling off. 1-2 mins

Then pour it all at once into the large mixing bowl, and beat at highest speed for about ten minutes. Or a bit longer. You must watch the beaters carefully, and when the fudge is beginning to be nice and thick, even setting a little on the beaters, THEN stop and pour it all into the Swiss Roll tin, scraping the beaters. If you have made toffee, you can boil it all up again later!

Have the top of your fudge in the tin smooth and even. Get the ruler and knife, and when warm, mark out the fudge into 1 inch squares or larger if you wish. Cut the set fudge into cubes when cold, weigh each bag of 4.oz or whatever, and keep airtight.

The texture should be melting on your tongue, just slightly crystallised.

Beryl



North Devon Show

Despite the weather we were ably represented in the Craft Tent by varying combinations of Denise, Julie, Liz, Flowa, Margaret, Sylvie, John and Glenis. Working in shifts did help - many thanks to all who gave their time. Sales were modest but there were lots of enquiries and Flowa has had follow up calls with interest in courses and/or becoming members. All-in-all it was a very worthwhile day though I have never seen mud well up through grass in quite the same way before! For future reference: though there was doubt about the rules (which say "no food in the craft tent") we did sell honey and probably could have sold honey fudge so long as it was sealed.

Margaret Kay



DIARY DATES

September 15th—20th - Apimondia, in Montpellier, France. www.beekeeping.com/apimondia

Sunday 20th September - Beginner Beekeepers Taster Day—11 am - 4pm Horestone

Sunday 27th September - Castle Centre, Barnstaple - Bee Diseases Day with NBU 11 am - 4 pm.

Tuesday 29th September - Workshop/discussion on preparing items for showing - Horestone. 2pm - 4pm with Jack Mummery. (please note date changed from that shown in August Northern Lights.)

Sunday 4th October - Wax workshop—10 am till 3 pm. Horestone. Donations to Branch, bring and share lunch - with Chris Tozer.

Saturday 10 th October - **DBKA** Buckfast Bee Day. - speakers Dr Max Watkins Vita (Europe) Ltd, Dr Ivor Davis, Past President BBKA, Alan Byham, RBI South East.

24th & 25th October - **Branch Honey Show weekend** at St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple.

29th—31st October - National Honey Show, St George's College, Weybridge, Surrey.

www.honeyshow.co.uk

8th November - Microscopy Day with Brian Marchant - 11 am— 3 pm at Halsannery. Further details in October Northern Lights.

Sunday November 22nd - **AGM** 2 pm at Horestone - further details in October Northern Lights.

Christmas Lunch - Sunday 17th January - date set, venue to be arranged.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Membership of the BBKA brings many benefits including insurance and information. From DBKA you receive the magazine Beekeeping, and from North Devon Beekeepers you receive the Northern Lights. This is the mouth piece of the Branch and as such aims to keep members informed about branch activities and other items of interest to fellow beekeepers. Items for publication on any aspect of beekeeping, subject to approval by the committee, are welcome from any member. We regret however that we are unable to accept any advertising for inclusions in the Northern Lights.

Derek Hunter Treasurer.

FLOWERS FOR AUTUMN

Plants in flower in October will contribute to the production of winter bees and stores.

Flowers such as Aster/Michaelmas Daisy are a valuable source of nectar and pollen during the autumn months. The pollen is orange. Ivy too is now coming into flower supplying both nectar and pollen. The pollen is yellow.



*Dave & Jean
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The CoB/'B4B' AGM will be held at the following time and venue:

Tuesday Sep. 15

10:00 a.m. prompt start

Horestone Apiary (N Devon Branch of the DBKA), Umberleigh, N Devon

The members of the board again look forward to as many shareholders as possible being able to participate. We are grateful to the NDB of the DBKA for permitting use of this venue, too.

Dave James

Community of Beekeepers / Bitz4Bees

A reminder.

Birthday, Christmas, for any other reason (or no reason at all) -

You can purchase Gift Certificates, values £5.00 and £10.00, these can be exchanged for items in our shop.

The shop will not be open on the 15th September 2009, we will be at the CoB/B4B AGM at Horestone Apiary.

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

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