



LBKA NEWS

Out & About

What have the Committee and members been up to?

Angela, our Secretary, was invited to a meeting chaired by the **Pesticide Action Network** bringing together all interested parties who are looking to act collectively on how London could become a pesticide free city. Others attending the forum were the Friends of the Earth, River of Flowers, the Soil Association, Sustain, Natural England, Bumblebee Conservation Trust and the Bee Guardian Foundation. The group is to meet regularly to progress discussion on common issues.

<http://bees.pan-uk.org/>

And that's not all Angela's been up to – she can be caught on BBC iPlayer, it's called **'Wild Weather in 2012: London.'** Both Angela and our member Karen Alton star! Brilliant! Here's the link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/i/b01pmb1t/>

LBKA committee members have met with **Southwark Council's Ecology Officer** to discuss how the LBKA can help forage creation. Southwark Council have allocated two prestigious sites and we aim to encourage corporations to fund the planting of wildflowers, perennials and trees as an alternative to keeping bees.

The LBKA have also been invited to meet social enterprise **The Golden Co** to discuss collaboration and Karin, our Chair, will be representing us at the **BBKA Annual Delegate Meeting**.





LBKA APPOINTMENTS

LBKA Committee members

Richard Glassborow and **David Hankins** were co-opted onto the **LBKA committee** after the November 2012 AGM . David has been really working hard behind the scenes as our Membership Secretary and has great versatility across IT and databases meaning we are run more efficiently. Richard re-joins the committee, and takes on specific responsibility for finding our permanent home. He continues to be a first rate mentor and manager of our extended teaching apiary at Eden.

LBKA Forage Officer

Mark Patterson has been appointed to the new role of **Forage Officer**. Mark will be familiar to many of you already through all his informative postings on Facebook, and advice on our website which now has a new month by month guide to planting. He's incredibly knowledgeable and always happy to talk forage and bees, and has members seeking him out at our monthly meetings for advice. His day job is as a Beekeeper and Community Manager with the national environmental charity Groundwork. He has strong credentials in the fields of community gardening, urban agriculture, ornithology, fundraising and horticulture.

Mark will continue his regular feature on planting throughout the year. Contact: forage@lbka.org.uk

Mentoring Officer

We're delighted that **Tristram Sutton** has agreed to take on the task of matchmaking 2013's new recruits who take our Introductory weekend course with one of our experienced members who have volunteered to mentor them through their first active season. Tristram is one of Sharon Basseys's mentees (Class of 2012) and we're sure will look after mentees and mentors brilliantly. Contact: mentoring@lbka.org.uk

LBKA Librarians

We're delighted that members Jo Lawbuary and Bjorn Blanchard have both agreed to be the first LBKA librarians! The library will be out at every monthly meeting for us to browse through and borrow. Please add to the collection if you have books you grow out of, or you know so well that you don't need the hard copy any longer. Jo and Bjorn will getting the library underway soon.



We are looking for help from the graphic designers amongst you – the newsletter needs you!! Please email communications@lbka.org.uk



NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY 13TH JANUARY

11:00 at [Fairley House Junior School](#)
220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY

By popular demand, the first meeting of 2013 will have LBKA member Rosanna Bickerton sharing her expertise on making creams and balms from natural products and beeswax from her own hives.



PLEASE NOTE: Following useful feedback from members about proposed changes to the Constitution and the introduction of Codes of Conduct for both members and committee members it has been decided to postpone the EGM to the February monthly meeting on 10th February to allow for further work. Papers will be sent out to the membership in due course. Thank you for your patience.

Please email Angela at admin@lbka.org.uk if you have any questions about the EGM.

Top tips from December's meeting: Overwintering and the LBKA Bake Off

Karin Courtman and Richard Glassborow talked about the importance of proper ventilation and feeding bees with fondant and reducing the risk of isolation starvation where bees may not move as a cluster toward nearby stores.

Top tips shared by Karin, Richard and other members were:

- Roll out thin layers of fondant between 2 pieces of cling film and put it between, or over frames so that bees can easily get to it wherever they are.
- Make a fondant sausage and put it across all the frames so you can see where it was eaten and then put future fondant in that area so they don't have to travel far,
- Put a hole through frames so bees can go through them rather than having to go up / down and over, making it easier for them to get to stores
- You can buy bags of fondant icing from Waitrose and if you use just 2 / 3 teaspoons a bag and knead and knead it's easy to make a good ball of it.
- Prop up hives as they may sink in the wet grass / mud and end up falling over.

The talk was followed by a bee quiz that proved to be fun (and very competitive!) along with glasses of cava and homemade cakes provided by members.



JANUARY IN THE APIARY

Where should we be with our colonies at this time of year?

January is a quiet time for beekeepers but an eye must still be kept on the apiary. Make sure that the roof has not been blown off by winds or that woodpeckers have not taken an interest in the hive. The queen should now have started to lay again, albeit in a small way.

Varroa strategy

Treatment in autumn with Apiguard may not have been enough to deal with the mite. Treatment with oxalic acid in late December or early January is a standard treatment for varroa. Oxalic acid is cheap to buy and the time taken to open the hive and administer is all done in less than 1 minute if bees are not flying. As always, it is essential to wear a veil when opening the colony to treat. Do not take chances.

Food stores

If the colony went into the winter with 35 lbs. of stores then feeding will not be necessary. If stores are light then only candy or fondant should be used at this time of year. (Sugar syrup should be avoided as it will excite the bees and so disturb the cluster. The bees are also unable to process syrup in winter and it is then liable to fermentation). Feeding is not usually necessary in January, more of a March task as the bees are then flying and consuming stores at a considerably faster rate than in January.

New equipment

Those who have purchased equipment during the winter sales can assemble frames, etc. It is surprising how quickly events can move when the bees get going in spring and ready assembled equipment keeps the beekeeper ahead of any eventuality. Some suppliers do have a post Christmas sale so it is still worth checking out the websites.

Cleaning old equipment

Best time to do this is immediately after it is taken out of use in autumn. If not done then winter is preferable to cleaning in the spring immediately before re-use. Attention to general cleanliness and maintenance of old equipment is part of apiary hygiene strategy. Remember to clean your smoker with a good soak (without the bellows) in soda crystals overnight.

Candles and honey recipes

For those who process beeswax then winter is the usual time of year for this activity. This topic is the theme of the January monthly meeting. Honey foodstuffs can, of course, be prepared and eaten at any time of year.

Education

Education and practical experience are the 2 routes through which beekeepers develop their skills. Education may arise from a variety of routes but Beecraft is a substantial resource. If you do not currently subscribe to Beecraft then January is a good month take out an annual subscription.

Howard Nichols (education@lbka.org.uk)



BEES AND FORAGE IN LONDON

With increasing numbers of honeybees in London, and competition for nectar and pollen with other pollinating insects, it is important that planting keeps pace with continued growth.

The latest NBU figures show 3,678 registered colonies in Greater London (up 10% from Spring 2012) and with only 75% of keepers registering their hives this figure is more likely to be around 5,000.

Research conducted back in 2010 on behalf of London Wildlife Trust, Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), and the Greater London Authority showed that an area two and a half times the size of Hyde Park of vegetated garden land is being lost every year. The losses are largely as the result of very many small changes made to individual gardens. Here's the link to the research report:

<http://www.gigl.org.uk/Portals/0/Downloads/LondonGardenCity.pdf>.

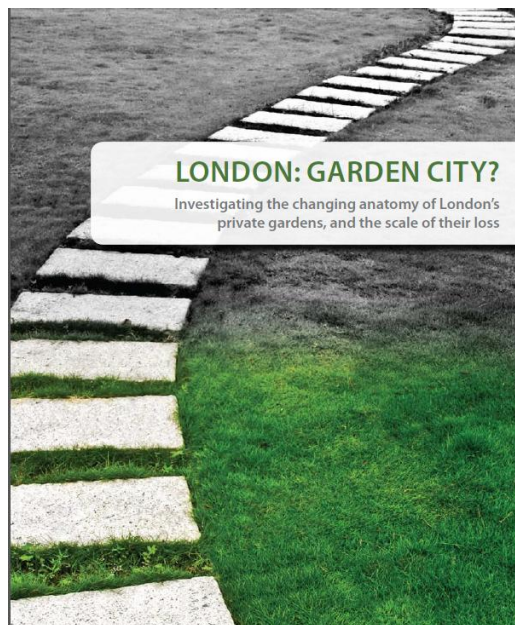
In October the LBKA initiated a meeting hosted by GiGL and attended by Natural England and Dr Karin Alton (Research Fellow, Honey Bee Health and Wellbeing at University of Sussex) about how they can use their datasets to give more accurate pointers to where there could be forage 'deserts' in London. The information would help inform London's Biodiversity Action Plans which cover the provision of local wildlife habitat.

By raising the debate about how much forage is enough, and whether there could be too many bees in London the LBKA has engaged those with influence in a meaningful way. There are some heavy hitters who agree with us:

- Paul de Zylva who is the Head of Nature at **Friends of the Earth** and started the Bee Cause campaign asked the LBKA to contribute to their blog with our pro-forage message.
- **Sustain** (behind **Capital Bee**) also agree with our stance of responsible beekeeping and more forage.
- **Neal's Yard Remedies** also asked us to advise on their Bee Lovely campaign, with funds being awarded to community projects focusing on forage planting.

The LBKA has also assisted Dr. Karin Alton who is preparing a paper on Urban Beekeeping along with her colleagues Norman Carreck and Prof. Francis Ratnieks from the **Laboratory of Apiculture at Sussex University**.

We will share that as soon as we can.





BEES AND FORAGE IN LONDON...

This is a complex question and the starting point could sensibly be that there can never be too much forage.

The LBKA will continue to respond in a considered way to enquiries from the press on these issues. We are being careful to emphasise that we are not trying to deter people from keeping bees, but to ensure that if they do, they are properly trained, and to stress that a concern about forage is an integral part of being a modern urban beekeeper.

With all the challenges facing our bees it is important the LBKA produces proud and confident beekeepers.



Useful links:

- To learn more about creating a wildlife and climate friendly garden: www.wildlondon.org.uk/gardenforlivinglondon.
- To explore what wildlife has been recorded in London's gardens you can visit 'What's In My Back Yard?' (WIMBY): www.gigl.org.uk
- To find out how you can do your bit for climate change adaptation and garden wildlife go to www.london.gov.uk/trees
- For further information on wildlife gardening across the UK go to The Wildlife Trusts and the RHS' gardening website www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk



JANUARY IN THE FORAGE PATCH

January is a time of year when the weather is often at its coldest and our honey bees should be tucked away snugly inside the hive.

At this time of year we would expect our queens to be starting to lay again, slowly at first but then gradually building up as spring and warmer weather approaches. For this the queen (and her larvae) needs a high protein quality diet, and pollen is the right sort of food for this.

Few native wild plants are flowering for bees to take advantage of, but fortunately there are a few garden plants that do and they offer a lifeline to bees venturing out to forage on mild winter days. Here's a few of my favourites:



Single snow drops



Christmas rose



Wallflowers

many varieties will flower during winter



Winter aconite



Hazel

Although wind pollinated, its high quality pollen is gathered by bees.



Sarcococca confusa

a dwarf evergreen shrub with very strong smelling flowers



Viburnum tinus

One of the earliest sources of nectar

Plant of the month for December and January has to be **Mahonia**.

Its clusters of bright yellow flowers on branches of prickly leaves are a magnet to winter flying bees.

According to the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society 75% of all winter flower visitations by bees are to Mahonia.





WINTER LECTURES

Wednesday January 23rd 6.45pm

Will Clayton from **Bees for Development** will be speaking to us at Roots & Shoots.

Bees for Development is the LBKA's charity and assists beekeepers living in poor and remote areas of the world - lifting them out of poverty through beekeeping.

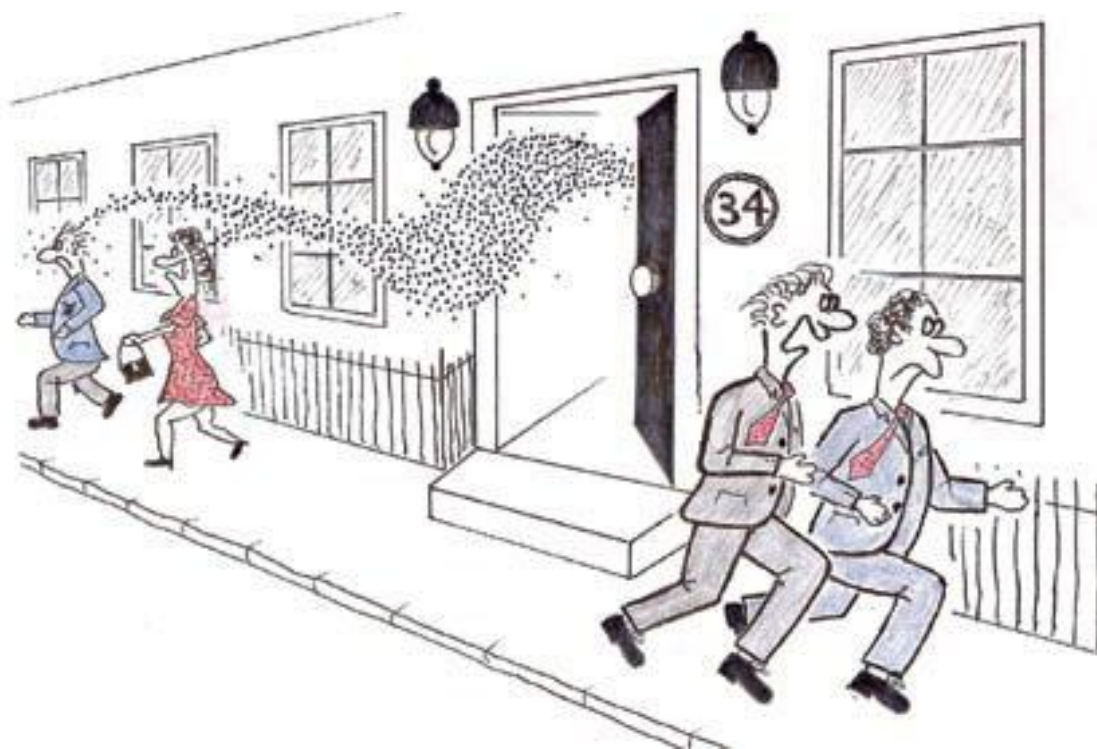
Keep the Feb 27th and March 27th free for the next winter lectures



Bees for Development

And finally...

As a thank you for one of Julian's lectures, an attendee drew this... Don't be alarmed, he won't be bringing them to the winter lectures!



'Nobody said that Julian Lush was bringing his bees to the lecture!'

Many thanks to all our contributors this month: Howard Nichols, Angela Woods and Mark Patterson, Mauricio Molizane de Souza for his photo, and Julian Lush for sharing the cartoon.

And if there are more cartoons or any other content out there that we can share then please send them to me at communications@lbka.org.uk