



# LBKA NEWS

## LBKA Courses

It has been a busy time recently for the LBKA, running our two weekend courses in April and May, and taster courses coming up in July in September.

Around 60 people took the LBKA Introduction to Beekeeping course which was half practical (making frames, inspecting hives and equipment) and half theory; with sessions on bee biology, the hive, forage for bees, swarming, diseases, the beekeepers year and starting up.

Our aim in all these courses is to do our best to ensure that anyone wanting to take up the hobby is as well prepared as possible, and has the support in place to ensure happy bees and neighbours! It's why some of our most experienced beekeepers continue to give up their time to mentor the Class of 2013, teaching them all they know and making sure they're ready to take the BBKA Basic exam and look after bees next year.

Forage is an issue we're all aware of, with less and less available for growing populations of bees in London. It's why we teach new beekeepers about its importance (and give them packets of seed to get them started) and encourage them to think about sharing a hive.

Thank you so much to all of you who gave up your time to teach, coach and host at our weekend courses: John Chapple, Karin Courtman, Richard Glassborow, Jon Harris, Angela Woods, Simon Wilks, Mark Patterson, Sharon Bassey, Alan Bezzant, Howard Nichols, Tristram Sutton, Julian Lush, Nic Barnett, Tieske Van den Broek, Anthony Garner, Abby Taubin and Memuna Forna.





## JUNE IN THE APIARY

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

#### Swarm control

This is the main priority. Routine inspections should be made every 7 days to check for queen cells. Make sure you have sufficient spare equipment for swarm control. Upon finding queen cells, you have sufficient time to close up the colony, go home to think things through and collate equipment. You are unlikely to have time to order equipment from a supplier, have it delivered and make it up. For anyone with access to Ted Hooper's 'Guide to Bees and Honey' then Artificial Swarm method is covered extremely well on pages 138 to 140. Fera also have a helpsheet for free download on the Beebase website.

#### Removing honey

Another seasonal task in early June is removing and processing the spring honey brought in by the bees. This year we have had a fairly cold spring and there is little spring honey so far. If spring honey is removed then keep a watch on stores within the hive.

#### Collecting swarms.

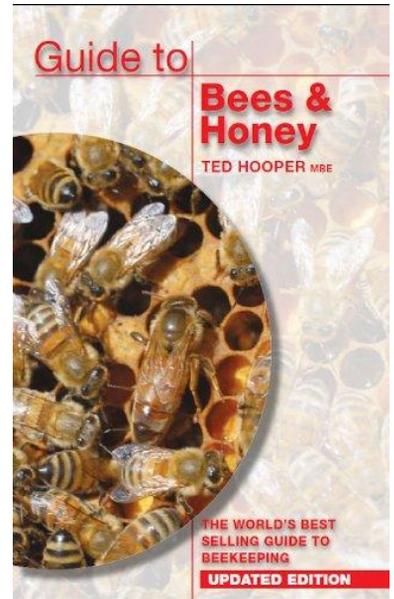
If your bees do swarm or you are called out to collect another swarm then personal and public safety should always be the overriding priority. Do not attempt to climb trees or use ladders beyond your capabilities. A simple order of action may be as follows:

- Make sure they are honeybees.
- If on someone else's land then obtain permission to enter from the landowner. If a branch of the tree needs to be cut then, again, make sure you have permission.
- Ensure any bystanders are moved away to a safe place.
- Put on bee suit and light smoker. Spraying the swarm with a fine mist of water is a refinement which will help keep the swarm in a cluster.
- Place a large sheet (an old bedsheet is ideal) on the ground underneath the swarm.
- After making sure that you are safe then deposit as much of the swarm as you can in a box or large bucket. Try to aim for 90% of the bees as you then have a 90% chance of including the queen.
- Turn box or bucket containing most of the collected swarm upside down on top of the middle of the sheet with a stone or piece of wood wedged between the box (or bucket) and the sheet. This allows access for the remaining bees.
- Come back at dusk to collect up the swarm by removing the stone and tying the sheet around the box. It can then be rehived.

#### Other action to be taken this month includes the following:

- Add supers as necessary, adding another in advance of it being needed by the bees. This may be either a brood super or a honey super, depending upon circumstances.
- Check varroa mite drop if not done in April or May. The Beebase varroa calculator is a useful diagnostic tool.

Howard Nichols ([education@LBKA.org.uk](mailto:education@LBKA.org.uk))





## JUNE IN THE FORAGE PATCH

After a dreadful start to the year at long last we now have decent weather and flowering plants are starting to make up for lost time bursting into blossom. Throughout London trees important as forage for our bees such as Lime, Horse and Sweet Chestnut, Acers and Sorbus are now in full bloom and herald the start of the main nectar flow. Despite the poor start to the year some members already have one super or more being filled with liquid gold.

Whilst inspecting the hives at Fulham Palace this weekend I noted that both my honey bees and wild bumble bees were making a bee line for the large sprawling Wisteria growing throughout the walled garden. Their bees tongues are far too short to access this rich nectar source so the bees cleverly chew holes in the back of the flowers through which to steal the nectar (see pictures below). Bees apply this nectar-stealing tactic to many exotic flowers with rich nectar sources such as Penstemon's and legumes.

In our gardens, plants popular with bees coming into flower this month include: Aquilegia's, Hardy Geraniums (not to be confused with scented Geraniums and Pelargoniums) Campanula carpatica, Centaurea montana the perennial cornflower, Lavenders, Foxglove, Bugle, Calendula. Coreopsis, Chives and thrift. Later in the month as we roll into July Echinacea, Echinops, Kniphofia and the bees' favourite Agastachi should start to flower.

It's been a month since I planted my pollinator friendly fiery themed hanging basket and its looking really colourful. So far several species of hover fly and solitary bees have visited but no honey bees yet.

Jobs to get on wit in the garden this month include:

- planting nasturtium seeds in hanging baskets and borders to create forage for bumble bees later in the season (their also edible!).
- Plant out Cucurbit vegetables such as pumpkin, marrow and cucumbers - all of which are popular with honey and bumble bees alike.
- Mulch garden flower borders to help retain moisture during the coming summer. Plants whose roots are kept moist and supplied with water will continue to produce nectar better than those which are not mulched during dry periods.
- As we move into summer bees will find it harder to find suitable sources of water. You can help by maintaining a shallow dish of water for them to drink from.

**Mark Patterson, LBKA Forage Officer**



**Mark's pollinator friendly basket**



**Honey bee on Wisteria**



**Wisteria, showing holes near stem where bees have chewed to steal nectar**



## MEMBERS' SEEKING ADVICE:

Our new section where you can ask anything bee related and at least 2 people will offer advice. Email in any questions to [communications@lbka.org.uk](mailto:communications@lbka.org.uk)

### Dear Fellow Beekeepers....

'What should I do with the remaining 100 or so of teeny black bees that are all that remain of a once thriving hive? They survived the winter, 'til about end of January heartily, and then later I noticed there were very few bees flying in and out. Inspecting yesterday I saw a few capped cells, no larvae and no eggs (though I don't think I looked closely enough). Needless to say, no Queen and no Queen cells. I also saw mustardy looking blobs outside the hive entrance, and wondered if this was an indicator of Nosema or dysentery?'

### Dear In Distress, we have 2 replies for you:

'My suggestion would be to take a sample of the bees and test for Nosema, and regardless of outcome:

- block the hive up and destroy the bees by the addition of a rag soaked in petrol.
- once all the bees are dead, burn the bees and disinfect the hive with a blow torch (burn all frames). as there are so few bees and there is active signs of disease, there is very little you could salvage.'

'I think if there are so very few bees left in the hive, no unsealed brood, eggs or presence of a queen then sadly the colony is doomed. If you suspect nosema then do not combine with another colony as you will only spread the pathogen to the healthier colony.'

## HELPING THREATENED BEE SPECIES

Here's a link to a report from Friends of the Earth. It is a report outlining 12 Iconic Bees with recommendations as to how government, local planners, conservation groups and individuals can help pollinators in twelve regions of the UK. In London it's the Buff-Tailed Bumblebee (see page 10 of the report). Two of the report's recommendations are that:

- Local authorities and local wildlife groups to encourage gardeners and local communities to grow more wild and/or bee-friendly plants in open spaces and gardens
- Local authorities grow more bee friendly plants in parks and open spaces.

The LBKA is actively engaged in playing its part in spreading this message

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing\\_notes/bees\\_iconic\\_bees\\_report.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/bees_iconic_bees_report.pdf)



## MEMBERS' NOTICE BOARD

We've been contacted on twitter by an allotment group in SE12 ( Hither Green/ Blackheath area), asking if we have any members who would like to tend hives for them. If you're interested in finding out more then either get onto Twitter or email [forage@LBKA.org.uk](mailto:forage@LBKA.org.uk) to help you make contact:



@LandLoveMag: @LondonBeeKeeper Hi, do u know of anyone that may want 2 tend the hives on our SE12 #allotments? Please DM us for more info. Pls RT too :-)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### June Monthly Meeting: Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June

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

An opportunity to meet up and catch up on how others are managing with their bees at the moment. With an 'in the round' session, and a chance to see how others are keeping their notes – what works and what doesn't. All are encouraged to bring their apiary notes to share their method and why it works for them.

#### April's monthly meeting



### Talk on gardening for pollinators: 16<sup>th</sup> July

Mark Patterson is giving a talk on gardening for pollinators @ Fulham Palace. The cost is £8 with all proceeds going to the Fulham Palace Trust. More details on Fulham Palace website. <http://www.fulhampalace.org/visiting-whats-on/events-adults/>

Many thanks to Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Angela Woods for all their contributions this month, and to Mauricio Molizane De Souza for the photos.