



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

January, 2018

Happy New Year and welcome to the first Newsletter of 2018! We hope your new year has started well.

This year, we will start our new Monthly Tuesday Socials at various pubs across London. The first one will be on 30th January in the The Lamb, Bloomsbury but we'll be choosing a different pub each week. We hope to see some of you there.

The newsletter is a bit lighter than usual this month, but thanks to our regular contributors for producing the usual regular content including the monthly piece from our Chair, what to do in the apiary (p10), what flowers are out (p6), what happened at the last meeting (p4), and what happened on Facebook (p10)).

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Thanks to this month's contributors: **Richard Glassborow, Eugene Fahy, Martin Hudson, Howard Nichols and Mark Patterson**. Thanks as usual to Martin Hudson for proof-reading it.

Would you like to join the esteemed list of contributors above? If so, please contact me.

Happy beekeeping.

Aidan Slingsby, Editor, services@lbka.org.uk

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

May I start this month's column by wishing all our members a Happy New Year!

I hope you have all had a good Christmas break and have found time to plan your beekeeping year ahead. Whether you are new to beekeeping or have already gained some experience it is probable you will be considering doing something new or hoping to do something better this year. Hopefully, you will find your membership of the LBKA helpful and supportive, either through formal programmes like mentoring, topic led meetings and help with BBKA examinations and modules or through informal sharing of knowledge, experience, ideas, and questions, facilitated by the more social aspects of association membership. If you are not finding this support or have ideas on adding to or improving it, please do contact the committee to let us know.

Communication between members (as with bees) is important and valuable. So too between members and the committee, in both directions: but it is not automatic. Initially, as a way of trying to improve and increase opportunities for communication, you may remember last



A frosted geranium. Photo: Mark Patterson.

month we introduced the idea of the LBKA monthly social meetings. We do not envisage any formal agenda, it is just a social; a meeting of diverse individuals brought together by a shared interest. We will see what happens but I will be surprised if there is no conversation about bees and hopefully the informality will make it an opportunity to air and share more tentative or controversial thoughts or issues. Some of these may just be interesting for the moment but some may develop into a consensus for further exploration or action. Please put this in your calendar, last Tuesday of the month: the first one is at 6.30pm on Tuesday 30th January, the Charles Lamb, Lamb's Conduit Street: details on the [website](#). The current thinking is that the venue will change each month, so please keep an eye on the invitations and website.

As it is a time of year for planning ahead I would like to take this opportunity to remind us all of some aspects of London beekeeping that have particular significance because of the social context of being in a city. It is the responsibility of all of us not to be a nuisance to our fellow Londoners. It never ceases to amaze me how fascinated the public is by these stinging insects. And tolerant of events like swarming, which, though rightly regarded as a wondrous natural phenomenon, can also be alarming to the uninitiated. But we should be mindful that other cities across the world regulate, restrict or ban the keeping of bees. I suggest we do not want to give cause for that to happen here.

It is for this reason of self-interest, as well as plain common decency, that we should pay particular attention to the following practices:

Keep nice bees: gentle bees are more enjoyable to work with and can be just as productive if honey yield's is your thing. You are less likely to get stung; your neighbours are less likely to get stung and so less likely to complain. Colony temperament is down to queen selection so it is possible to manage.

Monitor for disease: this is more out of consideration for the bees and your neighbouring beekeepers. Some areas of London have relatively high densities of apiaries, making it easier for disease to spread. An outbreak of disease in your colony can be just bad luck. But good beekeeping practice also comes into it, or rather, avoidance of bad practice: apiary hygiene, appropriate disposal of used equipment, etc. Remember, the beekeeper is generally regarded as the most likely vector of disease!

Swarm prevention and control: this can be contentious we know but it has wide significance in the urban context. Not least, the number of feral colonies that take up residence in buildings. They are not always welcome, are difficult to remove, contribute to further swarming and can be a reservoir of disease which then spreads to kept bees. We have also seen instances where a swarm has caused significant financial loss to businesses, e.g. landing on a café. At times our swarm collectors have been hard pressed to cope with the num-



The venue for our monthly meeting – the white door on the left.

ber of swarms emerging. So please do consider the urban context when considering your position, strategy and practice on swarms. The association can help here.

Queen selection plays a big part in all of the above. We are increasingly of the opinion that local bees are a good thing and we would like to encourage more beekeepers to consider queen rearing, if only at the scale of replacing your own queens with known and desired traits.

There are many good commercial UK suppliers of bees but be aware that some of the stock offered is imported from areas affected by exotic pests like small hive beetle. Exotic pests will almost certainly arrive at some point but when they do it will be through importation of bees, plants or something, as it already has been with Asian hornet and varroa. There is much to recommend home-grown London mongrels.

None of this is easy but we should all strive and help each other to be better beekeepers. This is one of the objectives of the London Beekeepers Association.

Finally, I would like to recommend to anyone who has not taken the Bee Basic exam that doing so is a very good way of consolidating your beekeeping foundation. It will give you confidence and a good foundation for further learning and development. Now is the time to register for this year's revision programme with Howard: please contact education@lbka.org.uk.

Announcements

This is our official place for announcements. If you only read one section of the newsletter, it should be this one!

January Monthly Meeting: All about Wax Moth

Our first meeting of the New Year will be on **Sunday 14th January at 11:00** where we'll be finding out all about the Wax Moth. We will be at our usual venue of Fairley House Junior School, [220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY](#).

The next monthly meeting will be on **11th February** and will be on one of the most popular Monthly Meeting topics: Preparation for beekeeping year and early spring management (including shook swarm).

Monthly Tuesday Socials

Our first Tuesday Social will be on **Tuesday, 30th January** at the Lamb ([94 Lamb's Conduit St, Bloomsbury, WC1N 3LZ](#) from 1830). These will be held in a different (food serving) pub each month. Any suggestions should be emailed to admin@lbka.org.uk.

Courses

We've released our courses. We will be offering two courses.

A Taste of the Honey Bee's World (Sunday 13th May) is a three hour course that will give you an insight into the world of honey bees and beekeeping. It will include opening and inspecting a hive (weather permitting; we provide bee suits). **It is not a full beekeeping course.**

An Introduction of Beekeeping (1st-22nd or 28th-29th April) is our flagship full beekeeping weekend course and one of the most comprehensive beginners' courses available, covering husbandry skills, bee disease and pests, siting apiaries, keeping bees in cities, products of the hive, components of the hive, making frames and beekeeping equipment, thorough lectures and hand-on sessions including inspection of three nearby sets of hives (weather permitting). This course is based on the British Beekeepers Association's "Introduction to Beekeeping" syllabus, but with a focus on keeping bees in an urban environment. It is designed to equip attendees with the basic skills and knowledge that they will need to keep their own bees safely and productively. Attendees will get a beekeeping book, free LBKA membership for a year. . . and mentoring for the rest of the season. It is this mentoring where you'll learn most

Please visit <http://lbka.org.uk/courses.html> for more information.

Build your own nuc box

Would you like to assemble your own Nuc box¹? Elliot – an experienced woodworker and beekeeper – will be running one or more nuc box assembly workshops in

¹Nuc boxes are versatile small hives that have many uses.

the Spring. You will learn basic wood assembly skills and theoretic aspects of bee hive design, such as the importance of "bee space". You can either bring your own flatpack nuc or will be supplied with one. There will be a small charge to cover costs.

If of interest, please e-mail elliott.hodges@lbka.org.uk for further information.

Apiary opportunity

Francesca has a large garden, with plenty of flowers in South West London, Putney. She is keen to have bees in the garden, but does not have the experience to look after them. She would fund the hives, bees etc. in exchange for someone willing to use her space to raise bees. It would be a "dream come true" for her. Please contact elliott.hodges@lbka.org.uk if you're interested.

Old announcements from December

Check our [previous newsletters](#) or contact services@lbka.org.uk for more details.

BBKA assessments It is still not too late to contact Howard on education@lbka.org.uk to register your interest in taking the **BBKA Basic** qualification, **Module 1** or **Module 2**. There is no obligation to actually take it, at this stage.

Membership renewals If you haven't rejoined and would like to, please renew your membership using the personal renewal link that you were sent by email. If you didn't get it (check your spam folder), email me at services@lbka.org.uk and I'll resend it.

Old announcements from November

Graham Winstanley-Hamilton: We are sad to report the passing of Graham Winstanley-Hamilton.

Honey sales opportunity: we're looking for LBKA members who can help fulfil an order for 220 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb jars of liquid honey. Please contact admin@lbka.org.uk if you could supply 50 or more $\frac{1}{2}$ lb jars and could bottle and label them (bottles and labels supplied).

Prizes from the National Honey Show: Well done to John Chapple, Julian Lush and Sara Ward for winning prizes at the National Honey Show, including in the classes that we sponsor. John (an ex-Chair of LBKA) won multiple awards – see the full and official list [here](#).

LBKA education offerings: Please see [last month's newsletter](#) for our education offerings, which include: the microscopy course, help for preparing for the BBKA Basic certificate and help for preparing for the BBKA General Husbandry certificate.

Do you have any announcements?

If you've any announcements for the next issue of LBKA News, please send to Aidan at services@lbka.org.uk.

Last month's Monthly Meeting: Christmas Fun and Games

What happened at our meeting last month.

Martin Hudson
LBKA member

LBKA's monthly meeting in December was held in the midst of a snowstorm – at least in North London – but provided the usual valuable information about beekeeping – but in a fun and challenging way, this time. About 20 members braved the snowy/slushy weather (depending on where they came from) to attend LBKA's annual Christmas Quiz, this time overseen by our own resident Master Beekeeper, LBKA's Education Officer, Howard Nicholls.

Howard admitted that this was the first time that he had attended the December meeting for a number of years, but – true to his own level of beekeeping experience – he set us a howler of a quiz. We arranged ourselves into four teams of five members each and, once we were supplied with sufficient caffeine supplies in the form of tea or coffee, we sat down to be interrogated.

For those of you who couldn't make it (or even those who did!), look at the twenty five questions below, which Howard has kindly provided. The answers are given later in the Newsletter (on p11). Howard gave us a hint, that some answers were given in recent editions of this Newsletter. Richard then suggested that, next year, we should make them all discoverable in the Newsletter, to encourage members to read them in full!

Test yourself by answering these questions (without cheating!). We won't re-allocate the box of chocs which was the prize awarded to the winning team (I suspect they've already been devoured) – but you will be able to give yourself a hearty pat on the back if you get more than 9 out of these 25 questions right!

Here goes:

1. What will be the international queen marking colour for 2019?



The two picture quiz questions.

2. Which non medicinal treatment is recommended for a colony lightly infected with EFB, particularly early in the beekeeping season?
3. State the scientific name for the Greater Wax Moth
4. What is the common name of the pathogen *Aspergillus flavus*?
5. Either in which decade was Brother Adam (a) born or (b) died?
6. Name an English football league team (1st 4 tiers) with the nickname "The Bees".
7. Identify what is wrong in picture A.
8. Name both the Christian names of The Rev. L L Langstroth?
9. Who was the producer of Bee Movie, released in November 2007? He was also the voice for the movie's leading character, Barry the Bee.
10. Beecraft started life as a county newsletter many years ago. Name the county.
11. What is the melting point of beeswax (+/- 5 Centigrade either way).
12. Each antenna of a bee consists of the scape and the flagellum which is segmented along its entire length. How many segments does the flagellum of the queen have?
13. In which segment of the abdomen is the Nasonov Gland?
14. Name a honey that has thixotropic properties.
15. Identify what is wrong in picture B.

16. Spell *****? (the severe allergic reaction suffered by some to honey-bee stings), which Howard pronounced.
17. Who is regarded as the inventor of the Queen Excluder?
18. Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) was founded in 1964 by Beowulf Cooper. What was its original name?
19. AFB and EFB are diseases notifiable by statute. What is the full title of the legislation?
20. As a beekeeper what would you be doing if you were "nadiring"?
21. What is Capt. J E Hetherington's contribution to practical beekeeping?
22. Who discovered Parthenogenesis?
23. The quadrate plate is part of which apparatus?
24. "The Bees", is a best selling book by the author Laline Paull. What is the heroine Flora's hive number?
25. Who founded the Bee Research Association in 1949, later to become the International Bee Research Association in 1976, often known simply as IBRA?

As you might imagine, at the end of his 25 questions, we pleaded with Howard for a 'comfort break' and, after replenishing our refreshments for a few minutes, Howard gave us the answers. The winning team got nine answers right, and the others got between 5 and 7. No names, no colony drill!

December in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

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. Woodpecker damage is more likely to occur when the ground is hard as they cannot find insects in the earth and so can turn their attention to beehives.

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. Hopefully we all treated

with Oxalic Acid in December but, if not, it is not too late. 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.

Check ventilation

If the air vents are blocked then ventilation will be impeded, leading to internal damp. Cold does not kill bees but damp does!

Wax moth

Check stored frames for evidence of wax moth infestation.

Food stores

If the colony went into the winter with the recommended 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 will move when the bees get going in spring and ready assembled equipment keeps the beekeeper ahead of any eventuality. Some suppliers have a January sale so it is still worth checking out the websites. Winter is a far better time to buy equipment than in May or June.

Site location

Those members who are looking to acquire bees for the first time this spring should try to find a suitable site now so that all is in situ for when the bees arrive. It is not a good idea to have bees on their way and still be trying to find a suitable location.

Site relocation

January is a good time to relocate a hive as the bees are not flying. Relocation within the apiary or within a 3 mile radius can be done at this time but better to check the weather and do this when there is going to be a severe cold spell for at least 1 week after the move.

Candles and honey recipes

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

LBKA events

Keep in touch with others via monthly meetings and winter lectures. LBKA has its 2018 programme of monthly meeting topics on the website and it is well worth making the effort to attend. We try to make these as interesting and useful as possible although the primary purpose of the monthly meetings are social whereby we keep in contact with each other and share collective beekeeping experience.

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 and BBKA news are substantial resources. If you do not currently subscribe to Beecraft then January is the ideal month to take out an annual subscription as it runs on a calendar year basis.

The LBKA is running a Module revision course for 3 evenings in late January and early February. This year it is Module 2. If you already have the BBKA Basic and are interested in learning this Module please let me know by email as soon as possible.

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year.

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

Bee friendly gardening New Year's resolutions

This month's forage blog takes a different direction. There's not much to write about in terms of seasonal forage for bees in the depths of winter when little is in flower and our bees are dormant so for a change my blog takes a look at what we can do to make our gardens better environments for bees all year round going forward into a new year.



Helianthus, the best garden plant for attracting bees



Bellflower, the sole pollen source for Bell Flower Scissor Bee and Harebell Blunthorn Bee

Create Habitat for bees

Bees need places to forage and find pollen, nectar, water and propolis and this can be done by planting the right types of flowers for them and incorporating a small water feature into your garden where bees can gather water.

Another sort of habitat bees need is nesting habitat where they can raise their offspring. For Honey bees this is a hive but for other bees this can be piles of decaying logs for them to excavate a nest burrow, a patch of sandy soil or clay bank for mining bees to dig out a nest tunnel or bundles of hollow plant stems and cardboard tubes for the likes of mason and leafcutter bees. These nesting habitats can be conveniently catered for in the form of the many pre-fabricated bee nesting boxes available from garden centres and online shops or you can make your own [see my guide](#) how to make homes for solitary bees here.

Other ideas you could try include making a nesting cylinder for ground nesting bees. You need to invest in a sheet of perforated metal sheeting which you bring together at the ends and fasten together with nuts and bolts to form a cylinder. This is then filled with sand or free draining soil to provide a medium which bees



Oregano, the best butterfly plant. The awesome bee-attracting plant also supports other common and scarce species



Cirsium (thistles) are the highest yielding UK native nectar plants and super-important bee forage. Here one is being visited by a male longhorn beetle Retpela maculata.



Knapweed, one of the highest yielding nectar plants. Its cultivated cousin Montana is equally as good and has a very long flowering period lasting all spring through to autumn.



Golden rod Solidago, the only plant I've ever seen Sharp Tailed Bees frequent

can burrow into. This design allows bees to nest in the top of the planter by burrowing downwards but they can potentially also excavate lateral burrows entering through the many perforated holes in the metal sheet. Try using soft and sharp sand, cactus compost or John Innes loam based soil with added sand. You can plant drought tolerant flowering plants in the top too to provide cover as some bees prefer some vegetation cover near their nests whilst others prefer a more open aspect.

Lastly the final habitat that bees need is over wintering habitat. For bumble bees this is often a shallow hollow excavated in dry soil beneath tufts of grass or piles of decaying vegetation, compost heaps or hollow plant stems for solitary bees. Try not cutting back all your herbaceous perennials in autumn, so leaving some stems intact for insects to hibernate inside the hollow stems. Many solitary bees over winter in their nest chambers.

Plant useful things in your garden

My gardening mantra is either the bees can eat it or we can. If a plant can't fulfil either of these two requirements then it doesn't get a look in! Of course most of the things that we can eat are also beneficial to bees and other pollinators as the majority of vegetables do also flower and the fruits we eat need the bees to pollinate them.

Plant the best plants for bees

Not all flowers are equally attractive or beneficial to bees and other pollinators. Attractiveness and benefit to pollinators varies a great deal with some plants being 100 times more attractive and useful than the worst. To complicate things not all plants are equally beneficial to all insects due to the shape and morphology of the blooms which may prevent all but a few dedicated visiting bees whilst others contain toxins, the effects of which only certain bee species are immune. Great examples are the foxglove *Digitalis Purpurea*, Comfrey *Symphytum officinalis* and Everlasting Pea *Lathyrus latifolia* which are among the top 10 UK plants for



Holly, the Male plants are coming into flower now and will continue through spring when the separate female trees also bloom.

sugar content in their nectar and the amount of nectar produced per hectare (kg of sugar/ha/year). These 3 plants should be a magnet for all bees having the greatest rewarding nectars among British plants. However Fox Glove and Comfrey are plants with deep tubular flowers which prevent all but the longest tongues from accessing their nectar, meanwhile Everlasting Pea has both a deep nectary and tightly lipped flowers which require a long tongued bee with a robust body to enter.

Bulking up your gardens by planting the most attractive and beneficial plants for a broad range of insects will provide the most benefit to pollinators whilst adding plants which are attractive or of benefit to only a small number of species helps provide food for more fussy specialists – often the species most at risk. There are many bees which are not generalist and will only feed their offspring pollen from a small number or a single species of plant. Plant a mixture of broadly attractive and specialist plants and choose plants which will offer flowers over a long season or plan a succession of flower types throughout the season. See the tables on pages 9 and 10. There are lots more planting suggestions on my [plants for pollinators](#) pages along with download guides for plants for different types of bees. There are also lots of resources on the [LBKA website](#).

Reduce your reliance on pesticides

Pesticides do have their place but only as a final resort once other means of defeating pests and disease have been exhausted. Try mulching with compost and recycling garden waste to feed plants rather than chemical feeds, try companion planting to ward off unwelcome pests and attract beneficial insect predators over chemical sprays. Pesticides find their way into pollen and nectar and accumulate in social bee colonies where they can exhibit a wide range of symptoms including reduced reproductive success, decrease life span of the individual insects, compromise immune response and tolerances to environmental stressors and increase mor-



Solitary bee nest planters.

tality rates. When buying plants for your garden try and find out from the seller or the grower whether neonicotinoid pesticides have been used in the plant's production – these pesticides are harmful to bees and long lived in the plant and surrounding soil meaning they can have effects on wildlife for many years to come.

Stop being so tidy in the garden

Try not to be too much of a compulsive tidy upper in your gardens. Try leaving small hidden away messy areas where vegetation is not cut back and things are left a little wilder. This will act as a refuge for invertebrates which are less tolerant of disturbed areas.

Learn to plan ahead

If you want to provide for pollinators in summer then the time to plan your planting activity is now. Decide what space you have, plan what you intend to grow and start placing orders now so that come spring you can have plants delivered and planted that will flower come summer. Planning ahead is especially important for spring bulbs which are best planted when dormant in autumn, 5-6 months before they will come into flower.

Plant variety	Flowering period	Pollinators attracted
Helenium autumnal ^a	July to October	Honey bee, Lasioglossum bees, Hoverfly, 4 species of Butterfly
Oreganum vulgare ^b or Oreganum onites	June to October	Honey Bee, Lasioglossum bees, Andrena bees, Bumblebee, Melitta bees, Hylaeus bees, Hoverfly, 9 species of Butterfly
Agastache foeniculum ^c	July to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, 4 species of Butterfly, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Hoverfly, Flower Bees
Calamint	July to August	Honey Bee, Bumble Bee, Megachile Bees
Lavender Gross Bleu	July to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, Lasioglossum Bees, Butterfly
Nepeta	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, Megachile Bees, Wool Carder Bee, Flower Bees, Butterfly, Mint Moth, Osmia Bees
Echium vulgare	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebees, Megachile Bees, Osmia Bees, Wool Carder Bee, Flower Bees, Hoplitis adunca, Lasioglossum, Pollen Beetles
Veronica spicata	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees, Hylaeus Bees, Hoverfly, Butterfly
Teucrium hiricanum	June to October	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Flower Bees, Lasioglossum Bees, Hoverfly, Butterfly, Mint Moth, Swollen Thigh Beetles, Pollen Beetles, Wool Carder bees
Sedum Spectable	August to October	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees, Butterfly
Solidago ^d and Golden Rod	July to October	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Xylocopa Large Carpenter Bees, Coelioxys Sharp Tailed Bees, Lasioglossum Bees, Butterfly, Beetles.
Hyssopus	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees
Eryngium	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bee, Hylaeus bees, butterfly, hoverfly, pollen beetles, Solitary wasps
Echinops	June to September	Honey Bee, Bumblebee, Lasioglossum Bees, Hylaeus Bees, solitary wasps
Centaurea ^e (Napweeds and Perennial Cornflower)	May to November	Bumblebees, Lasioglossum Bees, Megachile Bees, Osmia Bees, Hoverfly, Butterfly, Pollen Beetles
Cirsium (thistles) ^f	June to September	Bumblebees, Honey Bee, Andrena Bees, Halictus Bees, Colletes Bees, Flower Bees, Long Horn Beetle, Swollen Thigh Beetle, Pollen Beetle, Butterflies, Solitary wasps

Examples of some of the best plants to attract a broad variety of pollinators. Suggestions based on several years of data collection in studies into flower attractiveness to pollinators conducted by LASI and Rosybee Plants supplemented with results from the Agriland Project along with our own observations over the years in our London Garden.

^aThe most attractive garden plant for bees in 4 years of trials By Rosybee

^bThe most attractive plant for butterflies by LASI and top 10 plants for bees by both LASI and Rosybee trials.

^cThe most attractive plant for bees in trials by LASI.

^dShown by Rosybee trials not to be very attractive to bees however in my own garden I have 3 varieties which attract large numbers of predominantly solitary bees, blue butterflies, solitary wasps, hoverflies and pollinating beetles. On regular visits to the prairie plantings in London's Burges Park and on my regular travels around North America I have witnessed Golden Rod visited by an extraordinary range of pollinators. Solidago is the only plant in my garden on which I have seen sharp tailed bees visit.

^eCentaurea nigra (black napweed) ranked 4th by Agriland project for abundance of nectar produced per Ha and Centaurea montana (perennial cornflower) consistently in top 20 most attractive plants by Rosybee – in addition Centaurea species have long flower season and prolonged usefulness to bees.

^fUK native Plant producing the most nectar according to Agriland Project.

Plant variety	Flowering period	Main benefitting pollinator
Everlasting Pea	May to August	Megachile Bees
Stachys	May to September	Wool carder bee (collects hairs from the plant to carder its nest) Fork tailed flower bee
Bell flowers	May to September	Chelostoma campanularum, Melitta haemorrhoidalis Bumblebees, Honey Bee
Achillea (Yarrow)	May to September	Colletes davisianus wool carder bee (collects hairs from the plant to carder its nest)
Alliums	April to September	Hylaeus Bees Honey Bee, Bumble Bee
Lamium maculatum	March to November	Bumblebees and Hairy Footed Flower Bee
Pulmonaria	March to May	Hairy Footed Flower Bee
Astrantia	April to August	Hylaeus Bees
Asteraceae	April to October	Hylaeus Bees, Colletes bees, Swollen Thigh beetles
Foxglove	April to July	Garden Bumble Bee
Yellow Loosestrife	June to August	Yellow loosestrife Bee Macropis europaeus
Hawksbeard	June to September	Pantaloone bee Dasypoda hirtipes, Red Tailed Bumblebee, Honey Bee, Andrena bees, Osmia Bees

Some examples of plants which are beneficial to specialist species and are a good way to provide for fussy flower visitors to your garden.



Tim lover awarded MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours.

Give no dig gardening a try

Spreading composts and biodegradable mulches onto your soil and allowing worms and other detritivores to take nutrients down into the soil is much more beneficial to most soils over conventional digging in. By refraining from deep digging and only adding organic material to the soil surface we replicate what occurs in nature by creating a nutrient rich, moisture retaining top layer above increasingly mineral based layers of soil. Most plants have the majority of their roots within

the top 30cm of soil, even very large trees seldom have roots penetrating deeper than 2-3 feet and they are mainly for anchorage rather than water and nutritional absorption. The benefit to bees in no deep digging is that solitary species nesting in the soil don't have their burrows disturbed and plants flower better. Digging frequently disturbs the buried seed bank meaning weed species can take hold, whereas no dig gardening results in far less seed bank disturbance and therefore a reduced weed problem. In the United States it has been found that many ground nesting solitary bee populations can triple on no dig farms compared to conventionally tilled crop fields as a result of fewer nest burrows being damaged.

Facebook (In)digest(ion)

Some of the highlights from LBKA's [public facing Facebook page](#).

Eugene Fahy
LBKA Member

Unsurprisingly, this was a very quiet month on the Facebook page although there was a [video from a beekeeper in Kosovo asking for help to identify what was affecting his hives](#). The disease was identified by a number of respondents as American foul brood.

There were a couple of reports of attacks on hives, Angela Wood posted a report of a cruel arson attack on hives in a Manchester college apiary while in Geoff Hood's case, the attacker was *Apodemus Sylvaticus* (a field mouse).

A number of posts suggested people were using the quiet time to catch up on their reading. Geordy Mark posted a [link to a study by the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology](#) which found that one in five UK honey samples contain neonicotinoids. The samples were taken after the EU wide ban came into effect and low level residues pose no threat to human health. Geordy Mark makes the point that as rural honeys are far more likely to be affected, it highlights the quality of London honey.

In another post, he reported that the [RHS is reconsidering its perfect for pollinators accreditation for seeds](#) as many of the varieties are being grown by producers using neonicotinoids.

Norman Carreck shared an [IBRA post about Peter Pavel Glavar, an 18th century Slovenian priest, landowner and beekeeper](#). Glavar started the first beekeeping school in Slovenia, he promoted the use of honey supers above a brood chamber and wrote the first book on beekeeping in the Slovenian language. He is commemorated by Slovenian beekeepers on May 2nd each year in the church that he founded.

Manu Mercado [shared a Scientific American video showing how bee hairs are optimised for pollen collection](#).

Finally, Angela Wood highlighted [a hive product which could provide an alternative to plastic wrap](#). It is cotton fabric dipped in wax which can be moulded around food with the heat of your hands.

Guest Blog

I'd like to feature a guest blog article from a member every week here. If you write a blog, I'd love to be able to reuse your content here (no extra effort for you!) Please let me know on services@lbka.org.uk.

Members' marketplace

This section is for members offering beekeeping items or services to members or requesting items. Items could include nucs, wax and honey. Email services@lbka.org.uk to add something here.

No marketplace items this month.

Upcoming events

Sunday 14th January: Monthly meeting: All about wax moth

11:00-13:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY

Quiz and information about wax moth. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

Tuesday 30th January: Monthly social

18:30 onwards at Lamb, Lamb's Conduit Street

The first of our Monthly Socials will be in the Lamb, Lamb's Conduit Street.

Christmas Quiz – The Answers

Howard Nicholls
education@lbka.org.uk

See questions on page 4.

1. Green.
2. Shook Swarm.
3. Galleria mellonella.
4. Stone Brood.
5. Born 1898 and died 1996.
6. Brentford FC or Barnet FC.
7. Summer starvation (distinctly different from winter starvation).
8. Lorenzo Lorraine.

9. Jerry Seinfeld.
10. Kent.
11. 63.5°C (text books do vary slightly).
12. 11 for a Queen (and for a worker).
13. Abdominal Segment 7.
14. Ling heather honey (*Calluna vulgaris*).
15. Young queen just starting to lay.
16. Anaphylaxis.
17. Abbe Collins in 1865.
18. Village Bee Breeders Association.
19. Bee Diseases and Pests Control (England) Order 2006.
20. Putting a box below the bees instead of above.
21. He introduced wired foundation in 1892.
22. Rev. Dr. J Dzierzon. His paper was published in 1845 but only finally accepted in 1906.
23. It is part of the sting mechanism.
24. 717 (Flora 717).
25. Dr. Eva Crane.

Those who read Sara Ward’s article in last October’s newsletter should have been able to answer question 6. Thank you Sara.

Those who read Sally Haywill’s article in last November’s newsletter should have been able to answer question 20. Thank you Sally.

Committee

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee if you have any questions, requests, suggestions. We are:

- **Chair:** Richard Glassborow, chair@lbka.org.uk
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, treasurer@lbka.org.uk
- **Secretary:** Natalie Cotton, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Forage:** Mark Patterson, forage@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Emily Abbott, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Tristram Sutton, resources@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Vlad Zamfir, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Development:** Simon Saville, development@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentoring@lbka.org.uk

Our website is <http://www.lbka.org.uk/> and the pictures are in the same order as the names above.

