



BEE TALK

Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

SWARM SEASON BEEWARE

The Tuesday evening training sessions for the "Class of '24" started on 7th May at Kings Hill Nurseries. Of the eleven participants, eight had completed ITB this year and three joined us from previous years. We have intentionally kept numbers low to be able to be as vigilant as possible with hygiene practices. The EFB outbreaks of '21 and '23 were heartbreaking, let's hope never to be repeated. The good news is that on 23rd May, our Bee Inspector gave us a clean bill of health!

Of the three sheds on site, one is for storage of all the spare, clean hives and supers, one is used for storing any dirty items before they are cleaned and the third is the immaculate "Steve's Shed". Strictly out of bounds to anyone other than Steve or Richard.

Who betides anyone who dares cross the threshold – as you can see, even the bees know the rules!

The training team:- Steve Poynter, Maggie Curley, Richard Mountney, Chris Price, Nicki Maritz, Andy Threllfall, Francesca Bellingeri and Kirsty Bax.

With Swarm Season well under way it's important we have people on the Swarms Wanted list to ensure our collectors don't end up running out of equipment. You may have seen a request to re-register due to some "technical issues". We believe this is now resolved but, if you intended to be on the list, please double check you are on it. If not, simply re-register from the Members' Area, Swarm section, of the website. If, of course, you are on the list but no longer wish to be, please write to me at wlbk.swarms@btinternet.com.

To keep the season manageable for our dedicated collectors you can help by either becoming a collector yourself or, of course, trying to minimise the chances of your bees swarming.

To become a collector, go to the Members' Area, Swarm section, of the Website and register: <https://www.warleambees.org.uk/swarm-collectors/>

Most swarms collected in our patch will be from our apiaries, therefore, in your weekly inspections, be mindful of overcrowding



Even the bees know to stay out of Steve's shed

and give them space. Note the May Hints and Tips from Clive Joyce on spotting preparations to swarm. If the queen cells appear it's too late for swarm prevention and you are now in the swarm control phase. I'm sure you have your favourite method, Pagden, Vertical, Nucleus or if getting short of equipment the Demaree. If it's your first time, you will find plenty of articles on how to perform one of these.

Richard Pierce
Swarm Co-ordinator

BEEKEEPING TASKS FOR JUNE

Spring was disappointingly wet but warm- which led to large colonies which couldn't get out. Despite swarms, our spring crops are better locally than in some areas of the country. If you were near the rape, things went well. Now the colonies need to survive the June gap (if you have one). We may be in for a flaming June - the brambles are flowering already. After a moderate spring we must hope for a wonderful summer crop of honey and fewer swarms this month.

The new WLBK shirts and sweatshirts are a reason to be cheerful- eight designs in a dozen colours- all with the flower and bee logo. I went for a subtle pink – but many other colours are available! You can order them on the Branch website (read the article on page 5).

This month we need to be vigilant about disease and pests. The wet spring has stressed the colonies, so EFB is a real risk. Know the signs- twisted or discoloured open larvae should cause concern. EFB is high across the country. We are clear in our branch apiary, but know that there have been cases very close. Now is the time to do a disease inspection.

We also need to get behind our Asian Hornet Action Team- led by Bernard Brown and Liz Bates. It is time to monitor for the Asian Hornet and report any sightings.

It is not too late for swarms, and we have to assume queen cells this month mean swarms - not supersedure.



- It's probably too late to take off OSR honey, but if yours is still flowering, put in the clearer boards and book the extraction room.
- Do a full brood disease inspection- ignoring the bees. Look for EFB in particular.
- Keep up the weekly inspections (nine days if you have clipped queens). Look closely for queen cells – they hide in the tightest corners.
- Do artificial swarms, nucs or splits for swarm control if you need to - there is still time for more swarming.
- If you take off a spring crop, make sure colonies have enough stores. There may not be much of a June Gap this year, but colonies can starve after you remove their spring stores.
- Do a varroa count- either using a board or an alcohol roll. The new Varroa information from NBU has a handy video and also instructions for a sugar roll, as well as the levels we aim to stay below.

Jane Medwell, WLBK chair

DON'T GO TO BED WITH... A HORNET

Although I live in town, hornets are regular visitors drinking from our garden pond. They are magnificent insects and surprisingly docile compared with common wasps. As a larger insect they are noisy in flight, which probably alarms people. However, this is a cautionary tale. Hornets and wasps will inhabit bedding, probably attracted by the aroma and warmth. I have been stung by a wasp a few times getting into bed probably because I didn't take enough care when making the bed leaving a wasp trapped under the covers.

Also bear in mind hornets will fly at night and be attracted to bedroom lights if a window is left open. Trapping them in an upturned glass after they have settled is an easy way to remove them.

On this occasion I took the hornet outside and after a drink at our pond it flew off in the usual direction.

Relieved of course that it wasn't an Asian hornet, which may behave in a similar way but are more aggressive.

Mike Townsend



WORLD BEE DAY CELEBRATIONS

World Bee Day was this year on 20th May and WLBK held a couple of events in celebration, one at the Walled Garden, Guys Cliff in Leamington, and the other at Hill Close Gardens in Warwick.

At The Walled Garden, children were delighted by Lottie's new activity – pollen collecting – to add to colouring, making bee life-cycle discs and candle rolling. Thanks to Val and Di, there were over 200 pompoms of different sizes and colours for children to find in the garden and the pollen baskets to strap to their legs to carry it in. There was a pollen colour chart too so children could colour match their pompoms with real pollen. It was hard work to keep up with the buzzing collectors and make sure there was always more pollen to find! But the boy buzzers found putting out the pollen was as much fun as collecting it. They loved to run round and put out more pollen, which gave the grown ups a bit of a rest. Niamh was the first to try out the new game.

As it was World Bee Day even one drone got in on the act. Thanks Chris and for all your work leading the Displays Team.

Then the weekend after the World Bee Day celebrations, some of the shows team were invited to visit Busy Bees Nurseries in Leamington on the Monday.

Lottie's children, Betty and Joseph, had attended the nursery in earlier years and last year she was asked if she would visit and speak with the children about bees. It proved so successful that she was invited once again this year and more of the shows team joined her.

Lottie encouraged the children to colour in pictures, Terry and Joseph showed them how a hive was put together and how the bees did their waggle dance, Betty read to some of the group, Chris Ricketts showed them (and the staff and parents) the observation hive, Pete Benson sold honey and I encouraged the little ones to collect pollen, which we had made from pompoms and to pop the pompoms into their pollen basket, which was an orange bag we attached to their legs – or round their waists if they were very tiny. The children then collected the 'pollen' and took it to the observation hive, to feed the bees!

It was a great couple of hours and the children had a really good time.

We received two thank you letters from the staff, who also made a donation of £20 to the branch. It looks like we'll be back next year!

Judith Masson and Val Dillon



Niamh and Chris Price with their pollen baskets.



CARING FOR THE MARKET HALL BEES

A couple of our members were curious to know how bees in the museum are managed. After all, the hive cannot be opened regularly. However, the bees are on show so observations we normally make at our hives are not so straightforward. Museum staff, who love the bees, are, with my guidance, able to feed them via a cleverly designed concealed feeder and I have been delighted that together we have got them through a difficult winter and spring.

However, I can see we have a failing queen and in anticipation I have been raising a nucleus with a new queen. Installing a new colony also allows me to make a comb change so that we can demonstrate best practice in their management.

To make the change, I remove the hive to my garden in Kenilworth where I populate the hive with the new colony. After removing the hive from the museum, I allow the colony to settle for a few days and then make the changeover. At this stage, a second beekeeper present is very helpful particularly in keeping an eye on the queen to make sure she gets through the changeover undamaged.

I expect to be installing the new colony around the 30 May onwards and would welcome an interested beekeeper joining me and being involved. I would particularly welcome one of our newer members to have the experience of managing the populating of an observation hive.

Please text me on 07983 339612.

Mike Townsend

I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT BUT...

I had heard about **it**, I had even read about **it**, but I had never seen **it**. It has taken one of my more enterprising mentees to actually do **it** and if she hadn't, I wouldn't have believed **it**. So now I'm writing about **it**. Had I shown the initiative to have tried **it**, I could have saved myself both money and time. Grrrrrr!

What is "**it**"? **It** is putting a foundationless frame into a hive and letting the bees make their own comb. No starter strip, Completely bare,. Within 4 days, the frame was a quarter full and with in nine days it was not only complete, but laid up with eggs. Of course, this comb is unreinforced and would need to be handled carefully particularly during the hot weather we are expecting to encounter thanks to climate change, but this was cunningly overcome by the addition of two equally spaced bamboo kebab skewers clamped between the wedge and the top bar at the top and again between the bottom bars. I'm planning on trying this with super frames in the hope that I will be able to withdraw the skewers and create cut comb honey.

This was done at the end of April when the variable weather restricted the bees to barracks and their thoughts were turning towards swarming. We like to think that by giving the bees something to do, it took their minds temporarily off any evil thoughts they may be having.

Bernard Brown



WHY DON'T WE HAVE BRANCH APPAREL?

Our chair, Jane Medwell, on addressing the Sutton Coldfield and North Birmingham Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers at one of their meetings was surrounded by many of their members proudly sporting leisurewear branded with their branch logo. This raised the question as to whether we should do likewise, assuming the interest of our branch members would mirror that of the much smaller membership Sutton Coldfield and North Birmingham Branch. On the committee there was a degree of interest and a number of members also reacted positively.



With the key questions of the how, what it would cost and the associated questions of stock management, having already been posed and answered by Sutton Coldfield, we decided to approach the company they had partnered and worked up a good relationship with to see how we could proceed. The company, Stitch & Print based in Cumbria, have a methodology which appeared particularly attractive to a small membership like ours where the resulting online ordered garments are moderately priced and the key feature of which is that we, Warwick and Leamington, hold no stock and we incur no branch cost (We are aware that BBKA had adopted a different approach and have taken on the stock management issue with their permanent staffing).

Individual garment orders are clearly a matter for each member if they do wish to purchase the WLBKA branded leisurewear.

The next step was to work up the logo that would be embroidered on each ordered item. Currently, the branch has two logos, one that appears in the header of BeeTalk and the other is used on letterheads of the branch. Both were presented to the company and their advice is to use the BeeTalk one, as the other they considered unsuitable as embroidery due to its fine detail. In addition, we must ensure we, on behalf of WBKA, have the copyright to the logo being used and as a result stock images sourced from the internet could be problematic. The BeeTalk version wording shows our key relationship within Warwickshire Beekeepers Association as this is the charity to which we all belong. This also mirrors the Sutton Coldfield approach.

If members wish to look at the range of leisurewear, and it is extensive, the link to the company website is via the branch website (www.warleambees.org.uk). We are not proposing any colour preference and in discussion with Stitch & Print the text can be either black or white depending on the background colour selected when making an order.

Finally, Sutton Coldfield have also arranged, through Stitch & Print, to make available to members embroidered badges that can be sewed to bee suits etc. However, this would need to become a stock item and would incur an initial cost to the branch. No action has been taken on this but any cost incurred would be recovered through a charge of about £3.30 each. How we gauge if there is interest is a problem but if members wish to let me know (secretary@warleambees.org.uk) their view this can be followed up.

Sutton Coldfield have also commissioned Asian Hornet Action Team items and our chair, Jane Medwell, has already ordered items in striking pink (you can see her sporting this on page 2).

Bernard Brown

EQUIPMENT SALE

It's always a great feeling to spread joy and happiness in these troubled times and so it's good to report that as a result of the Branch's 2024 Equipment Sale there are now a goodly number of happy purchasers and vendors. Don't forget that bargains do also come available from time to time on the Articles for Sale and Wanted pages in the membership area of our website

APPEAL FOR WOOL

You'll see from the articles about our recent shows that we have another activity for the children to do, which is collecting pom-poms to represent pollen and putting them into 'pollen sacs' attached to their legs. We've run this activity at 3 events and although we made around 200 pom-poms, the children love collecting them so much that a lot have already been damaged as they stuffed them into their 'pollen sacs'.

Do you have any wool you could give to us to continue this activity please? The colours could range from pale yellow to very dark orange.

If so, could you contact Val Dillon (val.dillon@outlook.com) and I will arrange collection.

FOR SALE

CANDLE MAKING KIT COMPLETE £80
(or will split)

- 2Kg+ of Refined Pure Bees Wax
- 1 x Bain Marie Wax melter
- 1 x Hotplate
- 1 x Wax Refining Pan
- 2 x Skep and Bees Silicon Candle Moulds (Thornes cat TS25)
- 1 x Skep and Bees small Silicon Candle Mould
- 1 x Plain Candle with Bees Silicon Candle Mould (Thornes cat TS45)
- 1 x Gnome Silicon Candle Mould (Thornes cat TS225)
- 1 x Oval 'Hand Made' Vintage style Silicon Mould
- 1 x Octagon Wax Mould Bee on Comb Silicon Mould (Thornes E2016)
- 1 x 5 Bees Wax Bars Mould (Thornes E2005)
- 2 x 3 Circular Cricketer Moulds (Thornes G5111)
- 1 x Silicon Mould Release Spray
- 2 x Reels of Wicks for Candles

Ray Summers
raysummers81@gmail.com

WLBK UPCOMING EVENTS

We have some exciting events coming up at the branch during June, but first we want to remind you about our trip to Thornes in October. We hope to see at one (or all) of these events.

WHAT: A grand day out to Thornes

WHEN: Saturday 12th October 2024

TIME: 7:45am or 8:30am

WLBK has booked a 34 seater coach to take members and friends to Thorne's at Rand in Lincolnshire on the day of the Grand Sale. There will be a trip round the factory, opportunity to buy kit and a visit the museum. Bring a picnic or eat in Thorne's café.

Cost is £25 per person.

Pick up from Johnson's depot in Henley in Arden (free parking) at 7.45am or Kenilworth Railway Station (parking £2.00) at 8.30am.

Return to Kenilworth 5.35pm, and a bit later at Henley. Booking via the website.



WHAT: Asian Hornet trap making workshop

WHEN: Saturday 16th June 2024

WHERE: Kenilworth Senior Citizen's Club, Abbey End, Kenilworth

TIME: 2:15pm

With unconfirmed sightings north of Oxford and in South Warwickshire, your Asian Hornet Action Team consider it prudent, to encourage all members to put traps out now to provide the earliest identification of any arrival of the Asian Hornet here. Various commercial traps are available at cost, but just as effective ones can be fashioned from recycled materials relatively easily and at much lower cost. This trap making workshop will show you how and provide the opportunity to make one for yourself should you so wish.

All you need to bring is an empty 2 litre pop bottle and a sharp pair of scissors and a stanley knife. We will provide the rest of the materials. The workshop will also cover the deployment of traps and their operation and maintenance.

To book a place on the workshop, please complete and submit the form at this [link](#).

WHAT: June Bee Safari – Bernard and Jane Brown's Apiary in Langley

WHEN: Tuesday 18th June 2024

TIME: 7 - 9pm

Bernard and Jane are welcoming members to a safari at their apiary in Langley. If you want to see how Jane and Bernard manage their bees alongside everything else they do for the club and for beekeeping join the safari. If you drive a 4 x 4 you will be able to park at the apiary. If not you can park by the church in Langley and walk up the lane.

Numbers are limited so please book via the website. The location will be shared with those who book. The visit will focus on a seasonal inspection.

Hygiene is important – you must wear a clean bee suit, boots and gloves – no hive tools to be taken into the apiary.

WHAT: Drone Congregation Hunt

WHEN: Saturday 29th June 2024

WHERE: Meet at Cobbs Farm Shop, Kings Lane, Snitterfield, CV37 0QA (plenty of parking)

TIME: 2pm

There is a café at Cobbs Farm and it's a short walk / drive along Kings Lane to a possible DCA. We can also explore the area round the War Memorial and path to Snitterfield. If you have a long fishing rod (roach pole) do bring it. There will be a queen lure.

As with all things Bee success if not guaranteed, come to enjoy the challenge and keep your fingers crossed!

No need to book.

This event is weather-dependent, and will not run if it is wet or very windy. The boys only go cruising in fine weather!

Judith Masson

WLBK NEWS: NEW ROLES AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We have some announcements about members taking over new roles:

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Swarm co-ordinator

Following Chris Price, our Shows and Displays Co-ordinator, stepping down from acting as Swarm Co-ordinator in 2024, we are now very fortunate to have Richard Pierce stepping into this role. Key to the role is the maintenance of the swarm collectors and the swarms wanted listings held in the members area of the branch website. The most important lesson from the Chris Price era is for members on either of these listings to make sure the information is current. If you have received a swarm(s) please make sure your name is removed from the wanted listing. Welcome on board Richard (see page 1 for Richard's swarm email)

Thanks again Chris for managing this activity along with the shows and displays over the last few years. Was there really space in your diary for a full-time job!

Talks co-ordinator

With Paresh Pankhania wishing to hand over this responsibility, our Members Meeting wizard, Judith Masson, has volunteered to add this role to her already busy schedule. Approaches are made to our members individually and to the branch via its website for talks to schools, youth groups, businesses etc. throughout the year. As one of our charitable objects is to educate, we respond by either the individual who has been approached giving a talk or by the branch providing a speaker from our membership. It is the latter approaches that Judith will co-ordinate with our panel of speakers.

Judith has a resource of a substantial library of slides and talking notes covering areas of beekeeping to support individual speakers with talks ranging through various age groups and levels of knowledge. The branch also has OH projectors, PCs and screens to support those giving talks.

Giving talks to the interested on a hobby like beekeeping are both fun and far from challenging. If you wish to add yourself to the panel of talk givers, please let me know (secretary@warleambees.org.uk).

Again, I would like to thank Paresh for taking on this task over the last few years.

Here is the current WLBK membership position for 2024:

Registered	200
Partner	18
Junior	4
Local	25
Total	247

At the close of last year, the branch had 288 members of which 54 didn't renew this year, but we have gained 22 new members.

Of these new members, 10 were from our Introduction to Beekeeping course held in April, 2 were related to current members, some were already keeping bees and had moved into the area, others were currently registered with other branches, but wanted to join us as Local members.

Chris Cox, Branch secretary

Liz Gurney, Membership Secretary

Val Dillon, Treasurer

BEES AND BEAUTY SALONS

What is the connection between Warwick Beekeepers and gel manicures? Strange though it may seem, several Warwickshire beekeepers have been seen headed towards shops and pharmacies to buy devices for setting nail gel, with the more self-conscious opting to use online auction sites. These devices are basically lamps that emit Ultra Violet light, used to set the glossy coloured gels used on fingernails in beauty salons.

Still intrigued? Well it so happens that there are now a number of substances that set when exposed to UV light. In addition to nail gels these include adhesives referred to as 'LOCA' (Liquid Optically Clear Adhesive). These are used in various industrial applications and, for example, to fix and repair the screens of mobile phones.

So what is the connection with beekeeping? The answer lies in current trends in microscopy. In the last few years many local members have taken up microscopy as a fascinating hobby, enabling them to, for example, screen bees for potential disease and parasite problems, and to identify pollen grains found on bees, in hives and in honey, or taken direct from flowers. The shape, size and surface features of pollen grains are specific to the plants from which they are derived. They can therefore be used like 'fingerprints' to identify the plants that bees have been foraging on. Pollen grains vary in size, but most are in the range 20–40µm (20–40 thousandths of a millimetre). Such small structures can only be identified under a microscope capable of magnifications in excess of x100.



Two different makes of LOCA



A nail gel UV source used to set slides made using LOCA

Examination of pollen grains requires making a 'slide' – basically a small rectangle of glass on which a sample is placed and covered with a very thin square or circular glass 'coverslip'. Such a slide may be temporary and discarded (or recycled), or permanent – lasting many years. There are many collections of perfectly preserved slides that are in excess of 100 years old. I, for instance, have slides that I made as a schoolboy in the mid 1960s (I started very young!).

Making permanent slides was traditionally a complex process and required the use of chemicals that are now 'off limits' under modern Health and Safety rules. But enter LOCA, the wonder glue. Some of its many versions (left image) have optical properties (the same refractive index) that are identical to glass slides. This LOCA can be used to glue a coverslip to a slide with no diffraction or interference of the light passing through them, and, significantly, does not require the use of hazardous liquids.

So, back to the nail gel setting device. The image (above) shows a typical UV light source that can be used to set slides made using LOCA. The slides 'set' after 3–5 minutes of exposure to the light (shielded from direct eye contact for safety). They are expected to last for many years and can be filed away for future reference.

Making slides in this way is becoming routine in the practical sessions run for the County Microscopy Group and our members are becoming both confident and competent with this new technology – even if they haven't painted their nails!

Barry Meatyard

Further details of the County Microscopy Group can be found on the [WBKA website](#).

A BRUSH WITH DEATH

Brushing bees can look easy, but developing the right technique requires some knowledge of wax. Use bee brushes with caution. Never scrub bees and don't brush down against uncapped comb. Beekeepers who do not use bee escapes often brush the bees from each frame before extracting. This works if the brush has long, soft bristles and the beekeeper has a delicate touch.

If you look at a honeycomb from the end, you will see that the cells on both sides of the comb are angled upwards. The angle varies among colonies, but it ranges from about 9 to 14 degrees from the horizontal. This shallow V is deep enough to keep liquid nectar from running out of the cells before the bees have a chance to ripen it.

Brushing bees against this angled comb can injure them, but as long as you work completely capped combs, the brush is safe in any direction. But if some of the cells are not capped, the bees' legs and wings can become jammed against the angled-up comb when you brush them. Not only can legs and wings tear off, but delicate bee bodies can be damaged as they scrape against the irregular surfaces of the combs. It's like sanding a piece of wood against the grain or stroking a cat in the wrong direction. Instead of smooth and

silky, it is rough and ragged.

To avoid damaging bees, either invert the frames and brush downwards or, if you don't want to invert the frame, simply brush upwards instead of down.

Some beekeepers brush at an angle, a technique that works well for many, given a little practice.

Regardless of where you are using a bee brush, always flick the bees off the surface. You should never use a bee brush like a floor mop to scrub the bees away. Nothing could be more treacherous. If you gently flick the bees off the frames instead of scrubbing them, the bees will leave and they will be healthy enough to return. It's all in the wrist—several quick flicks will do the job.

Use a goose feather or specially made bee brush. The bristles of, say paint brushes, are generally too short and stiff to be safe for bees. Do your bees a favour and buy the real thing. Bee brushes come in various sizes depending on the number of rows of the bristles. I've always found a single row of bristles to be perfectly adequate.

As with all things bee-related, you must have a good reason to use a bee brush.

Published with the permission of the Honey Bee Suite

WHAT ARE SWARMY BEES?

Selecting queens based on their traits is the most important step in queen raising, however few you raise. Most of us favour traits like thriftiness, gentleness, stability on the comb and bees that don't follow. Other traits are more a matter of preference. Some beekeepers like a very prolific queen, others favour smaller colonies which fit into one brood box. Some like blacker bees, others like a uniform tan.

One trait we are told to avoid is swarminess, but it is not clear what this means. All bees swarm - it is how our favourite superorganism reproduces. A colony preparing to swarm is investing a large part of its resources in a very risky undertaking. Up to 70% of the bees (especially the younger bees) and the queen leave with the swarm, and Tom Seeley says that less than 25% swarms survive through the winter. A colony usually swarms when it is at its peak; in some ways, swarm preparations are a good sign!

However, we don't want colonies to swarm too early or too often. I would not expect a colony to prepare to swarm in the first year of a new queen, but I would expect the colony to make preparations in the second year or, if I am very lucky in the third. It's normal.

Then there is the matter of casts. Tom Seeley suggests that after the prime swarm has gone, multiple queens hatching may result in at least one virgin led cast- probably more. To the beekeeper this

can seem like a colony which "swarms itself to death"- sometimes literally. But multiple queen cells can be controlled by good swarm control. When you split a colony or make up a nuc, if you select one queen cell and remove all the emergency ones raised, then casts won't happen. We know that some colonies are more persistent at making emergency cells than others.

The number of queen cells a colony makes in preparation for swarming seems to be heritable; some make dozens, some just make a sneaky couple. If each cell is a bee-chosen egg which has the best potential to be a queen, then these are a great resource - or a nuisance, depending how you see it. Either way, they can be removed if you choose.

So... to select colonies that are "not swarmy" to raise new queens from, I need to choose a queen (with the qualities I like) who is at least a year old and has not tried to swarm. Or, better still, is two or three years old and has been kept through swarm control (maybe a nuc or pagden). I'd like to have recorded that she produced good crops, placid bees and has been resistant to chalk, sac and CBPV. In the future I might be looking for varroa resistance too. If I have purchased this queen from elsewhere I can't know these things.

So selecting for bees that aren't "swarmy" means making good choices from my own splits and colonies. I think....

Jane Medwell, WLBK Chair

HINTS AND TIPS

Whilst most beekeepers will want to use wired foundation to give super frames more strength during extraction, unwired frames make it easy to remove newly drawn and filled combs for sale as cut comb. It is best to remove them as soon as they are capped to avoid staining as bees walk over them. Put the cut comb in the freezer to kill any wax moth before it has chance to ruin it. Then you have the perfect entry for the coming **HONEY SHOW!**

To help to minimise transference of infections remember to have a bucket of washing soda available during inspections. A solution of 1kg washing soda to 5Litres of water with a use by date of a month is ideal to clean hive tools and gloves between each colony.

It is best not to open a colony to look for a virgin queen. Be patient and leave for at least a couple of weeks to give her chance to mate and begin to lay. Virgin queens may panic and fly off if the brood chamber is disturbed.

New supers can be added to the top of the stack(over-supering) or next to the brood box (under-supering) Over- supering means that heavy lifting is avoided but under- supering is better if you want wax drawn quickly, as the heat from the brood nest, immediately below, helps the wax builders to construct comb. Research indicates that the bees don't really mind.... so choose which is best for you!



If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to h.essex211@gmail.com

Helen Essex

The editor of Bee Talk is Tanya Weaver.
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