



Bath BEEkeepers NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 5
MAY 2024



HELLO AND WELCOME



Hopefully May will bring us some warmer weather and less rain, especially as this is a busy month for beekeepers. With the swarm season upon us this keeps us on our toes. Although sometimes we just need to observe our bees and just watch what they are doing outside of the hive, as this can sometimes indicate if things are not right, it's also important to make sure you look out for diseases. This month we look briefly at non-reportable diseases and next month we'll cover reportable diseases. With everything else starting up it is also the show season and we really need volunteers to come and support these events. Please see dates we need support with over the page.

ACTIVITIES – NON REPORTABLE BROOD DISEASES

Chalkbrood is a fungal disease caused by *Ascosphaera apis*, which affects developing honey bee brood. The signs of chalkbrood are either spongy, white larvae or older, dried, hard, white larvae in uncapped cells which signals the need for urgent action. Chalkbrood is fatal to infected larvae and can result in a decline in bee numbers and honey production. It does not typically cause the demise of a colony. However, it can be problematic and the most common treatment for recurring chalkbrood is to requeen the colony from a hygienic stock, as some strains of honey bee are naturally more resistant to chalkbrood than others. [Click link for more information on chalkbrood](#)

Sacbrood is a viral disease which, can lead to death of brood. Larvae become infected with the sacbrood virus when they ingest brood food fed to them by infected nurse bees. Larvae that have become infected with sacbrood fail to pupate and die just after capping. It is common to find uncapped cells containing larvae that have died from sacbrood as the bees will uncap the cells and attempt to remove the diseased larvae. The infected larvae will be upturned in their cells, lose their pearly white colour and turn yellow during the first

stages of decomposition, finally turning brown when the skin toughens up and the sac becomes filled with fluid. During the later stages of decomposition, the larvae remains begin to dry out and rot down into a dry, dark scale. If you rupture the sac you will find the contents to be a granular, brownish liquid and more-or-less watery depending on the state of decomposition of the larva. [Click link for more Sacbrood information](#)

Bald Brood and Wax Moth. Wax moth larvae feed off honey comb and as they tunnel below the cappings they cause them to become damaged and pupae to be exposed. This results in bald brood whereby honey bee pupae continue to develop in uncapped cells. Dark, older wax combs are

particularly at risk of supporting wax moth infestation and can suffer the most damage as larvae is reliant on impurities within the wax for their development so new pure wax is reported to stunt development of wax moth larvae

Bald brood is a common disorder in which honey bee pupae become uncapped and continue development exposed on the frame within the colony. It is thought that Bald brood is caused by both the lesser wax moth, *Achroia grisella*, and greater wax moth, *Galleria mellonella*, when their larvae tunnel under the brood cappings on the comb. [Click link for more information](#)

Varroa: Ensuring our bees are healthy is a priority and this means that we must keep varroa levels in check. manage-

ment of varroa is an ongoing balancing act of keeping the mite levels low enough to prevent them causing damage to bees while minimizing the negative impact of treatment or procedure on the bees. **Mechanical methods**, usually performed in spring, generally involve some kind of brood disruption to remove the mites infesting the capped cells. **Organic acids** and other non-pesticide compounds like thymol can be very effective at reducing varroa levels without the concerns of resistance developing in mites, which can be a problem with traditional pesticides. However, only one of these products can be used when honey supers are in place and this is formic acid. [For more detailed information click link.](#)



CLUB VACANCIES



The club needs someone to take over our treasurer role. Is there someone who is able to take on this role for us?

You'll get a very good handover and the support from all the committee members and you'll be invited to come along to the committee meetings. (committee meets every other month) If you think that you could undertake this really important role please drop a line to Charlotte or Shaun at bath-bka.sec@gmail.com

Dates for Diaries:

- 1 May TA Open Inspections @6.30
- 12 May Holburne Plant sale
- 12 May TA Inspection @ 2.00
- 20 May World Bee Day
- 22 May TA Inspection @ 6.30
- May 24 Basic (Improvers) Practical
- 15 June BBKA Queen Rearing



NEWSLETTER NOTICE BOARD

TA is Open:

The first Teaching Apiary Meeting to inspect the hives on-site will be on Wednesday evening on the 1st May 2024 at 06.30. We look forward to seeing you there.



Bee Book Display: The Bradford library currently has a display of books with bees mentioned within their titles, some are fact and some are fiction. Glenys Lunt recommends "Telling the Bees" by Peggy

Hesketh which is a well written novel, the main character being an elderly beekeeper who describes what, why and how he deals with his hives.



Shows:

The Club needs your support. We are invited to attend various shows which gives us the opportunity to help educate members of the public, promote information about beekeeping and the club. Without your support these important outreach opportunities become very difficult to

undertake. Shows are great days out and a fantastic way to help increase your own beekeeping knowledge while also helping to educating members of the public.

All members are welcome to help out at these events. If you can help at any of these show dates **Please email:** Alison.Hillman@BT Internet.com



Show Dates -Please Help:

- 12 May:** Holbourne Plant Sale
- 8 June:** Queen Charlton Fete
- 9 June:** Kelston Farm Open Day
- 29 June:** Timsbury Village Market
- 6 July:** Hinton Village Show
- 13 July:** Frenchay Flower Show
- 26 July:** ABW Families Day
- 2 August:** ABW Families Day
- 17 August:** British Bird of Prey
- 26 August:** Newton Farm Open Day
- 14 September:** Bathampton Village Show

ACTIVITIES - NO MOW MAY

No Mow May is a conservation initiative that encourages people to stop mowing or mow less often for the month of May creating a habitat that provide resources for our bees and other early pollinator. No Mow May brings a nectar boost to our pollinators across our gardens, parklands and verges throughout the UK. The movement was started in

2019 by conservation charity Plantlife, who is again urging people to keep the mower locked up for another month to allow the [spring plants](#) a chance to set seed before the first cutting, making for healthier, more diverse lawns.

Since the 1930s we have lost nearly **97%** of flower rich meadows and with them are

gone our vital food sources needed by pollinators like bees. **But your lawn can help!** A healthy lawn with some long grass and wildflowers benefits wildlife, tackles pollution and can even lock away carbon below ground. Best of all, to reap these benefits all you have to do is not mow your lawn in May and beyond!



THIS MONTH IN THE HIVE—MAY 2024

The month of May brings good weather and the flying days for our bees increases. As the forage increases nectar and pollen is in abundance. The queen will be reaching her greatest rate of lay and there should be brood across most of the brood box. Colonies should be growing rapidly so watch out for their swarming preparations. Inspect your hive(s) weekly, have a spare hive/nuc box ready with frames and artificially swarm where necessary as their natural impulse is to swarm and

this will need to be managed by you, the beekeeper in order to keep your bees. Also, during May it is often time to start adding supers to give more bee space as necessary and provide room to store honey.

During May:

- ◆ Inspect every 7-9 days for disease, swarming intentions, status of Queen, brood pattern and stores.
- ◆ Check for swarm cells or supercedure cells and take the appropriate action

- ◆ Remember to record what you see happening in each of your hives.
- ◆ Practice good apiary hygiene. Remembering to clean all equipment after use between each hive.
- ◆ Undertake varroa counts
- ◆ If bees show intention to swarm then create artificial swarm
- ◆ Super-up (when bees cover 7 frames, add a super)
- ◆ Unite weak colonies if/where necessary
- ◆ As the bees build make sure there is enough space for the bees

- ◆ If not already marked, this inspection is a good time to find, catch, and if you decide to undertake clip then mark the Queen before hive gets too busy.
- ◆ Maybe put out some swarm lures and catch a swarm.



ACTIVITIES - WORLD BEE DAY 20 MAY 2024



World Bee Day is a day of awareness about the importance of honey bees and why we need to protect them and other such pollinators. Designated by the United Nations, World Bee Day seeks to inform and educate people

about honey bees and their impact on our biodiversity, raise awareness about the harmful effects of pesticides, climate change, and habitat loss on honey bees - and what we can do to reverse this.

World Bee Day is a relatively recent event. This is in response to the ongoing climate change crisis, with more bee species than ever before being reported to be facing extinction in the past 10 years. As a result, the committee of Slovenia appealed to the United Nations in 2017 to honor World Bee Day. In December of the same year, the United

Nations approved the proposal, naming May 20 as International World Bee Day, with the first event taking place in 2018. In 2024 World Bee Day will celebrate its fifth anniversary.

World Bee Day 2024 takes place on Saturday, May 20. The date was chosen by the United Nations in honour of the birthday of Anton Janša, a pioneer of beekeeping in the 18th century.

The public can help bees by planting bee friendly plants in their gardens and encouraging their councils to plant wildflower meadows and leave

grass verges to allow wildflowers to bloom.

During May the BBKA also supports 'No Mow May' where the public are asked to not mow their lawns to allow wildflowers to grow to provide pollen and nectar as food for all pollinating insects. In the UK, May is a busy time for beekeepers who are tending their bees and watching them progress into hopefully strong colonies and often bringing in a spring honey crop depending on the weather and forage available. For more information see link: [BBKA world Bee Day](#)

QUESTION & ANSWERS FROM THE CLUB

Q: Where is the best place to put a swarm trap?

A: Place traps about 150m away from the target hives and if possible up a hill. It is best to place the traps as high as you can (without risking yourself) and south facing. There is evidence that swarm traps containing pheromones are 5 times as effective as traps without the lure.

Q: What do Honey Bees do at night?

A: The bee's usual nighttime activities include keeping the hive warm, cleaning up debris, processing the day's nectar, pollen and/or syrup collection and yes, they also sleep.



Q: Can you move brood frames around in the hive?

A: It is important to put brood frames back into the same place, don't even spin them around. They should go back as you find them, moving frames around in the brood nest disrupts the bees that's why we encourage new beekeepers to number the brood frames so you know the correct order. The bees spend a great amount of time and effort

maintaining bee space. Haphazardly placing comb back in a hive and out of order, increases the work they must do.

Q: What should you do if Supers are only filling in the middle?

A: If the Supers have nothing in the outer frames, it's ok to move the outer frames to the center to encourage the bees to fill the empty ones.

Recipe of the month – Honey Cake



If you have any stories, photos, info that you'd like included please email to:

alison.hillman@btinternet.com

By 20th each month

Ingredients:

- ◆ 250g clear honey, plus about 2 tbsp extra to glaze
- ◆ 225g unsalted butter
- ◆ 100g dark muscovado sugar
- ◆ 3 large eggs, beaten
- ◆ 300g self-raising flour

Method: Preheat oven to fan 140C/ conventional 160C or

gas 3. Butter and line a 20cm round loose bottomed cake tin.

Step 1: Cut the butter into pieces and drop into a pan with the honey and sugar. Melt slowly over a low heat. When the mixture looks quite liquid, increase the heat under the pan and boil for about one minute. Leave to cool for 15-20 minutes, to prevent the eggs cooking when they are mixed in.

Step 2: Beat the eggs into the melted honey mixture using a wooden spoon. Sift the flour

into a bowl then pour in the egg and honey mixture, beating until you have a smooth, runny batter.

Step 3: Pour the batter into the cake tin and bake for 50 - 60 minutes until risen, golden brown and springs back when pressed.

Step 4: Turn cake onto a wire rack. Warm 2 tbsp honey in a small pan and brush over the top of the cake to give a sticky glaze. Will keep for 4-5 days in an air tight tin.