



Leiston & District Beekeepers Association

www.leistonbeekeepers.org

Hello and welcome to spring!

Colonies found at the first examination in the spring to be queenright, with healthy brood and ample reserves of food, will require further attention now. A thorough examination of all the colonies in the apiary should be made.

On this occasion the objects of the examination will be to remove unserviceable combs from the brood chambers, to scrape the frame tops free from propolis and burr comb, to clean the floorboards and to provide extra room if necessary, either in the form of an extension of the brood nest (move or remove dummy board) or of a honey super over a queen excluder.

Removing unserviceable combs. Any of the outer, unoccupied combs in the brood chamber that are mis-shapen or otherwise in bad condition, and no longer fit for brood rearing, should now be removed and replaced by sound drawn combs or by frames fitted with fresh sheets of foundation. These can be obtained from Joyce Taylor email: tayloridgecot@btinternet.com or tel: 01728 746155. If frames of foundation are used, they should be placed on the flanks of the brood nest, but between drawn combs, e.g., in positions 2 or 10 in an 11-frame box or in positions 2 or 9 in a 10-frame box. (Later in the season, any of the remaining combs that are found to be nearing the end of their useful life, because of structural defects, should be moved towards the outer positions with a view to their replacement in the following spring.)

Cleaning the frame tops. The top-bars of the frames should be thoroughly scraped with the hive tool to remove propolis and any ridges of burr comb that would obstruct the bee space between this set of frames and those in the next hive unit to be placed in position above.

SHOWS

We shall be at the Glemham Country Fair on the 13th and 14th June and Heveningham Country Fair on 5th July. These are good events and there should be time to look around and enjoy the days as well - but lots of help is needed. Please let Peter Reader know if you would like to help at either or both the events.

Removing unserviceable combs note the wire showing



Cleaning the floorboards. There used to be a collection of debris on the floorboard of each hive, consisting mainly of dead bees and fragments of cell cappings that have fallen from the combs during the winter. Now that we use mesh floors, the debris falls through. If a spare clean floorboard is available, this can be substituted for the old one under the first hive; the old one, after cleaning, can be used under the next hive, the process being repeated until all the floors have been cleaned.

New Committee for 2009

Chair & County Rep - Joyce Taylor (01728) 746155 email:tayloridgecot@btinternet.com

Secretary - John Blakesley (01502) 478538 email:johnblakesley@fsmail.net

Treasurer - Penny Robertson (01728) 604388 email:probertson@toucansurf.com

Suffolk Show Rep - Laurie Wiseman (01728) 454238 email:laurie.wiseman@tesco.net

Shows - Peter Reader (01728) 830435 email:TheresaReader@aol.com

Newsletters - Mike Mayhew (01502) 723361 email:m.mayhew@btconnect.com

Plus - Chrissie Reeves, Ken MacDonald & Sandy Sutch

Providing extra room. The general condition of the colonies will be known as a result of the thorough examination that has now been made, and their requirements for extra hive room assessed. Colonies with less than six or seven combs of brood will not be in need of extra room at this stage, but those with larger brood nests and brood chambers becoming well filled with bees should now be given room for expansion.

This additional room will consist of a box of drawn super combs, over a queen excluder, for the storage of honey.

Providing a source of water

In the Spring, a colony of bees requires water for preparing brood food from the stores in the combs to feed to the increasing number of larvae in the expanding brood nest. The quantity required is greater than that brought into the hive in the limited amount of nectar normally obtainable in most districts early in the year. The additional amount is obtained from some local source of supply by water-carrying bees. Its collection can be quite a hazardous occupation, particularly in cool, windy weather, if the bees have to go to a pond or open tank, for example, in an exposed situation where they are liable to fall into the water and drown while trying to alight.

It is, therefore, a good plan to provide a shallow and readily accessible source of clean water in a sunny, sheltered place - near the hives but not directly in the line of flight from the entrances where it might become soiled with excreta voided by bees making cleansing flights.

School Farm and Country Fair.

On April 23rd the Suffolk Beekeepers' braved an encounter with 3,500 schoolchildren aged between 7 and 9 years old. The excited children arrive by bus from all over Suffolk to the Suffolk Showground to learn about farming and the countryside. It is surprising how little some of them knew of where their food comes from in what one would regard as a predominantly rural county. This has become an annual event for some years and once again a doughty team of beekeepers assembled to help inform the children (and teachers!) of the importance of bees in the environment. As always the children found the observation hives manned by Leiston Beekeepers fascinating and they were able to



handle beekeeping objects and equipment ably assisted by Ipswich Beekeepers'.

The end result was a lot of hoarse throats but we hope also some better informed children who may in future years as a result of their interest being kindled become beekeepers. If not, at least they will know where the honey they eat comes from and appreciate the value of bees as pollinators in contributing to the fertility of plants.

Joyce Taylor

Preparing for Swarm Control and Supering

Why inspections are carried out every seven days: A queen comes from a fertilised egg as a worker bee does. In both cases the egg hatches after three days into a larva. In the case of the worker the larva is fed for three days with royal jelly and then two days pollen and honey before being sealed into her cell. In the case of the queen the larva is fed five days royal jelly and is then sealed in her special cell. The worker bee emerges about 13 days after being sealed into her cell. The queen emerges eight days after being sealed into her cell. The bees usually swarm on a warm sunny day around midday, very soon after the queen has been sealed into cell, (that is on the eighth/ninth day from egg laying). So to be in front of the swarm you must inspect your bees every seven days from Mid April until the end of July.

When to 'super up'

When the colony has brood on six or seven frames and the bees, when viewed from above are thick on eight or nine frames, this is the time to provide extra space by 'supering up'. Placing a queen excluder on top of the brood chamber then placing a super full of frames with foundation or drawn comb or a mixture of both. If conditions are favourable a week or two later and you find the bees are covering thickly all but the outside frames of the super. This is the cue to place a second super on top of the first.

Later inspections for swarm control

From mid April and assuming you have a spare hive with ten frames of foundation inside it, you can begin. Every seven days the hive is gently smoked, the supers and queen excluder removed and the frames in the brood body are checked for queen cells, **after ensuring that the queen is there or eggs are present. This is most important, the queen or eggs must be present.** Queen cups will probably be there the first time you look - do not panic, not all cups develop into queen cells.

How to check for cells on the frames

The standard way of inspecting the brood box is to remove one of the outside frames, which will probably not contain brood and place it near the hive entrance throughout the inspection. With one frame out there is a space in the brood box; the frames are inspected, one at a time, and then put back into this space. The space thus moves across the brood box. The frames being inspected should be held vertically at all times. In this position the frame is gently shaken while still in the space in the hive, this to dislodge the bees to expose any queen cups/cells. If frames are held horizontally nectar will run out of the cells get the bees excited and you very sticky. All the frames are inspected this way, one by one. If no queen cells are found all the frames are returned to their original positions, the first frame is now replaced and the hive is closed up. A gentle puff or two of smoke every time a frame is taken out is sufficient to calm the bees and stop the smoker going out. More smoke than this can upset the bees and make them difficult to control.

If cells are seen - Do Not Panic!

If queen cells, either sealed or unsealed, are found, the bees are preparing to swarm and something needs to be done. Destroying all the cells, sealed and unsealed can thwart these preparations - **remember before destroying any cells the queen or eggs must be seen to be present.** Pushing the hive tool through the cells is usually sufficient. This will set back the swarming preparations for a week and the bees may give up the idea. To go on breaking down the cells should prevent swarming, but sooner or later you will miss a cell or the bees will make a cell from a two day old arvae and the old queen will be gone before the next inspection. For this reason if you find cells for the second time or the first if you want to get it over and done with, you must get your spare hive and carry out an 'artificial swarm procedure'.

Apiary Tour on Saturday 25 July, starting 12 noon

at Penny's in Saxmundham

Apiaries to be visited:-

Penny's, Saxmundham, Laurie's, Aldeburgh,

Association's, Aldringham & John's, Blythburgh

Bring protective gear and a picnic lunch *all welcome* please let John know
(01502) 478538 email:johnblakesley@fsmail.net so we have an idea of numbers

Beginners welcome, protective gear can be provided

The Artificial Swarm Procedure

What is an 'Artificial Swarm'?

To create an artificial swarm you must move the hive from its site to a position three feet to one side, then find and place the queen and the frame she is found on into your spare hive that has been placed on the original site. Within a few hours all the flying bees from the old hive will return to the old site and enter the new hive. the queen will then find herself in a similar position had she swarmed, namely with lost of older flying bees. You have an artificial swarm and a new home.

How to do it - a step by step guide to the 'Artificial Swarm'

- Assuming that the roof, crownboard, super or supers and queen excluder have been removed from the old hive for the inspection. The rest of the old hive - the floor, entrance block, brood box and frames of bees and brood, is picked up and placed some three feet to the side of its old position. the floor and brood box of the new spare hive are placed exactly on the old site with eight or nine frames of drawn comb or foundation.
- You then inspect every frame in the old hive carefully, looking for the queen. If your queen is marked this job is easier, but she must be found. When she is found, she and the frame she is on is placed in the centre of your spare hive. Next a frame of food from the old hive is also placed in your spare hive. Then both these frames should be cleared of bees, carefully inspected and any queen cells sealed or unsealed destroyed. The queen excluder supers, crown board and roof from the old hive are placed on the new hive. Apart from a quick inspection a week later to see if the queen is laying - eggs present - this hive will need no further regular inspection for several weeks.
- Returning to the old hive - this now needs a full inspection. You must select an unsealed cell and record the frame it is on. This will become your new queen. All the other cells sealed or unsealed should be destroyed by removal or crushing with the hive tool. The two frames that have been removed are replaced with a dummy board to block the space left by their removal. There should be enough food in this colony for the bees and it is a good idea to have the entrance block set at its minimum. Seven days later the old hive should be inspected and any queen cells that have been built since the last inspection should be destroyed remembering to keep your selected cell. Now leave alone for three weeks, it can take three or four weeks before the queen is mated and starts to lay. After three weeks check the old hive to see if there are any eggs, larva. if there are no eggs, try again seven days later.
- If all is well you can let the two colonies develop or unite them to form one colony under the control of the new queen.

To Recap:

- Hive is moved three feet to one side.
- Spare hive with eight or nine frames moved to original site.
- Put queen and her frame with a frame of food in new hive any cells on these frames destroyed.
- Old hive, all frames inspected leaving only one selected unsealed cell. This must be recorded.
- Seven days later inspect new hive and destroy all new cells leaving selected cell.
- Leave alone for three weeks.

Looking for a new site for your bees?

Richard Piercy is interested in having hives on his land (12-15 acres) at Old Vicarage, Mitford Road, Benhall, Saxmundham, IP17 1JA.
Telephone: 01728 604966.

Should you charge for collecting a swarm?

It is a service and the public needs to realise that we are not doing it just out of the goodness of our hearts!

£25 is the 'going rate' in Sussex and officially (we still have BBKA insurance cover) the cost is for the materials, petrol, use of basic equipment, frames, foundation, syrup etc.). If you really don't like charging you can always give your fee to the Association or to the BBKA which is a Charity!

Looking for a new site for your bees?

Karen Whitney is interested in having hives on her land (3 + acres) at Carlton, near Rendham
Please get in contact though Penny Robertson on 01728 604388

The 2009 Leiston & District Beekeepers Association

SUMMER PARTY

will be at Sandy's

Further details in next newsletter



Important new NBU Survey - please respond!

The National Bee Unit asks all beekeepers to respond to a questionnaire asking what each does to combat disease. The results will help it devise better beekeeper training. The survey takes approximately five minutes to complete.

Before you start, fetch your records - you will need them!

Then follow the link:

<http://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/public/News/news.cfm>

All answers are strictly confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. The survey is anonymous - so please be honest!

Beekeepers who would like to complete the survey (I hope all of us) but who don't have access to the internet, just ask Andy (or me) and you will be sent a paper copy.

Ambrosia (Invert syrup) for feeding your bees in the winter

Orders to: 01728 720106 or
christopher.bindloss@which.net

No later than 30th June, please.
The price is still under negotiation.

Sat 2 May	Apiary open every Saturday at 2.30pm until 26 th Sept - all welcome - teaching and a social gathering	Leiston & District
Sat 9 May	Creating Nucs; Don Cooper; 2.30 Bring bees for a free <i>Nosema</i> check	Waveney Bee Group At Grange Farm
Sun 10 May	Bee Health Day - Andy Wattam, Regional Bee Inspector, at Dallinghoo Village Hall 10.30 to 4.30 - bring your own lunch	Ipswich & ES Jeremy Quinlan More details on page 2
Wed 20 May	Beginners' Course & other dates in June & July	Waveney Bee Group At Grange Farm
Thu 21 May	Mulberry Farm, Elmswell from 6.30pm	Stowmarket & District
Wed 27 & Thu 28 May	Suffolk Show	SBKA Ian McQueen 01473 420187
Sat 13 Jun	Hive to jar; 2.30pm Mike Learner & Bob Spruce	Waveney Bee Group At Grange Farm
13 th & 14 th June	Glemham Hall	Leiston & District
Sun 14 Jun	New Beekeepers' Day from 10.45 Little College Farm, Creting Hills £15.00 includes refreshments	Stowmarket & District
Sun 21 Jun	Bee Tea at Dallinghoo. Members, prospective beekeepers & families welcome from 2.30pm	Ipswich & ES Jeremy Quinlan Details page 2
Sun 5 Jul	Heveningham Hall	Leiston & District
Sat 11 Jul	Bee Health Day & BBQ from 2.30	Waveney Bee Group At Grange Farm
Sat 18 Jul	Apiary Safari with Andy Wattam, RBI. Start from Dallinghoo Village Hall at 10am. Bring sandwiches	Ipswich & ES Jeremy Quinlan Details page 2
Sat 25 Jul	BBQ at Kizimbani, Bildeston Rd, Combs from 6.30pm	Stowmarket & District
Sat 1 Aug	Annual Honey Show at Bacton Village Fair	Stowmarket & District
Wed 16 Sep	Ten Minute Tips/Forum at St Michael's, Martlesham Heath from 7.30pm	Ipswich & ES Jeremy Quinlan

All members of the five Suffolk Beekeepers' Associations are welcome to attend any or all these meetings

BeeBase - have you registered?

This is the National Bee Units website so carries much useful information. One of the National Audit Office's few criticisms of Defra's bee support was that many beekeepers are not registered so if they have a problem, Bee Inspectors do not know where to find them. I don't think this is true for new beekeepers who are usually pleased to get any help they can but, just to be on the safe side I suggest you register at <http://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/>.