

April Beekeeping Notes ~ written by Pat Allen

At the time of writing the weather remains too cold for lengthy inspections, but you need to keep an eye on stores and **early swarming preparations**. It is a good idea to check the varroa population – put the floor insert in for a week, then remove it and count the varroa. If you have numerous varroa, you still have time to use a varroa treatment before you put the supers on, or use MAQS which can be used with supers on.

- Have your Swarm Control plan ready, and the necessary equipment.
- Super ahead of the bees' needs.
- Get your queens clipped this month (ask for help if you cannot do it yourself).

If a colony is not building up, get a Nosema check done. Be prepared to do a complete comb change if the test proves positive. Ask for help if needed.



EBKA Charity Number: 1031419

April 2017

Romford Division

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Committee Meeting: Wednesday 10th May 7.30, Jim's Place, Collier Row

May meeting: Thursday 4th at 8pm, Chadwick Hall, Gidea Park

Topic : "Using Varroa Treatments – Why & How" - Led by Paul Wiltshire

Also

"Trial Recipes for the Honey show – tasting of cakes brought along by members" - Led by Angela Mander.



Students hive-building: Saturday 13th May, 1.00pm,
The Barn at Thames Chase, Pike Lane, Upminster.

Mainly for students but other members can come along if they are not sure about putting hives together.

AUCTION Saturday 25th March

The auction of Eileen Marrable's equipment went very well, with lively bidding. All items were sold and the total raised was £375. This will be split with £300 going to St Francis Hospice and £75 to Romford Division funds.

Many thanks to Jim McNeill and Terry Watson for sorting out all the items and running the auction so well.

Romford Division Contacts:

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Honey Cakes, Honey Cakes and more Honey Cakes!

Have you sorted your best honey cake recipes yet for the May meeting? Homemade cakes should include honey (of course) with or without fruit to be tasted and judged by all attending the meeting, with the best possibly being chosen for future honey show recipes. I know there are lots of great cake bakers amongst the division so get out your aprons and beaters and get baking for May.

Angela Mander

Swarm Control – by Pat Allen 2nd March 2017

To manage your bees you need to try not to thwart their natural instinct. The swarming season is April-June, although you need to keep an eye on the hive for signs of swarming activity outside this time span.

Check your bees and try to see any signs that they may be preparing to swarm. When the weather becomes warmer the bee colony will increase in size and the bees start to run out of room. They may start to feel the need to produce another queen. Before the new queen emerges the old queen will want to make a new colony elsewhere and will go to another site where scout bees have investigated.

You can artificially swarm your bees. You need to get to know your bees and to be able to identify the queen. To stop swarming separate the queen from the brood and from flying bees. Never shake the frames when looking for the queen as a queen cell could become loosened and you could lose the larvae. Well-developed larvae in the queen cells is an indication of the bees preparing to swarm. If you feel the bees need more room you can give them another super or you can put the super above the crown board if you are undecided.

You need to prepare plans for swarm control. You will need a spare hive for every hive you currently have bees in, also two spare boxes. Approach quietly away from entrance.

Make a space when you go through the colony by removing the frames. Immediately look on the dark side of the frame as the queen likes to stay in the dark. Check the space in the hive where you have removed the frame to check the queen has not gone there.

JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL



Where to get bees?

Be very careful where you get your bees. Below are some reliable sources.

David Rudland: 381 Godstone Road, Whyteleafe, Surrey CR3 0BF 07798 915480 enquire@eastssurreybees.co.uk

Terry Thrussell: Westcott, Bromley Lane, Wellpond Green, Standon SG11 1NW 01279 842367

Douglas Pickford: 01371 870609

Courses

The **Beginners Course** has started, with theory sessions during April. We have 16 students taking part.



For those with a few years experience but who have not yet done it, now is the time to take the **Basic Assessment**. You owe it to your bees – and to your neighbours – to handle the bees well, and taking the Basic will show you what you are doing right and wrong. The Assessment itself is a learning opportunity as this is a practical assessment, just you and the Assessor. The cost is just £20 in 2017. EBKA has an award, the Miss Avey Award, where the candidates obtaining the highest marks in the county get £25 each. This could buy you a super which might hold 30lbs honey, which can be sold at £6 per lb. Not a bad return!

If you are unsure, then apply for the Basic and also book into the EBKA Basic Training Day (details in *The Essex Beekeeper*). This will show you what is expected, and it will give you confidence for the Assessment.