



Romford Division



Apiguard Available

Apiguard was ordered in spring in anticipation of being needed by start-up beekeepers at the end of the Beginners Course. As the course did not run due to Covid-19, this is now spare and available, at the Bulk Buy price of £4.20 per hive.

Pat Allen



THE PEDIGREE OF HONEY

The pedigree of honey

Does not concern the bee;

A clover, any time, to her

Is aristocracy.

by Emily Dickinson

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Websites:

www.ebka.org

romfordbeekeepers.wordpress.com

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Committee Meetings

Short meeting: re Romford Honey Show on Thursday 20th August, 7.30pm, via Zoom.

Main Meeting: Wednesday 9th September, 7.30pm, via Zoom.

September meeting: Thursday 3rd, 8.00pm, via Zoom.

Speaker: Sue Carter

Topic: How to Prepare for Honey Shows



Mini-Nuc 'apiary' in use in Pat's soft fruit patch.

Photo by Pat Allen

MANAGING MINI NUCS – 2nd July 2020

Pat gave a talk explaining the use of mini Nucs. How to prepare and use them and their limitations. The mini Nuc is a small unit which beekeepers use to get the queen bees mated.

Pat explained mini Nucs are good to use because they do not need to have many bees, the Nuc takes up very little space in the apiary and needs very little space to store. Preparation is easy as is the dismantling and its use does not appear to reduce the amount of honey produced.

Disadvantages of mini Nucs are that they are too small to raise a good queen from the beginning and are vulnerable to becoming overheated. Wasps can be a problem if you use the Nuc after June when the wasps are abundant. If you use the Nuc early on in the season before wasps are out and about it is advisable. Badgers can be a threat when using a Nuc as the Nucs are light-weight and can be easily knocked over, likewise, windy conditions can blow over a lightweight one. Therefore, they need to be secured sufficiently. Also do not place the Nuc near to your main colonies as they could be subject to robbing, place away from the main colony to reduce this risk.

To prepare a mini Nuc use starter strips of foundation, align the frame top scallops. The food you should use to feed the bees is fondant as it would not be advisable to use dampened or loose sugar. Have the entrance closed but leave ventilation, so that initially the bees cannot get out. Number your Nucs and make a record.

When collecting bees for your mini Nuc you must ensure the bees are healthy if you are transferring bees for another hive. You need to collect young, queenless bees without drones. The bees can be taken from a super with the help of a smooth sided container, a honey bucket can be of help.

To stock the mini Nuc remove the roof, lift the flap and put queen cell in; close the flap and place it in a cool, dark place until the evening, then replace the roof. In the evening move the Nuc to its final place and open entrance to queen excluder.

It is important to number the Nucs and document this in your records. The Nuc needs to be inspected on the day the queen is expected to emerge, or the day after. Food stores need to be checked and topped up if need be. A weekly inspection should continue until the queen is seen to be laying.

Mini Nucs are a good idea for people who only have one or two colonies and Pat says they are fun.

If anyone would like a Nuc for next year Pat has some for sale which are cheaper than the price from a main supplier.

JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL

August Beekeeping Notes

If March is the most dangerous month for the bees at the beginning of the season, then August is crucial to the bees' survival over winter.

Several members have told me that they lost colonies last winter. This should be a rare occurrence, so I have written some notes on winter preparations (in a separate leaflet as there is not enough space here), which accompanies this newsletter. I hope this will help you to prepare your bees well so that they can take whatever winter throws at them.

Here I will just summarise the jobs for this month. August is busy for us beekeepers. We need to ensure colonies are queenright, remove the honey, ensure the bees have adequate stores for winter, and treat the colonies against varroa. Some of this will spread into September, but don't leave it late to begin.

- **Do a disease inspection.** We have had an outbreak of EFB in our area this year, so this is especially important. Read your books to remind yourself how to do this. If anything does not look right, contact the Bee Inspector (see *The Essex Beekeeper* for contacts), or your mentor, or our Disease Liaison Officers (Paul Wiltshire, Jim McNeill).

- **Remove your honey crop.** Do not take all the honey and in particular, leave the bees with any super combs that have a lot of pollen in them. It will not spin out and will go mouldy in store over winter, and the bees need it. Give the bees back the extracted supers above the crownboard to clear down. Remove them after a week or so and store them for winter. A full National colony will need a brood box and a super for winter.

- **Unite and/or Requeen as appropriate.** The bees will readily accept a new queen this month. You should have decided which queen(s) to go with or to cull, so now is the time to reduce the number of colonies back to a manageable number, leaving you with spare equipment that you can use when the colonies expand next spring.

- **Treat against Varroa.** Get your chosen treatment on as soon as you have removed the honey. Follow the instructions carefully and remember to record what you used and when.

- **Feed the bees.** Assess the amount of stores and feed enough syrup to bring them up to at least 25kgs. A standard brood comb can hold 2.5kg, Langstroth brood about 4kg, Commercial somewhere in between.

Don't forget that the floor insert must be in when feeding and treating, but otherwise take it out.

Pat Allen