



Romford Division

April Beekeeping Notes

Hopefully this month we can get into regular weekly inspections, though we still need to be mindful that we will be destroying the bees' cosy environment, so don't take too long. Some colonies will be making swarming preparations, so make sure your plan and equipment are ready. For an inspection the temperature should be 14°C or above, and preferably sunny. Look first at the entrance – is there purposeful activity and pollen going in?

Always check the stores though there should be good forage out there for the bees by now. Add a super if the colony is strong and the bees are well across the box(es) already on. You can put it over the crownboard and they will go into it if they need it, then you can swap it to under the crownboard.

April is the month to clip the queen's wings if this is something you do. It really does help with swarm control so do consider it. At least mark her. If you have not done this before, do ask an experienced beekeeper to help you. In April it is easier to find the queen as there are not too many bees.

Pat Allen

Friendly Request

Just a reminder for anyone who has an entry to go in the newsletter; please could you make sure I receive your information at least 7 days before the upcoming meeting. I like to try to give Pat a bit of time for printing and proof reading and also give myself time to do any editing that needs to be done. This would be very much appreciated.

Many thanks in advance.

Theresa Caves

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Websites:

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DATES FOR THE DIARY

Committee Meeting: Thursday 13th May 2021, 7.30pm, via Zoom.

Meeting: Thursday May 6th 8.00pm via Zoom.
Topic: Reading the Colony,
Speakers: Martin and Clare, the Buckfast Speakers



*Pink thimbles
 They pucker and swell
 The docile buds of the apple tree
 Waiting for the honey bee
 Dusting pollen from her knees
 As she descends into sweetness
 And suckles on life's stem*



MANAGING MINI-NUCS - 4th March 2021 – *Pat Allen*

The talk explained Mini-nucs and why a beekeeper would use them. How to prepare and use the nuc and its limitations. A Mini-nuc is a small nuc to get the queen mated and is based on a small frame with an inbuilt feed box.

The advantage of using a mini nuc is that you do not use many bees. They are not too large for storing and do not take up much room in the apiary. They are easy to put together and take apart and they do not alter the amount of honey produced.

The disadvantage of using a Mini-nuc is that it is too small to raise a good queen from the beginning. It can possibly overheat, be attacked by wasps, badgers, robbed by full colonies and can be precarious in windy conditions.

To prepare a Mini-nuc use starter strips of foundation, in the Apidea you need to align the frame top scallops, using fondant for food is a good idea, close the entrance but leave ventilation. Keep a record of your nucs.

The bees for the nucs should be young queenless bees without drones, which can be taken from a super in a smooth sided container.

To put the bees in the nuc have the apidea upside down with the floor open, drop the bees inside, close the floor immediately and put the apidea the right way up. Spray the vent with water and put the nuc in a cool, dark place for 24-48 hours.

Open the entrance fully when the queen has emerged and check there is enough food inside, inspect weekly until you see brood. Once sufficient brood is seen the queen is ready for use.

Unite the bees into the full colony, discard any drawn comb, remove any food not consumed and clean nuc ready to be stored closed up in an area that is free from mice.

Mini-nucs are ideal for a beekeeper who only has a few colonies and are easy to use (apparently)!



JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL

Courses 2021:

Beginners: The format and some dates have been changed to fall in with Covid 'rules' and students have been informed. We have 31 students (I thought it was 30 but obviously I cannot count) so it will be challenging. It will be great to get back to some normal beekeeping activity – near normal anyway.

Refreshers: Very soon I shall be contacting those who have expressed interest to arrange some dates for two sessions. These will be **Managing Nucs & Mininucs** and **Comb Changing**. It's not too late to join these groups. There is very likely to be a session on **Honey Extraction** but that will not be before late July.

Pat Allen

Bulk Buys

Frames & Wax: If you have not yet picked up your order from me, please get in touch as soon as possible to arrange collection.

julie.mugglestone@gmail.com 07852 224262

MAQS: If you would like to use MAQS varroa treatment later this year, please let me know how many hives it is for. I will try to negotiate a good price.

Julie Mugglestone