



Romford Division



Dates for the Diary

Committee Meeting: Tuesday 22nd November, 7.30pm, via Zoom.

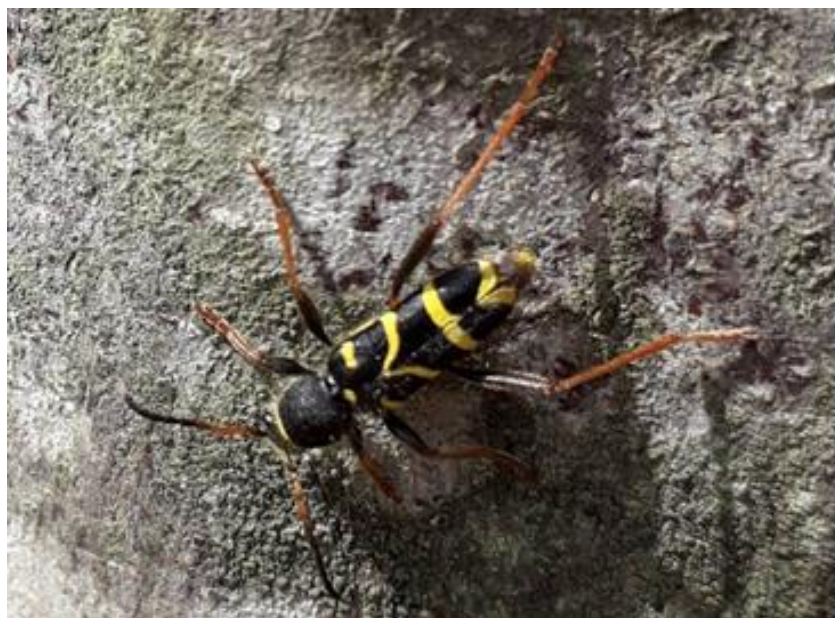
Next Meeting: Thursday 1st December, 20:00

Topic: Christmas Social, Please can members bring food to share for the buffet and their own drinks.

Venue: Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5EL

No Speaker, There will be a quiz so be prepared!

A rather beautiful Wasp Beetle, widespread in the South East of England. Photo: Harry Smith



NOVEMBER Beekeeping Notes

You should have finished settling the bees for winter by now. It is too cold now for them to take syrup, so if they are short of stores you will have to give them fondant.

Make sure you close off the ventilation inside at the top of the hive and put some insulation under the roof. I take out my varroa insert but some people like to leave this in. Be careful that it does not get too damp though, as damp rather than cold will kill bees. Woodpecker guards need to be in place now, and Mouseguards if your entrances are not small enough to prevent entry by mice (less than 9mm high). The hives need to be on paving slabs rather than directly on the ground. Strap them if your apiary is windy.

Sort through the spare supers and combs, discarding any combs that have pollen in them as this will go mouldy over winter (unless you can keep them in a freezer). Also discard any super combs that have had brood in as these will be spoilt by wax moth. Clean up your spare equipment and store it ready for use next year.

Pat Allen

Romford Honey Show 2022

Well done to all those members who entered the show. There were entries for all 22 classes this year. Claire O'Brien returned for this year's judging. It took quite some time for her to sample and find winners from all the various classes. She particularly enjoyed the fudge tasting. The 6 jars of gift honey have been donated to St. Francis Hospice.

The supper, always a good social event, was a choice of take away this year. Fish, Chicken or Burger and enjoyed by all. Claire was available for comments and tips for future showing. Did you miss out? Make 2023 the year you take part.

Angela Mander



Solitary Bees

Ted Benton. 6th October 2022

Most people have no idea about solitary bees, they usually think of bumblebees or honey bees. There are 27–30 species of bumble bees, but we commonly only see about eight of them as others are quite rare. There are 240 different species of solitary bees, however, and Ted found 52 species in his garden in Colchester during lockdown.

With solitary bees the single female bee makes her nest without any workers or helper bees and lays an egg in a cell which she has provisioned with pollen and nectar. The larva develops and hatches as a solitary bee the following year.

With ground nesting bees they dig a burrow and have branches off the burrow which they harden with wax. The egg hatches out and the larva develops in much the same way as a honey bee.

There are seven species of leaf cutter bees. The female bees make their nests in anything like a cane or hollow plant stem which they line with leaves, rolling them up making a shape which is like a cigar. The bee carries pollen on the underside of her abdomen which she deposits in the nest. When there is sufficient food, the bee lays a single egg in the nest then caps off the end with a circular piece of leaf, gluing it together with saliva.

The hairy footed flower bee can be seen in most gardens and green spaces early in the year, late Feb/ March. The female looks rather like a small bumble bee, the male is an orange/brown colour with orange hairs on their middle legs and feet.

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Leafcutter bee on bird's-foot trefoil, Photo: Tony Gunton



Leafcutter bee with leaf, Photo: bramblejungle



The potter flower bee is a digger bee. It is found on the south coast in a very small area and is an endangered species. It is rather like the hairy footed bee but does not have hairy legs. They nest in chalk cliffs.

The mourning bee is a black and white sombre colour. It is like a cuckoo in that it takes over another bee's nest, lays eggs in that nest and reseals the nest. The larvae hatch out and eat all the food which was intended for the host's larvae. It eats not only the host's food, but eats the larvae too and emerges in spring.

Ivy bees are seen on ivy when the plant is in flower. At Woodbridge Ted has seen tens of thousands of ivy bee in the churchyard. They are sometimes called plasterer bees because they make an outer coating on their nests that is waterproof.

Ground nesting bees

Clarke's mining bee is one of the first bees out at the beginning of the year. It does not sting. It is a pretty bee that feeds from the pollen and nectar of early spring flowers, they burrow into the lawn and are sometimes mistaken for flying ants.

Pantaloons bees get their name because the female has large orange pollen sacks on her hind legs, which make her look as if she is indeed wearing pantaloons. The bee sweeps away soil with her leg to help hide the nest.

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Aerial or Cavity nesters

These bees are the ones that are most likely to make nests in the bee hotels we provide in our gardens. They divide the nests into chambers using leaves or mud, depending on the species.

Red mason bees are the best-known bee. The females have what looks like horns, which they use to spread mud in their nests. They like hanging on to plants whilst collecting nectar.

Orange vented mason bees make their nests out of mud and chewed up leaves, they particularly like areas with thistles and knapweed.

Wool carder bees have yellow spots on their abdomens. The female lines the nest with hairs from furry leaves, and the males are very territorial and aggressive. The male has spines on his abdomen that he uses to stab bumblebees and honey bees. Lambs ear plant is a favourite plant of the females because of the hairs on the plant's leaves.

A solitary bee sting is not as bad as a honey bee or bumblebee. The solitary and bumblebee can sting again and again, unlike a honey bee.

Small scissor bees are the smallest British bee. They like the campanula plant and scrape the pollen off using the underside of its abdomen. The campanula plant only makes a small amount of pollen, therefore the bees must make several trips to the plant.

The jewel wasp is a metallic shade of blue/green with red on its second and third pairs of legs. It is a parasitic bee, also known as the emerald cockroach wasp.

Jilly Speakman-Bell

A Christmas Present for Your Bees?

It is hoped that some fondant can be picked up at the National Honey Show. The fondant will be in 1kg bags, priced at about £2.50 per bag. This will be offered to members, first-come, first-served, cash on collection, at the November or December members meeting (details by email after the NHS).

If you only have one or two colonies then you need to share with another beekeeper because one colony should not need a whole kilo bag (after all, you should have fed them enough with syrup already, this is only a top-up).

Julie Mugglestone

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