

Welwyn Beekeepers Newsletter

May 2017

www.welwynbka.org

News

Whilst we are all wondering what is going on with our bees and the weather, we have been active over the last few weeks:

Welwyn Bee Improvement Programme / Social evening

The evening was a success with a very good turnout. Peter Folge (see photo below) informed us all how he would like to implement the bee improvement programme over the coming years.



A brief summary of the programme: Peter researched ways to improve the following characteristics of the bees: gentle, less prone to swarming, increase in honey production. Peter identified the buckfast bees as the optimal bees for this purpose. As a result, the Association and a number of members have committed to purchasing Danish Island Mated Buckfast Queens (so that we know the characteristics we would like to cultivate are in the gene pool).

It is primarily the intention to breed drones from the queens and distribute frames of drone brood to members interested in participating. It is anticipated that drones will mate with native queens and the gene pool will over time change accordingly. Given we do have a number of queens, it is also envisaged that we will breed queens that can then be distributed to members which will further enhance the efforts to change the characteristics over time.

Knebworth Garden Show

A very big "thank you" to everyone who helped out at the recent Herts Garden Show at Knebworth House over the Bank Holiday weekend (see photo of the stand on the right). Particular mention to Peter, Anwen, Ian, Mike, Michael, Nic, Lieva, Mark, David & Sue. It was also good to see so many smiley children after they had made a bee and been given a sunflower to take home. Special thanks to Ann for all her dedication.

It was the first time we had attended this one, so the overall sales figure of £1,570 was extremely encouraging. Thankfully the weather was fairly kind to us and a good day was had by all.

Membership /Website Members Area

The Welwyn Beekeepers Association is steadily growing and we have reached a new high with 117 members! As mentioned before, visit our website, including the Members Area as Andy is continuously updating it with the latest news/items members are looking for or have for sale/purchase. If you need the password drop Andy a line at andyc321@hotmail.com and he will sort it out for you.

A last reminder

World Food Festival WGC
Saturday, May 20, 11 am – 5 pm

Please contact Denys Preedy at denysmpreedy@gmail.com if you have honey to sell and/or can help out on the day.

Next Social Event

Tea Party in the Garden
Saturday, June 24, 2-4 pm

Venue: 6 Deards End Lane,
Knebworth

RSVP Lieva at
welwynbees@gmail.com
Cakes welcome



Members Blog

How about you let us have comments, observations, thoughts about your hives/bees/experiences and share them with the members?

Please provide Gabriela at andyross7@btinternet.com with any comments for publication in the newsletter.

Around the Apiaries

Knebworth Golf Club

See "Training" below

North Mymms Park

Congratulations to Nicola and Wilfrid on the recent birth of their first child William James.

On the bees front, the colonies seem to be waiting for some decent weather and a drop of rain along with most of the county. We hope to be welcoming another two beekeepers to the site shortly once their security clearances have completed.

Watch this space: Ramblers Holidays, Lemsford

We are very pleased to announce that we are in detailed discussions with Ramblers Holidays with regard to setting up another apiary. It is the intention to have an initial 12 hives at the site with the potential of up to 25 hives. We hope to provide you with further information soon.

Thoughts from the Beekeeper

By Peter Folge

From a great spring start to bad weather conditions:- lack of rain and low temperatures have so far prevented trees and plants from yielding nectar and stopped bees from foraging for long periods of time. A warm start allowed colonies to build up quickly only to be suddenly faced with a shortage. Colonies, up to now, have continued to use up food reserves and we must be prepared to start feeding syrup in weeks to come especially if we need new comb to be drawn out. Watch out for swarms on the next warm days as colonies are still building queen cells. We have another 3 weeks for things to change so keeping fingers crossed otherwise we will have a 2017 honey shortage like New Zealand who have had one of the worst springs on record with very low Manuka yields.

Training

Apiary Training

Our Members monthly apiary training sessions will be held at 10.30 every second Saturday in the month at the Knebworth Golf Club Apiary. For information, there will be a training session held at 10.30 on all other Saturdays in the month at the Knebworth Golf Club Apiary. This is primarily aimed for those new members that would like to gain some practical experience before deciding if beekeeping is for them, and those new members who would like some supportive practical training in their early stages of beekeeping.

Forthcoming EVENTS with WBKA involvement

Sat May 20	World Food Festival Welwyn Garden City
Sat & Sun May 27 & 28	Herts Show Herts Count Showground Redbourn
Sat June 17	Welwyn Festival Street Market
Sat June 17	Applecroft School Summer Fete
Sat & Sun July 29&30	Pangshanger Festival of Wildlife
Sat & Sun August 12 & 13	Knebworth Steam, Crafts & Country Life Fair, Knebworth House
Sun October 8	Tewin Orchard Apple Day
Thu – Sun November 16-19	Hatfield House Frost Fair