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BEE ON SNOWDROP (GALLANTHUS SPP.)
NOTE COLOUR OF POLLEN.
PHOTO CHRIS PHILLIPS



CBKA WISH JOHN VERRAN BEST WISHES ON HIS RETIREMENT AS REGIONAL BEE OFFICER FOR THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT
PHOTO BRIAN JONES



THE WBKA STAND AT THIS YEARS BEEKEEPERS CONVENTION AT THE WELSH SHOWGROUND
PHOTO BRIAN JONES

NEXT MEETINGS

(Apiary meetings. Hive inspections weather permitting, otherwise indoors)

Sunday 11th April Club Apiary 2pm Hive assembly / 1st Varroa treatment & colony inspection.

Monday 12th April New Stags Head, Carmarthen 7.30pm Beginners and Association meeting.

Sunday 25th April Club Apiary 2pm Varroa treatment / setting up 2nd hive / hive inspection.

Sunday 9th May Club Apiary 2pm

Monday 10th May New Stags Head, Carmarthen 7.30pm Beginners and Association meeting.

Sunday 23rd May Club Apiary 2pm



THAT IS WHAT I CALL A BIG SMOKER

In a land renowned for 'big things', Barry Pobke's smoker adds a new dimension: imported from America, it was developed in Brazil to pacify Africanised bees, and is shown here against a standard 500g jar of honey.

From the November issue of *The Australian Beekeeper* Their web-site is www.theabk.com.au where you can subscribe online or download a trial issue.

Some interesting reading on their online article page.

Editors note. I always recommend buying a large smoker so that it will not fail when most needed. But perhaps this is taking things a bit too far. BRIAN.

SCIENCE AND BEEKEEPING "OLEIC ACID" The Smell of death

Oleic acid is emitted by the decaying corpses of a number of insects, including bees and *Pogonomyrmex* ants and triggers the instincts of living workers to remove the dead bodies from the hive. If a live bee or ant is daubed with oleic acid, it is dragged off as if it were dead. This is why oleic acid is also sometimes referred as "smell of death". The repellent smell indicates to living insects how to avoid others that have succumbed to disease or places where predators lurk. This "death recognition system" based on a simple fatty acid likely evolved over 400 million years ago.

Occurrence

Triglyceride esters of oleic acid comprise the majority of olive oil, though there may be less than 2.0% as actual free acid in the virgin olive oil, while higher concentrations make the olive oil inedible. It also makes up 41% of peanut oil, 15-20% of grape seed oil, sea buckthorn oil, and sesame oil, and 14% of poppy-seed oil. Oleic acid is the most abundant fatty acid in human adipose tissue.

From Wikipedia

WANTED MORE DRONES



Researchers at Leeds University are beginning a three-year project that will examine whether a lack of mates is making colonies less genetically diverse. The team hopes that providing queens with sufficient numbers of males could protect hives from being wiped out by disease. October 2009

QUEEN MARKING COLOUR FOR 2010 IS BLUE

APRIL – THE FIRST HIVE OPENING

Choose a warm day and ideally wait until most of the flying bees are out and about i.e. not first thing in the morning or last thing at night before opening the hive. It has been quite a long time since the last inspection and if you are like me it is easy to forget what you need, so before you begin make sure you have everything to hand – your bee suit, a well smoking smoker (and spare fuel & lighter), hive tools, queen cage and marker pen, hive record, and also a few new brood frames in case you need to use them. The first inspection is usually a little early for swarm control, but you should be aware that a second box maybe required in the near future.

Get everything in place before you open the hive, the last thing you want is to open up and then find that you need something! When you are ready (suited and booted) and the smoker is puffing cool smoke, smoke the hive – wait a few minutes, then open up.

So what are you looking for?

1. Is the queen present? Don't worry if you actually don't see the queen on the first occasion, the important thing is to find evidence of her. Gently remove each brood frame and check to see whether there are eggs and larvae present – if you see eggs then you know the queen was in the hive up to 3 days before. If however you do see the queen it might be a good idea to mark her. Using your queen cage very carefully encourage her to the centre of a frame, then gently cage her by pushing the cage into the comb – make sure you don't get too many worker bees in with her! Using the marker pen (blue for this year) mark her just behind her head with a large dot of colour. Wait a few moments to allow the paint to dry then release her as soon as possible.
2. Is there enough room? There are two parts to this question
 - (a) Is there enough space for the queen to lay? – just by looking at the brood box you can tell if there is enough space (without lifting out a frame!), if the hive looks full of bees, then it would be advisable to add another box, if it looks half empty then leave alone for a while. At this time of year add a super with frames of either drawn comb or if you don't have any yet, foundation to make a brood space of a brood and a half. If you place it under the original brood box the new brood will keep warmer. Any stores in the old brood box will be moved by the bees to make more space for the queen to lay.
 - (b) Is there enough space for the bees to store incoming nectar? This really falls into line with a) above – if the brood box looks full already then add the super to make the brood box larger, and the bees will move stores around and start to fill the extra space with stores as well as brood. If there is still plenty of space then leave alone for a while.
3. Has the colony got enough food until the next inspection? Always make sure that the colony has enough reserve food of about 9lb (or the equivalent of 2 full brood frames) in case the weather turns cold or wet and the bees are unable to forage. A normal brood frame will have a mixture of stores on the outside, pollen and brood towards the centre – make a rough guess with all the frames with stores as well as brood. Keep the candy on until you are sure stores are being laid down and you have expanded the hive (a bit later on)

Is the colony building up as fast as others? i.e. the one at the associations apiary. The first time you look in count the number of frames containing brood and check this figure week by week. If the brood is building up very slowly you might need to take remedial action i.e. it could be a poor queen so you would need to re-queen the colony, or the colony may have underlying health issues in which case you should consult with a more experienced bee keeper.

Are there any signs of disease or abnormality? It is difficult for a beginner to assess this and by going along to the apiary meetings regularly you will quickly learn what is a healthy looking frame and what isn't. Bee Craft produce a series of apiary guides (laminated) which are very useful to keep handy if you do need to check. Roughly though as mentioned above, a brood frame should, at this stage, be a mixture of stores (whitish wax capped, filled with honey), open cells (with eggs / larvae) and capped larvae (the cappings slightly proud of the frame and in a yellowy wax colour) – there could be some drone cells and the drones have more protruding cappings the same colour as normal capped brood.

Start your hive record – An exercise book is quite good for beginners with just one hive, but you may want to use other methods of keeping a record. Check the “Bee Craft” web site to see their hive record. A hive record is very important especially if you have two or three hives. It is the first thing you look at as you are preparing yourself for the next hive opening and you will take along the equipment needed accordingly.

From the beekeepers point of view the first hive inspection is probably one of the most important and the most exciting of the season. You will have noticed that “the girls” have made it through the winter by their foraging on good days, but now is the time to really check that the queen is strong and performing well. You are also checking to see how the colony is building up, whether it has enough space and stores and whether it looks healthy. It is also a time to do some general housekeeping of your own – removing the dead bees from the floor, checking the equipment for holes / aging and making notes on what you need to do the next time you open up.

FORAGING IN APRIL:

Crocus, Wild garlic, Helebore, Primrose, Willow, Blackthorn, Gorse, Mahonia.

PLANTING FOR YOUR GARDEN (FUTURE FORAGE!)

Sunflowers, Marigolds, Mallow, Buddleia, Asters, Roses, Lavender, Herbs, Fruit trees / bushes.



Oxalis acetosella Common wood Sorrel – This is a pretty white flower 6-9 inches high – the bulbs spread, so plant somewhere where they can reproduce nicely but not take over your border. Garden varieties are available in pinks and mauves. Maureen has been told that this plant is where oxalic acid comes from, so it might be a good natural treatment to help keep the varroa mite numbers down. Indeed Maureen has had this plant in her garden for a while and her bees have very little varroa. Of course this hasn't been clinically proven, but a natural remedy in the fight against varroa is always worth a try!

“A characteristic of members of this genus is that they contain [oxalic acid](#) (whose name references the genus), giving the leaves and flowers a sour taste which can make them refreshing to chew. In very large amounts, oxalic acid may be considered slightly [toxic](#), interfering with proper [digestion](#) and [kidney](#) function.”

From Wikipedia

Notes by Cathy Tansly

If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter, something to sell, some recipes for later in the season, foraging material or just a beekeeping experience please send it to Cathy Tansly cathytansley123@btinternet.com for inclusion in the next newsletter.

COULD SUGAR BE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN 2010

"If British Sugar, the sugar refining monopoly in the UK, does not offer the same price as last year, £27 per tonne instead of their current offer of £26 per tonne, then British farmers will not grow sugar beet next year. It is only a break crop and we could grow more wheat, oilseed rape or field beans to replace it. British consumers would then have to import cane sugar from the tropics at a greater world price." Oliver Woolstonholme, BBC Farming Today, 4th September 2009

**CYMDEITHAS GWENYNWYR SIR BENFRO
PEMBROKESHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

**The Annual Sale of Bees and Beekeeping
Equipment will take place on
SATURDAY May 1st 2010**

at the
**FARMHOUSE BUILDING, WITHYBUSH SHOWGROUND,
HAVERFORDWEST, SA62 4BW**

To commence at 2 p.m. Viewing from 11.00a.m.
Refreshments will be available. Buyers No. System operating.

Enquiries and entries to Tom Pegg Tel: 01437 563392

**CYMDEITHAS GWENYNWYR GLANNAU TEIFI
Teifside Beekeepers Association**

30th Annual Sale on Saturday 8th May, 2010

Sale of Bees and Beekeeping Equipment

The Association welcomes buyers, sellers and
browsers to

Coed-y-Bryn School (Grid Ref. SN354443)

Viewing from 10.00 am, Sale Starts 1.00 pm
Refreshments available throughout the day

Sale entry forms from John Page, Tel: 01545 590515

Sultana & Cherry Honey Cake Recipe sent in by Cathy Tansly**Ingredients:**

4oz butter or margarine	6oz honey
6oz self raising flour	4oz sultanas
2oz chopped cherries	2 eggs
A little milk	

Method:

Pre heat the oven to 300°F / 150°C

Cream the butter or margarine and honey together

Beat the eggs and add alternatively with the sifted flour to the creamed mixture

Add the fruit and enough milk if necessary to give a dropping consistency

Turn into a well greased 7 inch round tin and bake on the middle shelf for 1½ to 1¾ hours in the preheated oven

Remove from the oven, when it feels springy to the touch and a skewer comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool a little then turn out onto a wire cake stand and leave to get cold.

SECRETARIES RAMBLINGS

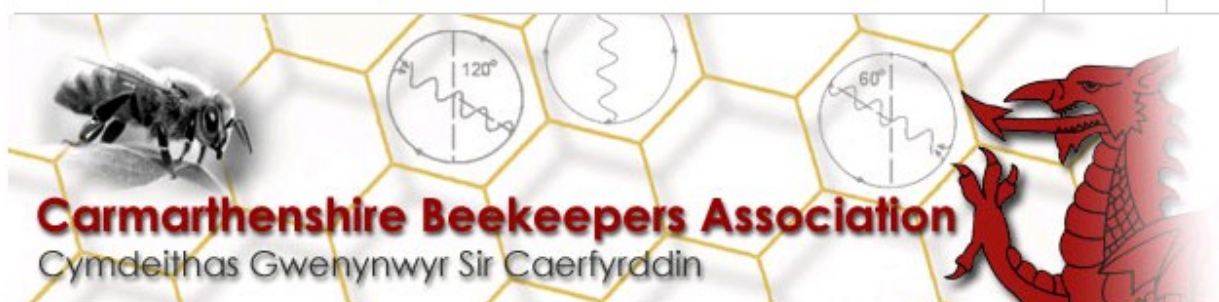
Dear Beekeepers I expect you are all waiting for the spring weather to arrive. As soon as we think there will be a break in the weather it either pours with rain and hailstones or is clear and frosty. Spring is late this year so don't be in a hurry to open those hives. Just make sure they have enough food. Candy can still be fed, and is better than no food. Soon you will be able to give some syrup. Hopefully the weather will improve and there will be enough forage for that boost in the bee population. By now I hope you have cleaned all that old comb from the frames you removed last year and replaced with nice new foundation. Don't forget to treat those frames with Glacial Acetic Acid to kill those Nosema spores and other nasty bugs. Place frames in sealed bags with an old plastic container with about 20ccs of acid for every ten deep frames, a strip of old cloth for a wick and the acid will evaporate. Take care with acids, use goggles and rubber gloves and a mask to be safe. Leave them for a week, then air them for a couple of days to get rid of that chippy smell. They can then be fitted with new foundation and used to replace older combs in your hives. Aim to change about a third of your combs every year.

If you require new beekeeping equipment at good prices our Vice Chairman Chris Phillips is now starting a new business after buying out Martin Hooper bee supplies from Burry Port. If you require a catalogue give Chris an email on info@phillipsbeesupplies.co.uk or go to his website www.phillipsbeesupplies.co.uk

I hope you all enjoyed the Convention this year, I saw many beginners and old friends there. I was unable to attend all the lectures. But those I did attend gave much food for thought. Perhaps we can put some of the advice into practice this coming season. I may not make the next meeting as our grand daughter is being christened on 11th April So if I don't get back from Chichester by Monday my apologies. I'm sure some of the other members will entertain you.

Good beekeeping Brian Jones Hon. Sec. CBKA

P.S. More articles and photos folks. Thanks to Cathy Tansly for her input to this newsletter.



Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association
Cymdeithas Gwenynwyr Sir Caerfyrddin

CARMARTHENSHIRE BEEKEEPERS WEBSITE ADDRESS IS

www.carmarthenshirebeekeepers.org.uk

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association's committee. Whilst every effort is taken in compiling the contents to ensure they are correct and accurate the club assumes no responsibility for any effect from errors or omissions. Editor / Hon. Sec. Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association BRIAN JONES. CWMBURRY HONEY FARM, FERRYSIDE, CARMARTHENSHIRE TEL: 01267 267318 Email: beegeejay2003@yahoo.co.uk