



April Newsletter

Hello Members,

By now, most, if not all of you would have had a look inside your colonies and I hope, like me, your hearts were full at the sight of your bees having survived the winter and with your queen's having began to lay and fill frames with the season's brood. I've been a little bit behind with my prep for this year and already had to quickly finish off and paint a super to add to one of my colonies. As ever, I'm grateful to other members for their help and advice over the winter and into the new season (you know who you are!), without whom I'm sure I'd have been facing a very different reality upon opening up my hives.

Mentoring in such a niche hobby as beekeeping is very important and an experienced hand can help build confidence and avoid costly mistakes that could result in new members being put off the hobby. If you are an experienced keeper and feel you've something to offer a newer member in terms of mentoring please consider attending this seasons inspections and training sessions and get to know some of the clubs beginners. I know they'll be grateful for your time, input and friendship.

With the new season underway Michelle reminded me this week about Ted Hooper's five questions, which I thought might be useful for members (and rusty members) to have a think about before opening up their own hives over the next few weeks, they are:

1. Has the colony sufficient room?
2. Is the queen present and laying the expected quantity of eggs?
3.
 - a) Early Season - is the colony building up in size as fast as other colonies in the apiary?
 - b) Mid Season - are there any queen cells present in the colony?
4. Are there any signs of disease or abnormality?
5. Has the colony sufficient stores to last until the next inspection?

In other new's I was disappointed not to have been able to attend Bob Smiths talk on swarming control and prevention but understand that it was much appreciated by the few who did attend. I am told it was very useful for those new to beekeeping and a good reminder to those more experienced members at our club with much discussion being had. For those that missed it there is a great article in the March BBKA news page 82 and the article in beecraft on pages 18/19 which you may find useful to read and digest.

*****IMPORTANT*****

Apiary Inspections , demonstrations and an availability request:

Michelle and Gary our lovely club apiary managers have put together a schedule of inspection dates and this year for the first time are running a series of 'how to' or demonstration days at the club apiary. Attached to the same email as this newsletter you will find the list of dates and accompanying form which we'd like members to fill in and return indicating their availability to assist with inspections to ease the burden on Michelle and Gary. As ever inspections are open to all so even if you don't want to lead or assist the inspection you are more than welcome as a member to attend, its a great way to meet like minded people, make friends and share your love of beekeeping.

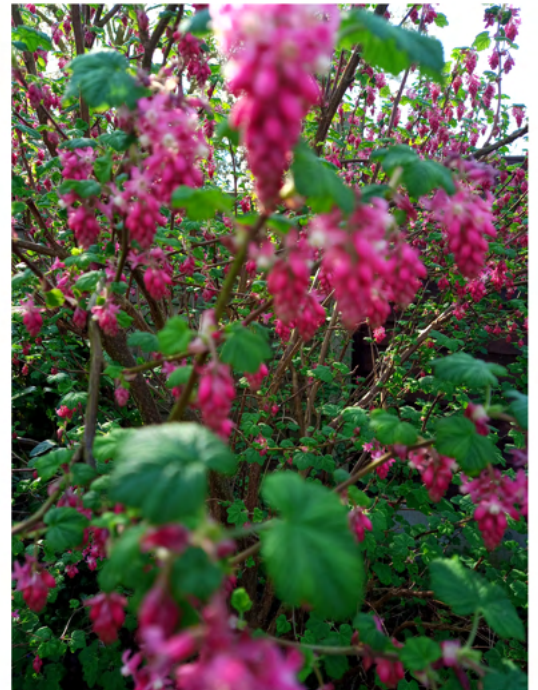


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Lesley's Tips:

Our brilliant club secretary Lesley has collated some information this month on some of the plants our bees will be currently using for forage, so keep your eyes peeled and if you're a keen gardener keep an eye out at your local garden centre and perhaps add a few to your basket, so that our bees may take advantage this time next year.

"Spring has sprung early this year it seems and the bees have been busy collecting pollen from the catkins, crocii, aconites, snowdrops and primroses that will give them a good start for brood raising, however the danger is that few nectar flows have started at present so a careful watch will be needed on colonies to ensure they still have sufficient stores to tide them over. Colonies also use a lot of water brood raising so a source should be available near by and a feed of thin syrup will be beneficial if their stores are low."



A case of Poison!

Just as a word of caution/warning. Gary forwarded me a picture this week (right) of some of his bees, dead having defecated a yellow faeces, Gary suspects that this is a case of poisoning by gardening weedkiller/treatment. If you see something similar with your own bees, this could very well be the issue as the weather improves and people head out into their gardens to start preparing their lawns and plants for the year ahead. Similarly, if you are considering any sorts of treatments for your own garden, do your research about the product you intend to purchase.

