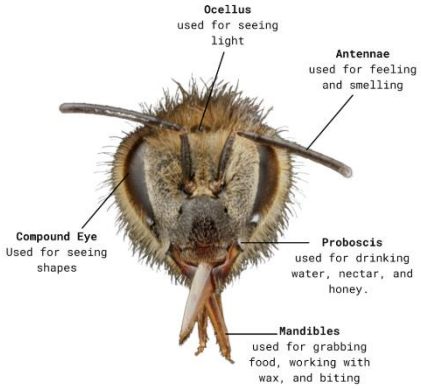
Gravesend Branch Newsletter

March 2025

Varoa meeting

The meeting on bees that are dealing with the varroa mites and requiring no treatment was fascinating and I think some of us who attended will be trying to identify those traits in our colonies.



In March, honey bees in the transitioning out of winter and focusing on brood rearing and readying for spring. They are making the most of the sunny climes and foraging for pollen and nectar. They are also doing a bit of house keeping including disposing of their dead particularly removing from the entrance.

A bit about the honey bee's eyes...

Honey bees have five (yes five) eyes!

They have two large compound eyes and three smaller ocelli eyes situated in the centre of its head.

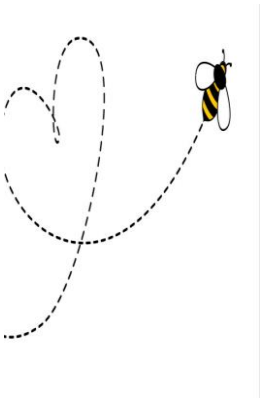
The compound eyes are located on the sides of the head and are made up of thousands of tiny lenses (ommatidia) that each point in a slightly different direction, creating a wide field of vision. Compound eyes help bees detect movement and see patterns, which aids in identifying plant types and other bees. Bees can see colours like blue-green, blue, violet and 'bee purple' due to their ultra violet receptors but they are red blind!

The ocelli eyes are located on the top of the head in a triangular pattern. They are made up of single lens and several sensory cells. Allowing bees to detect light intensity and movement. The Ocelli help bees to judge light intensity, detect movement, maintain stability and navigate.

Bees can also see two types of light that humans cannot, polarised light and Ultra violet (UV) light.

And finally, bees can see things that are close up in greater detail. Isn't that incredible and all that in a tiny head! Mavellous creatures, honey bees.

Branch Lunch



Last Saturdays' branch lunch at Bartellas went very well, good food and company and most enjoyable. Thank you everyone that could be there!

Dates for your diaries...

- Please note the apiary clear up scheduled for Saturday the 22nd has been postponed as the Jeskyn Rangers have been into the apiary and cut back the greenery for us, but no doubt some clearance will be needed later on.
- The disease inspection and discussion for Saturday the 29th of March will go ahead weather permitting, check for whatsapp messages.
- There are still some places left on the taster course if you know anybody who may be interested.