



Gearing up for the Ayr Flower Show

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It is hard to believe that we are once again approaching the time of year when serious consideration has to be given to our contribution to the Ayr Flower Show.

Our Association relies on this show above the many others in which we participate, to raise the awareness of, and educate the general public to the importance of the honey-

bee. It is also an important venue for local beekeepers to show their skills at honey production, candle making and photography. It raises the profile of our Association and highlights the valuable contribution we make to the local community in terms of beekeeping and its associated educational contribution.

The committee will

shortly be meeting to consider what theme/s we can present this year, and welcome ideas from other members, old and new. We also always need volunteers to set up and man our stands, so please give your names to Lindsay or other committee members. Free entry and parking to show as reward for your valued help.

Association Library.

If anyone has come across a book or DVD they think would be of interest, especially to beginners, please let me know. We have funds available to purchase new material. A recently purchased book is "A World without Bees" which will be seen in the library when the new classes com-

mence. A couple of books and a DVD have still to be returned. Everyone please check your shelves. They can be returned any time.

Many thanks.

Conservation : Global and Local



As beekeepers we are all too well aware of the growing problem of trying to conserve the biodiversity of our environment. Species are being lost at an alarming rate according to scientists.

Deforestation affects not only the indigenous people but disrupts water cycles, leading to drought and crop failure thousands of miles away. Harvesting marine crops to extinction

causes a chain reaction which affects numerous other dependent species.

Climate change is the main concern for environmentalists at the moment, but some think not enough attention is being paid to conservation.

Beekeepers know of the problem posed by the overzealous cutting of hedges, mono-planting and loss of field margins. Please encourage friends and family mem-

bers to think of bees and other pollinating insects when planting their summer flowers, and to allow a patch of wilderness somewhere in their garden. Every little helps!

For more information go to www.vanishingbees.com

Bees Return to Kew Gardens.

Honeybees are making a comeback to Kew Gardens as part of a campaign to encourage people to grow bee-friendly flowers in their gardens.

Chief bee advisor for Kew Gardens Tony Smith and horticulturalist Alison Smith have reintroduced some 20,000 honeybees into two new hives at Kew Gardens. Bees in Kew's hives died at the same time as many colonies across the country.

The honeybees at Kew are part of Jordan Cereals' Big Buzz campaign which also includes a give-away of 30,000 lavender and rosemary plants and 5,000 packs of seeds. The cereal company, which has a nature-friendly farming scheme, is calling on the Highways Agency and local councils to make publicly owned land more bee-friendly and plans to teach children about the value of bees through exhibitions.

The campaign is supported by conservation groups, leading bee experts, celebrity chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and London Mayor Boris Johnson.

Research into the decline of honeybees has been boosted this year with an £8m injection of government cash and a £10,000 fund to map the rare British black variety.

Hive Rustlers

Beekeepers stung by pestilence and poor weather are being warned to protect their hives from rustlers as thefts rise to unprecedented levels due to a national shortage of bees.

The sharp decline in Britain's honeybee population following the arrival of varroa mites and two consecutive harsh winters has led to premium prices for top-quality bees and a black market trade in stolen hives.

Experts believe the bees may have been stolen to order, destined for beekeepers whose own hives have failed. Tim Lovett, president of the BBKA said "To steal bees, you have to know what you are doing." Hives are selling for over £200 for a good-quality second-hand hive.

Caroline Davies The Observer 10.5.09

Co-op Plan Bee

Further developments following last month's piece on the co-p donating £10,000 towards research into hardy native bee varieties.

It has now pledged £50,000 for research into possible causes behind the decline of the honeybee, but its 10 point plan also includes prohibiting the use of a group of eight pesticides on own-brand fresh produce; trialling a wildflower seed mix to attract honeybees; and raising awareness of the plight of the UK's bees.

They have suggested a list of ways people can help our honeybees which includes:

- Planting more wildflowers and shrubs, also pots and windowboxes to attract bees.
- Grow a patch of long grass or hang a bee box in your garden so bees can shelter from rain or sudden temperature drops.
- Become a beekeeper or provide space in your garden for a hive.
- Read and learn more about what's happening to bees.
- Don't leave unwashed honey jars outside in recycling boxes. Bees are attracted to them and honey from overseas may contain bacteria and spores that are harmful to our honeybees.

You can learn more about Plan Bee online. A five minute short film is at

www.co-operative.coop/planbee

The co-operative magazine summer 2009.

Email bees5@beinternet.com

Please send in any ideas you may have for improving this newsletter, or any articles you have read which would be of interest to our other reader.

Thanks in anticipation. Suzanne.

Congratulations to all who have passed the recent BBKA modules: Phil, Lindsay and Ian.



We love Honeybees.

Frequently asked Questions

Q: Beginners often ask... when should I put on a super?

A: The general rule for supering is that the bees should never be using all the comb that is available to them. As soon as they get near this state a super should be put on, but remember that the aim is to draw bees from the brood chamber into the super fairly quickly. The beginner will only have foundation in his/her supers and the bees will often not go quickly through a queen excluder to get to a super of foundation. Thus you can put the super on without an excluder. At the next inspection the bees should be established in the super, and be drawing out the wax into comb. The queen can then be found and if she is in the super be put down into the brood chamber and the excluder put in place beneath the super.

Q: What are the rules for moving colonies of bees?

A: The old rule governing the movement of honeybee colonies is as valid today as it ever was: "colonies may be moved under 3 feet or over 3 miles" It is mandatory during the active season, when bees are flying most days. The reason for the rule is fairly easy to find: bees learn the district over which they fly and home on to their hive with complete accuracy, providing the picture of the surrounding area is not altered. The shift of over three miles is always necessary in the active season. If a move of, say, two miles is made, then as soon as the bees fly out half a mile they come across their old known flight pictures and fly home to their former site. A distance greater than three miles may be preferable where the colonies are being moved up or down a narrow, high-sided valley, as their normal flight patterns may extend over greater distances in situations of this sort.

Guide to Bees and Honey. Ted Hooper.