

The Tivvy Buzzette



The newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers ~ April 2019

Tiverton Beekeepers are a branch of The Devon Beekeepers Association. Registered Charity No 270675.

Welcome to the April edition of the Buzzette.

Nosema Evening

A date for your diary: **17th April, start time 6-6.30 pm**

A very different meeting - apart from the fact it starts early i.e. 6.30 rather than 7.30 it is a hands-on practical meeting. As well as covering Nosema this year the meeting will also include a session on building Asian Hornet (AH) monitoring traps and a discussion as to how you can participate in the coordinated Devon AH monitoring scheme.

Why we hold this annual event:

Nosema spores can retain their viability for up to a year (1) and are passed from one generation to another; they are in effect continuously present. Healthy hives can tolerate low levels of spores but at certain times of the year (e.g. in spring and autumn) when bees may be confined to the hive due to the weather, the number of spores can rapidly escalate and give rise to developmental problems. Often there are no outward signs of this acute disease other than a hive fails to thrive. As the spores are microscopic the only real way to positively identify them is by use of a microscope. Your club has two microscopes which we make available to you for this purpose.

The benefits of attending:

If you want to learn about Nosema, the different types of spores, what they look like, how to identify them and how they impact our bees as well as what you can do about it then come to the meeting.

The primary aim the evening is to identify Nosema spores and indicators of potential problems however a lot can be learned about bee anatomy and morphology by examining bees through the microscopes. During the session you will see bees in greater detail, learn how to prepare specimens and slides and how best to examine them using the microscopes.

The club microscopes are an underused resource, if you have an interest in bee anatomy or morphology and wish to use either the low power or high-power microscope then come to the meeting.

How you can get the most out of the meeting:

Although we will have a limited number of dead bees from the club apiary which can be examined under the microscope you will get the most out of the session if you bring some of your own. 10 dead bees are sufficient to examine however a sample of 30 is the minimum for a statistically valid confirmation of a Nosema problem. Obviously, no one likes to kill bees but if you have a hive that is not thriving as well as you would like this may be a sacrifice worth making.

If you choose to collect and dispatch your bees then do this safely a few days before our meeting. Use the guidelines in the tip sheet attached or vary this by using a plastic bag over the hive entrance and collect the bees as they leave. *(continued on next page)*

AH monitoring traps:

We recognise that not everyone is interested in hive Nosema levels. Some may be more worried about Asian Hornets. Accordingly, there will be a practical demonstration of how to build a monitoring trap for AH and some of our more experienced members will show you how to build your own trap and discuss how best to use this for monitoring. The club will provide some of the more difficult to obtain parts but you will need to bring at least one plastic lemonade/green water bottle and a Stanley knife or cutting implement with you on the evening for this session.

We look forward to seeing you on the 17th April

Reference 1: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=191>

Attachment: Tip sheet for Capture and Dispatching

Nosema Testing

Tips for capturing and dispatching you bee sample: -

1. Equipment: - Full bee suit, handful of dry grass, empty container(s), (butter/margarine tub with lid or similar).
2. Choose a warm day when the bees are flying.
3. Using the handful of dry grass, block the hive entrance.
4. Wait until there are at least 30-40 bees pitched around the blocked entrance.
5. Scoop the congregated 25-30 bees into the tub and fit the lid on tightly, and clearly mark with the hive no and your name.
6. Unblock the entrance!!
7. Put the tub c/w bees in the deep freeze where they will quickly die.
8. After 8-10 hours carefully take the lid off the tub and check that the bees are dead.
9. Place tub in fridge or cool place until ready to take to the Nosema testing meeting.

THE GREAT NORTH DEVON ASIAN HORNET HUNT

We have a large area to cover, from Somerset to Cornwall is about 40 miles. From Ilfracombe to north of Okehampton about 30 miles. But more sheep than people. The good news is that the Asian Hornet (AH) prefers to nest in urban areas. This hunt is in two parts. Part one is to find and destroy any queens in the springtime before they can produce large nests. Part two is in the late summer when we will identify the presence of AH workers for the National Bee Unit (NBU) to trace and destroy.

PART ONE - THE SPRING HUNT FOR A QUEEN AH

The theory that supports the Plan - Last autumn a typical AH nest will produce about 350 queens that will hibernate and 90% will not survive. About 35 will come out of hibernation about mid-March and be on the point of starvation. They seek out food and on their own to start to build a Primary nest out of papermaché. A few worker cells are formed, eggs are laid and workers emerge about the end of April. So for the first couple of months the queen is working alone and desperate for food.

The Plan - Last year we became aware of a new liquid bait SUTERRA (also called TRAPPIT). It is very attractive only to wasps and hornets. It is NOT a pesticide. See the DBKA 'BEEKEEPING' magazine for March 2019 (page 43). I have selected seven days beginning 15th April and ask all members to put out a bait point. If you see an AH feeding take a photo if you can and destroy or trap it. If you need help contact me or Martyn Hocking (details below). **We have prepared enough plastic bottles each with 100ml of SUTERRA which will be enough for seven daily**

bait replenishments of two or three teaspoonfuls (10 - 15ml). These are ready for collection from Horestone apiary or from Chris Utting (please 'phone first). Remember to take in the bait at night and if it rains.

PART TWO - THE LATE SUMMER HUNT FOR AH NESTS

The theory - A nest will contain about 6000 workers and they love to feed from honeybee colonies. Workers will be 'hawking' in front of your hives, or flying around flowering ivy looking for other insects as their colony needs meat to feed their larvae from August to November. They will forage up to 700m from the nest. They are still attracted to SUTERRA bait. They are not aggressive away from the nest but do not go near a nest if you find one.

The Plan - Using a butterfly net, squash racquet or prawn net swot one to the ground. Take a photo and keep the specimen. Inform the DEFRA Non Native Species to report the sighting to the www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet online or by email to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk If you want assistance contact me or Martyn Hocking but also let us know of your find.

USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

download Asian Hornet watch App - useful for identification and recording

Monitoring for the Asian Hornet using SUTERRA - page 43 from BEEKEEPING magazine - copy attached

AGRISENSE Technical Data and Material Safety Data Sheets - copies attached

Asian Hornet Coordinators for North Devon Branch of Devon Beekeepers' Association

Chris Utting 01237 474 500 chrisutting@btinternet.com

Martyn Hocking 01271 870 485 martynhocking195@btinternet.com

The Asian Hornet Action Team www.ahat.org.uk - a Torbay based organisation that has organised about 50 coordinators spread across England

BBKA website www.bbka.org shows a map of all the 50 AH coordinators

Somerset BKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Good hunting, Chris Utting and Martyn Hocking 18.3.19

Sale of hives and bee equipment as previously discussed:

1 x used national bee hive complete with bees frames, rapid feeder, mouse guard and queen excluder £160

4 x used national bee hives with frames, rapid feeder, mouse guard and queen excluder £ 60 each

1 x used brood box mesh floor and roof £15

1 x used nuc box and swarm collecting box home made £15

1 x used stainless steel 4 frame honey spinner, 4x 30lb plastic honey buckets. 1x 30lb honey bucket with tap. Nylon double strainer. 2 x rhombus clearing boards complete. 1 mixing bucket for feed £ 150.

48 x new 1lb honey jars with 98 new lids £20 *(continued on next page)*

1 x used smoker £5

1 x new smoker £15

1 x used hooded fencing vest, 1 x used small jacket ,1 x nearly new small leather gauntlet gloves £25

1 x used kids sherif bee suit an leather gloves aged 7-11 years £25

1 x used baby burco boiler to boiling frames £15

As previously discussed I have to give up due to anaphylaxis now to bee sting.

Many thanks

Jacobstowe

Okehampton

01837851510 or 07966782892

From George Purkiss

If you have any interesting articles relating to Bees & Beekeeping, please do not hesitate to forward them to me jon.gubb@voddens.co.uk by the 27th of the month for inclusion in the next months edition of the Buzzette.