



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – August 2021

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

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



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Well it seemed a long time coming, but at last, conditions allowed us to take our display stand out on the road. Well to Knighthayes any way for the Mid Devon Show.

First of all a tremendous huge thank you, not only to the people who helped to set up, attend, and to take down our site, but to the huge number of members who for various reasons were uneasy to attend the show, but contacted me to wish us good luck.

A wonderful gesture, thank you.

Honey sales went very well and despite no live bees being there, our display stands drew a lot of interest and questions. and some new members signing up for our beginners course.

There were also some offers of land available to site colonies for any of our members (details with Jon).

The weather, as usual is always the challenging part of our hobby, but hopefully in the next few weeks we can can organise an event to get us all together and chatting again over tea and cake.

Many, many thanks for you ongoing support.

Malcolm



Tiverton Beekeepers' Branch Members Meeting Programme .

Summer / Autumn 2021

Meeting Programme.

It was good to see some of you at Mid Devon Show and many of you said that you were eager just to meet up again as beekeepers sharing experiences over tea & cake - our favourite pastime! We are hoping to have a bar-b- que in September so we can do just that. It will be good to see you all again. More details to follow soon.

Unfortunately we do not feel confident enough about the Covid situation to start booking meetings at Uplowman Village Hall yet, but we hope to have meetings of some sort either by Zoom or in person on the 3rd Wednesday evening of each month as usual.

When dates and talks have been confirmed we will let you know by email

Tony

Helping out at the Apiary with the beginners practical sessions

Keith, Derek and Malcolm continue with running the beginners practical sessions at the apiary who are in the last few weeks of their course. They would love some help if anyone can spare a couple of hours to support the beginners in their learning. They continue to do this socially distanced in small groups. We have all been beginners at some stage or another in our beekeeping journey. Newbee's are, I'm sure the life blood of any group or club so this is a perfect opportunity to help ours and do a spot of revision at the same time in the craft.

They meet at The Apiary, Knightshayes from 1pm to 3.30pm. The beginners are divided into two groups and they have an hour each 1-2pm and 2.30-3.30pm to comply with Covid19 rules

Please feel free to just turn up and join in if only for a chat and some general bee talk.

Cake is always welcomed of course. Telephone numbers if you want to contact them are:

Malcolm 01884 821927

Derek 07977922173

Keith 01884 254977

Bulk Buying Scheme



My name is Cath Davies and I am taking over from Derek on the Bulk Buying scheme and thanks to Derek for all his hard work but he is now handing over the baton! The aim of the Bulk Buying Scheme is that 100% of the money saved is passed on to our members. No money goes to club funds.

The deadline for all orders will be Friday 13th August 2021

The range will consist of Jars, caps and Ambrosia Syrup, as last year and will include, standard 1lb honey jars, round jars at 1.5oz, 8oz, 12oz and hexagonal at 4oz and 8oz. All jars come with caps but you can order additional caps, for the honey jars only, if required.

HOW TO ORDER Jars and Ambrosia Syrup

Download the Order Form from this 'Tivvy Buzzette' and either email or post it to me.

I would be grateful if everyone could pay by BACS before the collection date and ensure they show their surname as the reference. However, we will still be accepting cheques where necessary on collection.

The club has a good stock of sugar donated from Tesco and Morrisons, available for free to our members, please contact Malcolm Crook, our chairman, Ian, Derek or Tony for further details.

Ambrosia Syrup

People who have used this to feed to their bees in the past have found the convenience and results very beneficial to the bees. Most people used at least one can per hive. This depends upon the colony and the beekeeper. Most colonies require about 20 kg of stores to see them through the winter. This can be made up of their own stores (leaving a super full of honey) and/or giving them syrup, either Ambrosia syrup or your home-made sugar and water syrup (in the ratio 2:1).

The syrup comes in 12.5kg jerry cans and is ideal to feed to your bees after you have taken your honey from the hive and treated for varroa.

Product Information

Ambrosia® bee feed syrup is a liquid ready-made feed with a balanced sugar type spectrum (fructose, dextrose, sucrose), based on beet sugar of the purest quality. The high percentage of fructose and lower portion of glucose prevents the formation of crystals in the honeycombs. The high sugar concentration makes the syrup resistant to microbiological decay. The ideal combination of the sugar type spectrum ensures the bee's optimal use of the nutritional components. The nutrient concentration is approx. 72.7%. 1 kg (or, 1 litre) ambrosia® bee feed syrup is 0.73 kg (1 kg) sugar crystals.

Ambrosia® bee feed syrup is particularly beneficial in the early and later winter feeding:

- its formulation comes the closest to natural Bee feed,
- effortless acceptance and utilization-less inversion work needed,
- conserves the bee's energy balance. Tests showered energetic advantages on a scale of 15 %.
- High resistance to microbiological decay leads to longer shelf life
- Hygienic, time-saving, and practical handling

Collections will be from the address shown on the order form but please let me know if you have any problems, my telephone number is 01884 849377. I look forward to meeting you all! Cath Davies Bulk Purchasing Coordinator.



Honey Harvest

We are getting to the time of the beekeeping year when we can think about taking off our honey crop - if we are lucky enough for our bees to have some to spare ! The Branch has 2 honey extractors which you can borrow to help you through the sticky process.

One is a 9 (super) frame radial extractor, the other is a 4 super frame tangential extractor but will take 2 National brood frames if needed. It also has an in built-in strainer & standing tank.

If you would like to borrow either of them then please contact me either by phone 01884 841257 or email tony.lindsell@btinternet.com.

You will need to collect them from me at Uffculme but there is no charge.



The Branch needs your help.

Looking after our Branch Members over the last 2 years has been a real challenge but Malcolm with a small group of officers has made sure we have been as active as possible. You may have heard that, unfortunately, due to personal commitments Malcolm will be standing down as our Chairman in November. The future offers a lot of exciting opportunities for beekeepers including training of beginners & improvers, managing the Branch Apiary, organising a programme of speakers, producing a monthly newsletter & keeping members updated, promoting bees through our stand at shows and events plus simply keeping the branch ticking over to name just a few.

In order to do all this we need your help on our committee- it doesn't take a lot of time nor do you need to be an experienced beekeeper & it is often good fun. If you are interested in helping (& every little helps) then please have a chat with Malcolm or one of our committee members.

Asian Hornet briefing

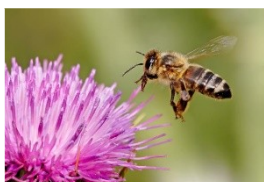
The branch Asian Hornet alert system has been sparsely tested in previous years and has now been shown to be robust. The first communication of 2021 by a member of the public occurred on Sunday 25 July 2021 with the website log recording an entry at 23.09 and my phone being 'pinged' at the same time. I was able to send a holding email reply before talking to the lady concerned on the Monday. Thankfully it was a false alarm, and she was grateful for the prompt response and guidance.

From my conversation with her it became apparent the media and the internet sources are responsible for generating a completely false narrative about insects, danger to health and the plight of bees. The offending insect was a European hornet (*Vespa crabro*) that had flown into her house at night through an open window attracted by the light in her room especially with the curtains not being drawn. This was the first time she had seen a hornet up close and was overcome by the enormity of its size. She thought it was one of the "murder hornets that kill people" as written about in the national press. Most of my resultant discussion was about setting the record straight as the images and lurid tales are about *Vespa mandarinia* (Japanese giant hornet) which is native to East and South Asia, mainland SE Asia, parts of the Russian Far East. There have been 3 sightings in the Pacific Northwest of North America (Seattle, Washington State and British Columbia) 2019 to 2020. She had also formed the opinion, from reading internet material, that all hornets were Asian and their sole purpose was to wantonly kill bees. And by bees she meant exclusively honeybees as journalists do not write about the 269 other UK species.

The upshot is that there is still a large job for us to do as beekeepers to inform and educate the general public about bees, social and solitary, wasps and hornets - all members of the order Hymenoptera. As we move into the mid-summer months with hopefully more warm weather, let's do our best to inform people of the diversity and wonder of the Hymenoptera. Let's talk about the importance of pollination and pollinators – yes wasps are pollinators as much as bees just not on the same scale – native insects and non-native invasive insects so as to produce an informed public response that appreciates biodiversity and the value of these amazing insects.

Please encourage people to report sightings via our Branch website if they think they may have seen an Asian Hornet or are uncertain what they have seen. An image attached to the form is much appreciated as it makes my verification easier and more accurate. I would much rather have 99 sightings of wasps and *V. crabro* and miss the vital sighting because people were unsure whether to contact us.

G Nuttall-Owen AHAT Coordinator



Honeybee *Apis mellifera*

Body length 15mm UK native



Patchwork leafcutter bee *Megachile centuncularis*
Body length 15mm UK native



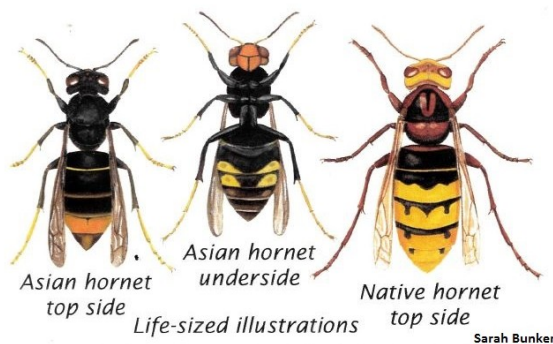
Common Wasp *Vespa vulgaris*
Body length 16 to 19 mm UK native



European Hornet *Vespa Crabro*
Body length 30 to 40mm UK native



Yellow legged Asian Hornet *Vespa velutina*
Body length 25 to 30 mm Non Native Invasive



Around the apiary in August

By Keith Owers



Apis Mellifera on Hypericum Hidcote taken by Hilary Sanders 29/07/2021

What a change in the weather from last month. I am sure our bees have enjoyed the sun but I am not sure they enjoyed the high temperatures. It must be hard work if you were on fan duty in the hive.

This month we should be about harvesting our honey crop. From my own hives it will be a poor harvest, although one or two hives have a reasonable crop. In a year like this the problem tends to be that quite a bit of the honey in the supers has not been capped. As a general rule if you shake a frame with un-capped honey over the hive and very little falls out it is safe to extract providing there is not too much uncapped. A better alternative method, but much slower is to spin the frames before uncapping and collect the honey for immediate home use then uncap the rest in the normal way. For honey to store well the water content wants to be around 17-19%, above this and it will ferment in the jar. To sell it must be below 22%. Should you decide that you do not have enough to make the extractor sticky, one option is to put the super below the brood box, I am told the bees will then move the honey up into the brood box. I have not tried this method myself but I may well do so this year. I do not like to leave supers above the brood box in the winter. It tends to make for mucky supers in the new year when the queen has started to lay in them. This is one of the reasons that I use the bigger brood box of Langstroth hives. This gives extra space for the bees to store more food in the brood box. Having extracted the honey I return the same supers to the hive they came from for the bees to lick them out before storing them in the shed for the winter.

As soon as harvesting has been completed I will be treating my bees for Varroa it is important to treat to reduce the number of mites before going into winter. At this time of year the mite population is high and the brood population is low so we tend to have more mites going into the brood cells to breed. With increased numbers of mites feeding on the larvae the bees that emerge will be weak and they are the ones that have to live longer and go right through till next spring. If you look at the National Bee Units information on varroa control you can select which treatment you would like to use, or alternatively ask your bee supplier. Apiguard works well for me but I tend to change from year to year but return to Apiguard in alternate years.

I will have my wasp traps in operation and keep a sharp look out for Asian hornets. Wasps tend to go for the weak hives first so close the entrances down to 25mm or less.

A handy piece of equipment at harvest time is a refractometer to check the water content in honey. Better luck for all of us next year.