



Southampton & District Beekeepers Association

www.southamptonbeekeepers.co.uk

Things to do and see

Author Andy Willis - February 2009 - Supplemental

Having checked most of my bees this week, I have been shocked and surprised by how much my bees have eaten in the last month during the cold spell.

Some hives are requiring emergency liquid feeding (1.5lb sugar to 1 pint of water) as all stores in the brood box have been used. One small colony has died through starvation, having emptied its brood box and not been able to leave to replenish stores from a nearly full super above as there was so much brood to keep warm.

Other hives with good numbers of bees will run out of stores in early march. These will be fed at the end of February, using slightly weaker syrup of 1lb to 1 pint.

If you haven't hefted your hives and checked for stores in the lightest ones, then I suggest you do so as soon as you can. The only hives of mine that won't require feeding are the very smallest with fewer mouths to feed, and even these will benefit from stimulative feeding in early march.

Losing one hive out of twenty five is not so bad but I fear the real crunch time will arrive next month when the old winter bees reach the end of their extended lives, and all hives will require feeding. In nearly 19 years of beekeeping I have never seen so many hives so short of food.

The good news is that spring has arrived here in Southampton, crocus are now flowering and the first frog spawn arrived in my pond last night. (14th February)

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