



## Things to do and see

Author Andy Willis - November 2009

The weather has been very kind to us beekeepers this autumn. Ivy has yielded well and filled or topped up many brood boxes so the bees shouldn't go hungry in a while, but access to water will be required for the bees to use set ivy honey during the winter.

The higher than normal temperatures has helped late brood rearing and given a boost to numbers of bees in most colonies.

The dry weather has enabled quantities of pollen to be gathered from late season flowers enabling the bees to be strong and well fed to survive the rigours of winter.

The higher temperatures will also have meant that late applications of Apiguard will have had a better effect on controlling varroa than would have been expected.

If you are in doubt about a colony being queen right check to see pollen is being taken in around midday on mild days. If there is lots of pollen than all is well, if none then you need to open the hive and check for eggs/brood. Do this quickly and don't expose frames of bees/brood to cold air or strong winds unnecessarily. If there is still no brood and not many bees it may be better to unite with another queen right small stock using newspaper.

If there are lots of bees but no brood the queen may have gone off lay early, in which case if you require varroa control, one of the appropriate organic acids can be applied and close the hive up and hope she resumes laying in Jan/Feb as the days start to lengthen (check again for pollen coming in, in late winter)

Topping up of stores can still be done but it is getting late. This late feeding should be completed by mid November at the latest in our area. Nukes can be continued to be topped up little and often, but they will usually stop taking the syrup down when the cold weather sets in.

Check on the apiary after bad weather or storms to ensure the roof is still on all hives and entrances haven't got blocked with leaves and debris.

In low lying areas flooding can be a problem so ensure hive stands are adequate for these locations as you don't want water getting into the hives.

Supers of drawn comb that has been licked dry can be stacked on a spare floor outside with a spare roof on the top. Ensure the entrance is closed to keep out mice. A travel screen can be used as the floor if you have one. This allows good air circulation and stops mould from spoiling the combs. Frost should keep wax moth under control, so don't store comb or boxes in a heated building.

Old brood combs are best rendered down using a steam easy (available from Thornes) I get 1 ½ lb of wax from a national brood box.

## Plants in flower this month worked by our bees:

Plant	Pollen Colour	Pollen	Nectar	Comments
Cherry (Autumn/Winter)		v	v	
Fatsia Japonica		v	v	
Garden Chrysanthimums - Single		v		
Gorse	Rich golden yellow	v	v	
Heather - Winter/Spring		v	v	
Ivy	Pale creamy yellow	vv	vvv	Possible honey crop. Sets almost instantly in the comb
Mahonia - Early		v	v	
Michaelmas Daisies (Late)		vvv	v	
Strawberry Tree (Arbutus)		v	v	
Viburnum Tinus		vv	v	

### Key

V: Okay  
VV: Good  
VVV: Very Good

### Varroa

Do checks on the average daily mite drop this month. You want less than 8 mites per day and ideally less than 1 per day by the end of the month.

If you have more than this purchase one of the organic acid treatments and get ready to apply in a brood free period or next month.

### Other Bees

If you have masonry bee nest boxes out in the garden, during dry weather bring them in to a dry cold shed to over winter, they can get very wet and go mouldy if left outside all winter.

Put the dates in your diary for the winter talks/lectures and if you wish to enrol on a course do so soon, as places are being filled fast this year. Some have already been oversubscribed.

**Copyright 2009 S&DBKA**