



## Southampton & District Beekeepers Association

www.southamptonbeekeepers.co.uk

### Things to do and see

Author Andy Willis - July 2008

- Things tend to settle down a little in the Apiary this month. With luck and reasonable weather, supers start filling up. Hives that swarmed or were artificially swarmed settle down into full productivity with the main honey flow.
- Early swarms from April or early May or early divisions may try a second round of swarming so don't get caught out.
- Supers of honey should be left on until fully capped – put the very best frames by, for showing in a display case (our show is next month)
- The solar wax extractor should be working most days that are sunny now. Drone brood that has been culled can have the wax reclaimed this way. Brace comb or wild comb on top bars and on the bottom of frames also is best removed on each inspection and this can also go into the wax extractor.
- Pieces of wild comb or brace comb containing honey and nectar are best removed and placed on top of the crown board, under the roof. The bees will lick it dry in a few days. The bees will quite often sculpt this wax into some quite spectacular shapes. The then dry wax can be put into the solar wax extractor for purifying. If you don't have a solar wax extractor, then save up the wax and put together in sealable plastic bags (I use freezer bags) and put through a freezer for 24hrs to kill wax moth eggs. After this you can store in a dark place for melting down over rain water at the end of the season. (see 'Wax purification - the Andy method' in the 'how do I?' section).
- Nucleus hives can still be made up from strong healthy stocks. I use these as an insurance policy for queens/queen bank for later on. The problem with queens failing continues and having a spare queen or two in nukes at hand has proved its worth in the past. Bad tempered stocks can be requeened with a queen raised in a Nuc from you best stock. This makes beekeeping a pleasant task when the honey flow is over, and the bees can get even touchier.
- Keep an eye on Varroa levels in a colony, by uncapping 100 drone larvae (best at pink eye) or put the collection tray under the open mesh floor for a few days only.
- Divide the total number of mites by the number of days the tray was in to get an average 'mite drop' per day.

Level and Control Required	Average Mite Drop per Day	Proportion of Infested Drone Pupae
Low No Action	4 or less	< 1 in 30
Medium Plan Action	Between 5 and 8	Between 1 in 15 and 1 in 30
High Take Action	More than 8	More than 1 in 15

Varroa counts as advised by the CSL, DEFRA

- This month is the last real chance to reduce Varroa levels by drone culling as few drones are produced in August. A super frame in the brood box has been working very well for me, removing the wild mostly drone comb, soon after it's been capped. I have harvested nearly 3lb of wax from the 20 or so hives, just last month, by putting this drone brood and Varroa into my solar wax extractor.

- Clover and lime have been yielding very well in our area for the past 3 weeks. Most of my hives now have 2 full supers of honey. The bees in the city gardens continue to out perform all the rest. The strongest one in my garden is filling a super a week at the moment, starting July with 6 full supers on a brood and a half in my National boxes. Having already done a shook swarm and an artificial swarm, and constant drone brood removal.
- Plants in flower this month that contribute to the main honey flow in our area:
  - Late Limes - Tillia species, cool mint flavoured honey
  - White Clover - best after rain or heavy dew
  - Blackberries - grey pollen, best in sunny weather
  - Sweet Chestnut - bees dusted with yellow pollen all over, best in hot dry conditions
  - Meadow Sweet - green Pollen
  - Purple Loosestrife
  - Hebe Shrubs
  - Golden Rod
  - Evening Primrose
  - Bell Heather
  - Privet - bitter taste in honey
  - Rosebay Willowherb - not much in our area
  - Goats Rue - Galega, orange pollen This is a garden escape and grows in vast numbers along the motorway embankments and at the nursling out apiary.

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