



*working with
the environment*

SOUTHERN
Daily Echo



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GRIM FIND: Andy Willis of the Southampton and District Beekeepers' Association, examines a hive filled with dead bees. Right, a bee doing what comes naturally.

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Who will bee our saviour?

BEEKEEPERS are appealing for new sites to keep their hives after chemically-resistant pests threatened to destroy their secure swarm.

Southampton and District Beekeepers' Association (SDBKA) is desperately trying to spread out and occupy different locations to combat a rise in Asian varroa parasites.

SDBKA chairman David Norris explained that it was not the first time that the pests had descended on Southampton.

He said: "We had it here a few years ago and we were



able to treat it but now some of them are developing a resistance.

"We have another chemical

but it is a one-off shot and we do not look to use it until absolutely necessary."

Varroa feeds on adult bees, weakening their immunity to diseases, which ultimately ends up killing them off.

One way to tackle the pesky creatures is to keep hives broadly spaced apart.

Mr Norris said: "We need to have the hives in groups of between four and six but at the moment we have got 24 at the Broadlands apiary.

"This means one bee can go into next door's hive and carry the pest.

"If we can get smaller sites

we think that might help.

"We are getting concerned about this problem and what the beekeeper can do to keep it down.

"We are never going to get rid of these and we have just got to find a way around it.

"Left untreated, it kills the whole lot within two years." Beekeepers will be putting their heads together with their New Forest counterparts who are hosting a talk in Lyndhurst today on pest management.

For more information or to join SDBKA, visit southamptonbeekeepers.co.uk.