

The Auricle

Moray Beekeepers Association Newsletter

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S.B.A. EXAM SUCCESS!

Congratulations to the 12 students of the 2012 Basic Beemaster course who all passed their assessments over the weekend of 30th June and 1st July. Having attended a four-week classroom course in February and March, followed by several practical sessions at the training apiary at Birnie, all the hard work was rewarded as every member of the class passed, 10 of them with distinctions.

Scottish Beekeepers Association Education Convener (retiring), Ian Craig, traveled up from Renfrewshire and managed to juggle the practical sessions in between the rain showers and then tested the students' beekeeping knowledge.

Course Instructor and MBA Secretary, Tony Harris said, 'I am really pleased for all of them'. The 12 passes bring the number of successful Basic Beemaster students in Moray beekeepers up to 19 for the last 2 years.

So once again, congratulations to Anne Black, Dianna Baillie, Ron Clark, Vicky Dawes, Loraine Larkworthy, Morag Henderson, Amanda Petersen, Arlene Ritchie, Grant Scanlon, Davey Stuart, Yvonne Stuart and John Willoner.

If you want to improve your beekeeping knowledge and skill and are interested in taking the SBA Basic Beemaster assessment in 2013, then contact Tony Harris, or any of the above members for more information.

It was a busy weekend at Birnie apiary as MBA Chairman, Andrew Tassel and Treasurer, Donna Clark were running the second of our 'Introduction to Beekeeping' courses for this summer. This is a one day course, in the classroom in the morning, lunch and then a practical in the hives in the afternoon.

New members are encouraged to take one of these courses as it will give you the basic framework of how to look after your bees and increase your confidence. The next course is on 11th August and numbers are limited.

JULY MEETING & DEMONSTRATION

**OUR NEXT MEETING IS AT TOM
BALCH'S APIARY, FORRES ON
SUNDAY 15TH JUNE, 2.30PM
START.**

**WEATHER PERMITTING TOM
WILL BE SHOWING US HIS BEES
AND DEMONSTRATING HIS
QUEEN REARING TECHNIQUES**

**FOUNDATION WILL BE ON SALE
AT DISCOUNTED PRICES AND
YOU CAN PAY YOUR 2012
SUBSCRIPTION, SO BRING CASH
OR CHEQUE BOOK WITH YOU.**

**A RAFFLE WILL TAKE PLACE
AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE
AVAILABLE AFTERWARDS!**

Full details of all Monthly
Meetings, Open Apiary Sessions
and Courses are at

www.moraybeekeepers.co.uk

JULY IN THE APIARY

July is a month of bounty and given half decent weather, honeybees will be hard at work, foraging on white clover, bramble, lime, charlock, bell heather and rosebay willow herb. It is now that all your efforts in managing your colonies and preventing swarming will reap a harvest and the strongest colonies will fill one, two or maybe three supers with honey.



honeybee on clover

Your chosen swarm control technique should continue until mid July by which time the swarming season should be over and provided you have enough supers on the hive you can go on holiday for a week or two. If you previously left a sealed queen cell in a hive as part of your swarm control, you need to check that she has managed to mate and is laying well. If she has been slow to mate due to bad weather she could become a drone laying queen (DLQ), i.e. capable only of laying unfertilized eggs and she will need replacing. If you find more than one egg in each cell, the young queen has either just starting laying or there are laying workers (LWs) in the hive but how can you tell the difference? Well, with laying workers, you will find that the eggs have been laid on the cell walls as the worker's abdomen is too short to reach the bottom of the cell.



Multiple eggs from laying workers

Laying workers will develop if the queen has died or been lost, on a mating flight for example, and the colony is 'hopelessly queenless', i.e. the bees have no means of raising a replacement queen on their own. It usually takes about 4 weeks for the

workers' ovaries to develop until they start laying the unfertilized eggs that will only produce drones



tidy compact brood nest of a drone laying queen

Other indications are that a DLQ will keep a tidy, compact brood area and lay single eggs in cells while LW's will have a haphazard laying pattern while laying multiple eggs in the same cell. Both will have raised cappings over worker cells and many miniature drones running around.

The recommended procedure for dealing with a DLQ is to re-queen (if you have a queen available) or to unite to a queenright colony after removing the old DLQ. It is virtually impossible, however, to re-queen a colony with LW's as the colony usually kills an introduced queen, and the bees from the LW's hive are just as likely to kill the queen of any colony it is united with. The best thing to do is to shake the bees out in front of a large colony and let them sort themselves out, entering any hive that will let them in.

When adding foundation to an expanding brood nest during a honey flow, it should be put two positions in. It is a mistake to add it to the flanks as the bees will draw it out and quickly fill it with honey before the queen has time to lay in it and we want the honey upstairs in the super, don't we? Whilst you should super early in spring it is wrong to over super towards the end of the season as you will find that the bees will half fill one and then half fill the second, whereas if you leave just the one it should be filled and capped nicely.

You should continue to monitor for varroa and should be thinking about which treatment you will be using when the honey flow is over. Fit and check your floor inserts. Count the number of mites and divide by the number of days you have had the insert installed and this will give you an idea of whether you need to treat. (if in doubt seek advice)

The first week in August is the time to take your bees to the heather, and if you prepare the hive right, and there is a couple of weeks of warm, sunny weather, you should earn a reward of at least a super of heather honey. Hives for the heather should be absolutely packed full with bees and you can supplement this by adding up to 2 frames of emerging brood from another disease free hive a couple of weeks before the move.

If your hives are in pairs, as long as there is a honey flow on you can move one to another part of the apiary, allowing the flying bees to safely enter the remaining hive going to the heather – this will give you a very large number of foraging bees.

Young queens, preferably of the current year's hatch, are also essential for heather going hives as they tend to continue laying longer, again meaning less space in the brood frame for the bees to store the precious honey – Remember, we want the honey in the supers!



heather moors

Other tips include moving frames of eggs and brood to the outside of the brood frame and frames of honey to the centre. As the bees usually like to store honey in the outside frames, leaving the centre frames for the queen to lay in, they usually move this honey to a super, and this should be done a few weeks before and then a couple of days before the move.

The day before the move, remove these supers and place a super of drawn comb, or thin unwired foundation for cut comb on top. Secure your hives with ratchet straps or the like, and move to the heather at dawn. It is easy to block the hive entrance with a strip of foam rubber and it is always a good idea to add a travelling screen on top to allow greater ventilation during the move. Hives can be brought home from the heather in the 1st or 2nd week in September and you then have to get your hands on that beautiful heather honey! (Editor's note: see next month's Auricle if you want to see how to extract your honey)

Varroa Control for Resistant Mites

The varroacides Apistan and Bayvarol can no longer be relied on to control infestations of varroa in beehives, as the mites have built up resistance to the chemicals used in them.

There is now another varroacide that can be used against the mite; **Apivar**. However, you can only get it from a vet under prescription, and they have to import it under a licence from abroad.

Vet Robert Thurlow of Bridge Veterinary Clinic in Dumfries will supply it, but it has to be on an individual basis, and after a 'consultation' to cover the legal aspects of supplying Apivar. His website has a consultation form you can download and fill in and once he is happy that Varroa appears to be showing signs of resistance he can prescribe Apivar.

Apivar uses the chemical Amitraz to combat the mite, and it is impregnated on strips hung in the hive in a similar way to the use of Apistan. The cost of Apivar is approx. £30 for 5 hives, which at £6 a hive is still cheap to have healthy bees.

Robert Thurlow can be contacted on 01387 259111 or his practise website is at: www.bridgevets.com

HEATHER TRIP & MEAL 12 NOON SUNDAY 19th AUGUST

As part of our August meeting we will again be enjoying a meal at the Delnashaugh Hotel, Ballindalloch, before heading off to our heather stance nearby.

It is a 3-course meal and the cost is £14.95, half price for children under 10 years. Numbers are limited so if you want to attend please contact Tony Harris or any member of the Committee and put your name down. Menu to follow!

WASP TRAPS

Wasps start to be real nuisance at this time of year, robbing hives of valuable honey as well as chomping through bees as they return from foraging flights. They just love anything sweet, i.e. honey and sugar syrup, and if your hive is left unprotected, wasps can quickly outnumber and over-run your bees, destroying the colony. There are however, a few things you can do to help your bees.

1. Put a reduced entrance block in place so the hive entrance is easier for the bees to guard.
2. Placing a wasp trap next to your hives will catch hundreds of wasps and surprisingly few bees.
3. Take care not to spill any honey, wax comb or sugar syrup near your hives or in your apiary as this will attract every wasp in the neighbourhood. Once they have started visiting the apiary, they will stay around until the frosts kill them off but by this time your bees may have been killed off as well.

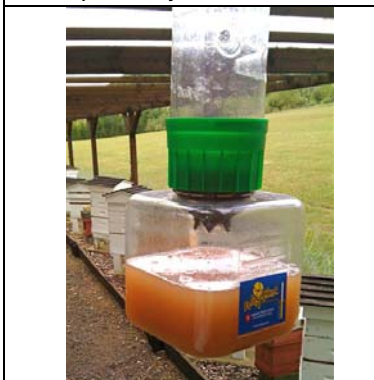
You can buy wasp traps from suppliers or you can save a few pounds and make one yourself from a clear 2 litre plastic bottle, as shown in the photographs below. – it will work just as well.



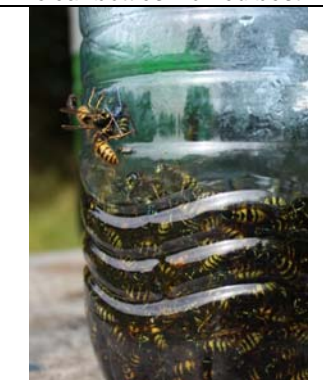
wasps will try and enter a hive



clear bottles worked best



commercial wasp trap



it definitely works!

Cut about 5 holes in the bottle, about 1/3 of the way up and above that, about 2/3 of the way up, wrap a couple of bands of duck tape. Pour in the magic mix, then screw the top back on and sit on the ground beside the hive or just park it on the roof. The small holes were originally supposed to be the diameter of a thick straw and round, but two quick cuts with a Stanley knife blade and folded back to expose a small triangular hole is equally effective. If it is windy you can secure the bottle by trapping between a couple of boulders or attaching it somehow to the side of the hive.

The idea is that the odour of the mix attracts the wasps in quickly, and when they wish to leave they fly up to the light above the dark bands of duck tape. They eventually fall down into the thick mix and drown.

The mix? Something fruity (fruit juice, jam, actual fruit) plus a small pile of sugar, plus more water and a good glug of vinegar. Then a couple of drops of washing-up liquid to hasten the drowning and make escape unlikely.

If you are new to beekeeping or haven't experienced wasps robbing a beehive you will be shocked at the numbers involved. Last summer I caught hundreds of wasps in the bottle over just a few days!

American Foul Brood detected in Inverness-shire

An outbreak of American Foulbrood (AFB), a disease affecting colonies of honeybees, has been found in an apiary in Inverness-shire.

The disease was confirmed today (June 20) following laboratory diagnosis by Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA). Outbreaks of AFB have previously been reported and dealt with in this area over the last three years.

The AFB infected hive will be destroyed as there is no permitted treatment for the disease in the UK. There are no risks to public health from AFB and no implications for the quality and safety of honey.

The affected apiary is located near Inverness and the movement of bees and related equipment into or out of the affected apiary is prohibited.

Bee farmers and beekeepers are being urged to be vigilant for signs of the disease, to maintain good husbandry practices and to notify any suspicion of disease to BeesMailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

In order to assist Scottish Government Bee Inspectors to control this and other diseases, beekeepers are urged to register on BeeBase, the national bee database. This will give them access to up-to-date information on the control of AFB and bee related issues.

Beekeepers in the area of this outbreak who are not on BeeBase are requested to send their contact details to BeesMailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Background

AFB is a notifiable disease under The Bee Diseases and Pests Control (Scotland) Order 2007 (as amended). It kills off bee larva, is highly contagious and difficult to eradicate.

Unlike European Foulbrood (EFB) hives with AFB cannot be treated and must be destroyed.

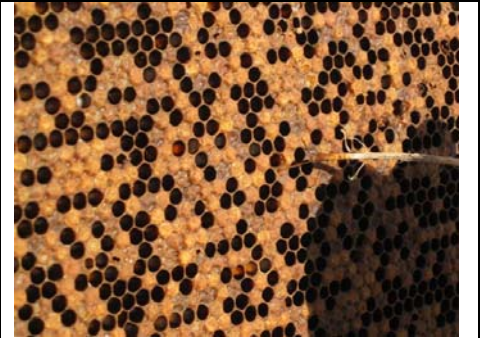
Further information and details on how to register on BeeBase can be found at www.scotland.gov.uk/beehealth

AMERICAN FOUL BROOD

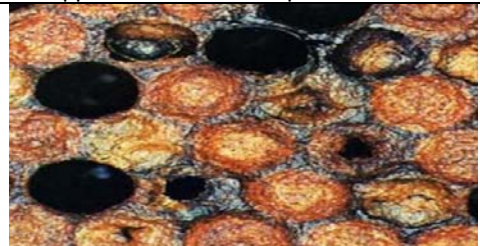
AFB is caused by the bacterium, 'Paenibacillus larvae'. Young larvae ingest AFB spores with food and usually become infected when less than 2 days old. The bacteria enter tissues and kill the larvae once the cell is capped, creating millions of spores that dry out to a scale which is difficult to remove and can remain a source of disease for forty years.



appearance of healthy sealed brood



rope test and pepper-pot brood pattern



greasy looking capped cells, concave instead of convex. The holes in the cappings were the bees have tried to remove the pupa.



hard black scales

Symptoms: AFB symptoms include an uneven 'pepper-pot' brood pattern; sunken, greasy, often perforated cell cappings; dark 'scales' which are difficult to remove from cells and the textbook 'ropy' larval remains when drawn from a sealed cell using a matchstick.

So please be vigilant and make sure you check your brood frames for signs of brood disease, either AFB or European Foul brood (EFB). Bees should be gently shaken from the frames to allow a full inspection, as abnormalities are then easily spotted.

Carefully examine the whole frame by holding it to the light and checking both sealed and unsealed brood for abnormalities such as unusual brood patterns, discoloured larvae, perforated cappings, or loose EFB scales in the cell (completely dried out larvae). Open any cells with abnormal looking cappings and check the consistency of any dead remains by probing with a matchstick (ropy - AFB, not ropy - EFB). Dispose of the matchstick into the lit smoker; do not discard it as it will be infected.

If you suspect foul brood in your hive(s) you should close the entrance if the colony is dead or if still alive, reduce the entrance to prevent robbing. You should also disinfect your beekeeping equipment and gloves before examining any other colonies.

You should then contact your local Bee Inspector, Kirsty Sutherland, Inverurie, Tel 01467626247, (this number is also in your membership card) or e mail: kirsteen.sutherland@scotland.gsi.gov.uk and she will arrange to come and check your bees. Or you can send a whole comb (well wrapped to prevent leakage of honey) or a tube (available from the NBU) containing suspect diseased larvae to the NBU. Don't forget to include your name, address, apiary location (OS map reference) and the hive identity.

If you have confirmed the presence of AFB/EFB using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD kit available from suppliers), send the positive kit and a larval sample to the NBU.

Do not remove any hives, bees or equipment from the site until the disease (if confirmed) has been controlled. This is a self imposed 'Standstill' which is a requirement under the legislation. And be very careful about buying bees or second hand equipment from areas where AFB has been confirmed, and if you have already done so you need to thoroughly disinfect the hive, and burn any old frames! Click [here](#) to find out more on hive sterilisation

INTRODUCING A QUEEN TO A COLONY

As with most things beekeeping there are various methods described for introducing queens, from simply running a new queen into the hive, to caging her for a few days inside the hive, half drowning the queen in water or even weirder still, dunking the queen in royal jelly and then placing her in the hive. But when the time comes for you to introduce a queen, how are you going to do it, and how should you prepare the hive to ensure the bees accept her?

We can do no better than to quote from Ted Hooper's, 'Guide to Bees and Honey' in listing the general conditions for introducing queens. 'When introducing a new queen to a colony it must be done in such a way that both the colony and the queen are in the right condition to accept each other. The colony must be queenless, should not be in an excited condition from any cause, and should come into contact with the new queen fairly slowly. The queen should be in an undisturbed condition, should be hungry enough to solicit food from any worker who comes into contact with her, and if possible, her odour, which will be that of a stranger, should be masked or her direct contact with the bees delayed until her scent has changed to something nearer their own.'

The time of year is also important as queen introduction is usually easier during late August and September when the main flow is over, and in April and May, only where there is no oilseed rape to producing foraging excitement. If you were to introduce queens into large colonies any time between, when swarming, the excitement of foraging and bad weather confinement can make the bees 'edgy', many queens will be lost.

So what I am going to describe is considered to be one of the safest ways to introduce a queen and that is by introducing the queen first to a nucleus and then introducing the whole nucleus to the full colony. This is particularly relevant if you have received an expensive bought queen in

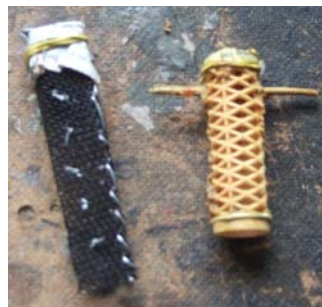
the post and you want to minimise any risk of getting her killed and this is what you do.

Make up a 3 frame nucleus, ideally of young house bees, from the colony to be re-queened and place next to it but facing the other way, so it is ready to receive the new queen. If you want to make sure the nuc is hopelessly queenless, i.e. the bees are unable to raise a new queen, you should make up the nuc and seven days later go into it and remove any queen cells the bees have made. It is a good idea to feed sugar syrup, 2lb of sugar to 1 pint of water, as there will be few flying bees in the nuc.



Queen in travelling cage with attendants

When a queen arrives through the post she will be in a travelling cage along with half a dozen or so workers to look after her and a small amount of food in the form of candy or fondant. She will likely be in a poor condition physically and not in lay so a slow introduction to the nuc is called for. Take the travelling cage to the bathroom (with all doors, windows and plug holes closed) or to the car, again with doors and windows closed (and ventilation slots below windscreen covered up) and release the attendant workers.



Home made cages

Being very careful, introduce the queen into a Butler cage, one end being plugged permanently and then cover the other end with newspaper and an elastic band. If she manages to fly off at this stage she will fly towards the bathroom or car window but won't be able to escape and you will easily be able to catch her. Be careful if handling a queen and only hold her by the wings or thorax not her abdomen but better still, try and coax her into the cage without touching her.



Cage is fixed onto the top of a brood frame

Attach the Butler cage or you can keep the queen in the cage she arrived in, near to the top of the frame of brood with a nail so that it hangs down over the brood, close the hive and top the feeder up with syrup. The mesh in the cage allows the bees to have contact with the queen, to feed her but they cannot harm her. The bees normally release her after 24 hours or so but if you want to be extra careful you can plug both ends of the cage and supervise her release yourself. Then leave the nuc alone for 2 weeks by which time the queen should be laying. You can then unite the nuc with the parent hive, after removing the old queen, via the newspaper method, or by simply placing the 3 frame nuc back in the hive in the same place the frames were removed from a couple of weeks before. Introduce the nuc immediately after the old queen is removed and it is also a good idea to spray both the colony and the nucleus with sugar water to stop the bees running about. A quick examination of the colony from which the queen has been removed is also advisable in case there are signs that the bees are starting to think of swarming and if any queen cells are present you must destroy them. Queen introduction using the nucleus method is a very safe method at any time although, as any beekeeper knows, there are no guarantees!!



Good result - Queen laying well!

MEAL AT THE DELNASHAUGH HOTEL 12 NOON SUNDAY 19th AUGUST & TRIP TO THE HEATHER

Numbers are limited so please book early by contacting Tony Harris or any member of the Committee

SUMMER PROGRAMME 2012

- Sunday 15th July, Queen Rearing,
Tom Balch's Apiary, Forres, 2.30pm
- Sunday 19th August. Trip to the Heather & Meal, 12 noon
Delnashaugh Hotel, Ballindalloch
- Sunday 30th September, Talk & Demonstration, 'Extracting Honey'
Birnie Apiary, 2.30pm

The Scottish Beekeepers Association celebrates its centenary in 2012.

The main celebration will take place on 15th & 16th September 2012 at the Stirling Management Centre, University of Stirling. Over the two days, there will be a series of lectures by Prof Robert Paxton, Prof Keith Delaplane, Prof Robert Pickard, and Dan Basterfield NDB.

Accompanying the lectures will be trade stands, local associations' displays, workshops, demonstrations and beekeeping exhibits. The highlight of the celebration will be a centenary dinner and ceilidh. *Booking open now.*

To download a booking form, visit <http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/About/SBACentenary.aspx>

M.B.A. SHOP

It has been the first year we have sold equipment to members so it is a learning curve for us all. To make it easier for all concerned the following rules will come into effect if you wish to purchase equipment from the Association.

You must have paid your subs for the current year and **produce your membership card** at the time of purchase! (if you haven't received a membership card or have lost it please contact Donna Clark)

Equipment will only be on sale at advertised Apiary Sessions or Monthly meetings (see website or membership card). Pre-ordering to Andy Watson by phone, tel 01466 760277 is recommended as your journey will be wasted if your item is not in stock.

A maximum purchase of 20 frames and 40 sheets of foundation only will be allowed.

ASSOCIATION HONEY EXTRACTORS



If you don't have your own honey extractor you can borrow one of the Associations. The one on the left is a heather honey press and the one on the right is a manual radial extractor for liquid honey and we have 2 of both



You can borrow them for free by contacting either

Andrew Tassell (Keith area) Tel 01466 771243

Or

Tony Harris (Fochabers area) Tel 01343 821282

SCOTTISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION (SBA)

Moray Beekeepers Association is affiliated to the SBA and you are encouraged to join. Membership of £30 a year will give you a monthly magazine, £2 million Public and Product liability insurance, a compensation scheme if you lose your bees and access to beekeepers throughout Scotland,

Contact membership convener: Mr. Phil McAnespie, 12 Monument Road, Ayr, KA7 2RL

SBA web site: www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk

BEE SUITS/GLOVES /SMOCKS

Quality bee suits and clothing from BB Wear, for MBA members who receive a 15% discount (please order via the MBA Secretary)

BB1 Full suit £84.00

www.bbwear.co.uk/

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Bob & Rosemary Garrity, Simon Burns

The Association website is packed with lots of useful information on beekeeping and bees and has an interesting blog that you are encouraged to contribute to. It is well worth a visit - the address is

www.moraybeekeepers.co.uk

Items for inclusion in the Newsletter to be sent to the Editor: Tony Harris, Cowiemuir, Fochabers, Moray, IV32 7PS or you can e mail: tonyharris316@btinternet.com or phone 07884 496246

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PAY YOUR SUBS FOR 2012, NOW £12 ADULT, £7 OVER 65YRS AND 12-16YRS!