



CBKA Newsletter

December 2009

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It's the season to visit friends and family. Make sure you include your hives, go and visit them once in a while and make sure that they haven't blown over, or that snow or ice hasn't blocked the entrance. A very gentle heft occasionally will tell you if you should give them a block of fondant/candy. If the hive feels light feed them sooner rather than later.

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January Meeting

Our first meeting of the New Year on Monday, January 18th is "Question Time". Come and ask our panel of experts anything you like about bees and beekeeping. You will be able to pose your questions anonymously via a slip of paper if you don't want to stand up and ask the panel directly.

The new location is in the *Wellburn Room, Newham Grange Leisure Farm, Wykeham Way, Coulby Newham, Middlesbrough, TS8 0TG.*

This is on the first floor of the large old building just a short distance from the large car park.

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CBKA Word Search

A little bit of light hearted fun for the year end. Find the following words in the grid below - just to make things interesting the words can be forward, backward, diagonal, up, or down.

Beekeeper, Beeswax, Buzz, CBKA (x4), Colony, Comb, Drone, Flower, Forage, Garden, Hexagon, Hive, Honey, Insect, Nectar, Petal, Pollen, Pollination, Queen, Worker.

B	N	P	O	L	L	I	N	A	T	I	O	N
J	E	E	Y	W	R	L	T	V	Y	F	N	J
V	X	E	L	T	L	A	C	L	O	V	E	R
E	D	U	S	L	V	T	O	C	B	K	A	T
K	R	W	A	W	O	E	L	D	K	Q	R	C
H	O	N	E	Y	A	P	O	Q	U	F	O	E
I	N	E	Y	Y	X	N	M	L	M	B	S	
V	E	C	N	G	Q	L	Y	O	B	Q	E	N
E	Y	T	O	Y	L	E	W	U	A	D	E	I
Q	K	A	G	C	N	E	G	R	G	O	K	Q
B	U	R	A	B	R	Z	K	E	W	E	E	W
U	W	E	X	K	K	C	B	K	A	A	E	C
Z	O	E	E	A	N	E	D	R	A	G	P	B
Z	S	K	H	N	C	X	J	O	F	F	E	K
F	O	R	A	G	E	L	D	W	H	U	R	A

More Interest in Bees

The interest in bees and beekeeping from the most unexpected quarters is still going on...

From <http://www.farmersguardian.com>

ONE of the UK's leading tractor manufacturers has joined the battle to save Britain's bees. New Holland has announced a partnership with the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) where it will use its 'extensive dealer network and customer base' to help save a declining bee population.

According to the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) bees contribute over £200 million to the agricultural economy every year through honey production and their pollination of plants and crops. But research has found bee numbers have plummeted by up to 30 per cent – more than 2 billion bees – in the last two years alone. Richard Spencer, New Holland's marketing manager, said it was a logical step to join the BBKA given many of its customers relied on bees to pollinate their crops. "Our products are used to harvest crops such as oilseed rape and our specialist tractors are designed for orchards, for example.

"It's clear that the customers who use these machines also rely on honeybees for their livelihoods. We're excited about this opportunity to work with the BBKA," he said.

Starting with its official launch at the Lamma 2010 machinery event in January, New Holland will continue to provide stands at agricultural events across the country to raise bee awareness amongst farmers, land-owners and contractors.

Tim Lovett, BBKA president, said he was 'delighted' with New Holland's commitment. "The BBKA welcomes the opportunity to work with a major player in the agriculture sector and to be able to raise awareness with key groups such as farmers, land-owners, fruit growers and contractors, all of whom can have a major influence on the future welfare and success of honeybees in the UK," he said.

Bill Wilkinson

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This month in the Apiary

There are a lot of conflicting ideas on the rights and wrongs of feeding during the winter. The main argument goes that if you had fed your bees adequately in the autumn they would have sufficient stores to get through the winter without supplementary feeding, and you should not disturb your bees in mid winter. On the other hand if your bees are running out of food then why stand on ceremony and risk losing a colony? I saw bees flying in mid November, perhaps you noticed them flying later, so they will have been using winter stores at an accelerated rate.

If you need to feed your bees then it is necessary to feed fondant or candy rather than syrup as liquid feed risks fermenting and will also over stimulate the queen to start laying too fast and too early.

I have heard the words candy and fondant used interchangeably but there appears to be a difference. Bakers fondant follows a tight technical specifications and method of production. Bakers fondant consists of: sugar 74.5% ± 0.5%, glucose solids 14.5% ± 0.5%, water 11.0% ± 0.5%. The ingredients are heated to boiling point (approx 105°C) and are then stirred in a creamer until cool. This produces a soft, fine-grain sugar paste.

The term 'candy' be used where the mixture is heated to a higher temperature (typically above 112°C) in order to evaporate some of the water and make a more solid product.

In practice there appears to be no difference when used for our intended purpose - as a feed for our bees.

You can buy Bakers Fondant from our local beekeeping suppliers or from some bakers or confectioners. Make sure that it doesn't have any flavourings, preservatives, colouring or other unwanted additives.

For those that want to make their own here is a simple recipe. I have seen recipes with vinegar, cream of tartar etc but I don't want to feed my bees anything like that.

Bee Candy Recipe

Equipment

A large pan or jam pan, hand or electric mixer, cooking thermometer, margarine tubs or small take away food containers. The solution will bubble and froth furiously, so make sure the pan is large enough not to boil over.

Procedure:

- Pour 2 kg of granulated sugar into 600ml of water in a pan and bring to the boil stirring constantly.
- Cover and gently boil up for about 5 minutes.
- Remove lid and check the temperature with the cooking thermometer, continue to boil with lid off until the temperature reaches 112°C. As the mixture steams off the concentration increases and the boiling temperature will also increase.
- Remove from the heat and cool to 93°C.
- Carefully whip with the mixer until the mixture begins to turn white and creamy. Keep moving the outside of the mixture into the centre which will remain liquid for longer.
- Pour into the containers.
- Allow to cool undisturbed.

If the temperature of the mixture falls below about 68°C you will have a pan full of candy which will be very difficult to shift! Pour into the containers while it is still about 70°C - 75°C. Some mixture will remain coating the pan. To clean the pan fill it full of clean hot water and leave for a few hours, the mixture will soften and be easy to remove without a lot of elbow grease.

To use: Invert the tubs/containers over the feed hole in the crown board. If you want to turn the mixture out of the tubs/moulds then wrap in clingfilm to keep moist. Only partially unwrap the clingfilm when you put the candy over the feed hole, this stops it drying out.

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Happy Christmas and good beekeeping for 2010

Secretary: Ian Brown, 48 Thames Ave, Guisborough, TS14 8AF. Tel 01287 632851

Meetings are held in the Wellburn Room, Newham Grange Leisure Farm, Wykeham Way, Coulby Newham,

Middlesbrough, TS8 0TG on the 3rd Monday of the month from September to April at 7:15pm. Visitors and new members welcome.

BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

Allan, Tony & Richard Jefferson

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