

East Lothian Beekeepers' Association

(Founded 1887 – Scotland's Oldest Local Association)

www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk

Newsletter 162

March 2013

A miserable start for bees and beekeepers

A wet summer, followed by a wet autumn, followed by a wet (there is a trend here) and relatively mild winter is making for a difficult beginning to the beekeeping season again this year. As I sit here writing this, the snow and sleet is battering against the windows driven on by a raw Easterly wind. My agricultural advisor tells me the Oil Seed Rape is already behind for the time of year – apparently it doesn't like the wet weather either. Despite all this, on the few sunny warmer days we have had, my bees have been out and are collecting pollen – there is life in all 3 hives much to my relief.

2012/13 Winter meetings

In February, John Coyle came south from Stirling to impart his knowledge of Top Bar Beekeeping to an interested group of members. It was a very lively and informative evening and I think we all went away with something to ponder on.

Greame Sharpe came and spoke about Varroa Management at the March meeting. After depressing us at the beginning of his talk, things picked up, and as he emphasised, with careful checking of your mite drop and by applying suitable treatment at the correct time all should be well in your hives.

The format of our next meeting on **April 4th** will be an 'Ask the Experts' evening, where our panel of expert beekeepers (which will include Mike Bain, George Barton and A.N. Other) will try and answer all your beekeeping queries. Please come along armed with your questions for this enjoyable last evening of this winter's sessions.

Also, please don't forget to take a look at our small library of beekeeping

books, which members are able to borrow.

Apiary Hive Openings

The Apiary at Lennoxlove will again be the venue for our hive opening days. There are 6 scheduled days as follows:

4th, 11th and 26th May

1st and 8th June

6th July

These are obviously dependent on the weather. Please check the website for up to date information on the day.

SBA AGM

On Saturday I braved the snow and drove to Perth to attend the SBA AGM. This proved to be an informative afternoon. There is a whole buzz of activity out there and a lot of dedicated people who make up the SBA; it was nice to put faces to names. The formal agenda as printed in your SBA monthly magazine went smoothly. For anyone interested, all the reports etc. are on the SBA website which can be accessed by SBA members.

John Coyle was elected as the new East Area rep for the SBA. His main function is to be the point of contact between the SBA executive and the local associations in both directions.

The proposal for the AGM - 'That the SBA petition the Scottish Government to invoke a moratorium on the use of the pesticides known as neonicotinoids until it is established that these substances do not have an unacceptably long half-life in the soil and that they do not damage pollinators or the soil dwelling organisms on which soil fertility depends' - was passionately debated by both sides. The motion was defeated by 31 votes for and 43 votes against and 5 abstentions.

After a welcome cup of tea, the rest of the afternoon was spent discussing the proposal for the first draft of the new SBA Constitution.

This is available on the members' page of the SBA website. The SBA committee are asking all members to read this and any amendments can be submitted by 11th May 2013.

The SBA is also looking for a new General Secretary to take over from Bron Wright. If anyone is interested and would like to know more please contact Bron directly.

Dates for your diary

Haddington Show 29th June at East Fortune. We expect to have our usual successful tent at the new look Haddington Show. This year the date and venue have been changed so let's hope the weather changes for the better this year as well.

Gifford Show 17th 18th August at Gifford. Now is a good time to start thinking about your entries for the show – honey, wax, home baking!

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