

Feral Colony in a Seal garden.



Sarah Rapley's account of this late season bee colony removal from Honeysuckle in a Seal garden.

On Christmas Eve I was surprised to receive a call regarding a swarm in a back garden. After receipt of some photographs, it was clear that it was a feral colony in a local back garden - the property had been empty for over a year and the new homeowners had just spotted what they originally thought was a large fungus in the honeysuckle. When it buzzed them they realised it was a colony of bees and gave me a call.

By the time the 29th came around I didn't hold out much hope for them still being alive as Storm Bella had passed over and temperatures had dropped to **2° C**.



Luckily they were in a fairly sheltered spot in the undergrowth and were still alive and clustered tightly. The branch was too sturdy to cut so I decided to just sever the comb at the top, and get them into the nucleus box and home as soon as possible.



Sarah lost in the honeysuckle making the last few cuts to the honeycomb.



Once home, I cranked up the heater in my shed and fitted the combs into brood frames with elastic bands. The warmer temperature enabled the bees to fly around within the shed and find their way back to the nucleus box. There was plenty of fanning going on. I gave them a warm thick syrup feed to give them a boost.

I will keep them in my shed next to an open window for the next few months, and put some fondant on. They had very few stores.

Let's hope they make it!!
They certainly will have a better chance than being outside in the next few months of winter weather.

Sarah Rapley 29th December 2020.