

**SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
BEEKEEPERS  
BRANCH NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

Editor: Mary Staffurth

Tel: 01732 462931 / Email: [marystaffurth@yahoo.com](mailto:marystaffurth@yahoo.com)

Branch website: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>



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## **Giving the Bees a Head Start for Winter**

Both Branch apiaries got off to a difficult start this year. Although the weather picked up during the summer, the forage was very variable, so the honey harvest is small. We are trying to ensure we retain sufficient honey for each colony to have a full super to get through the winter. There has also been quite a lot of late swarming activity, so we have had to provide additional feed to help new colonies to establish. At Barrwood, the new long hive has been occupied by a collected swarm, which seems to be settling down and, hopefully, will be productive next season.

At both apiaries we are well into autumn/winter preparation, so as well as varroa management and feeding, we need to do some physical checks to make sure the apiaries are secure and weatherproof.

On the pests and diseases front, thankfully the Asian Hornet is still at bay, but there have been a few cases of EFB nearby. The amount of varroa seems very variable, but we are using a combination of methods to ensure the bees are as healthy as possible going into winter. Interestingly, the levels of wax moth and wasps seem to be below average, but we are being diligent about reducing entrance openings, and avoiding spills of syrup as the wasps will be around until the weather really cools down.

*Liz Birchenough*

## **The Plus Side of Propolis**

The autumn season is upon us, which means it is time for the first of our indoor meetings. This month the speaker is Andrew Gibb, who will be talking about some hive products we do not often use. We are all familiar with wax and honey but some of the other bee products are often considered a nuisance. For example, bee venom does have therapeutic properties. Although propolis sticks everything together, it does have antiseptic and nutritional benefits. Even more strangely, wax moth, which most of us find to be a stubborn pest, is actually edible and used in some countries as a source of protein.

This sounds like a fascinating topic especially to anyone interested in natural products. The talk is free, and guests are welcome: **Tuesday 17th September at 7.30pm at Weald Memorial Hall.**

*Liz Birchenough*



## **Asian Hornet on Board**

Even though we are aware of the high numbers of Asian Hornets in France we were surprised when we went on a sailing holiday in Brittany last month to find this dead hornet on board the boat when we arrived.

*Mary Staffurth*

## Honey Show and Craft Fair

Our annual Honey Show takes place on Saturday October 12th and will be judged by the Branch president, Paul Abbott. If you wish to enter, you must bring your exhibits to St John's Church Centre, Hildenborough between 09.30 and 10.30am on the morning of the show. If you wish to enter the show, but are not available to submit your own entries, please let me know so we can make alternative arrangements. There is a large, free car park behind the hall.



If you won a trophy last year, please return it on the day, or give it to me before the event so all trophies can be displayed. After the show, the trophies will be taken for engraving, and will be presented at the AGM in November.

The Craft Fair will run from 2pm to 4pm. The Honey Show will also be open to the public for viewing at this time, so please arrange to collect your entries at about 4pm.

The Honey Show is open to all members. Please read the rules and schedule carefully.

Sue Knights (Entries Secretary) will be on hand on the day to provide guidance if you are not sure about the class you need to enter. Even if you do not have your own bees, there are classes you can enter - the more the merrier! Even if you don't feel ready to enter, please come along in the afternoon to have a look round. Light refreshments will be available.

*Liz Birchenough*

## Apiary Meetings

Sunday September 8 at 11am: Hilbert Road Apiary

Saturday September 14 at 2pm: Barrwood Apiary

Sunday September 22 at 11am: Hilbert Road Apiary

Saturday September 28 at 2pm: Barrwood Apiary

*Send photos or articles for the newsletter to: [marystaffurth@yahoo.com](mailto:marystaffurth@yahoo.com)*

*Go to our website for all the latest beekeeping news: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>*