

# Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association

## Newsletter for August 2009



Just when the weather looks as if it is brightening up a bit we find that the beekeeping season is nearly over and we should start thinking about preparing our hives for the coming winter.

Two winters ago we lost over a third of our colonies but last winter the losses were much less. A possible reason for this is that we have been taking more care preparing our colonies during the Autumn.

Three questions we should ask ourselves about each colony

- ⇒ Are they strong enough to survive the winter?
- ⇒ Have they got enough food?
- ⇒ Are they disease free?

If the colony is weak you might wish to unite it with another colony because one strong colony is more likely to survive than two weak ones. Check first that the weakness is not caused by disease.

There is still plenty of time to feed sugar syrup for their winter stores. Remember that a strong colony will need 20 kg of honey (equivalent to 16 kg granulated sugar) to last them through to the spring.

At this time of year it is important to check and treat for disease. On the next page I have described the use of Apiguard to control Varroa and I strongly recommend you start this as soon as possible. It is also worth checking if you have Nosema and to treat with Fumidil B if confirmed. This requires examination under a microscope and I am offering a service to members this Autumn. Details overpage.

## Dates for your Diary

### Wednesday 19th August

Association Apiary  
Training session for new beekeepers  
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

### Sunday 6th September

Open Day at the Association Apiary  
11 am - 4 pm

### Sunday 13th September

Speen Food Festival  
11 am - 4 pm  
Speen Playing Fields

### Sunday 20th September

Visit to Stockwood Discovery Centre  
See overpage for more details

## Open Day

### Sunday 6th September

11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Our Open Day on 6th September has attracted a lot of interest and we have already sent out more than 70 invitations.

We shall be setting up our tent in the field away from the hives where we will have:

- Live bees in an observation hive
- Poster displays, and demonstrations of beekeeping equipment
- "Dancing with Bees" video
- Activities for children
- Refreshments
- Sales of honey and hive products

At hourly intervals during the day, providing the weather is good enough, we will take small parties of visitors into the apiary and show them at close quarters the inside of a beehive.

We will need lots of help during the day and I hope that as many members as possible, new beekeepers as well as experienced ones, will come along.

I shall be co-ordinating the event so if you can spare some time please send me an email at [chairman@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:chairman@mbbka.org.uk) or phone me on 01494 866516.

Please keep this Sunday free. Tell your friends about it and bring them along with you.

More overpage ....

## Visit to the Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton

On [Sunday 20th September](#) there will be a visit to the Stockwood Discovery Centre at Luton. The Centre is well known for its bee-friendly gardens and museum of country crafts, including beekeeping. The Centre is also the home of Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association.

A guided tour has been arranged and times will be given nearer the date. Costs will depend upon the numbers going but will be no more than £5 per head.

We will travel there by car and Karen Dadswell will arrange the rendezvous point and time. We need to get some idea of how many people are likely to come so, if you are interested, please contact Karen on [01296 624091](tel:01296624091) or email [membership@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:membership@mbbka.org.uk)

### Varroa Control

As soon as your honey has been harvested you should start to consider Varroa control. It is important to do this in the Autumn so that the winter bees are as healthy as possible.

Apiguard is the best treatment to give at this time of year. You will need two trays for each hive.

As soon as you have taken off all the frames you are going to extract, remove the cover board, any remaining supers and the queen excluder.

Place one opened tray directly on top of the brood frames. Put an eke or empty super over it and then replace the queen excluder, super, cover board and roof.



If you are using an open-mesh floor insert the monitoring sheet underneath the mesh so as to cut down ventilation through the floor.

After two weeks, replace the Apiguard tray with a fresh one and leave that in place for another 2-4 weeks or until the bees have emptied it.

There are different opinions as to whether you can feed sugar syrup whilst the trays are in the hive. Personally I wait until the Apiguard treatment is finished before feeding.

### Sugar at wholesale prices

If you harvest most of your honey you will need to feed the bees sugar syrup so that they have enough stores for the winter.

The BBKA has made an arrangement with [Booker Wholesale](#) to allow beekeepers to purchase sugar from their cash and carry warehouses.

You will need to register and obtain a card which will then enable you to make purchases from the warehouses. The process is quite easy.

Go to the store reception and show your BBKA membership card, fill in a form and you will be issued with a temporary Booker card which can be used straight away.

I bought granulated sugar from them last week in packs of 6 x 2kg bags at a cost of 65p per kilo. This is quite a lot less than the supermarket price.

You must look carefully at the prices however because the cost per kilo can vary significantly depending on the pack size.

The nearest warehouse to us is in High Wycombe and there are others in Luton and Watford. For more details see their website at [www.booker.co.uk](http://www.booker.co.uk).

### Nosema

The gut parasite *Nosema apis* has been around for a long time but now there is a new strain *Nosema ceranae* which is causing concern. Both strains can be controlled using Fumidil B but the Bee Inspectors recommend we don't use Fumidil as a preventative measure but only when the disease is confirmed.

This requires preparing a sample and examining it under a high-power microscope. I have the equipment and training to do this and I am offering a service to members to check their bees for Nosema.

You will need to collect in a match box about 30 live bees from each hive. Send them to me and I will check them for you. To cover the costs I am making a charge of £2 per sample.

Our winter programme will be announced in the next newsletter

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