



# Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

April 2008

[www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)

## Swarms, swarms everywhere - what are we to do?

**With the swarm season upon us, Jenny and Michael Johns gave an excellent talk on how they cope with this important stage of the beekeeping calendar.**

Michael first explained the two key reasons for controlling the bee's natural tendency to swarm – namely ensuring that your beekeeping does not alienate you from your neighbours and also to help ensure that you have a more bountiful honey crop.

It is important to remember that this is a natural thing for the bees to do, and is normally a result of overcrowding or that your queen is not laying as well as the colony want her to do. Simple preventative measures therefore include ensuring that your bees have enough space and to re-queen the colony on a regular basis.

Michael had heard that commercial beekeepers in Australia re-queen every year and rarely suffer from swarming. However, this might not be practical nor economical for most hobby beekeepers.



Having studied various swarm control measures, Jenny and Michael have settled on



what is known as the Modified Snelgrove Method. The reason for choosing this approach was that others require more space and beekeeping equipment than was available to them in their apiary.

Michael pointed out that, regardless of how you control swarms, the most important thing to do is to carry out regular inspections from April through to the beginning of July. Even in less than perfect beekeeping weather, it is important to look for the signs of swarming. The main telltale sign is that your bees will start to make queen cells.

Before moving on to a practical demonstration, Michael and Jenny also explored other means of swarm control (including clipping the queen's wings, removal of queen cells and the artificial swarm method) - all of which can be used with varying levels of success.

We were then treated to an extremely well planned and executed demonstration of how the Modified Snelgrove Method is applied. This included a very helpful handout with illustrations on the method.

This was a very informative and entertaining evening, and we are sure it will help all those that attended to manage their bees better over the coming months. 🐝

## What's on this month...

A sub-committee met in March to plan for the Division's **Open Day** being held on 17<sup>th</sup> April from 7.30pm till 9pm at the Chingford Horticultural Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford.

The purpose of this event is to give non-beekeepers and those interested in beekeeping an insight into the lifecycle of the honey bee and the benefits and enjoyment of keeping bees.

Visitors will be guided through four presentation areas, including practical demonstrations on beekeeping and the honey bee. These presentations include: -

### 'The Honey Bee'

By Jenny and Michael Johns

### 'The Bee Hive'

By Ken Barker

### 'Products of the Hive'

By Ted Gradosielski and Peter Clarke

### 'Essential Beekeeping Equipment'

By Kevin and Tiffany Cook

We would like as many members as possible to attend this event, and invite anyone who they believe would be interested in attending. All are welcome, regardless of age or their interest in bees.

A flyer is available from the division website if you would like to distribute these to interested parties. These will also be displayed in local libraries and hopefully distributed from honey seller's stalls at local farmers markets.

Please arrive in good time, and note that parking bays are limited at the venue. However, there is plenty of unrestricted parking in nearby streets. 🐝

## Beginners certificates

The beginners course, delivered by Ken Barker, had no less than nine students this year. These included: -

Mark Suggs  
Paul Harvey  
Daniel Harvey  
Emma Hewitt  
Paul Mason  
Liarne Stephens  
Eric Beaumont  
Djelloui Lakhdar  
Ruth Devison

Both Liarne and Eric came early to the March meeting and received their certificates from Ken.



The remainder will be presented at future events or during one of the practical sessions that Ken will be holding at the Warren in the coming weeks. These sessions will help the beginners get used to working up-close with bees as well as showing them the inner workings of the bee hive.

A new beginners course will start at the beginning of next year - and we hope it is equally well supported. More details are available from Ken - contact details are below. 🐝

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