



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

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www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

How to make show-winning honey

Tips, tricks and how to please the judges at your next honey show!

With the Division's own honey show coming up on 12th September, Jim McNeill's presentation on producing prize-winning exhibits was extremely well timed. Having won numerous regional and county prizes himself – as well as serving as a judge on many occasions – Jim's inside knowledge was extremely valuable to both novice and experienced beekeepers alike.

This presentation dispelled the theory that, "it's not what you know, but who you know" as honey is always entered without the judges knowing who the entrant was. This anonymity ensures two things. First – to alleviate any fears that judges might be favourable to one contestant over another – and secondly, that the judges can concentrate fully on the specified qualities of the entry. No allowances will be made if one entry is from a less experienced beekeeper within that given class – which should result in the best exhibit always coming out on top.

Jim gave a whole range of very useful tips on preparing honey – ranging from how to extract and filter the honey, heat-treating honey to stop crystallisation, cleaning procedures for jars and lids, the application



of labels and, general tips on producing honey that is going to attract the judge's attention. More to the point, Jim made it clear what things made judges reject entries even before the real competition begins. Amongst the greatest of heinous sins are dirty jars and lids, under-filled jars, jars that don't match, uneven labelling and honey that's been entered in the wrong class. If you get these wrong your entry will not even get to the stage where the judge checks its aroma and taste!

This was an incredibly useful event to hold at this stage in the calendar. This year's honey show will be the first for some of the newer members so it gave them a very good insight into what the competition is all about. We also hope it gave encouragement to many of the long-standing members who have never entered an exhibit in the show.

Our sincere thanks to Jim for taking the time to give us this talk. The meeting ended with a show of thanks for Jim, yet another certificate presentation by Ken and the recital of a short ode by one of our newer members, Avril Smith, on bees and beekeeping. See details opposite for the Honey Show in September. ♀



Winter Preps

An additional meeting was held at the new divisional apiary at Wanstead in September – the aim of which was to give newer beekeepers hands-on experience on the all-important task of closing the hives down for winter.



Jenny Johns and Ted Gradosielski covered subjects including winter feeds, Varroa treatments and how to protect against other invaders such as mice and woodpeckers. ♀

What's on this month...

It's that time of the year again when we show off the very best of what the division members have produced this season at the EFBK Honey Show on Saturday 12th September.

The show takes place alongside the Buckhurst Hill Horticultural Society Show at St. Johns' Church Hall, Buckhurst Hill. All members are encouraged to enter at least one item in the show – and to come along and lend a hand. Many visitors come expecting to buy honey so we would ask you to bring whatever stock you have in order to put on an impressive display.

The show is not just about honey. There are categories covering candles, cakes, frames of honey, photography and the ever popular mead category. Entry forms were included with last month's newsletter but copies are available from the Show Secretaries if required.

Items must be on display by 10.30 on the morning of the show. Payment of fees should be made to Show Secretaries on or before the morning of the show. All cups are to be returned cleaned – at the latest on the day of the show.

For more information please contact Show Secretaries Peter Clarke (020 8521 1533) or Ron Baldwin (020 8505 1020). ♀

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