

Woodlands Apiary



February 2013

The 2013-14 beekeeping season got off to a cold and wet start but all of the stocks have survived and were on the wing during the sunny period of 30 January.

Stock conditions: I suggest that we dose all stocks with varroacide as soon as strength permits and then go into a programme of bio-technical control for the remainder of the season. There are no signs of Nosema so, at this time, no treatment is required.

Stock N°	Strength	Condition
1 WFT	good	ok
2 WFT	strong	ok
3 WFT	moderate	ok
4 WFT	good	ok
5 Tina	strong	v slight varroa
6 Wal	good	v slight varroa
7 Jon	moderate	ok
8/9 T/W	moderate	v slight varroa

Early Feeding: Presently all stocks are being fed a 1:1 sugar syrup just in case the queens start accelerated brood laying early this year – with some luck, we may have a 100% overwintering rate for the Apiary's first full year.



Mice and Birds:

During the cold snap a field mouse took up residence in N° 6 by somehow wriggling round

the mouse guard and, even with the guard refitted, it or them had a good chew at the entrances to N° 6 and 3. The dangling compact discs in front of the hives have so far managed to deter the woodpeckers.

Apiary: A farm volunteer raged war on the surrounding weeds and brambles clearing the fence enclosed patch south towards the farm buildings – I have laid, in a rough and ready

fashion, another ten bases for additional hives. I have six or seven stocked hives to transport to Woodlands as soon as the weather breaks, thus leaving ample room for few more hives for yourselves – there's a good day's work resetting and squaring up the new bases, and the bridge across the stream could benefit from some walkway repairs – any volunteers?



Expanding Your Stocks: Now is the time to consider your own strategy for expanding and/or refining your own bee stocks. You might want to leave replacing your 1st year queens for a 2nd full year before replacement – new mated queens are available (at about £45) through to June/July, or we can breed some of our own.

For expansion with new stocks: packaged bees (1.5kg) with a New Zealand queen (£150) should be ordered within the next few weeks for delivery in late April-May, or we can split up some of the Apiary stocks and/or we can collect and take in some swarms (along with their diseases!) around early to mid May.

To restart N° 8 (presently combined with 9) we could either split 8/9 and introduce a fertile

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queen (as above) or start from scratch with a new queen and split stock, etc..

New Recruits: I've received a few requests to join the Apiary- for this season our sticky band will be joined by Harry Singh.

Neal's Yard Grant: We applied for but was not successful for a £2,000 grant for Neal's Yard - we had hoped to use this to add some IT gizmos and webcams so that the Apiary could WWW outreach to local schools and community groups - ideas where else we can apply for similar levels of grant funding would be welcome!

Woodlands Farm Trust Website: This is now up and running - I've ask for a hyperlink to the L&A website [Apiary](#) page to be activated.

Beekeeping Agreement: I am still waiting for the Trust to sign off the final version of the Beekeeping Agreement - it's only taken 10 months so far - whatever, I'll circulate it for your individual agreement within the next week or so.

Things to Do: For the new season, please:-

1) sterilise all tools and protective clothing ahead of use for the new season - use soapy water for leather gloves; clothing launder as normal; hive tools, smokers, etc., can be soaked in a washing soda-water (~1 to 5) solution for an hour or so - further details of commercial scale decontamination is available from [Defra BeeBase](#).

2) if you haven't already done so, let me have your minimum contact details for the Trust's management;

3) make up any new frames and hive parts so these can put out in the Apiary to acclimatise for a few weeks before use; and

4) read through and understand the [Woodlands Apiary Risk Assessment](#).

2011-12 End of Season Report: This [End of Season](#) report sets out the Apiary accounts, showing a 1st year operating loss of £1,306.15.

Apiary Working Days: I'll endeavour to regularly attend the Apiary on Thursdays from about noon starting 2nd week of March but those experienced amongst you can work your hives to your own schedule - do remember, however, that until your are 100% confident of your bee handling skills, always work the Apiary with at least another beekeeper close at hand.

John Large



Photo: Tina