

HELENSBURGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER No. 177 NOVEMBER 2012

CHARLES URWIN (EASTWOOD BKA AND GLASGOW AND DISTRICT BKA)  
ON "NUCS"  
THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER AT 7.15 pm IN THE HALL AT RHU CHURCH

Forget your fancy Power-point presentations. This talk features a nucleus hive, a beekeeper, and more than 30 years of experience. About three years ago we organised a nuc making workshop and since then there have been more members using this essential piece of beekeeping equipment. A nuc allows you to make increase of your bees, aids mating and widening of your genetic pool, provides back up colonies that can be over-wintered, houses bees in small colonies for new beekeepers, eases the introduction of queens, and a lot more. Come and hear Charlie's encyclopaedic knowledge on the subject: an opportunity that should not be missed. Oxalic acid in solution for trickle treatment also will be handed out at this meeting: see item below.

A NEW BEEKEEPER'S GETS STARTED            Cameron Macallum

In the beginning...

They say 'what's for you doesn't go past you'. That was certainly the case at the Gardening Scotland show at Ingliston this summer. Straight in the door and I am met by H & D Beekeepers at the bee boles, followed by more beekeepers at the SBA stand. I was very impressed with the friendly reception and advice, and came away with enough information to put a foot in the hive door.

...next up was to attend a course.

I attended at the Scottish Agricultural College, Auchincruive, Ayr, where Graeme Sharpe runs the one day 'Beekeeping for Beginners' course. This excellent course is subsidized by the Scottish Government and costs £25, including lunch, and all equipment and clothing is supplied.

The day begins at 9am with a classroom input with Power-point, props and discussion, until lunchtime, covering the various aspects; Importance of Bees, Hive Parts, Life Cycle of the Honey Bee, Selection of Apiary Site, Forage and Feeding, and Safety.

After lunch and a beekeepers health and safety input, there follows a practical session at the SAC Apiary. Graeme takes the group for a "hands on" instruction in basic bee handling, hive inspection, queen catching and marking. Although in a group, each individual has a chance to practice and discuss on a one to one basis with Graeme and physically handle the bees under supervision.

In all, this is a very good course that I can highly recommend for raw beginners and newish beekeepers, or the just curious. The group I was with were a mixed bunch of starters, some having bees and others returning to beekeeping. All came away with very good comments and impressions, and Graeme's

enthusiastic approach rubbed off on all of us. Also it gives a chance to see if beekeeping is 'for you' in a controlled environment.

So if there are any prospective beekeepers out there, this is the course to attend - before getting stung.

## ASSOCIATION APIARY REPORT OCTOBER 2012

Neil Sandison

All hives have now got their "winter eke's" on and plain ply cover boards with small vents in each corner and 1 inch thick sheets of polystyrene glued on the top of the ply to keep the little b's warm over winter. Blocks of candy will be put into the ekes in the next week or so. The Varroa count revealed some interesting variations among the four hives and I wonder how, or if, we could interpret the following results after Apivar strips were put in on the 5 Sept.

Hive No. 9	<u>No. 3</u>	<u>No. 4</u>	<u>No. 7</u>
First 48 Hrs to 7/09/12 432	446	176	2050
48 Hrs to 19/09/12 265 (61%)	135 (30%)	69 (39%)	133 (6%)

Can we assume that Hive No. 7 had little or no sealed brood in early September and the mites were all in the hive exposed to the Apivar. This could mean that there were not enough young bees hatching in the colony for it to survive over the winter.

In the case of hive No 9 it looks as if quite a lot of bees were hatching in the middle of September exposing the mites to the Apivar strips. Applying the same logic, which is seldom a good idea with bees, hive No 9 should survive the winter O.K..

It would be great if members would Email their views on this to Mike or Gordon and also report on their own Varroa count results.

## OXALIC ACID FOR WINTER TREATMENT

As in previous years Jim McCulloch has kindly agreed to arrange to have oxalic acid (3.2% in sugar syrup solution) to be made up for trickling on at 5ml per occupied seam in December or early January. Also as previously this will be provided free by the association and entirely at the individual beekeeper's risk. Please confirm your requirements to Gordon at [Gordon@windsmiths.co.uk](mailto:Gordon@windsmiths.co.uk), as per earlier email.

The orders will be handed out at our next meeting on Thursday 29 November.

FINALLY....

The first of the winter gales is a reminder to get those hives checked and tied down if you have not already done so.