Lady Godiva came in person to sample the honey produced by Coventry bees at the Godiva Festival recently.
### Warwickshire Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Oct</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Beekeeping</strong> (6 week course)</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fircroft College. Contact Ian Edwards;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ian.edwards@fircroft.ac.uk">ian.edwards@fircroft.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Oct</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td><strong>Apiary Clean Up</strong></td>
<td>Solihull</td>
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<td>Branch Apiary, Ravenshaw</td>
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<td>8 Oct</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td><strong>Branch Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Solihull</td>
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<td>Improving your bees the BIBBA way - Jo Widdicombe</td>
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<td>Methodist Hall, Blossomfield Road, B91 1LG</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Oct</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td><strong>Branch Honey Show &amp; Special Branch Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Coventry</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Subject; Alternative Branch Apiary Site presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All Saints Church Hall, Rectory Lane, Allesley, Coventry, CV5 9EQ</td>
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<td>18 Oct</td>
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<td><strong>Branch Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Sutton Coldfield</td>
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<td>Erdington Methodist Church</td>
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<td>20 Oct</td>
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<td><strong>Branch Honey Show</strong></td>
<td>Rugby</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If you have honey, enter it in the show…</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full details on the website <a href="https://rugbybeekeepers.org">rugbybeekeepers.org</a></td>
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<td>United Reformed Church Hall, Hillmorton Road, Rugby, CV22 5AD</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Oct</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Beekeeping</strong> (6 week course)</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Winterbourne House &amp; Gardens.</td>
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<td>See listings at <a href="https://winterbournehg.org">Winterbourne H&amp;G</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Oct</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td><strong>Branch Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigating biological controls of varroa mites</td>
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<td>Scott Dwyer, Warwick University,</td>
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<td>Dame Elizabeth Hall, Firbank Close, Bournville, B30 1UA</td>
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<td>12 Nov</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td><strong>Branch Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Solihull</td>
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<td>Botany for Beekeepers - Stuart Roberts</td>
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<td>Methodist Hall, Blossomfield Road, B91 1LG</td>
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<td>15 Nov</td>
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<td><strong>Branch Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Sutton Coldfield</td>
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<td>Chairman’s Evening</td>
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<td>Erdington Methodist Church</td>
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<td><strong>Branch Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Coventry</td>
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<td>Beekeeping, Home &amp; Away - John Home</td>
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<td>All Saints Church Hall, Rectory Lane, Allesley, Coventry, CV5 9EQ</td>
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As members of the WBKA you are welcome to attend any of the meetings and events listed in the Warwickshire diary pages.

From the Chairman

I am writing this expecting that it will reach you after the annual Honey Show, this year with the County Lectures running alongside. Thank you to all of those who have helped with the organisation of the event and I hope those of you who took part feel justly rewarded and motivated to enter again next year. I also hope that you enjoyed the lectures and that the speakers have given you something to help you keep improving your own beekeeping.

Do you have recent experience working with schools to help them include beekeeping as part of the school curriculum? If so please make your branch Trustees aware. The BBKA Executive have signalled that at the forthcoming ADM (January 2019) they intend to propose a new membership category for schools and over the next few weeks your Trustees will be considering how we should respond.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that although the beekeeping season is just about over, the beekeeper learning season will continue through the winter. Most branches will have an active programme of meetings (open to all WBKA members) and these will be complimented by events organised by the County Education Coordinators team. Please look out for introductory courses for microscopy and intermediate courses for those who want to move beyond the basic skills.

David Blower
**Warwickshire News**

**Birmingham Branch**

September has been a very busy time for the Birmingham Branch. Our Annual Honey Show on the 6th and 7th September was a great success, held at Martineau Gardens in glorious sunshine, with more than 1000 visitors attending over the weekend. Ivor Flatman judged the honey, wax, mead and photograph entries presented by members of our Association (and one from Kidderminster) about which he was complimentary of the quality, particularly the novices. All entrants are encouraged to enter the County Show. Presentation of our trophies was by the Bishop of Birmingham who was particularly proud to present Ray Bowers with the WC Hart Trophy for frame for extraction. The Bishop is a bee landlord and felt he had contributed towards this award as Ray, together with Samantha look after these bees. Our thanks go to everyone who volunteered their services in setting up, manning the stalls and taking it all down at the end of three exhausting but enjoyable days and of course our bees who have produced quality products.

Heritage Weekend followed and we had tables at Winterbourne Gardens, Fircroft College and Highbury Hall. As usual, the observation hive always brings crowds not only to find the queen but to question what is going on inside the case. ‘How does the queen get the coloured mark?’ Even the occasional ‘Where is the king bee’? At Fircroft alone there were over 600 visitors so I believe we can say we are fulfilling our object of ‘educating the public in the importance of bees in the environment’ and when our Beekeeping for Beginners courses start in October we will be ‘promoting and furthering the craft of beekeeping.’

*Jan Willetts*

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**Coventry & District Branch**

www.covbeebranch.co.uk

The branch activities for September kicked off with our attendance at the Godiva Festival at Coventry’s War Memorial Park on the 1st and 2nd of the month and although there were some issues getting beekeepers and the bees on and off the site because of the ‘improved’ security measures, it all worked out in the end. Sincere thanks to all those members who volunteered their help on the stand - I hope you enjoyed the experience and also the music and the rest of the festival.

The monthly Branch Meetings have now moved indoors to the All Saints Church Hall, Allesley and we have an excellent programme planned for the winter season thanks to the hard work of our new meetings organiser, Cathy Bonner.

The first Branch Meeting was held on 17th September when our own Dave Bonner, Master Beekeeper, gave a presentation on preparing wax and honey for showing. He shared numerous hints and tips on the best way to prepare exhibits and even the likes of Peter Spencer said he learnt something new! Hopefully, this will have fired up the enthusiasm of members to enter some of the classes at the Branch Honey Show which is our next meeting on the 15th October. We would particularly like to see plenty of novices entering exhibits and vying with each other for the new trophy; The Chris Skuse Trophy, which will be awarded to the novice with the most overall points in any class. Who will be the inaugural winner? Our Honey Show Secretary, Pete Barclay will open the online entry system a few weeks before the show or you can enter on the night. Watch out for information via Covbee Yahoo Group. In the meantime, why not
practice at the Warwickshire County Honey Show on 29th September?
Whilst the honey show is being ably judged by John Home, we will be holding a Special Branch Meeting which has been called by the committee in order to present our plans for moving the Branch Apiary from its current site at Ryton Gardens to the London Road Allotments, Humber Road, Coventry. Dave Bonner will give a presentation outlining the committee’s proposal and the members will be asked to approve the plans before the move can go ahead. The committee would like as many members as possible to attend this meeting and be involved in deciding the future of your branch.

Julia Barclay

Nuneaton & Atherstone Branch
Our outdoor meetings came to a close at the start of September with a session where a hardy group spent time tidying, stacking and generally clearing up the apiary site. We now look forward to our series of winter talks on the first Tuesday of each month at Hatters Space Community Centre, with a variety of speakers talking on different aspects relating to beekeeping and bees in general.
For the more adventurous members who ventured to the Derbyshire moorland in the hope of garnering a crop of heather honey, it was a less successful trip than last year when a bountiful crop was obtained. Some beekeepers were a little more successful, so it was probably a matter of timing. Still, it was a small “adventure” at the end of the season. If the adage that you get a good crop of heather honey once every 7 years holds true then only 6 more years to go!!
May your supers be full, your swarms few and the Sun always shine on your apiary.

John Twidle

Rugby Branch

Our winter talks are to begin with Bob Smith discussing the importance of pollen to the hive. This will be an informative session to all, but especially for the newer beekeepers who will be overwintering their bees for the first time this year.
A snippet of information from one our beekeepers; she has evidence that badgers have been scratching about just inches from hives in her orchard. According to Warwickshire Wildlife and her research, badgers are very interested in the numerous insects within the fallen fruit, more than in the hives themselves, so be aware and remove any fallen fruit away from hives. Also, an extra precaution is to strap the hives especially if badgers or other animals are known to be nearby.

Gail Plester

Shipston Branch
After weeks of preparation and media speculation about the likely winners, the SBKA Honey Show and Bring & Share evening finally arrived on 10th September, held this year at Tysoe Village Hall.
We were fortunate to welcome Ian James to judge the good number of entries and he talked us through in
some detail what he was looking for in each class. We all learnt a lot from his experience and enjoyed his humour and anecdotes.

Douglas Nethercleft won the Johnny Castle Plate for best in show with a frame for extraction, while Mike Cherry won the Deborah Williams Honey Pot for best novice entry for his set honey. David Blower won the Pat Brazier Cup for the most points across all classes. A particular mention for the 'Beginners Thursday' group for winning the 'Black Bag' class, and for John Francis, for winning both the clear honey and clear honey - novice classes.

Thanks to Douglas Nethercleft for organising the evening, Tris Moore for setting up the on-line entry system and for everyone who helped on the evening. Particular thanks to Ian James for judging the various classes.

A special thanks was given on behalf of the committee to all those who helped at local shows this summer. They were a great success. The Moreton Show, in particular, required a great amount of planning, work and candle making and the demonstration hives were very popular amongst visitors.

**James Taylor**

**Solihull Branch**

Most beekeepers have been busy this month extracting, bottling and labelling their honey in preparation for either gifts or the annual local and county honey shows. Our honey show was held on 10th September at Dorridge Methodist Church with a whole array of high quality exhibits. There were 58 entries from 14 members. As last year, the medium honey and honey cake classes were the most popular. Beekeepers carefully polished and gingerly arranged their exhibits in the hope of winning a cup or the coveted red card - first place in a specific class. Our judge Sue Lang, started the judging with the novice class commenting on the key points that she was looking for before coming to a decision, e.g. no sticky lids, or signs of granulation etc.

We all enjoyed the evening as the quiz tested not only our beekeeping knowledge but also our Latin language skills! Thank you to our quizmasters, Andrew and Sarah, for making us think, particularly in the fiendish anagram and picture rounds.

Roger and Rachel once again did a superb job in organising the event. Our meeting would not have been complete without some refreshments so thank you to Denise and Mandy for their delicious cakes and tea.

Here are our results:

Certificate of Merit for Best Entry in Show - Amanda Cadge, for six containers of honey for sale.

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On a different note, Celia went missing for a week in August, when she travelled to the United States to attend the Eastern Apicultural Society Conference, held this year in Hampton, Virginia. With some 800 delegates, the conference draws its members from all the eastern states and many other people visit it from as far afield as New Zealand. Celia gave three lectures, an after-lunch talk for the Life Members and hosted 'Tea with Celia', an unknown quantity, which turned out to be surprisingly popular and great fun. She found American beekeepers to be much the same as ours, except everything is bigger. There is also a large group of influential people who spurn any protective clothing, preferring tee shirt, shorts (or jeans if things get tough) and sandals. This has a lot to do with the docility of their bees, mostly based on Italian stock, and helped by the sunshine and high temperatures. Disease is a problem and recent legislation has introduced a ban on use of antibiotics other than with a prescription from a vet. Celia was told that commercial beekeepers have been stockpiling supplies ahead of the ban, as an expected resurgence of AFB will cause many of them enormous problems.

**Channy Collins**

**Sutton Coldfield & North Birmingham Branch**

16th September - Annual Honey Show.

We had our annual honey show in Sutton Coldfield. It seems to be a stressful time for many beekeepers, but it is a way to raise the bar and make beekeepers better. We had honey, mead, wax, honey cakes, frames, photography and more and from the quality of the entries, Sutton is looking forward to the County Show.

We should give congratulations to Bernard Diaper, Julia Wigfield, Richard Evans and Graham Carver, who all won at least 2 cups each and also to all the other winners and entrants this year.

**Sutton Branch exhibitors getting ready for the show**

**Jitesh Patel**

**Dat Rosa Mel Apibus**

"The rose gives the bees honey"

After an engraving attributed to Johann Theodore deBry (d.1598)
August 18th 2018
For two weeks following July’s drama, all three colonies progressed smoothly. The swarm I received in late June is continuing to do well. This colony has built up strongly and they have drawn out nearly nine frames of foundation. The only issue I have with them is their temper, they can be quite moody. The new queen that emerged last month from the queen cell is also doing well. Her colony is very calm and productive. I was able to mark her around two weeks after she hatched (and I’m pleased to report that I didn’t make a mess of it!)

My original queen has failed. Her bees never got on with her. At one point, I left eleven days between inspections and when I returned I found two queen cups with eggs in them on one frame and two capped queen cells, side by side on the next frame. There was a queen cup on the top of this frame too. I let the bees proceed with a supersede as they’ve been trying to replace this queen since I picked them up. In spite of the queen being a young queen from 2018, I think they needed to replace her in order to strengthen their colony before winter. I’m hoping that at the next inspection (tomorrow), the new queen will have successfully mated…if not, this colony may be in trouble!

A fortunate aspect of being on an allotment is that there are many people keeping an eye out for pests such as wasps. Two weeks ago, a large wasp nest was destroyed after being found in a tree on the allotment border. I’ve also put some wasp traps up near the apiary…the combination of sliced apple and cola marinated spam seems to work very well! It’s shocking the number of wasps caught. I’ve reduced all the entrances to the hives to help the bees defend themselves.

Sept 19th 2018
I’ve been away for most of the month, so I’ve not been able to attend to the bees as often as I would wish to.

The colony which replaced it’s queen by supersede I was almost ready to give up on as lost. When I asked a more experienced beekeeper if I should just shake the bees into my other colonies, I was told to be patient and that it’s not too late. When I inspected the same colony in early September, the bees were calm as anything and I could see eggs and uncapped brood! This is going to be a very small colony heading into winter, but I’m going to try to overwinter them in a poly nuc. The other colonies are looking strong and I’m hoping they’ll do well over winter.

I’ve received approval from the allotment association to move my apiary site out of the weeds and onto the orchard, beside some hedges. So this winter, one of my projects will be to get this done. It will be much better for my bees and for me. It’s a tad annoying after all the work I did to prepare my original site in the first place, but I really do need to move the apiary.

Denali Enns
**What is Robbing?**

Robbing is a situation in which a bee hive is attacked by invaders from other hives. The invasion is serious for a colony for a number of reasons:

- A hive defending itself against robbing will fight to the death. This battle can result in the loss of many bees and even destroy an entire colony.
- If the hive is unable to defend itself, the invading bees (or wasps) can strip the colony of all its food.
- Being robbed changes the disposition of a hive. The bees can become nasty, aggressive and difficult to deal with.

In the autumn when feeding your bees and after any honey flow has ended, is a prime time for robbing to start, so be on the lookout for the tell-tale signs.

**Indicators of Robbing**

A colony that is under attack will appear to be more active than it previously was, but the activity at the entrance is different. Bees, when they are coming back to their own hive, land on the periphery of the entrance then walk in. Bees that are robbing will dart around at the entrance, then make a dash for it, but straight for the entrance, not landing on the periphery as bees from the colony will.

Bees fighting outside a hive is an early sign and can be confirmed by the erratic and characteristic ‘zig zag’ flight of the robbers on approach to the target hive. Guard bees recognise this flight pattern and will be on high alert. They challenge and examine all entrants for a period of about 1 to 3 seconds by antennal contact to determine a nest mate from an intruder by their odour. An intruder is usually mauled by the guard clamping onto a leg or a wing and curling the abdomen into a position enabling it to sting. A fight ensues and the robber is marked with 2 heptanone from the mandibular glands. Other guard bees recognise the alarm, raise their abdomen and sting chamber, releasing a further alarm pheromone, isopentyl acetate. If unable to escape, the robber is stung and dies.

If your sense of smell is good you will be able to smell the alarm pheromone which has a banana-like scent and if you smell this when examining the hive, be prepared for an attack, or close up the hive till a later date. If you take the crown board off, robber bees will fly out in a hurry. Another sign is when capped honey in the frames has had the cappings ripped off and the holes have jagged edges.

If a target colony is weak and succumbs to attack, silent robbing ensues. The colony continues to work normally, while at the same time robbers enter and leave the hive unhindered. The only tell tale sign now is the flight of the robbers returning directly to another hive. Also, robber bees leaving the robbed hive, fully laden, will have their rear legs...
forward as opposed to a bee leaving the hive on a forage flight, unladen, when the rear legs will be trailing. Eventually, the robbed colony will be devoid of stores, may abandon the hive or even die off.

Dealing with Robbing
Once robbing starts it is difficult to stop, so it is important to prevent it. Robbing is often brought on by the actions of the beekeeper spilling sugar syrup on the floor, leaving brace comb in the apiary or leaving hives open longer than necessary.

Prevention measures include;
- Feeding your bees at dusk, when flying has ceased, to reduce any excitement and prevent the flying bees from leaving their hive to search for the food source,
- Feeding all colonies at the same time and reducing the size of the entrances down to about ‘four bees wide’ or 10 mm so they can be more easily defended - especially important for nuc colonies.

If robbing has only just started and the colony being robbed is strong in bees and queenright, then close the entrances of all colonies up to one bee space.

One method that is advocated to stop robbing is to lean a sheet of glass (or polycarbonate) against the entrance. The rightful entrants will find a way round it, but the robbers will keep flying into the glass and give up. You can also try putting some small leafy branches in front of the hive to confuse the robbers. Another method is soaking a bed sheet in water and covering the hive that is under attack. The sheet (heavy with water) drapes to the ground and prevents robbing bees from getting to the entrance. The bees in the hive seem to be able to find their way in and out. During hot dry weather re-wet the sheet as needed. Be sure to remove the sheet after one or two days. By that time the robbing behaviour should have stopped.

In an apiary, if there is only one colony doing the robbing and one being robbed, it is often sorted out by swapping places. This seems to confuse the bees and generally works. If the robbed colony has taken a bit of a beating, then close the hive and move it three miles or more away. In it’s place put a brood box with some honey on a plate or saucer inside, or if there is a frame in another colony, preferably the robbers colony, with a small amount of liquid stores in, then place that inside. Once the robbers have cleared it up they should quieten down and return to normal.

Various sources including Lancashire & North West BKA, Beekeeping for Dummies & the Dave Cushman website. Via ebees

BAD BEE JOKE

Q Why do bees stay in their hives all winter?
A S’warm!
**Honey Alchemy**

**Honey & Ginger Muffins**

I have a wonderful book which gives a simple recipe for muffins which can then be adapted into FIFTY different types of muffin. “Create 50 kinds of muffins from just one basic mix!” it says on the cover – I still haven’t made them all.

As you probably know, Solihull Beekeepers are partial to the odd cake and I tried this one on them the other week, it went down well! I used the basic recipe from the muffin cookbook and adapted it for the ingredients I had.

**Ingredients**

Oil or melted butter for greasing
280g / 10oz plain white flour
1 tbsp baking powder
1 tsp ground ginger
Pinch of salt
115g / 4oz soft brown sugar
4 balls of stem ginger (from a jar of stem ginger in syrup)
2 medium eggs
250ml / 9floz milk
6 tbsp sunflower oil (or 85g / 3oz butter, melted and cooled)

**Method**

Preheat the oven to 200°C /190°C fan / 400°F / Gas Mark 6.
Grease a 12-cup muffin tin or line with 12 paper cases (no need for greasing if using cases).
Sift together the flour, baking powder, ground ginger and salt into a large bowl.
Stir the sugar through the dry ingredients to mix well.
Chop the stem ginger and mix that through the dry ingredients.
In a separate bowl or large jug beat the eggs and add the oil & milk, mixing well.
Make a hollow in the centre of the dry ingredients and add the wet mixture to the dry.
Stir gently until just combined; do not over mix – Delia Smith says no more than 10 stirs!
Spoon into the muffin tray or cases and bake for 20 minutes or until well risen and firm to touch.
Leave the muffins in the tin for 5 minutes then serve warm with a cup of something good.
If you can resist, you can also put the muffins onto a wire rack to cool, they are best eaten on the day of baking but can be stored in an airtight tin and refreshed in the oven for 5-10 minutes (150°C/140°C fan/300°F/Gas 2) or in a microwave on HIGH for 20-30 seconds.

Denise Grove
How much pollen do bees need?

There is lots of advice on what gardeners can do to help bees and other pollinators, most of it focused on what sort of plants we should be growing. It is all very well growing the right plants, but are we growing enough? And how many is enough anyway? In attempting to answer that question, let us focus on bees, nearly always the most important pollinators and the ones that depend most completely on flowers. Also let us consider pollen, rather than nectar, because although bees need both, pollen is a vital protein-rich food for raising young bees. Nectar is to some extent a renewable resource, which flowers can produce more of, but pollen is not. When a flower opens, it contains a fixed amount of pollen, and when it has gone, it is gone!

So how much pollen do bees need, and what does that mean in terms of flower numbers? Those who had the job of devising the measures targeted at pollinators in the Defra Countryside Stewardship scheme asked themselves exactly the same question, and quickly realised that a lot of educated guesswork would be needed to arrive at any kind of answer. For most bees we do not know how many colonies or nests there are per unit area of garden or countryside, or how much pollen is needed for each bee larva, and for most plants we do not know how much pollen there is per flower.

A team led by Dr Lynn Dicks at the University of Cambridge, did its best, and its deliberations were reported in a recent paper in the journal Ecological Entomology. Their main conclusion was that rearing bees takes an awful lot of pollen, and thus an equally large number of flowers. Earlier Swiss work had already shown that it takes the pollen from tens or even hundreds of flowers to raise a single, small, solitary bee larva. Data for British wild flowers and much larger bumblebees suggest that the Countryside Stewardship requirement of two hectares of flower-rich habitat per 100 hectares of farmland is enough, just, only if you make the most optimistic assumptions. Make more pessimistic assumptions about pollen supply and demand, and there is no way any feasible scheme could even begin to supply the quantities required. The inevitable conclusion, that intensive farmland does not even come close to supplying the needs of bees, makes sense of other research. Bigger bees need more pollen, and although it is well known that all bees have tended to decline recently, larger bees have suffered more than small ones. In the Netherlands, large bees have become measurably smaller over the past 150 years, almost certainly because smaller bees can make do with less food. Small bees have not changed in size. Dutch citizens have become 10 per cent taller over the same period, largely as a result of improved nutrition, mostly from intensive farming, so our gain is the bees’ loss. The message is simple. Growing the right flowers is important but it is at least as imperative to grow lots of them. You cannot have too many flowers, especially in March and April, when queen bumble bees are waking up and establishing new colonies.
Caveat Emptor

Be aware that Warwickshire Beekeepers Association is not responsible for any goods or services advertised in Warwickshire Beekeeper or on the website. Anyone purchasing bees or nuclei should satisfy themselves that they are disease free and that they are aware of the provenance of any queens.
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