



# Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association May 2016 Newsletter

## Neonicotinoids and Pollinators

38 Degrees is running a campaign entitled “**Keep bee-killing pesticides off our fields this year**” and as Beekeepers our opinions will be sought. In truth we should all have an opinion on the matter, however I feel the information on the 38 Degree website is lacking in detail. Below I have tried to summarise some key points and provide links to sites that give further background reading.

The UK Government is reported to be reviewing the ban on the use of neonicotinoids in the UK. Last year it temporarily lifted the ban for specific cases.

Neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides which are generally applied as seed dressings but can also be applied as a spray or through spreaders. A systemic pesticide is absorbed by the plant, making it available to any insect that feeds on that plant.

The two sides of the ban seem to be the environmental action groups and the agriculture industry supported by the agrichemical companies. It is argued that the neonicotinoids are very effective in performing their task and are better than employing historic pesticides on both cost effectiveness and performance. However a key issue is the effect on the pollinators and specifically the solitary bee and bumblebee populations. Neonicotinoids can remain active in the soil long after a crop has been harvested so insects can be affected the season after application by new crops taking up the pesticide.

Research in 2015 shows that on exposure to neonicotinoids solitary bees failed to breed and bumblebee colonies produced a third of the queens one would expect from a healthy colony. Added to the habitat availability issues with these species they are clearly endangered. The court is still out on the effect on the honeybee colony but it is detrimental to the learning and navigation abilities of the individual honeybee.

A link to the 38 Degrees petition via the Chalfont Beekeepers site can be found [here](#). A good article on the peer reviews of the two scientific reports produced in 2015 can be found [here](#). The review by David Goulson towards the bottom of the page is particularly clear. An article by Randy Oliver, a bit old but still relevant, tries to give a balanced view can be found [here](#).

### Bee Safari

Karen Smith will be running a Bee Safari on Sunday 15th May. A Bee Safari is where Karen, along with members of our Association, visit several apiaries and carry out disease inspections of the colonies within the apiary. The safari starts at the Association Apiary at 10:00 am, lunch at 1:00pm and two further apiaries south of Wendover following lunch. If you would like to be part of the Safari please contact [Sarah Turner](#). You will need to bring a clean beesuit, wellies and gloves. Karen intends the session at the Association Apiary to be very much hands on.

### Swarms 2016

With the warm weather finally due to arrive, so the swarming season will start. As you will know Brian Bush runs a very busy and effective Swarm Hotline where he takes calls from the public and coordinates with members to collect and home swarms. The hotline number is:

**07770370132**. If you are interested in helping collect swarms or even have a home for swarm(s) please contact Brian at: [swarm@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:swarm@mbbka.org.uk)

### Programme of Events

**15th May 2016**

**Bee Safari**

10:00am

Association Apiary

Organiser [Sarah Turner](#)

**18th May 2016**

**Association Meeting**

Swarm Prevention and Control

6:30pm

Association Apiary

**15th June 2016**

**Association Meeting**

Making Increase

7:00pm

Association Apiary

**18th June 2016**

**Weston Turville Village Fete**

**16th July 2016**

**Lee Flower Show**

Organiser [Sarah Turner](#)

**20th July 2016**

**Association Meeting**

Uniting Colonies

7:00pm

Association Apiary



## Queen Rearing for a Small Apiary

If you have several colonies and one particular colony last season performed better than the others in terms of friendliness, productivity and immunity from disease. This method might suit you for producing queens from that colony.

The method uses a **Miller Frame**, basically a brood frame with the foundation cut in a saw shape. The best time to successfully raise new queens is when the weather is consistently warm and there is a good flow on, normally June. To be safe, throughout the process feed the bees 1:1 sugar solution.

**Day 0:** Prepare a cell raising nucleus box with a frame of stores, frame of pollen and ideally 2 frames of sealed and emerging brood but one will do. Shake bees from frames of open brood into the box, sufficient bees to cover 3-4 frames.

Take a frame from your chosen colony with eggs and young larvae on it. Cut a saw shape across the middle of the frame as shown in the diagram. I use a ruler, stanley knife and wire cutters.

Place the frame into the Nucleus box between a frame of sealed brood and the frame of pollen.

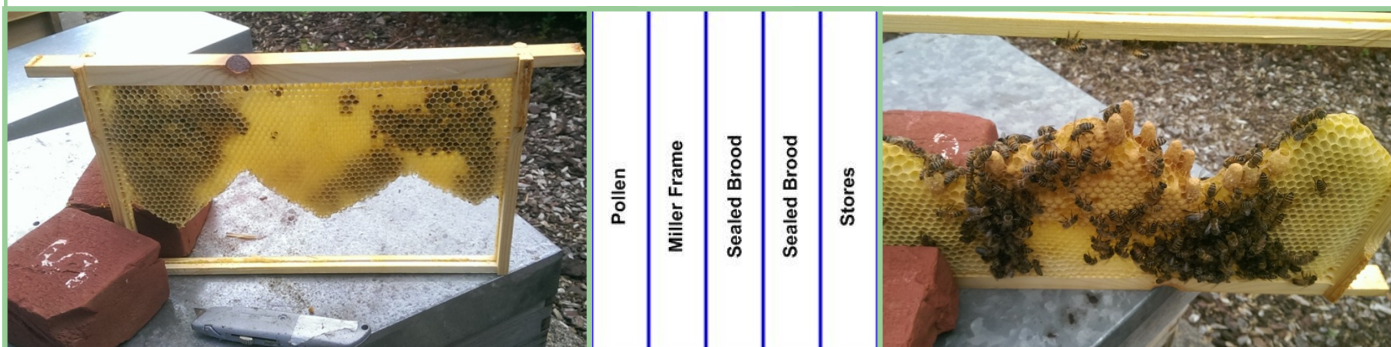
**Day 3:** Inspect the Miller frame, pinch out any sealed queen cells leaving the open queen cells. Also where queen cells are close together pinch out cells around the open queen cells that you like the look of (towards the middle of the frame, well formed and plump larva inside).

**Day 10:** Create the number of queen rearing 3 frame nucleus boxes you require, polystyrene nuc work well, the three frames being one of stores, one of sealed brood and one of drawn comb, plus two frames of shaken young bees.

Cut out the number of queen cells you require, ensure you do not cut the comb close to the cell, scissors work well for this. Leave one cell on the frame for that colony to raise a queen.

In the queen rearing nucleus pin the queen cell to the face of brood frame. Continue to feed colonies.

**Day 31:** Check the nucleus boxes for laying queens



Miller Frame cut from frame with eggs

Frame arrangement

Miller Frame with sealed queen cells (not been pinched out)

### Secondhand Equipment for Sale

Susan Bogue [susanmcb51@gmail.com](mailto:susanmcb51@gmail.com) has National hive for sale. Scott Rutland from HWBKA [scottrutland1968@googlemail.com](mailto:scottrutland1968@googlemail.com) has several complete Standard and Deep National hives for sale.

### BBKA Basic Assessment Course

The course starts on 8th May, if you interested in attending please email [education@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:education@mbbka.org.uk)

### Frames and Foundation Prices

Foundation, per 10 sheets:

14x12 wired	£14.50
Deep National wired	£ 8.50
Shallow national wired	£ 5.50
Shallow National thin unwired	£ 4.00

Frames, per 10:

14x12	£11.00
DN4/5	£ 7.50
SN1	£ 6.75

For details contact: [chairman@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:chairman@mbbka.org.uk)

### South of England Show

The organisers of the Bees and Honey Marquee at this year's South of England Show are looking for helpers and entries to the Honey Show. Full details can be found [here](#).

### School Visits

If you would like to help out on one or more of the school visits please contact Vanessa at [var@fairholme.me.uk](mailto:var@fairholme.me.uk)

Wendover Junior School	12th May
Holmer Green First School	17th May
Drayton Parslow Village School	26th May
Tring School	10th June
Broughton Infant School	23rd June
Aldbury Primary School	30th June
Aston Clinton Combined School	14th July
Bearbrook Combined School	19th July