



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association April 2017 Newsletter



Honesty a member of the same family as Oil Seed Rape;

Brassicaceae.

Apiary Opening 22nd April

The Association Apiary will have its formal opening for this year on 22nd April starting at 11am. The purpose of the day is to help Andrew Smith the Apiary Manager prepare the apiary for the season ahead.

Activities on the day include; tidying the shed, frame making cleaning and flaming hive parts. If the weather is fine we may get the opportunity to check the colonies and possibly start a comb change or two.

The event is open to all members and may be of interest to those who attended the New Beekeepers course as they will be able to acquaint themselves with the site.

Please bring along your wellies and bee suit if you have one.

For further details please contact Andrew at apiary@mbbka.org.uk.



Last Winter Meeting of 2016/17

Our last winter meeting of the 2016/17 season will be held on 19th April in the Church of the Good Shepherd. I would like to thank Sarah Turner for organising some excellent talks. I know that Sarah has the programme for 2017/18 nearly finalised, again the variety and quality of the speakers should not disappoint. The final meeting on 19th April starting at 7:30pm is something we have not tried before. We have 5 x 15 minute talks (including questions) lined up on a variety of topics:

- Why Do Bees Swarm? - Brian Bush
- How swarms and nuclei can be turned into productive colonies—Deborah Campbell
- Bee pest, the Pygmy Shrew—Kevin Crangles
- Bees and Plants—Jonathan Matthews
- Grafting Larvae Made Simple—Sean Stephenson

I hope to see you at the meeting.

Summer Meetings

Our summer meetings at the Association Apiary kick off on 17th May at 7pm. The format of the evening is a demonstration and discussion on a topic particular to the time in the season. The May meeting will cover swarm prevention, swarm control and making increase. Subsequent meetings will be on 3rd Wednesday of the month through until August.

Swarms

I have been through many colonies in the last couple of weeks and have been surprised at the amount of drone brood and in particular emerged drones. Colonies generally will not lay down drone brood until they reach a reasonable size. To me the indications are of an early swarming season.

If you are interested in collecting swarms or would like to receive a swarm please contact Brian at swarm@mbbka.org.uk, the swarm number is **07770 370132**.

Programme of Events

19th April 2017

Association Meeting

Short Talks

7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

22nd April 2017

Apiary Opening

11:00 am

Association Apiary

27th April 2017

New Beekeeper Apiary Sessions Start

6:00pm

Association Apiary

29th April 2017

Chalfonts BKA Auction

2pm-5pm

Chorleywood

Organiser [Fiona Matheson](#)

17th May 2017

Association Meeting

Swarm Prevention and Control

7:00pm

Association Apiary

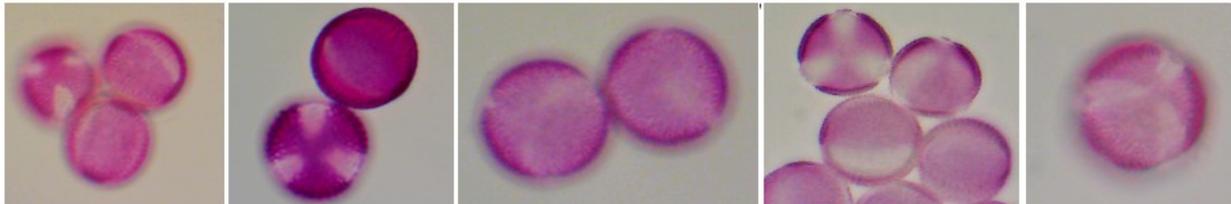
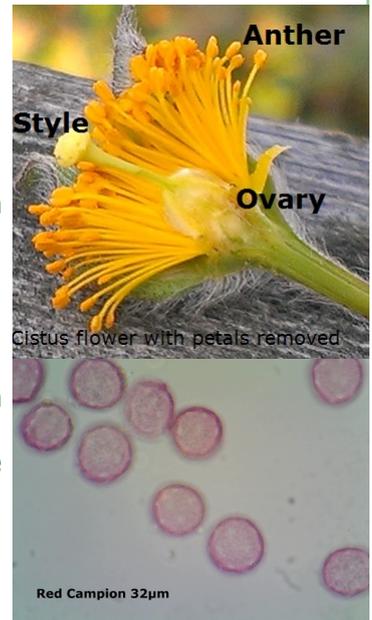
Pollen

Pollen is a fascinating and beautiful thing! Over the last few years I have been collecting and photographing pollen local to my colonies and cannot get enough of discovering new pollens. Generally a flower will have anthers that release pollen (male parts) and a stigma (female part) which will receive the pollen. So that the right pollen reaches the right stigma it comes in different shapes and sizes and only the correct pollen can adhere and be accepted by a stigma, just like a key to a door. When describing a pollen one talks about the size, the shape, number and type of apertures, the surface pattern and thickness. The ivy pollen to the left is medium sized (30µm), round with one aperture which is a pore and furrow, the surface is medium thick with a net pattern. The pore can clearly be seen in the middle of the white line and it is through here that the pollen tube emerges to travel down the style to the flower's ovary and the fertilize the flower. Pollination is the arrival of the pollen on the stigma and fertilization initiates the development of the seed.

April is a fantastic time for collecting pollen and sometimes you come up with evidence that plants are available that should not be in flower. In March I collected pollen that had fallen off the legs of foragers from two different apiaries about half a mile apart, the pollen was for Red Campion, something I would not have expected. Between the two apiaries there is a formal garden so I suspect the bees had been foraging there.

If before the next Association meeting on 19th April you are inspecting your colony and come across a pollen load, particularly if it is an interesting colour, please place it in a dry paper envelope, recording date, location and your name. Bring the sample along to the meeting and I will take your sample away and try and identify it.

The Bucks County Beekeepers Association run a Microscopy Group. We meet monthly to learn and practice new skills and the study of pollen is a key activity for the group. If this topic interests you and you would like to find out more, contact chairman@mbbka.org.uk. Below are a selection of pollens from the Brassicaceae family collected this year, left to right; Danish scurvy grass, cuckoo flower, honesty, aubrieta and oil seed rape. Photos of the plants can be found [here](#).



Chalfonts BKA Auction

A quick reminder that the Chalfonts BKA will be holding their Bee Equipment Auction on 29th April, as well as equipment there will be colonies for sale on National, Commercial and Deep National. The current list of items for sale can be found [here](#) and the complete catalogue will be issued in the coming days.

Equipment for sale

One of our members who is giving up beekeeping has three complete National hives with Apex roofs for sale, please contact chairman@mbbka.org.uk for further details.

We have stocks of complete Caddon hives, parts, frames and foundation for sale, prices can be found [here](#).

MBBKA Education

The New Beekeepers Course has completed the theory sessions and now moves on to the practical sessions in the Association Apiary. There were over 30 attendees on the course and feedback has been very positive so far. Thanks go to Caroline Windley and everyone who helped to make the course such a success. In May we will be running BBKA Basic Assessment training sessions, these are open to all members who have kept bees for at least a couple of years. The training is a great way to consolidate your beekeeping skills and share experiences with other beekeepers. One can attend the sessions without sitting the Assessment. If you intend to continue studying for the BBKA Modules the BBKA Assessment is a prerequisite, for further information contact: education@mbbka.org.uk.