

West Wilts BKA News

News, the planned activities and some advice for members of West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association



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This is your 'go to' section that will describe the things that you need to know about (because it is the stuff that spends your money)!

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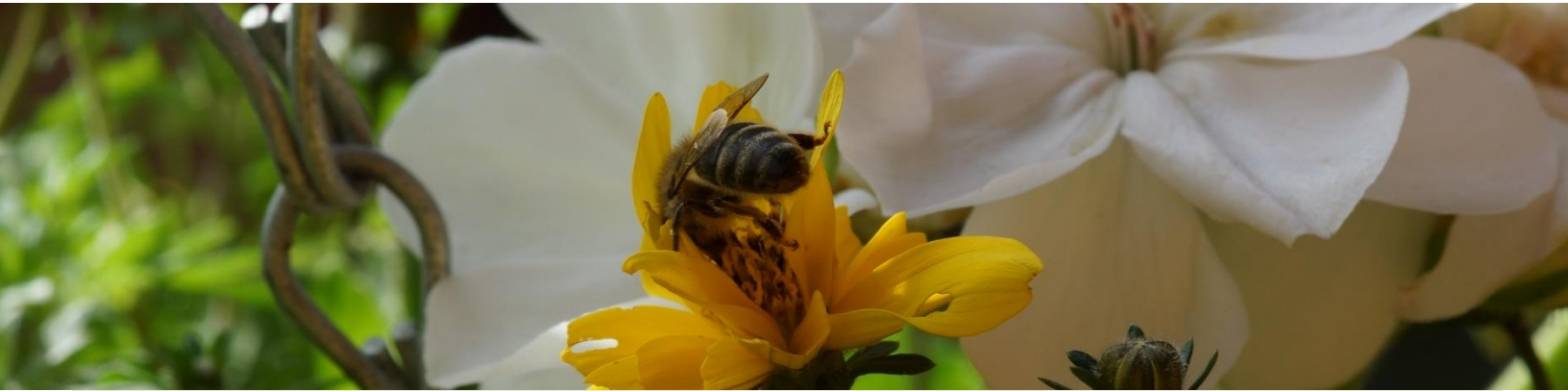
The 'fun bits': social events, training and reviews.

From the editor

I was in two minds what image to put on the front of last month's newsletter. I was thinking whether to put the image I have used this month or something else...I decided to put the image of a bee on an orchid on the front because I thought February was far too early for the crocii to be out and the weather was too cold for the bees.

How wrong I was! It was the 2nd Feb when the flowers were not only pushing through the lawn, but there was a warm snap and the bees were flying and looking for pollen...that means they are probably raising brood.

"Oh no, they're early!!" I exclaimed ...but I looked at the date I took this photo and that was 1st Feb last year...so how wrong an exclamation it was. "Oh no, I'm late!!" would have been far more appropriate! If you, like me, are wondering where they year has gone, get you bee suit washed, you equipment cleaned and be ready for the 'quick draw' of the hive tool.



Editorial

I have already uttered above how unprepared I am for the season ahead, but we'll get there...I think...I hope.

I have also deliberately mentioned the photo on the front for both this month and last (and that has been a theme of a few editions of the West Wiltshire BKA Newsletter). There is a reason for that, and that is we can learn and reflect an awful lot from the imagery. Some of the team from Advanced Beekeeping Courses gave an excellent talk at one of the Wiltshire Bee and Honey Days on what you can tell from just watching the hive entrance. I am a moderately keen fan of that (moderately in that I know I should do more, but don't have the time), but each time I have had a stare at the front of the hive it has made me prepare a little bit for what to do...a sort of tiny-mindfulness for the beekeeper. If you get a chance to see/hear their talk I recommend it.

So the last few front page images have been:

- A non-bee...to highlight that all pollinators need help and the fact that we are pollinator minded means it is not a great leap to consider the other little creatures that help our [local] environment.
- A bee on an orchid to highlight what a wonderful place we live, where there is variety including orchids...and let us hope variety increases in the plants for bees so their diet is enriched and they are healthy, not to mention they are productive.
- A bee on a crocus to highlight that the new year is coming, but also to give you a chance to see how intriguing the bee is. I am hoping that converting it to a PDF has kept enough resolution to you can see the bee has pollen on her antennae and over her head. She will clean that off through a rather involved process using her specially adapted front legs (with antenna cleaners) and gradually transfer the pollen to her pollen baskets on her rear legs via her middle legs whilst in flight. I always find it amazing the complexity involved and the adaptations she has to achieve it.

I won't make comment on the banner image on this page. That is just a "bee's bottom as she raids a hanging basket". My selection criteria for that was somewhat simpler..a bee...some colour...and a distraction from the background.

Anyway, hopefully that has generated a bit of thought! This month's newsletter is following the similar format. I have kept saying that the serious stuff will reduce...actually I think it is. The next month will see a few things comes to fruition and as you can see from the Diary of Events on the next page, the calendar is filling up with sessions at the new apiary and other events. Anyway, I hope you enjoy this, and who knows, by the time you read the next edition you may have had a peek in a hive or two.

Diary of events

March 2022

West Wilts BKA Lecture – 3rd March (Thursday), 7.30pm; Swarm Collecting, Dave Bonner, Zoom link to all members

WBKA Charity Conversion Special Meeting – 8th March (Tuesday), 7pm (hybrid meeting); Meeting on conversion to a CIO. The WBKA Secretary will be circulating an email to ALL members in the County strongly encouraging them to vote and explaining how to vote either in person, on Zoom or by post.

Bee Tradex - 12th March (Saturday); NAEC Stoneleigh. Tickets are £6. See: <https://beetradex.co.uk>.

Wiltshire BKA Council Meeting - 15th March (Tuesday); Meeting post CIO decision – (hybrid meeting)

West Wilts BKA Committee meeting - 28th March (Monday), contact Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com for more details.

April 2022

WWBKA Apiary Opening – 2nd April (Saturday)
Official opening of the new apiary

BBKA Spring Convention – 8th-10th April; Harper Adams University, Shropshire TF10 8NB. See page 5

June 2022

Bath and West Show – 2nd-4th June; nr Shepton Mallet

September 2022

Wilts BKA Honey Bee Health Day – 3rd September (Location To Be Confirmed)

West Wilts BKA Honey Show - 10th September 2022; Bratton Jubilee Hall

October 2022

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – 8th October (Saturday); Corn Exchange, Devizes

November 2022

West Wilts BKA Annual General Meeting – 7th November; Bratton Jubilee Hall

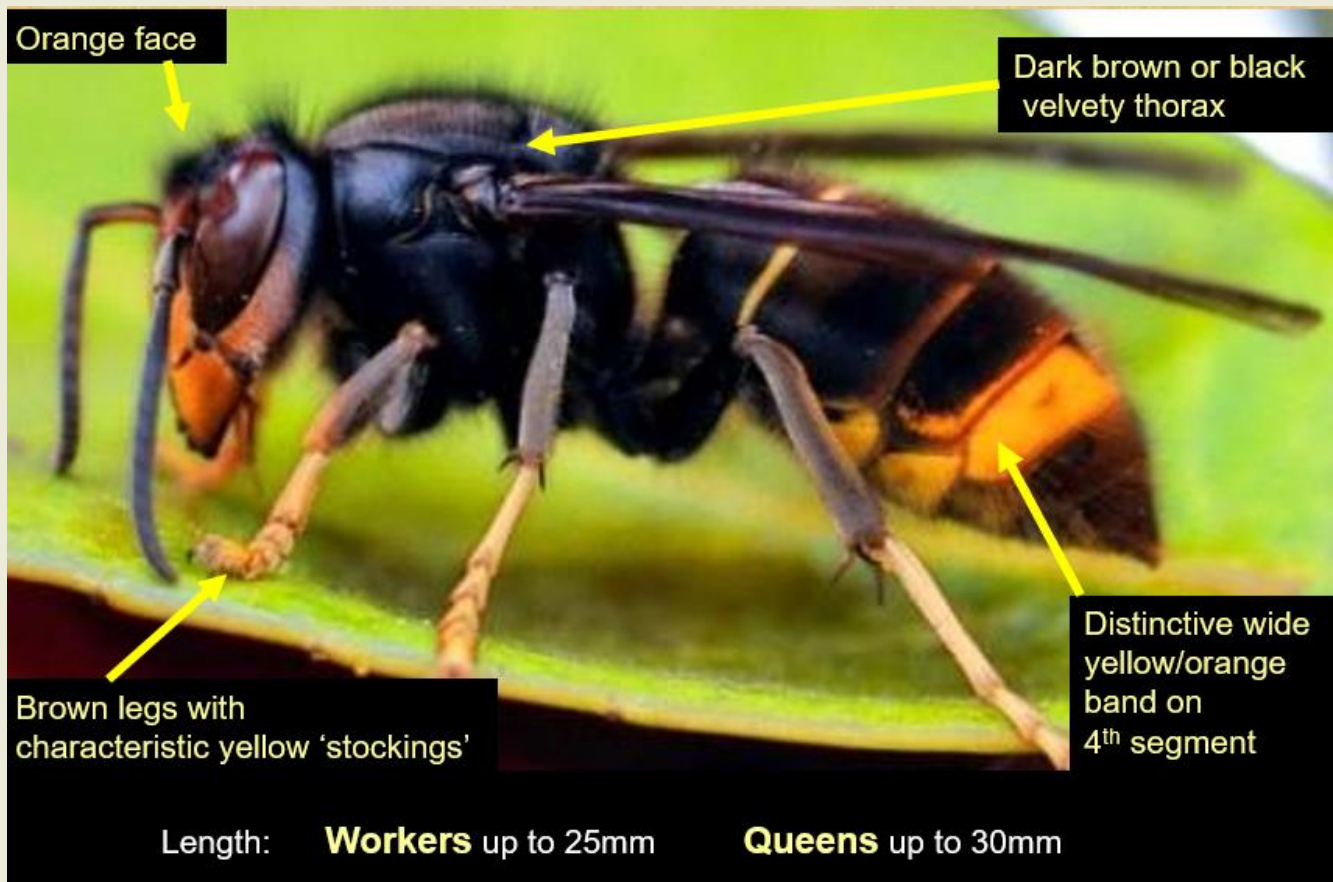
Need to know

Look out for Asian Hornets!

At this time of year we should start looking out for any asian hornet queens that have emerged from hibernation and will be searching desperately for liquid carbohydrates – perhaps foraging on flowers or tree sap, etc. Although we hope that no Asian hornets managed to build a successful nest here last year – we cannot be sure of that, and there is also the possibility that a queen has arrived here from abroad in a vehicle or freight container. Successfully trapping a single queen at this vulnerable stage avoids the considerable amount of effort needed to locate her nest to destroy it later in the year – hopefully before newly mated queens start to disperse from it into the surrounding area!

So monitoring traps should be put out to catch any AH queen in your area. Traps of various types can be bought ready-made, or you can make your own trap from a plastic drinks bottle (see instructions at www.bbka.org.uk/faqs/how-to-make-an-asian-hornet-trap).

Your trap should be baited with a sweet and aromatic attractant (eg. sweetened apple juice; or dark beer + sugar; or wine + sugar + cassis + water; or a proprietary wasp attractant such as 'trappit', - all are claimed to have been used successfully). Obviously, do not use honey!



Make sure that your trap will not kill beneficial insects; this can be ensured by eliminating the risk of drowning your captives, either by using a mesh screen above the attractant to prevent trapped insects drowning in the liquid; or by placing tissue paper, or cotton wool, or other absorbent material into the attractant so that non-target species have something to stand on to prevent them from drowning. Site your traps in a sheltered sunny spot where you can check them regularly (at least daily),

and release any other insects such as European Hornets, moths, etc which become unintentionally trapped.

If you suspect that you have caught an Asian Hornet in your trap, do not open it but place the whole trap in a freezer for 12 hours and report the capture. All sightings of Asian hornets or their nests should be reported immediately (with a photograph, video, or corpse) to the alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk email address or the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app. Also notify the Branch Secretary and the Branch AHAT team who will be able to offer advice and help to obtain the photographic evidence, or a specimen, to be sent with your report. Asian Hornets are not usually aggressive away from their nest but do not take chances.

David Newell (AHAT Leader: 01373 825560) should be contacted if you require any further advice or information.

Good to know

Lectures

I am afraid it is a quick flash to bang for this month's lecture as it is only a couple of days after the newsletter comes out, hopefully this will get you motivated and prepared for the swarming season ahead.

3rd March – Swarm Collecting, Dave Bonner

Dave Bonner is an "enthusiastic hobbyist" who runs 25 productive colonies.

He is a Master Beekeeper and has been going to Uganda every Year since 2008, and as a Project manager for Bees Abroad, he has four active projects in rural communities in Northern Uganda.

He is active in the Warwickshire BBKA and was a Seasonal Bee Inspector for ten years.

Spring Convention

BOOK NOW!

Spring 2022
Convention

Friday 8 - Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 April 2022
Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

Lectures, Workshops and Seminars covering a wide range of practical and scientific topics, directed at all levels of experience, presented by leading experts. Bumper Trade Show Saturday 9th

Speakers and Tutors include; Marin Anastasov, Mark Barnett, Shirley and Richard Bond, Norman Carreck, Lars Chittka, Celia Davis, Joyce Nisbet, Juliet Osborne, Julian Parker, Sara Robb, Nigel Semmence, Jo Widdicombe, Geraldine Wright, and more...

For further information, and to book from 31st January
see the Spring Convention pages at www.bbka.org.uk

Contact us

Newsletter content

We will try to send this out as close to the 1st of the month as possible. We will have a copy date of a week before to give us time to get everything together, and we would really like to hear from you. If you want to include anything please send an email to Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com.

Contact details for committee and officers

WWBKA President: President-WWBKA@outlook.com

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WWBKA Membership Secretary: Membership-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Asian Hornet Action Team Coordinator: AHAT-WWBKA@outlook.com

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