



Cumbria Bee Times

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(Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent those of the CBKA)

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Autumn, in the Beekeeping World, marks the end of one year and the start of the next. By now the honey harvest will have been gathered in and for the beekeeper it is a logical time for the preparation for the new year. To ensure a good crop of honey during the next season a colony of bees must have the ability to survive the winter and emerge in the spring strong and healthy. To enable this to happen the beekeeper must ensure that the colony has a good laying queen, is disease free (Varroa treatment should have been applied) adequate stocks of food are in the combs (at least 40lbs) and the hives are weather proof.

The bees are capable of withstanding the minimum temperatures experienced in this country but not damp conditions. Unfortunately Cumbria is a particularly damp county and care should be taken when choosing a site for overwintering the bees. Provide shelter from the winds and driving rain and ensure that the hives are on high ground away from the possibility of flooding; an event which is becoming more common and severe.

Adequate ventilation, in the hive, is important, without drafts, because water vapour is produced by the bees from the feed they consume to provide the energy and cluster heat needed for their winter survival.

Finally remember the to fix mouse guards to the hive entrance.

The weather is still warm and the bees are active bringing in pollen from the Ivy and Himalayan balsam, but once the temperatures begin drop and the bees cluster on the comb mice can easily creep unnoticed into a hive causing extensive damage to combs. At last,

you think, I can put my feet up and relax until the spring. No! There is still plenty of things to do for the beekeeper during the winter months. Importantly periodically check the hives for stores by lifting one corner of the hive, by the base, to check the weight, known as hefting. By experience beginners will soon learn to estimate the weight of the hives. Another indicator of lack of stores during the winter, is when removing the hive roof, bees can be seen on the top of the combs, through the feed hole in the crown board. During the winter equipment should be checked for damage and cleanliness. Old comb can be melted down and exchanged for new wax with some of the beekeeping suppliers.

Thorne's for example do a straight swap and the table below is an extract from their information on how to calculate the number of sheets of foundation for a given weight of wax.

This is a straight exchange of crude wax into refined foundation. You provide the wax and they swap it for their premier foundation, wired or unwired. No cash changes hands but you get less wax per lb than on conversion.

The table below outlines how many sheets you get per lb of wax. Be sure to look in the right column for the amount of wax you want to exchange - under 50lbs or over 50lbs.

For example, if you take in 30lbs of wax and would like all of it exchanged for Langstroth deep wired foundation, the calculation would be:-

$$30\text{lbs} \times 3.5 = 105 \text{ sheets.}$$

1. Straight Swap

Foundation	Under 50lbs			Over 50lbs		
	Wired	Unwired	Thin super	Wired	Unwired	Thin super
BS Deep	3 3/4	4 3/4	7 1/4	4 3/4	5 3/4	8
BS Shallow	6 1/4	8 1/2	11 1/4	6 1/4	9 3/4	13
Commercial Deep (16"x10")	3	3 1/2		3 3/4	4	
Commercial Shallow (16"x6")	4 1/4	5 1/4	8 1/4	5	6 3/4	10
Dadant Deep	2 1/4	3		2 1/2	3 3/4	
Dadant Shallow	4 1/4	5 3/4	8 1/2	5	6 3/4	9 3/4
Langstroth Deep	3 1/2	4 1/4		3 3/4	4 1/2	
Langstroth Shallow	5 1/4	7	9 1/4	6	8	10 3/4
14"x12"	2 1/4	3		2 1/2	3 3/4	
Rose OSB	3 3/4	4 3/4		4 3/4	5 3/4	
Section squares			43 3/4			49 3/4
3 section length			15 3/4			16 1/4
4 section length			11 3/4			13

There is the anticipation of a new season and what will it bring. Every spring, on the first calm warm day, I always get a thrill when approaching my hives and I hear the buzz of the bees flying and taking in pollen.

The season of 2021, I think, turned out much better than I thought it would during the spring when it was cold and wet. There were some late frosts which damaged the apple and damson blossom resulting in no apples, damsons and plums. However, despite the very dry summer I have harvested a reasonable crop of honey and hopefully so as everyone else.

I was lucky to have a field of Creeping thistles nearby. I don't suppose the farmer was too pleased, but the bees seemed to like them.



Now that the honey has been extracted you should be proud of what is a high quality food product greatly sort after by the general product.

Your honey will most likely be different every year depending upon the flowers your bees

foraged on giving different colours and flavours and the annual Honey Show is the ideal event to show off your produce and compare with other beekeepers. Unfortunately the Show has not been held since 2019 because of the Covid restrictions. Now that those restrictions are being eased the Cumbria Beekeepers Executive Committee have decided that the Cumbria Honey Show will be held again this year on 20th November 2021 at the Braithwaite Institute. As I write this article I have received

notification of the event from the Cumbria Beekeepers Secretary, Debbie Keighly.

A new Show Schedule has been prepared to replace the (very) old one with an edition of a photography section and a new cake recipe. Guidance notes, have been added, to help exhibitors which will hopefully overcome



confusion especially for those who have not entered before. One area of confusion is "which section does my extracted honey go in?" The judge uses

grading glasses to align the exhibits with Light, Medium and Dark. If you are unsure, on the day, seek advice because if your exhibit is in the wrong section it could be disqualified by the judge.

Two speakers have been booked to give talks on Beekeeping topics making it a full day of beekeeping.

Please try and support this event which will give everyone the chance to socialise again. Certain precautions, against Covid will be in place, which the Cumbria Executive Committee ask you to respect for the safety of your self and others.

Further details will be sent out by the Cumbria Secretary.

Dates for your Diary

Cumbria Honey Show 20th November 2021
The Cumbria Autumn Convention had to be cancelled, because of the Corana virus. This is normally hosted by the Cockermouth Branch at Embleton and it is hoped that the convention will be held next year.

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