

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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Pesticides in wax harm bees, aid varroa

BUILD-UP of chemical residue in wax used in brood frames can inhibit development of bee larvae, cause increased brood death and shorten adult bees' lifespan by as much as four days, researchers claim.

The findings, published in the on-line scientific journal *Plus One*, support the theory that chemicals can have marked effects on bee colonies even without directly killing bees.

Researchers Judy Yu, Carol Anelli and Walter Sheppard at Washington State University in the US studied bees in hives contaminated with high levels of pesticide, using a hive with 'clean' wax for comparison. The results proved striking, with delayed development particularly in the early stages and markedly reduced lifespan for the adult worker bees.

At the same time, the delayed larval development gave *Varroa destructor* mites greater opportunity to feast in sealed cells. The spread of contaminants to clean comb was also observed and led to increased larval mortality after several brood cycles. The research team concluded: 'Sub-lethal effects, including delayed larval development and adult emergence or shortened adult longevity, can have indirect effects on the colony such as premature shifts in hive roles and foraging activity. In addition, longer development time for bees may provide a reproductive advantage for parasitic *Varroa destructor* mites. The impact of delayed development in bees on varroa mite fecundity should be examined further.

The findings underline the importance of an integrated pest management system of hive hygiene – it is currently recommended that brood frames should be renewed on a rolling basis at least every three years by removing the oldest four frames in the spring before the brood nest grows to cover them. Bees can detect contaminated pollen and seal it with wax to 'entomb' it, claimed Dr **Jeffrey Pettis**, head of the Bee Research Laboratory of the US Department of Agriculture, in a recent discussion with British MPs. He also said that there was some evidence that mild contamination from neonicotinoid pesticides may make bees more susceptible to nosema.

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Dates for your Diary

June 11th

Fell Gather

at Mitchell's Auction
Mart, Cockermouth.

Stephen Barnes, is still
looking for volunteers
to help man the Bee
related display.

July 9th and 10th

Lakeland Rose

Show

Schedules can be
obtained from Roger
Blocksidge 20 Fowl Ing
Lane, Kendal

LA9 6HB

Or 01539 734436

August 20th

Gosforth Show

Schedules will be
available from Val
Sullivan later.

November 12th

Cumbria BKA

Conference and

Honey Show

Details later

December 3rd

Wax Day

Branches and Secretaries

The Cumbria Beekeepers Association currently has five branches, whose contact details are:

Carlisle

Walter McPhee
Low Buildings
Castlesteads
Brampton
CA8 2AX
016977 41530

Cockermouth

Bill Mackereth
6 Whiteside Avenue
Cockermouth
CA13 9AR
01900 825188

Keswick

Sandra Wallace
Spooney Green
Keswick
CA12 4PJ
017687 72601

Penrith

Joy Rich
Holly House
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Penrith
CA11 0HT
017684 83910

Whitehaven

Val Sullivan
Brackenwray Farm
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01946 862604
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Other Associations

Kendal and South Westmorland
Peter Llewellyn
1 Greenside House,
Hincaster,
Milnthorpe,
LA7 7NA
01539 562369
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Furness
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Beehivemaker

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Wood preservers

Ronseal state that their Five Year Woodstain is safe to use on beehives and that if the timber is rough you may also use Ronseal Fencilife.

Laws of beekeeping demonstrations

Under the most rigorously controlled conditions, the equipment will do exactly as it pleases. If it works, something has gone wrong. Once messed up, anything done to improve it makes it worse. Experience – the name given to mistakes. If anything just can't go wrong – it will anyway (and at the worst possible time)

Nothing is as easy as it looks.

Everything takes longer than you think.

Nothing is impossible for the beekeeper who doesn't have to do it for himself.

If everything is going well, there is something which has been overlooked.

You will always find a queen in the last place you look.

When it goes right nobody remembers – when it goes wrong nobody forgets.

If the explanation is so clear that no one can misunderstand, somebody will. There is no problem when, looked at in the right way, does not become more complicated.

Don't worry about every mistake made – they make up for the things done and got away with.

Don't be afraid to ask dumb questions, they are a lot easier to answer than dumb mistakes.

Is Natural beekeeping Bee friendly?

Jonathan Getty, Irish Beekeeping List
(from the Notts newsletter)

There is no link to it online unfortunately.

This is a quotation from it: "These barefoot beekeepers have developed alternative approaches which emphasise small-scale, low cost chemical-free beekeeping with simple equipment and locally adapted bee populations. These bee friendly methods result in lower honey harvests, but stronger and healthier bee populations. David Heaf, author of The Bee-friendly Beekeeper, explains that although there have been no scientifically conducted studies on natural beekeeping, he has not heard of any report of 'so called colony collapse disorder from any natural beekeepers' ".
Really? No scientific studies? What about the small cell research? What about the work by Engelsdorp et al which looked at the level of chemical and pesticide contamination in honeybee colonies? What about Seeley's work in the Arnot Forest? What about organic beekeeper Dee Lusby's problems with CCD?

I noted with interest this comment from Phil Chandler - the Barefoot Beekeeper - on www.biobees.com last October in a thread discussing treatment with lard patties:
"I have been treading this tightrope for ten years now, and I have been wiped out twice. I can't afford to have no bees in the spring if I am to do any useful research next year. "
Interesting. On the point of getting 'wiped out' for a third time, yet the journalists are fed stories about this approach producing "stronger and healthier bee populations". Who's kidding whom here?

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01946 822836