

Gravesend Beeline

The newsletter
of the
Gravesend Branch
of KBKA
August
2015



[www.kentbee.com/
kbka/branches/
gravesend](http://www.kentbee.com/kbka/branches/gravesend)

Hi everyone,

Many of you will have recently received an e-mail from the National Bee Unit warning that colonies may be at risk of starvation – in the middle of summer! The Unit has apparently had reports from Bee Inspectors in some areas where colonies have already died out due to lack of food. This summer has certainly been very dry in our area and the general view seems to be that honey yields are disappointing – probably because the flowers have been struggling to produce nectar in the very dry conditions. The Unit suggests that we all left our hives to check if any are light, and feed if necessary; nucs, splits, swarms and those colonies that have had all the honey removed are particularly at risk. A 2:1 (sugar to water) feed can be given if necessary, or even fondant if nothing else is available in an emergency.

It also seems to be a bumper year for wasps, and they are also desperate for food, with our colonies being an obvious target. Members who use wasp traps near their hives are finding them filling up very quickly.



To make a wasp trap simply wash out an old glass jar and remove the label. Make a hole in the centre of the metal lid big enough for a wasp to get through. Then half fill the jar with jam dissolved in boiling water. Put the metal lid back on and stand the jar under or close to the hive. The wasps can get in to find the source of the sugary smell but can't fly back out, so they eventually drown. Honey bees aren't tempted to go into the jars.

Plant kills Asian hornets

According to a recent report in the *Daily Telegraph*, French scientists have found a carnivorous plant which attracts and kills Asian hornets. Scientists are now trying to isolate the plant pheromone which attracts the insects and hope to develop a trap by next season. The hornet has not managed to cross the Channel yet, but is reported to have reduced French honey production to a record low in recent years.

Dates for your diary

The next club meeting at Cobham Hall is on **Sunday 23 August** and will concentrate on honey **extraction**. Any new members who have just a few frames of honey, but no extractor, can bring them along and use the club equipment. More experienced members or those with more than 8 frames, can hire club equipment from £10 per week. Ask Michelle for details. If anyone has ordered ApiGuard from me, or would like to buy some, I will have a supply with me on the day. There are also some second-hand, food grade buckets left in the shed for £1 each. All proceeds to the club funds. The club **BBQ** will be on **Sunday 13 September** at Cobham and will include a Winter preparation inspection by Peter Cox. This year's **AGM** will take place on **Sunday 15 November** at Cobham Hall. The meeting will start at 2pm and a number of activities and prizes are being planned, including a mini honey show, quiz, raffle and Bake Off.

2016 Taster Course

We are planning to run a Taster Course in the Spring next year for anyone who would like to know more about beekeeping or is thinking of taking up the hobby. The numbers are limited, so if you have a friend or relative who you think might be interested, let me know before Christmas, so we can assess numbers. The cost is £75 per person, and so it could be an ideal Christmas present.

Lesley