

MID-KENT BRANCH  
KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION  
**NEWSLETTER**

January 2011



**January Star Sign - Capricorn**

Capricornus – one of the most ancient signs. Half goat, half fish, one of the rustic spirits, he was placed in the heavens as a constellation by Zeus in reward for coming to the aid of Zeus in his battle with Typhoeus – one of the Titans, a monstrous giant that caused storms.



**A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS**

The past month has provided early snowfall for winter. It is more usual for January and February. The Met Office forecast for the month ahead is for an old fashioned 'proper' winter with overnight hard frosts and the risk of snow showers with generally below average temperatures. The UK remains subject to complex weather patterns due to Atlantic systems with moisture meeting much colder air from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. *Interestingly this is what Simon wrote last year, but has happened much earlier this year!*

The most important consequence is the food store status of hives. The cluster will maintain a temperature of between 20 – 30°C (see Hooper p60-61 for detail). The cluster also needs a supply of water to dilute the honey. The main risk for the colony is that as we progress into February and the queen begins to lay, then the temperature needs to be raised to 32 - 36°C or the brood will die. This is the point at which the colony can starve and fail.

This month's tips as last year are: -:

1. If you are making candy to provide supplementary feeding then use a sugar thermometer. They can be purchased online or from larger kitchen departments in stores for £7 - £10. *(alternatively save yourself time and buy a 12kg box from a baker for £16/£17) or in Tesco/Sainsbury/Asda but it is relatively more expensive pro rata although more conveniently packaged and ideal if you have a couple of hives. Cut the 500g plastic package into 4 and put it over an open feedhole.*
2. If you fitted mouse guards to your hives that are the perforated holes in strip type, check that dead bees do not obstruct them. There will be low-level losses from the colony through the winter and particularly with narrowed entrances fitted there is a risk of blockage. *(it is a good idea to fit the blocks with the entrance uppermost as a layer of dead bees will not then obstruct the entrance)*

. There will be a meeting of the branch committee in January. Please can the members send either an e-mail or call Barbara Harris if there is an issue that you would like to be raised.

**Beekeeping Equipment**

Do you remember that late spring day when you were dealing with a captured swarm or one of your hives looked as if it was about to swarm? But somehow you never seem to have enough equipment ready to hand! Perhaps now is the time to take advantage of the Thorne sale. Also look out for the new range of equipment being marketed by Maisemore.

**Oxalic Acid Treatment**

This needs to be done as soon as possible- temperature permitting

The Smallholders Show was a great success last summer. We need to continue to raise our profile with the castle management. This year the aim is to have a stand that gives us the best possible representation. Its about ideas, presentation, marketing and we have a lot of talent within the membership. In the next three months it's a thinking and planning task – can you help?

**January Meeting**  
**East Malling Research Station**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011**  
**at 7.30 pm**  
**Queen Rearing**  
**Terry Clare member of BIBBA**

**If you wish to occupy your long winter evenings preparing for next season by making up frames/re-waxing cleaned existing frames, and require foundation, please let me know in advance: BS deep £6.90 per 10 wired: BS shallow £4.00 per 10 wired. I have a limited number of frames, and also boxes of ¾" gimp pins at £4.00 per 500g.**

**Michelle has sent this link to a very interesting development in the fight against varroa**  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth\\_news/newsid\\_9306000/9306572.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_9306000/9306572.stm)

Your comments and contributions are as ever most welcome and valued  
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