



June 2009

BEE ADVISED

the AVON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION NEWS SHEET

A message from our Chairman

"Some considerable time has passed since ABKA had a central communiqué. The demise of the ABKA newsletter was largely due to recognition of the great improvements in the content of BBKA News in communicating national matters and the fact that branch newsletters communicated more specific information.

The ABKA Executive has now decided to produce a news sheet again on an occasional basis to bring relevant information to our membership. It is envisaged that this will supplement such facilities that exist and have a beneficial unifying effect on the branches. Neil Redman has volunteered to act as our Editor.

I hope that Branch secretaries, newsletter editors and members will forward matters of general interest to Neil to help make this venture a success and benefit to all."

David Maslen - Chairman ABKA

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Hosting a hive

Bristol Branch has introduced a new scheme this year aimed at members of the public who would like to support and enjoy honeybees by hosting a hive and beekeeper.

The scheme has generated quite a few responses with some apiary sites being outside of the Bristol 'area'. They currently have requests for potential sites in Backwell, Bitton and Banwell, which may be more suited to members from other branches. For more information or to take up a hosting offer visit the Bristol Beekeepers webpage and go to the forum. All ABKA members are welcome to make use of the forum.

There is also a site available on the ABKA website at Clutton.

Editors Note: In all walks of life volunteers are rare. If we don't respond to their requests or needs they might be less reluctant to volunteer in the future!

Forthcoming events

All branches have their 'apiary teaching' days. See each branch webpage on the ABKA website for details. If you would like to attend please ensure you have spoken to the relevant Apiary manager or Branch Secretary before your visit.

Blagdon & Clevedon

- 26th June - From 6.30pm B-B-Q & Auction of Bee Equipment
- 24/25th July Portishead Show including honey classes
- 12th Sept. Winscombe Show including honey classes

Bristol

4th July Garden party, auction & raffle. All Avon Beekeepers invited. Food and Drink provided. Raffle prizes and food donations appreciated. All proceeds to branch funds 10 am set up; 12.00 registration of sale items; 2 pm start. Apiary is located at the Orchard at 328 Passage Road, Brentry, BS10 7TE. Drive onto site for unloading/loading only. Please park on Passage Road.

Siting beehives and handling bees on allotments

Things to do

- Seek the agreement of the Allotment Manager and undertake to abide by any rules stipulated and satisfy the managers of your competence or explain how you have arranged adequate supervision.
- Satisfy the Allotment Manager that you have made adequate arrangements to ensure that any problems caused by your bees in your absence will be resolved.
- Only keep bees on an allotment if you are a member of the local Beekeeping Association. (Membership of a Beekeeping Association provides members with third party/public liability insurance through their affiliation to the British Beekeepers' Association).
- Try to arrange for hives to be sited in a remote area of the allotment(s) away from other plot holders.
- Limit the number of colonies in any area (obviously they should all be good tempered)
- Ensure that bees are encouraged to rise in excess of 6 feet before leaving the plot by the use of screening which could be natural hedging, wooden fencing or fine plastic/wire mesh screening.
- Ensure that the flight path (of low flying bees) is not directly across other plots.
- Handling bees should be done at times when the bees are very active, thus leaving fewer in the hive - a warm afternoon. Always ensure there is someone else with appropriate protective clothing on site in case of emergency when handling bees.
- Check that none of the plot holders are allergic to bee stings. Ensure that the plot holders know that they should dial 999 if someone has a severe allergic reaction to a bee sting and that they should tell the paramedics that it is a bee sting reaction.
- Ideally you should live close to the allotment.

Things NOT to do

- Keep colonies of bees on an allotment if you are an inexperienced beekeeper (unless the novice will have the benefit of guidance by an experienced beekeeper).
- Use the allotment as a dumping ground for difficult bees
- Place hives in positions from which flight paths impinge on other allotment users or pathways.
- Handle bees when other people are gardening in the immediate vicinity.
- Do not allow the strength of colonies to increase to swarming strength in an unmanaged way.

Mentors required We have over 60 new BBKA registered members this year and we had full attendance at the 'Introduction to beekeeping' courses at Chew Magna and Churchill. Many of our new members are starting to keep bees for the first time and are in need of a mentor. There are several requests for mentors on the ABKA website and in local branch newsletters. If you are an experienced beekeeper and can spare the time please volunteer.

Health and Safety This might seem like the blindingly obvious but we have had two incidents in our area lately that could lead us open to legal action by an ambulance chasing legal eagle:

- A visitor to an apiary teaching day picked up a smoker by the barrel, no guard – (ouch!!)
- Another visitor turned up to a teaching day in a t-shirt and shorts – (potential ouch!!)

Bee alert, if you'll pardon the pun. Always issue warnings before going near the bees.

Contributions can be sent to the editor electronically – n.r.redman@btinternet.com or by post - 51 Sandyleaze, Bristol, BS9 3PZ