

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

February 2019

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Branch website: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>

Bee Diseases

At the next Branch meeting, on **Tuesday February 19**, Dr Emily Bailes from Royal Holloway College will be presenting her research on the transmission of deformed wing virus and slow bee paralysis virus. She says recent work suggests that flowers may act as a hub for the transmission of these diseases between pollinators, and are especially important for transmission between different species of pollinator. In this talk she will explore flowers as a route for picking up diseases and what this means for areas of planted flowers such as wildflower strips. The meeting will be at **Weald Memorial Hall**, Weald, TN14 6PT from 7.30pm-9.30pm.

If you can get to the hall by 7pm Cliff Hayward will be holding a half-hour session to make monitoring traps for Asian hornets. You will need to bring plastic bottles.

Could You Spot an Asian Hornet?

We are all aware of the threat to our bees from Asian hornets but would we recognise one if we saw one? At the first meeting of the year Celia Rudland gave us a fascinating array of facts about Asian hornets and our own native European hornets.



An Asian hornet

The native *European hornet* is about half a centimetre larger than the Asian newcomer and mainly looks yellow with black legs. It often flies after dark and nests in dark places. Each colony numbers between 400 and 700 by Autumn. It sounds very noisy but has a reputation as a gentle giant.

By contrast the *Asian hornet* has an orange face, black body and yellow legs. It is about two to three centimetres long. It is active from April to November but unlike the native is not active after dark.

The Asian hornet was first spotted in Europe in Bordeaux, in France, having come in on a bonsai plant imported from China. It spread rapidly across large areas of Europe, reaching England in 2016. The reason that Asian hornets are so devastating for our hives is that they concentrate on eating honeybees whereas the native European hornet eats a range of insects. The Asian hornets will find a beehive then work in groups, first attacking returning foragers then going inside to take the larvae. A bee colony that is targeted will nearly always be destroyed.

Only the newly mated queens overwinter and the rest of the colony dies. At first the Asian hornet's nest is barely bigger than a hen's egg. March and April are the months when the queens can be caught in traps. By July or August, the colony has moved to a second nest, typically high up in a tree. Each colony produces between 200 and 400 queens and overall a nest will contain between 6,000 and 15,000 hornets. If the nest is not destroyed then there will be four to six new nests the following year within one kilometre.

For more information about the Asian hornet go to our website where there are links to the Asian Hornet Action Team.

On the Web

Among the new information John Farrow has added to the website this year is a 'Getting Started' article to help new and prospective beekeepers. There is also a wealth of other information as well as links to other websites. Click below or search Sevenoaks beekeepers to find our site.

<http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/A-Guide-to-Getting-Started.pdf>

Nucs Wanted

I moved to Eynsford meadows five months ago after several years of beekeeping in Somerset. I am keen to buy new season Nucs this year. I have a Nuc box to transport five to six frames.

John Richardson john.richardson2@nhs.net 07561 53640

Pesticide Petition

There is currently a petition online asking the Department of Environment to consider banning the use of chemical pesticides in public spaces and planting flowers instead. You can read about the petition, and sign it if you wish at:

https://www.change.org/p/departement-for-environment-save-the-bees-ban-the-use-of-chemical-pesticides-in-public-spaces-plant-flowers-instead?recruiter=444714394&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=share_petition&utm_term=472765

Wasps and Disappearing Pollinators

Sidcup and Orpington Beekeepers Associations are holding an afternoon of talks by two leading UK scientists to which all our members are invited.

Dr Seirian Sumner (aka Wasp Woman) is the country's top wasp expert. Her talk is entitled Wasps – the neglected darlings of the insect world. She says her mission is to make you think differently about the insects that you fight over jam sandwiches. There are 100 times more species of wasp than there are ants and bees combined, and their populations are declining at rates faster than bees; without wasps, your garden would be swamped in insect pests and spiders. Seirian says the main reason she loves wasps is because of their extraordinary social behaviours: monarchies, rebellions, ASBOs and wasp police, undertakers, negotiators, welfare wasps, menopausal wasps, and wasps with aspirations above their station.

In the second lecture, Seirian's husband Dr Nick Isaacs from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology will be asking: 'Where have all the pollinators gone?' Nick is a senior ecologist who studies how biodiversity is distributed, how it is changing over time, and how we measure it.

Programme details:

Saturday 23 February at Orpington Village Hall, High Street, BR6 0NN

Doors open 2.00pm

2.30pm start – Wasps, the neglected darlings of the insect world. Dr Seirian Sumner

3.15pm break

3.30pm – Where have all the pollinators gone? Dr Nick Isaac, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

4.15pm tea and cakes

Admission £5 pay at the door; under 18s free.

David Rea, Sidcup KBKA email david.rea@talk21.com

Diary Dates

Tuesday 19th February: Dr Emily Bailes on the transmission of deformed wing virus and slow bee paralysis virus between bees.

Venue:- Weald Memorial Hall, Weald, TN14 6PT 7.30pm-9.30pm.

Sunday 3rd March: Introduction to Beekeeping course. Click for full details: [Introduction to beekeeping – booking form](#)

Venue:- Weald Memorial Hall, Weald, TN14 6PT from 10.30am to 3pm

Tuesday 19th March: Peter Aldridge will give a talk and demonstrate the use of top bar hives.

Venue:- Weald Memorial Hall, Weald, TN14 6PT 7.30pm-9.30pm

Please send any articles or photos for the newsletter to Mary Staffurth: marystaffurth@yahoo.com