



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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Seasonal Comments.

Despite the Spring being cold it remained relatively frost free with plenty of blossom on the fruit trees and the honey bees seemed to prosper. In fact I had one hive ready to swarm on the first of May and another hive a week later. The dandelions were exceptional this year with fields and roadside verges a blaze of yellow. Fortunately Councils seem to have got the message that dandelions are a valuable source of forage for pollinating insects and do not spray herbicide in the quantities they did in years gone by. However, I think that there is a case for the reduction in grass cutting to encourage wild flowers at the road side and other open areas.

We are now into the month of June and after a relatively dry spring the weather has now turned windy and unsettled and at the time of writing the temperature below the normal. This is the time of year referred to as The June Gap when there is a lack of forage for honey bees and other insects. In comparison to the abundance of nectar and pollen in the spring from flowers, hedges and trees, summer sees a reduction in these sources of forage. During this dearth of forage, you may need to feed your bees to stop them starving especially if you have taken an early crop off them. If you do feed syrup, be very careful not to spill any in the apiary as this can cause robbing. It is best to feed when there is little flight activity for the same reason. Of course, there are plants in flower at this time of year so having an abundance these plants close to your apiary will be advantageous. Plants to grow for this time of year include:- Catmint, Lavender, Borage, Blue globe allium, Herbs such as thyme, coriander and rosemary and shrubs such as pyracantha (see the header above) This shrub not only attracts honey bees but also Bumble bees and many species of solitary bees and hoverflies.

Himalayan Balsam.

This plant, which provides excellent forage for Honeybees, has always caused controversy. Ken Hodgson sent me the article below which he recently had published in the Times and Star. Be aware that it is illegal to encourage the spread of Himalayan balsam.

Soothing Balsam?

A snippet on Cockermouth Town Council's dilemma on Himalayan Balsam's control in the parish environs after pressure from the West Cumbria Rivers Trust to "pull out" the species. Prior to open season on "balsam bashing", does anyone in the upper reaches to the River's Trust realise there is a rare native balsam here in Cumbria, probably being eradicated by the Trust's actions?

Nearly all balsams are naturalised "foreigners". Himalayan balsam was introduced in 1839, grown in greenhouses as an exotic plant until it escaped into the wild. Orange balsam was brought from North America, only the yellow flowered Tuh-me-not balsam is native. This variety is only found in three locations, Cumbria, Shropshire and near Dolgellau in North Wales.

As all Balsams thrive in damp locations, one wonders how many of the rare plants are being removed indiscriminately by over zealous volunteers spurred on by salaried Rivers Trust personnel. To make any inroads in control, balsam needs to be removed before flowers and seed heads are evident. Do "basher gangmasters know the difference at this green stage, between the varieties? Answers on a postcard.

Ken Hodgson

Chairman, Cockermouth Beekeepers' Association



Dates For Your Diary

10th September 2022

Cumbria Beekeepers Autumn Conference at the
Embleton Village Hall, Cockermouth. Hosted by the Cockermouth
Beekeepers Association

12th November 2022

Cumbria Honey Show

Further details of these two events will be issued in due course.

HIVE GEOMETRIX EXHIBITION

Upfront Art Gallery, Nr.Penrith CA11 9TG

Tues. 17th May – Sun. 3rd July

‘Honey Bees through the Seasons’ . *Paintings by Stephen Livingstone*

Other events by Penrith Beekeepers:

20th May: Celebrating World Bee Day ‘Cooking with Honey’

A presentation and supper of ‘tasty bites’ both savoury and sweet,
prepared by John Crouch, Cumbria’s Celebrity Chef. . £20 per person

Bee Hotel Making Workshops:

22nd May + 18th June 2.00.p.m. FREE

Gardeners’ Question Time

19th June 2.30.p.m Chaired by Eric Robson, formerly Chair Gardeners' Question Time

Radio 4 + panel of experts. £5 per person.

See www.penrithbeekeepers.org

Prior booking essential for all events.

For tickets: Tel: 01768 894404

E mail: mr4cnr@gmail.com

QUEEN REARING COURSE: SATURDAY 18TH JUNE 2022

Graham Royle will be leading this one day course which aims to teach :

- The natural process and stages of queen rearing
- 3 possible queen rearing techniques
- How to set up a cell raising colony
- Queen cell distribution
- Introducing a new queen into an established colony.

Cost £20 per person.

Places are limited. I will be circulating the information to other beekeeping associations across Cumbria at the end of this week. So, to avoid disappointment, please register a place before then if you are interested in this opportunity.

Graham Royle: Before his recent retirement, Graham worked for the Animal and Plant Health Agency National Bee Unit as the seasonal bee inspector for Cheshire. He started beekeeping in 1968 and has managed 20 colonies in three apiaries and has been Chair of Cheshire BKA. Graham was involved in the discovery and tracking of the first siting of the Asian Hornet in the UK in 2016.

Beekeeping Excursion to Slovenia 29th August – 3rd September 2022

Buzzing off to Ljubljana, the bee keeping capital of Europe! Due to cancellations because of ill health several places for this trip have recently become available. Please contact Margaret Riches asap if you are interested in finding out more about it:

Dr. Margaret Riches

Tel: 01768 894404

Penrith Beekeepers Association : Chair

Cumbria Rural Choirs : Chair

Penrith Ladies Luncheon Club : Speakers' Secretary & Treasurer
