

Greetings Fellow Beekeepers,

I hope you have had an enjoyable break and I wish you all a Happy New Year and great Beekeeping! After such a disastrous start to the year, we are finally getting some real sunny summer days and there is a nectar flow on at the moment. There is enough moisture in the soil for the plants to be able to use some of it to entice the bees to their nectar and ensure cross-pollination of the species. We still are having relatively cool nights and this gives the plants a chance to recover from the rapid loss of moisture during the day and keeps the nectar flowing.

Your greatest concern for your Bees now is to give them plenty of space in which to operate. A strong colony will fill a drawn super with nectar in a week if it is available so they will need space. Space for nectar, space for pollen, space for the brood to be laid, matured, and for them to emerge into a hive which is not going to be overcrowded and too hot for comfort during the day when the sun is at its height.

If we do get a really hot spell you can assist the bees and increase your harvest by offsetting the supers to leave a small gap between each to allow for air flow and passive ventilation. Don't make the gap more than a quarter of an inch or you may promote robbing by other bees in the apiary or worse still start an aggressive attack by wasps that are always on the lookout for a free meal. You could always do the matchstick under the crownboard trick too as you may have done in the winter to stop condensation forming on the walls and top of the hive.

If you are desperate for a sample of new season's honey you can always steal a capped frame from the hive now and replace it with either a frame of foundation or drawn comb. Don't take a frame that is not capped, as the extracted honey is likely to ferment. One frame will probably give you about a kilo and a half of honey, which is enough for the whole family to have a sample!

Steal the honey on a sunny, still day immediately after lunch, so that most of the hive occupants will be away for the afternoon. You will have less bees to get in the way and it will disrupt the hive less, which means that the neighbours will be happy because they will not be tormented by your bees looking for someone to punish for the invasion of their privacy.

Bees use a lot of water in the summer, so have a container nearby with some sort of debris in it as the bees may drown if there is nowhere for them to get a firm grip whilst they suck up the water. A handful of grass or a wooden float in the container is ideal.

Next meeting will be on Monday 18th Jan. in the Plunket Rooms opposite the Warehouse at 6.30 pm. When we will be talking about nectar flows, Tulin poisoning, Cut Comb honey and solving your problems. See you there. Adrian.