



BEEKEEPERS NEWS

Issue No. 28

January 2018

December Roundup

We hope all our customers had a very Merry Christmas and we wish you all a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

December was spent ensuring all orders were up to date and Christmas presents and vouchers delivered on time for the big day. We also welcomed back Maria into the office from maternity leave and are pleased to say that Carly (her maternity cover) will be staying with us.

Our annual winter sale started with a bang on the 29th December with many of you staying up past midnight to bag the best of the bargains. More about the sale later in the newsletter.

Equipment Focus

Oxybee is our new winter oxalic acid treatment. It is very easy to use as all the ingredients come ready-measured.

The contents of Oxybee are a 1 litre bottle of oxalic acid dihydrate and two 35g sachets of sucrose powder containing glycerol, which helps the oxalic acid to stick on to the bees.

Oxybee can be stored for 12 months once the solution is made up unlike other oxalic acid treatments where it has to be used within 30 days, making it an obvious choice if you don't need to use the entire bottle at once.



Oxybee should be used during broodless periods and without supers, which makes it an ideal winter treatment. Depending on the size of the cluster, a bottle of Oxybee should treat between 20 and 30 colonies and costs £37.

Ask our Expert

Please email us at sales@thorne.co.uk if you have a question for our experts.

Time to Hunker down...

Hopefully you have left your bees adequate supplies for the winter months. The weather has been unseasonably mild and the bees have been out foraging, but not finding much in the way of nectar and pollen. This excessive activity causes them to burn through their supplies at an alarming rate.

It is best not to disturb your bees too much, breaking the seals they have meticulously put around their nest to keep in the warmth they generate to stay alive. There are a few things you can do which disturbs them only a little. Firstly, keep the alighting area clear of debris. This will indicate signs of activity to you as the bees come and go and enables them to get out for cleansing flights. If you put the Varroa board or correx sheet into the open mesh floor and examine and clean it weekly, this will give you a good visual image of the bees' movements during the past interval, showing you where they are clustered and if they are uncapping new supplies. Finally, if you are concerned they are getting low on stores, or just as an insurance policy, you can give them a pack of fondant. The average colony needs around a pound of stores a week up to the solstice, and about a pound and a half going into spring so a 2.5 kg pack will last from 4-6 weeks (on average) – check regularly. I hope you and your bees survive the season – best wishes for the New Year.

Winter Sale

Our annual winter sale is a good time to stock up on the essential pieces of kit before the season really gets underway. We have most National Hive parts in the sale. These are made from British WRC and as such may have the odd split, knot and discolouration. Hive parts come with nails and plastic runners.

Frames are packed in 50s and are made from second quality Redwood, and may have small knots. Again we have most BS sizes available plus Commercial and Langstroth. We also have many normal stock lines in the sale, and a few discontinued items. It really is worth taking a look. The sale ends on 31st January but some products will be removed before this.

Sale orders do take a little longer to send out than normal so please be patient and we will despatch your order as soon as we can. Please note, if it gets too cold (below freezing) we won't be sending any orders that contains sheets of wax until it gets a little warmer.

[View PDF of sale items](#)

Beekeeping Blog

December

We have really started to feel the cold this month here in Lincolnshire. Despite this, there have been lots of jobs to be getting on with! Hives have been hefted every couple of weeks, just to make sure there are plenty of stores going in to winter. If a hive feels a bit light, it has been fed fondant. The other big job this month has been tidying! The beekeeping cabin has been having a much-needed tidy-up after the busy year we've had. It is not a nice job but it saves having to do it when the bees are keeping me busy later on in the year. Occasionally, I also walk down the apiary site to make sure that the mouseguards are still attached to the hives and that the bees can fly freely in and out by making sure that the holes are not blocked with dead bees or other debris.

Another job around the corner is the winter varroa treatment. This will involve oxalic acid. To prepare for this, I have done a varroa mite drop check over a seven-day period as advised by the National Bee Unit. This involves inserting an inspection tray into all hives and counting the mite drop on each one over 7 days. From this, you can work out the approximate number of varroa in the hive, giving you a good idea as to which colonies are suffering most from varroa and which ones need monitoring more closely. I will most likely do the oxalic acid treatment early January on a cold but sunny day. After this, the main job will be making sure all colonies have enough food going into spring.

Bees for Development Update

In addition to our core work with poverty alleviation projects, BfD conducts scientific assignments concerning tropical beekeeping. In December our BfD team conducted research about the ecological sustainability of forest beekeeping in South West Ethiopia. We are collecting data to prove that forest beekeeping helps to maintain healthy populations of honey bees, provides an economic incentive for forest conservation, and supports livelihoods. The science of forest beekeeping is very poorly understood by the wider forest conservation and development community in Ethiopia and this is something that we aim to change.



Forest beekeepers near Mizan Teferi in south west Ethiopia (IMGP 1872) © Milan Wiercx van Rhijn, Bees for Development.

BfD Bee Safari to Trinidad & Tobago

Need to escape UK? Last two places still available on February's Caribbean Safari with the wonderful Gladstone Solomon. Call us now on **01600 71484**

Save the date!

Wednesday 12 June, 4-30-8pm.

Our special Bee Garden Party in the gardens of Marlborough House, The Mall, London. Hosted by Martha Kearney and Bill Turnbull, with many VIP

National Honey Show News

The National Honey Show team are hard at work planning the next show in October.

Meanwhile, this month, the first of the videos from our 2018 lecture programme should be uploaded to The National Honey Show YouTube Channel. If you 'subscribe', you should be notified as they appear, otherwise these will be announced on the National Honey Show website and Facebook page.

So while we're waiting for the videos and the next show, planning and planting for bees can be really helpful for times when there is little in the way of forage. So in gloomy January, look around and take note of plants that are in flower in your area, especially of those that your bees are visiting on flying days. There is actually quite a lot in flower, winter flowering jasmine, some mahonias and gradually across the country, the winter aconites and snowdrops and consider whether you can beg, borrow, swap or even buy stocks to help the forage in future hard times for your bees, and of course wild bees, too.

We wish you a happy, healthy and successful year for you and your bees, and look forward to seeing you at the next National Honey Show Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th October 2019.

National Honey Show dates for next year are Thursday 24th October, Friday 25th October and Saturday 26th October at Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey KT10 9RT.

www.honeyshow.co.uk

Upcoming Events

- **Winter Sale** – Now On!
- **Ordering begins for Spring Shows** – Monday 4th February

and VIB guests!

Early bird tickets still available at **here!**

- **Ulster Beekeepers Convention** – 15th and 16th February
- **Bee Tradex** – Saturday 9th March
- **Welsh Beekeepers Convention** – Saturday 30th March
- **BBKA Spring Convention** – Saturday 13th April

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