

Dear members,

Firstly let me say I hope you are all well during these difficult times and that I hope the strain of lockdown is not proving too horrendous. Hopefully progress towards a more normal life will continue.

As you will doubtless appreciate, I very much hoped around now to be sharing some exciting plans and news around what we had planned for the year as well as details of the annual "spring clean" get together. Thus far all of that is on hold given the current situation but we will obviously look to do something as soon as we possibly can.

The lockdown has also delayed finalisation of the membership forms which come with our updated privacy policy. Please do read this and then return the form completed - it's a legal requirement for us to have a privacy policy but this should ease the membership renewal process in future.

I won't presume to try and teach the membership how to keep bees given many of you have vastly more experience than I do but I did think as we can't get together it may be worth my sharing some of the things I'm thinking about now for some of the newer members.

These are just my thoughts and there are many ways to do things so please feel free to have a read and make up your own mind.

Food - as I write this I have pussy willow, almond, crocus, acacia and Japanese plum all producing forage in the orchard but the bulk of the spring food is yet to come in and may have been knocked back by that nasty little cold snap we had. With the days lengthening the queen will be starting to lay so food can get ripped through pretty quickly at this time of year. Please do think about checking the hives by hefting them to see how much they've got and drop some fondant on if necessary. In March I usually also start thinking about whether to give my hives a 1:1 syrup as a spring boost.

Inspections - as I mentioned earlier, it has been cold and still is relatively cold even when the bees are flying. I appreciate it may be tempting to lift the lid just to check how a hive looks particularly if you're worried about one but I always try and resist this until a nice day in early March to avoid chilling the colony or any brood.

Gear - as I can't get into the bees just yet I also use this time (particularly the cold dark nights) to plan what I may be doing this year more generally and preparing what equipment I may need - further hives, frames making up for comb replacement and so on.

Lastly and on a most positive note I also like to think about what I might do with my honey should the girls produce plenty - I know many of us are doing a bit more adventurous cooking and baking than we might otherwise whilst locked-down at home so if anyone has any good recipes to share (or other hints and tips), please do share on this website (send to download@cwgsy.net) and/or the GBKA Facebook group for others to try.

Kindest regards,

Wayne