

In The Apiary – 19th September 2011

Feeding is all but complete and varroa treatment is well under way. We will go into the winter with 10 hives plus 2 belonging to the field owner, Steve Williams. 5 are double brood chambers, 3 advanced nuclei (in the national hives) and 4 (including Steve's) strong single brood chambers. There will be more information as to how we got to this position in the AGM report.

We had the last Apiary meeting on 11th September. I hope the meetings over the season have been useful for all who attended and that next year we will have some extra space to accommodate our growing numbers. It would be useful to hear any suggestions you may have for improving the meetings.

At this final meeting I was asked by a worried member why his bees were coming back to the hive with a white stripe down their backs and white on their heads. I was pleased to allay his fears telling him that the bees were 'working the balsam' (probably along the River Exe) and the white was pollen. This incident illustrates that the things the more experienced bee keepers take for granted are often completely unknown to the new beekeeper and we all have such a lot to learn from each other.

Finally we must all take care when removing trays of varroa from the hive after treatment - they are not always dead and therefore can still spread the virus if not disposed of properly.

Geoff Arney