



*Crocus tommasinianus*

**April 2016**

**WVBKA Charity Registration  
Number: 517008**

**From the BBKA: Results Are In!**

Thank you to those of you who took part in the BBKA for the Future survey. The initial analysis is now available to you as a member of the BBKA, which the Executive Committee will be reviewing to lay the foundations for the organisation's future.

To find out more go to the [Members' Area](#) of the BBKA website. If you have problems doing so, please contact the Administration team for assistance on 02476 690666. Again, thank you for your participation.

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**Diary Dates**

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

- WBKA Convention

**April 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>**

- BBKA Convention

**April 16<sup>th</sup>**

- Talk 'Swarm Management (11am Ewyas Harold Hall)

**May 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>**

- Practical course class 1 & 2

**May 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>**

- Practical course class 3 & 4

**May 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Car Boot sale

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**Swarming and swarm control**

*by Wally & Jenny Shaw*

*Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April at Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall, starting at 11am.*

The beekeeper should remember that swarming is simply reproduction. All the complex, integrated behaviour that occurs within a honey bee colony has evolved simply to improve its chance of successful reproduction.

Most beekeeper's primary interest is just one aspect of this behaviour, namely the collection of nectar and the storage of honey. In order to produce the maximum amount of harvestable honey, the beekeeper seeks to create large colonies but also to prevent them from achieving their natural destiny through swarming.

Most beekeeping books understate swarming but its control is vital if good honey crops are to be consistently obtained. There is no doubt that swarm control is simultaneously the most important and most difficult aspect of colony management.

**Queen Colour of the Year  
2016 is:  
WHITE**

From the point of view of practical management, swarm control can be divided into two distinct parts with a clear (biological) threshold between them, which is when the colony starts queen cells.

**1. Pre-emptive swarm control**

The type of management that can be used before queen cells are present in the hive (to prevent their initiation).



*Image by Gary Stolz*

**2. Re-active swarm control**

The type of management that can be used when queen cells are produced (to prevent the issue of swarms).



*If you would like to learn more then come along to this workshop. The cost is £8 entry on the day, tea and coffee are available but bring a packed lunch.*

*The event is due to start at 11am*

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## Crime Prevention and Protecting Beehives

Following on from his talk at the AGM Paul Crumpton has sent us the following information:

Contacting the police following a crime or reporting anything suspicious – have a look on:

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/article/2325/Contact-us>

The following links provide details of how to subscribe to email alerts, Police contact details and Smart Water products. Please note with the latter, there is a substantial discount code available.

To join a Watch scheme and/or receive Community Alert messages from West Mercia Police, click on the following link and follow the options. <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/article/1992/Join-a-watch-scheme>

To find out more information about your local area including who your local Policing team are, click on the following link, insert your postcode in the space in the middle of the page and select your address from a drop down menu. <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/article/1694/West-Mercia-Police>

To join the National Neighbourhood Watch association or simply find out further information, click on the following link and follow the instructions. [http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get\\_involved/join\\_or\\_start\\_a\\_scheme/](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get_involved/join_or_start_a_scheme/)

### Special SmartWater Offer for West Mercia Residents

West Mercia Police have negotiated a special SmartWater supply arrangement for all households within the Force area. Please see below for some product details and an instruction on how to purchase a pack.

You will need to enter the discount code and you will be asked to register your name and address and then you can pay by credit card, or post an order with a cheque.

#### How SmartWater Works:

- Assigns your valuables with their own unique forensic code, allowing them to be traced back to you
- Makes your home less of a target for thieves
- Can be used on anything from electronic equipment to jewellery
- Easy to apply, only visible under UV light – does not leave unattractive marks or stains
- Proven to work – widely used by the police and feared by criminals
- Gives added peace of mind
- • Supplied with signage to warn thieves that your home is protected
- • When deployed by police, SmartWater has helped reduce burglary by up to 85%.

#### How to buy:

Please visit: [www.smartwater.com/shop](http://www.smartwater.com/shop)

Or call: 0800 521 669

Use discount code: WDBCRIME25

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Paul Crumpton  
Rural, Business & Cyber Crime Reduction  
Coordinator, Herefordshire  
West Mercia Police

Dial 101 and ask for 67102

Direct Dial 01905 727402

## BBKA Basic Assessment

The BBKA run a series of training modules designed to increase the knowledge of beekeeping. This training is open to all members of the BBKA. Before you can start on the modules it is necessary to pass the BBKA Basic Assessment. To take the Basic Assessment you should have managed at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months.

The Basic Assessment syllabus can appear daunting at first glance but closer inspection will show that it merely lists the basic things which all beekeepers should know.

The assessment is both practical and oral and takes place mainly at the hive in a local apiary.

If anyone is interested in taking this test then WVBKA will provide additional training to make sure the candidates are prepared.

For more information contact [Sue Quigley](#) or [Peter Woodward](#) or go to the [BBKA website](#).

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# DAVE'S BLOG

## April notes

The most important thing at this time of year is to make sure your bees do not run short of food as this will only lead to poor development. Of course this is not the only thing that the bees require, they need an adequate supply of pollen to provide the protein for them to build up – food, protein and decent weather are fundamental for early development.

By now you will almost certainly have checked to see whether you have a queen-right colony. I'll be surprised if you don't have a few drone layers as this is quite common. The most important question is what do you do about it? Well, there are several things you can do. Providing everything else is equal from a disease point of view, you can unite stocks together. Of course, remove the queen which is defective, a sheet of newspaper will be sufficient to amalgamate. This is quite a common occurrence and one which beekeepers need to be aware of early in the season and to act accordingly. Dwindling bees are no good to you and they need to be dealt with quickly, the earlier the better.

Don't forget on a nice warm day to have a good look around to see if there is any disease present. It is far better for you to examine your bees thoroughly before the colony gets too big and too difficult to handle. Put all thoughts of anything else to one side and concentrate frame by frame on the disease side of things. This is a prerequisite; it is good husbandry and one which should be practised by all beekeepers.

If you don't know what good healthy brood looks like then call somebody to assist you who does know. I do not wish to preach to the converted but examining thoroughly is very important. If you're not sure, then get an accomplished beekeeper that can recognise disease to come along and help you with the task.

Now what about having a go at raising a few queens, there's nothing very difficult about this. All you need to do is choose a colony which you like and simply remove the queen. This will encourage them to build queen cells and then you can simply split them up into nukes. This is as near to nature as you can possibly make it so why not have a go – you may well be surprised.

That's it for now folks. All the best and have a good season.

*Dave*

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*Honeybee on lavender by Greg Fisk*

### Golden Valley Apiary

Long Lane, Peterchurch

Agents and stockists of Thorne's beekeeping equipment: Honey jars, Varroa treatments, Sheriff bee suits etc. all at competitive prices.

Dave and June Williams: 01981 550320

Remember to phone first!

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## WVBKA Officers for 2016-17

### Chairman:

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### Association Apiary Manager:

- TBC

### Newsletter Editor:

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### Committee:

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- Geoff Dutson
- Jane Matthews
- Andy Strangeway
- June Williams
- Suzanne Wenczek

### Catering Committee:

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- June Williams

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### Website Editor:

Greg Fisk

### Honorary Auditor:

Mike Price

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## WVBKA Association Apiary

At this year's AGM it was agreed that we should continue with the apiary at Shenmore but look to develop a different way of using the facility than we have previously. The longer term aim is that we have a team and facilities in place so that when Dave feels the time is right we can take some of the educating load off him. In the meantime, we have a facility that provides a range of opportunities for our members to get involved and to learn in a practical way. We have discussed a few ideas in the committee but do not have a final concept sorted out. However, I thought I should let you know what we are thinking about so that if anyone wants to add to the discussion they will be welcome.

The idea at the moment is that basic management of the bees will be looked after separately from the use of the site as a training aid. Dave and David Williams are willing to help on the basic husbandry to make sure that we have good bees for users to work with. The thoughts on training so far are a bit vague but we want to begin to train up members who are willing to help out with the Basic course and at the apiary. These trainers will not need to be the most experienced beekeepers but should be people with enough experience to be able to help the 'newbies' learn the basics and who are willing to share their knowledge with others. Over time, we will plan to train these trainers so that they learn some basic teaching skills and maybe they should take on some of the basic BBKA exams so they increase their depth of knowledge.

At this stage we are looking for anyone who feels they would like to get involved and have some time to give back to the association. The more people that take up the challenge the better this will work and there will be less pressure on those involved if there are others to share the load.

We are planning to increase the number of hives to the site limit of 10, so that we have enough bees available for teaching and for the Basic exams when necessary. If anyone is in the process of reducing their number of hives then we would be interested to discuss the potential of the club purchasing some good quality National hives.

*Peter Woodward*