



## Brook Road Bees

May 2010

It's been an interesting month, bee wise, on our allotment. Many bumble bees and honey bees vying for the local flower nectar, provided courtesy of the allotment holders.

Despite my best efforts and under nature's control, sadly, some of our bees decided to get up and leave our hive in a swarm. The swarm was caught and is now residing in yet another hive in my garden, we are left with about 30% of the bees in our allotment hive, but two of the supers on this hive are full so we will get some honey this year.

The remaining bees will build up a colony with a new queen ready for the winter, but if the weather is kind we may get another super of honey. (The old queen left with the swarm, so I will replace her later in the year and return the bees to the allotments hives for the winter.)

Coincidentally our allotment site was visited by another swarm, sounding just like the world cup stadium in full flow. The swarm came over the hedge and decided to meander around the allotments. Ted was off like a shot but wished me luck before he went

We managed to collect this new swarm, which had alighted on a rosemary bush and we housed it safely in the second hive on the allotment, which had been put there just for that purpose.

Susan from allotment 20 managed to take some pictures of the swarm being caught and being housed in the hive. (See office window notice board). Having a swarm is an interesting sight with thousands of bees at the front of the hive waiting to enter.

This hive will be left for a few weeks and then investigated to see if they have a queen and if they are healthy and viable.

This will give us two hives with bees on the site so the committee will have to decide if we are allowed to keep two full hives now.

There are many flowers about in June, but those giving lots of nectar for large bee colonies are, for a short time, not available. Beekeepers sometimes call this period a 'June Gap' in terms of nectar flow; so taking all the honey from the bees at this time of year can sometimes result in the bees going hungry!!! It pays therefore not to be too

impatient in taking away their honey. This year looks good, so the gap may be short and negligible.

Many thanks for all those you who are showing an interest in our bees, particularly those who were not fazed by the sight of a few swarms moving around our allotments. This year, for some reason, has been particularly full of activity for swarms, it could be the weather or maybe the dramatic increase last year in humans keeping bees as a hobby. Either way I have personally come across 6 'wild' swarms this year, purely by accident, usually I'm lucky to see one.

Best wishes

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