Dec	-	▶ Plan ahead	<b>A</b>						Mahonia			Winter treatment			Dec
Nov Winter bees	-	Leave alone Clean/repair	Heft Fondant if needed						lvy		on rotect	— Monitor →			Nov
Oct	<del>-</del>	<b>★</b>							lvy		Mouse guards on Woodpecker protect				Oct
Sept	2	Prepare for winter	Thick Syrup	Reduce		Assess Unite			Sedum		hornet checks checks	ner treatment			Sept
Aug	<del>+</del> +	Honey		Add/ remove		As U		mer	Heather Himalayan balsam		Asian he Wasp Robbing	Late summer			Aug
July	4+						Disease inspection	Sun	Rosebay willowherb clover			Monitor			July
June	++	<ul> <li>Regular inspections</li> <li>Check stores</li> </ul>	Swarm feeding Nucleus feeding	o o	Swarm Control	Redneen		Spring	Phacelia rapsberry Lime			swarm Treat swarms	Swarm		June
May	++		Swarm	Add —		Queen rearing // Unite		OSR	OSR top fruit	Comb		Shook swarm Treat	Ó		May
Apr	2+	Full inspections			Prevention	Assess Queen Requeen/ Unite	Disease inspection	OSR	OSR dandelion	Sample adults		Monitor Spring treatment			Apr
Mar	c. 2	Quick check/ assess	Thin Syrup/ pollen						Crocus Willow		Asian hornet checks Mouse guards off	Monitor Spring trea	ing rable		Mar
Feb Winter bees	-	alone Prepare	Heft Fondant if needed						Snowdrops		Asian hor		Rapidly expanding _		Feb
Jan	-	Leave alone Sales Prep	HeFondant						Mahonia				Rapi		Jan
Beekeeping Year Planner	Inspections: Internal Inspections: External	Main Actions:	Feeding	Supers	Swarming 60,000	Queens	Brood	Honey/ 50,000-	Forage	Nosema	Pests 40,000-	Varroa	30,000- Number of bees 20,000-	Full colony Swarmed colony Brood	

Editor's note: Consider the plan as a guide; the exact timings will need to be adjusted for weather conditions and geographic location. Most actions required will benefit from further reading.

## The Beekeeping Year Planner: Notes

his beekeeping year planner is based upon one developed in 2016 by Glyn Davies, BBKA Past President, Torbay BKA, and published in an adapted form by *BeeCraft* in 2020. The original, created by Glyn in association with the Devon Apicultural Research Group was intended to be downloadable and editable to local conditions. We thank Glyn for allowing us to publish this planner here using his original as guidance.

## **Inspections and Actions**

**Late autumn and winter** (usually October to mid-March) when the temperatures are cold, only observe from the outside. Check that the hive is sound, protected from and undamaged by pests.

- Feeding: Heft (lift each side separately) or weigh it to assess the level of stores.¹ If the hive is light, feed fondant.
- Varroa: Monitor levels during November and early December, and if the count is high, treat with oxalic acid.<sup>2</sup>

**Spring and summer**. inspect more frequently. In particular check:

- Feeding.<sup>3</sup>
  - Spring: Assess stores, especially after poor weather, after comb replacement and when the rapidly expanding spring brood places stress on older winter bees, or in order to stimulate colonies for early nectar flows. Protein patties may also be considered.
    - ❖ Thin syrup 1.25 litres of water to 1kg white granulated sugar.
  - ◆ Early summer: During forage gaps.
  - ◆ Late summer: In preparation for winter.
    - Thick syrup 1.25 litres of water to 2kg white granulated sugar.
- Space: As the colony population increases, more space will be needed, so add supers or brood boxes. Cramped conditions can precipitate swarming.
- Pests and Disease: Perform regular brood,<sup>4</sup> adult bee<sup>5</sup> and Varroa<sup>6</sup> checks. Treat Varroa as required (see Figures 1 & 2).<sup>7</sup> Use association microscopy resources for Nosema checks. Wasps, mice, woodpeckers, wax moths and Asian hornets can all impact colonies.<sup>8,9</sup>
- Swarming: Check regularly for signs of swarming<sup>6</sup> and act to prevent or control.<sup>6</sup>
- Splits, queen rearing and uniting.
  - ◆ Splits: As colonies build up, they may be split as part of swarm control measures or to increase the number of colonies.
  - ◆ Queen rearing: This may be undertaken to replace queens, improve stock or provide young queens for winter.<sup>10</sup>
- Honey: This will usually be done during late spring for oilseed rape (OSR) crops and during summer for spring and summer main crops. Those taking their bees to the heather will have an additional crop.<sup>11</sup>
- Wax: This can be reclaimed and recycled at any time of the year, but is often done during the less busy winter months.

## Late summer and early autumn

 Winter Preparations: Strong, healthy, well-fed colonies overwinter best. Checking for 20kg of stores, possible supplementary feeding, pest and disease management and uniting unviable colonies are all important.

BBKA News Special Issues are available from: https://www.bbka.org.uk/listing/category/bbka-shop The National Bee Unit's BeeBase website has excellent leaflets, fact sheets

and YouTube links. https://nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167



Figure 1. Use a monitoring tray to check the *Varroa* mite drop and decide on the appropriate level of control needed.<sup>6</sup>

## **Brief references**

- 1. BBKA News, December 2020, p420.
- 2. BBKA News Integrated Pest Management Special Issue, P21-22.
- 3. BBKA News Feeding Honey Bees Special Issue.
- 4. NBU Common Pests, Diseases and Disorders of the Adult Honey Bee.
- 5. NBU Foulbrood Disease of Honey Bees.
- 6. NBU Managing Varroa.
- 7. BBKA News Swarming Special Issue.
- 8. https://nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167
- 9. BBKA Healthy Hive Guide.
- 10. BBKA News Queen Rearing Special Issue.
- 11. BBKA News Honey Special Issue.
- VMD latest info: https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/

BBKA News Special Issues
available from: www.bbka.org.uk/shop

Method	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Open mesh floor												
Drone brood												
Queen comb trapping												
MAQS/Formic Pro												
Apiguard/ ApilifeVar/ Thymovar												
Apistan/Apitraz/ Apivar/ PolyVar Yellow												
Api-Bioxal/Oxuvar/Oxybee/ VarroaMed												

Figure 2. Examples of integrated control measures used throughout the year. 6,12