

April - Doh!

What can I say about the first half of April that you haven't already muttered under your breath as you dashed out of the rain again! So let's just say I've been feeding the bees. That said in-between the damp spells the bees have been very active, which is always good to see.

It was one of those feed topping up moments where I like to start. After a quick peek under the roof I could see that the bees had taken down another kilogramme of fondant and there was not going to be a let up in the weather. A quick simple job of swapping out the containers and job done.

Back in kitchen I cut out another block of the "very" sticky white stuff and put it into a similar take away container. I had a short window of dry ish weather but the wind was picking up so needed to be quick. Take off the hive roof and the top crown board that covers the eke, gently remove the empty container and put in the new one with the fondant. But no, the lids didn't match? I hadn't cut a hole in the replacement container thinking they were all the same size and was just going to swap the lids over. I'm standing there with the hive roof off, the wind picking up and yes the rain was starting to make itself known.

You need to remember my girls were still safe inside the hive because there was still a crown board under the eke, the food sat over the hole of this crown board for the bees to access it. But this would only protect them for a short while.

My first idea was to just put the fondant into the previous container but that would get too messy to say the least. I hadn't brought my bee bag of things and equipment which does have a small folding knife, this was just a simple job of swapping the fondant take away containers and the wind was now getting stronger.

If I closed up the hive now I would have to wait for the next dry ish window to replace the fondant and God only knew when that might be. I had the blinking stuff in my hand! Right the only thing for it was to pop the bottom crown board and put the fondant directly on the top of the frames. It might be a bit messy but the bees will sort that out, but at least there wouldn't be any sticky fondant outside the hive attracting any unwanted dinner guests. By now a small amount of panic was starting to cloud my thinking, a bit like the rain.

I pulled out my hive tool from my back pocket to pop the bottom crown board, I never go to the hive without it. That's what the hive tool pocket in every bee suit is for, a hive tool with two blades on the square bit on the front. You can't face palm in a bee suit, the mesh gets in the way, but that was certainly how I felt. Doh!

Quickly cut a hole in the lid, placed the fondant over the "feed" hole and closed up, job done. Trudging through the mud back to the house in the wind and rain I did use some of those naughty words followed by the word idiot a few times.

Today is the 21st of April, the sun has now been shining for a few good days now and the temperatures are on the rise. The time that I think every beekeeper looks forward to the first full bee inspection of the bee year is about to happen. I am certainly excited and a bit nervous to what

we, my Bee Mentor and I, might find when we lift the lid and look at the frames and see how the bees have fared over the winter. But you will have to wait, just a little while, because this will be in a separate special bee blog of its own.

Take care now and of course bee safe.

Chris.