

Bee Blog 3

Hello,

I am running a bit late this time. We have had the builders completing the outside of the house. It is amazing how disruptive it is even though they are not in the house. However, it's good to be almost complete.

I like to ponder the world around us. It is an amazing place. I heard an interesting way of thinking about the size of atoms.

"There are as many atoms of water in a glass of water as there are glasses of water in all the seas and oceans."

I did a bit of research into this, and of course the amount of water in all the oceans is an approximation however it would appear to be the case. That thought stretches my mind.

Well Maybe I shouldn't have mentioned swarming last time. I wonder if Linda is sending a copy of my blog to my bees?

On the next inspection we found play cells. A week later we had queen cells with lava. Thinking back to the bee course a few years ago. "Don't do anything in a panic, put it back together and consider options". This is a relatively small colony caught in our bait hive last year and the only one we have. We think the queen is good, so we do not want her to swarm and leave us. So we decided to split. We moved the hive to the other end of the stand and set up a new hive in the same place as the original hive. We moved the frame with the queen to the new hive with no queen cells and expected all the flying bees to return to the original site with the queen. Hopefully simulating her swarming. We reduced the queen cells to two in the other hive with the nurse bees and brood. Recording the date we should look for eggs from the new queen.

A week later we checked the original hive for queen cells. And they had produced more! We still don't want this queen to swarm so this time I removed the frames with some nurse bees and put them in a nuc. There may not be enough to make another colony but I thought it was better than destroying all the queen cells. Hopefully our queen will not swarm now.

A bit later that week I was working in the garden and noticed several bees on the ground. I thought this a bit odd. A few minutes later I saw a small swarm of bees in a gorse bush. We have never dealt with a swarm before. I had a spare nuc box so we used that to catch the bulk of the swarm and put it on the ground near the remainder of the swarm in the bush. I stood and watched, the bees started to stand at the entrance fanning outwards with their bums in the air. I thought this was a good sign that we had the queen in the nuc. They are sending out pheromones saying she's over here girls. However there were still quite a lot of bees near the original swarm position. I was surprised how docile they were. Not bothering about me at all. I could lift a handful of bees from the bush and let them walk off my hand to the nuc. Over a period of time they all moved into the nuc. I do not think this is a primary swarm as they fitted in the nuc ok. They may be one of the new queens from my original split however that hive still has about the same number of bees in it. So it may be from somewhere else. I have heard a possibility that there are wild bees near us in some abandoned bee hives.





“she's over here girls”

When the time came that the first split queen may have laid eggs we looked in the hive and in the new swarm too. We found no eggs in either but we did see the new queen in the split. Maybe the bad weather had delayed her. In our original hive we had more play cups. This time we removed them. This hive was growing well. So at this time we still have one good hive and three potentials. Some nice weather would help.

A week later we inspected all the hives except the last nuc. Great news: we have eggs in both the split and the swarm hives. However, more queen cells in the original hive, which we removed.

Well this has been a busy time for our bees. We appear to have increased from one hive to three with a possible fourth. Now we are pushing the limit on our kit and it looks like we need to invest in more hives. However this is a good problem to have. I am hoping the weather will improve and let the bees and flowers do their magic.