

Wisborough Green Beekeepers Association
a division of West Sussex BKA

"Improve Your Beekeeping" courses

Venue:- Rudgwick Village Hall, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, West Sussex. RH12 3JJ

Wisborough Green BKA are organising two one day courses that will cover some techniques and information to help beekeepers manage their bees efficiently, with care and understanding.

Tuition in the apiary with a colony of bees in front of you is valuable for honing practical skills and putting theory and management techniques into practice. It is better if the beekeeper has a reasonable knowledge and understanding of what is being demonstrated, otherwise they are shown how to do something without knowing why, but where do they learn that essential information? These courses fill those gaps and are packed full of good sound information that is not always easy to teach at apiary demonstrations.

They will be held early in the winter, so those who wish to try something different, or feel they have gaps in their knowledge, will have plenty of time to prepare or for further study. There will be two levels to suit all beekeepers, from the beginner to the most experienced, so there will be something for everyone.

The two levels are:-

Sunday November 3rd 2019. "The Early Years". We have been careful not to call this "Beginners", because beekeepers often have different views on the meaning and some are unaware of what stage they are at.

This level is for those who are in their early stages of beekeeping or are unsure about the "basics", i.e. life cycles, what happens in a colony when it is preparing to swarm, what happens when a queen is removed from a colony, queen introduction, recognising the 3 types of queen cells, recognising foul brood, etc. If you are unsure about any of these then this is the course for you.

Much more than these topics will be covered, including some simple management techniques that are commonly used.

Sunday November 24th 2019. "Intermediate/advanced" is for those who have kept bees for some time, are competent beekeepers and want to move on, or can use the knowledge learnt in the **"The Early Years"** to understand what the various management methods are trying to achieve.

This course will include many topics that should increase the knowledge of the beekeeper and the efficiency of the apiary by understanding what the bees are trying to do, not simply the "Beekeeping by Numbers" approach without the basic understanding.

Which one to attend? It is difficult to advise without knowing the individual and their beekeeping knowledge and ability. If you are a Wisborough Green member Roger Patterson can advise.

"The Early Years" will be held first, as it is expected that some beekeepers may choose to attend both courses. The more experienced will reinforce what they already know, or perhaps be encouraged to learn more. It is hoped that much of the information gleaned in **"The Early Years"** will help the less experienced understand much of what will be discussed in the **"Intermediate/advanced"**.

There will be a little duplication, but at different levels, e.g. **"The Early Years"** will discuss what happens in a colony when it swarms. In **"Intermediate/advanced"** we will assume participants know that, so will discuss how that information is relevant to the various swarm control methods.

Why attend anyway? Learning away from the hive is not easy and we all have plenty to learn. There are a lot of myths and poor advice in circulation, often "cut and pasted" from elsewhere. They are seen so often they are taken as "fact". There is much contradiction in beekeeping books, some written by quite inexperienced beekeepers. The internet doesn't help, as you can easily read about a method that is used successfully in California or Texas but may be inappropriate for our conditions.

These courses are delivered by an experienced beekeeper, who although has wide experience, will only give information suitable for our conditions in the South East of England.

The tutor. Roger Patterson started beekeeping in 1963. He has kept up to 130 colonies and been teaching since the early 1970s. He is currently Apiary Manager at Wisborough Green BKA where he is also one of the demonstrators. Roger lectures and demonstrates widely, meeting many different beekeepers keeping bees under different conditions. He knows what beekeepers need in order to manage their bees with care and understanding. His methods are tried and tested and simple to operate. Some were learnt from the old beekeepers or developed by himself and may not be found in books.

He writes for beekeeping magazines and is author of "Beekeeping. A Practical Guide", as well as owning and managing Dave Cushman's website <http://www.dave-cushman.net/>

Booking form on <http://www.wgbka.org.uk/Events>