

Chapter 1 : Bees Past & Present

The bee department at Buckfast Abbey has changed from honey production to education. Yes, the bees still make honey, which we harvest for the Benedictine Community who live at the Abbey, but we concentrate on the welfare of the bees and try to practice gentle bee keeping.

Bee Types Buckfast Bees A websearch on "Buckfast Bees" will give you many websites with largely the same information, including the usual information about Brother Adam and the history of the Buckfast bee. They virtually all mention "Isle of Wight Disease" and state it was caused by acarine. This is the old view that has been thought to be incorrect for many years, yet none I looked at acknowledged that. It is popularly seen as a hybrid, but then some sources suggest it is a "hybrid between many races". This in my book makes it a mongrel. Br Adam himself, in an article in "Bee World" in states "The Buckfast bee is a cross between the native British and the Italian bee". Buckfast bees are very prolific and can build up into huge colonies. Br Adam designed the "Buckfast Abbey hive" that used 12 Dadant frames, instead of the normal 11 that are use in the Modified Dadant, that has the largest box commercially available. I have never used Buckfast myself, but I have handled what I have been told were them on many occasions. If correct, then they were very variable, both in colour and characteristics. Some queens are very light and some very dark, with drones and workers being very mixed colours. This observation has been supported by some of the supplier sources. If Buckfast are a cross between two sub-species then they are a hybrid and the resulting hybrid vigour is probably the reason for their reputation as good honey producers, but surely that is for only one generation. If the queens are replaced by the bees, then we have nothing different than the vast majority of other bees. My first experience of Buckfast was in my early beekeeping years, when one of my BKA members had 4 colonies in his garden, close to a church. He was a "let alone" beekeeper and his method was to requeen all his colonies in April every year with Buckfast queens, put supers on and leave alone until August when he took them off. When everyone else was averaging around 30lb of honey he was getting lb. The queens were raised abroad, I think in Isreal at that time. Attempts were made to leave the queens for a second year, but they often swarmed and when the daughter queens started laying, the colonies often turned very aggressive. This has often been my experience ever since. In those days Br Adam controlled the breeding and sale of Buckfast queens and I never heard a bad report all the time the original queen was in the colony. With a number of breeders in several countries it is difficult to understand how there will be consistency. I know there are "breeders" who buy one queen, then raise a lot of queens from them, have them open mated in their area and call them "Buckfast". I have seen "Buckfast crosses" advertised, but what are they? Surely no more than mongrels that are likely to be very variable. These are referred to as "fastbuck" and probably are a cause for concern amongst genuine breeders. I was once invited to an apiary to "see my new Buckfasts". There were four of them and they were as variable if not more so than any of those I have seen from beekeepers who take in swarms. The colour of queens, drones and workers varied considerably and so did their temper! Despite what is sometimes said about breeding from Buckfast, I believe that to avoid some of the problems I have seen you should replace queens regularly from a reliable breeder. This of course adds to the cost of beekeeping and takes away one of the major joys - queen rearing. A rather amusing story I have is I gave a lecture on "Bee Improvement" to quite a large audience. At question time an attendee said they had "native" bees. I was a bit suspicious so I asked where they came from.

Chapter 2 : Buckfast Bee Keepers Group

Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey, describes the life work of Brother Adam, beekeeper, queen breeder and developer of the Buckfast bee. This book outlines Brother Adam's techniques of queen rearing and keeping newly mated queens in small colonies are the basis of the highly successful queen rearing and overwintered nuc programs established by Kirk Webster and Michael Palmer.

Welcome to the Buckfast BeeKeepers Group website This website has been created to provide information to English speaking beekeepers that are interested in keeping and breeding Buckfast type bees. Brother Adam, whose civil name was Karl Kehrle, was born in Mittelbiberach, Germany and became a monk at the age of eleven when he was sent to the monastery by his mother. The development of the Buckfast bee commenced when a significant portion of the British black bee was wiped out in the second decade of the last century due to an epidemic of acarine disease and or paralysis. The British strain of *Apis mellifera mellifera* was especially susceptible to the onslaught and was decimated across large areas of Britain; it seems that only a very small population managed to survive. At Buckfast the only colonies not affected by the disease were those headed by Ligurian queens and hybrids of these queens with British black bees. This started Brother Adam on a lifelong quest to breed a strain of honey bee that would contain as many desirable qualities as possible for beekeepers with a goal of maximum production for a minimum of input on the part of the beekeeper. Buckfast theory includes that desirable characteristics in other bee populations are introduced into the main Buckfast lines. This is achieved by a process of crossing, selecting, culling and backcrossing. During these unique genetic combinations, characteristics that are not present in the parents often appear and if these new characteristics are deemed to be of value, an attempt is made to fix them within the line and then include them in the main Buckfast bee line. The result is a healthy and stable bee with the main characteristics being docility, vitality, industry, low swarming, high honey production and economic use of stores amongst more minor ones, for example, low propolis use and lack of brace comb. Bee breeding groups that have separate agenda to Buckfast beekeepers have disseminated much misinformation about the strain. This has led to some end users being unsatisfied and to incorrect conclusions being drawn. One of the commonest errors repeatedly stated is that as Buckfast bees are hybrids that they will not breed true. The correctly bred Buckfast lines breed true because they are genetically stable, if Buckfast queens are mated to Buckfast drones, of course, the result will be Buckfast. It is doubtful that there is a present day population of bees that does not have some genetic material from other subspecies. The mating of the Buckfast queens is controlled either by instrumental insemination or by reliable mainland and island mating stations. The centre of Buckfast breeding has moved from the England to Germany, where numerous matings stations are in operation for the beekeepers to select from. A forum has been created for English speaking Buckfast beekeepers at this address: These breeders continue the work started by Brother Adam. It is a big responsibility; the work done by Brother Adam cannot be repeated as some of the original material used is not now available in its former state, the reason being either through heavy hybridization or extinction. Where a population of bees is heavily hybridized through uncontrolled crossings it is difficult, but not impossible, to fix characteristics of use in breeding. It just makes the work more demanding. This situation needs to be rectified and a UK based breeding group has been formed with the primary objective to commence a breeding program, to provide access to reliable mating stations in the UK and genuine Buckfast breeding material. A decision was made to re-activate the mating station formerly used by Brother Adam at Sherberton on Dartmoor as well as establish two more mating stations on Exmoor. In addition to these mating stations, instrumental insemination will also be used in the breeding program. As mentioned above, Buckfast bees are prolific, industrious, vigorous as well as being docile and can be handled with ease , they do not swarm excessively like Carniolian bees; they make economic use of their stores - unlike Italian bees which are prone to turn all their stores into brood and then starve to death; they are healthy and resistant to brood diseases whereas *Mellifera* type bees often have problems with brood diseases both types of fowlbrood and chalk brood ; they are resistant to Acarine disease which the yellow type of Italian is very susceptible to. If there is a honeyflow - these bees will produce a crop.

The Buckfast strain of bee has been bred and selected by beekeepers for over ninety years with the aim of including as many valuable characteristics as possible with the overriding theme of a bee that is bred for beekeepers to have the maximum production for a minimum of input, both in management and care, as possible.

Chapter 3 : Brother Adam – Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey

Beekeeping At Buckfast Abbey has 29 ratings and 0 reviews. Methods used by Brother Adam, creator of the Buckfast Bee strain, to manage bee colonies in De.

History[edit] The nave of the Abbey church is in a mixture of Romanesque and Gothic styles The first abbey at Buckfast was founded as a Benedictine monastery in This second abbey was home to Savignac monks. In the Savignac congregation merged with the Cistercian , and the abbey thereby became a Cistercian monastery. It had come to own "extensive sheep runs on Dartmoor, seventeen manors in central and south Devon, town houses in Exeter , fisheries on the Dart and the Avon , and a country house for the abbot at Kingsbridge ". By the mid s however, the abbey again flourished. The other monks, who all co-signed the deed of surrender, also received smaller pensions. After dissolution[edit] Following dissolution, the abbey site and its lands were granted by the crown to Sir Thomas Denys c. Berry had the ruins demolished, constructing a Gothic style "castellated Tudor" mansion house, and a wool mill on the site in James Gale in Ten years later, Dr. Gale decided to sell the property, but was keen to offer it to a religious community. An advert was placed in The Tablet, describing the Abbey as "a grand acquisition could it be restored to its original purpose. The land had been leased by monks from the St. One monk fell 50 feet but survived; and three monks fell off a hoist without serious injury in In that year, reconstruction of the south wing of the monastery began; it was intended to include a refectory and cloister. Reconstruction of the tower was completed in July with painting completed the following December. There is a conference and seminar centre, and a restaurant the Grange. On the west side of the Abbey are two gardens with plants ranging from herbs used in cooking or medicine to poisonous plants. Behind the public area is an enclosed garden for the monks. A bridge leads over the river to the abbey farm. Self sufficiency[edit] Buckfast Abbey, monastic produce shop. The Abbey is self-supporting, with a farm where vegetables are grown and bees, pigs and cattle are kept, a shop which sells wine, honey beeswax, fudge and other items made by religious communities throughout the world, and a gift shop, book shop, and restaurant. Its perceived links to violent anti-social behaviour – especially in Scotland – have been a controversial issue for the abbey [24] [25] which has employed a youth worker in one area affected. The remaining 16 hives that survived were of Italian origin. The school later named one of its Houses "Abbey" in memory of this period in their history. School of the Annunciation[edit] The School of the Annunciation is a place of learning for adults. It is a charitable company based in the grounds of Buckfast Abbey. It offers distance learning, part-time programmes, summer schools and short courses in theology, philosophy, catechetics, sacred beauty, liturgy and other associated subjects to support the New Evangelisation. They are widely regarded by many as one of the finest sets of change ringing bells in the world. In August , the Abbey hosted the Millenium Bell Ringing Festival in celebration of its th year since the foundation of the monastery. List of abbots[edit] Stained glass in Buckfast Abbey. The panel, designed by the monks, is 8 metres 26 feet across. Benedictine abbots[edit] Alwin Aelwinus first mentioned as having attended Shire-mote in Exeter in about Known from the Domesday Book to have been Abbot in Eustace first mentioned in in a Totnes Deed. Benedict, as the Cistercians also live by that Rule. William acted as Papal Legate in Nicholas elected in Michael mentioned in the Cartulary of Buckfast Abbey C. Peter I mentioned in the C. William II mentioned in the C. Howell mentioned in the Leger Book L. Henry mentioned in C. Simon mentioned in C. Robert mentioned in L. Peter de Colepitte mentioned in the P. William Atte Slade mentioned in the Banco Rolls Stephen I mentioned in the Ep. John of Churchstowe mentioned in the Ep. William Gifford mentioned in the Ep. Stephen of Cornwall mentioned in the Ep. Philip Beaumont mentioned in the Ep. Robert Symons mentioned in the Ep. William Paderstow mentioned in the Ep. William Slade mentioned in the Ep. Reg and William Beaghe mentioned in the Ep. Thomas Roger mentioned in Ep. He was Prior Administrator c. John Ffytchett mentioned in the Ep. John Matthu Matthew mentioned in the Ep. John King mentioned in the Statuta Cap. John Rede I mentioned in the Ep. John Bleworthy mentioned in - Cal. Alfred Gyll mentioned in the Ep. John Rede II mentioned in the Ep. There is no record of death or resignation from his office. He surrendered the Abbey to the king on 25 February Thomas Duperou - Superior: August - February Leander Lemoine -

Superior: March Ignatius Jean - Superior: July - November Boniface Natter - Abbot: Died 4 August Died 26 December Bruno Fehrenbacher elected 10 January Titular Abbot of Tavistock till his death on 18 July Ruling Abbot till Titular Abbot of Malmesbury. Resigned December and has since been convicted and imprisoned for child sex abuse.

Chapter 4 : Queens & Buckfast Stock - Ferguson Apiaries

It is not an easy task to make a report on beekeeping as it is pursued at Buckfast Abbey in South racedaydvl.com a few of our methods are not in line with principles generally accepted, or more correctly, they offend against rules acknowledged by most authorities on beekeeping " at least in England.

Origin[edit] In the early 20th century, bee populations were being decimated by tracheal mites. In , only 16 surviving colonies were left in the abbey. All of them were either pure Ligurian Italian or of Ligurian origin, hybrids between Ligurian and the English black bee A. Brother Adam also imported some more Italian queens. From these he began to develop what would come to be known as the Buckfast bee. Heritage[edit] The Buckfast contains heritage from mainly A. The Buckfast bee of today also contains heritage from two rare and docile African stocks A. The Buckfast bee was not interbred with the *Apis mellifera scutellata* from which the so-called Africanized bee was derived in Brazil in the s. To be able to control the matings, he started to use an isolated valley in Dartmoor. With no other bees within range, Brother Adam could maintain their genetic integrity and develop desirable traits. The book *In Search of the Best Strains of Bee* tells about his travels in search of genetic building blocks. Brother Adam imported more bees to cross with his developing Buckfast bee. Every new bee strain or bee race was first crossed with the existing Buckfast bee. In most cases, the new desired qualities were passed on to the new generation and the new combination was then made stable with further breeding work. Every crossing with a new race took about 10 years before the desired genes were fixed in the strain. Over 70 years, Brother Adam succeeded in developing a vigorous, healthy, and fecund honey bee which he dubbed the Buckfast bee. The Buckfast bee is popular among beekeepers and is available from bee breeders in Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom, France and other places. They are extremely gentle and highly productive. According to Brother Adam, "The average annual honey yield over the last thirty years has been 30 kg [66 lb] per colony. Thus we have a favourable balance compared with the average production in America or in Europe. The stock has been imported into the United States eggs, semen, and adult queens via Canada and they are easily available. Primary qualities are those qualities essential for any maximum honey production.

Chapter 5 : The Buckfast Honey Bee. Characteristics and recommendations – ApiExpert

Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey is a great book for any beekeeper interested in breeding honey bees and rearing queens. The queen rearing and bee breeding section in this book is especially interesting. The queen rearing and bee breeding section in this book is especially interesting.

Yes, the bees still make honey, which we harvest for the Benedictine Community who live at the Abbey, but we concentrate on the welfare of the bees and try to practice gentle bee keeping. By learning about bees we can engage with them, respond more appropriately to their needs, and try to help with any problems which they could encounter - this could be anything from parasite control to starvation. We aim to work alongside each colony during every season and remain as flexible and responsive to the environment as they do. This involves respectful and mindful management of the bees, as well as gentle handling, which takes into account their natural behaviors and instincts. Each colony has her own character, her own name and is important. For a full list of courses, and to book, please Workshop 1 - Giving your bees a flying start to the season! You must have a solid foundation if you are going to mave a superstructure. This workshop will outline some of the ways which you can promote and strengthen the welfare and fitness of your colony in Spring to pave the way for a productive season. Splitting your bees is the simplest form of queen rearing and we can show you some of the ways which have worked for us most successfully. Saturday 18th May from 2pm to 4. Do they inspect them relentlessly every 8 or 9 days all through the season? How good record keeping and basic understand of the natural life cycle of a colony can lead to less manipylation, more meaningful inspections and happier bees. There are times when your girls can do perfectly well actually better without you. Learn when and how to inspect your colonies and when you can give them a break for less string and a more relaxed summer. Saturday 25th May from 2pm to 4. This workshop aims to debunk some of the common myths and misconception about bees which are often quoted in literature and by word of mouth. Saturday 13th July 2pm to 4. The course is designed to cover most of the bee keeing season from the spring build up and swaring to honey harvest and the preparation of bees for winter. We will be running two beginners courses in tandem every other week. Both courses are from 10am till 12pm Please note: It is impossible to learn everything there is to know during only 8 weeks so students are welcome to join our community beekeeping group on a Sunday afternoon, during or after the course has finished, to top up their experience and understanding. One of two seperate afternoon sessions which explore the phenomena of honeybee swarming. Saturday 27th April 2pm to 4. Saturday 4th May 2pm to 4pm. We will deal with the why? New for Bee-gin Again! Reboot your beekeeping skills. Sometimes turning the computer off and then on again will sort out how well it reponds. We can easily become unfocussed and sloppy when looking at our bees. Going back to basics and relearning the fundamental procedures and preceptions which we use to manage our colonies will refine, refresh and strengthen a frmawork for great working practices. Saturday 20th April 2pm to 4. They could be stressed! The balance of your colony is essential for its health, wellbeing and success. Learn how to read your colony and to recognise when they are out of kilter. You could steer them back onto the right track by using simple management techniques. Sometimes these could make the difference to your colony surviving and flourishing or dwindling and dying out. Saturday 8th June 2pm to 4. The day will teach you how to recognise healthy brood and how to detect when things are not as they should be. Plenty of hands on experience coupled with expert advice and tuition. Saturday 20th July from 11am to 4pm. Taster Days from April to September For people thinking about taking up beekeeping. We will be running four seperate days on the following dates this is not a four week course - each day is a self-contained unit which is repeated to allow more oppertunities to attend. Saturday 30th March Saturday 27th July Saturday 7th September The day starts at 11am and finishes at 4pm with an hour for lunch bring your own or fine at the grange restaurant on site. We will be giving you an overview of the basic responsibilities and commitments involved in keeping bees alongside the costs and where best to get your kit. You will have the chance to see inside a hive and expereince the fascinating world of the honey bee first hand. A full information pack will be given out for you to keep. It could be just a group of friends or a family group who want to experience the wonder of bees up close and personal. Family groups

must be accompanied by at least one adult. Then youngest child age restriction is 5 years. All visits last a couple of hours and can include a talk, a visit to the bees bee suits provided and weather permitting and some light refreshments with a chance to chat and ask questions. The maximum group size is around 10 give or take a few These dates are available for Abbey visits all on Sunday mornings between 10am and 12pm. You need to pre-book visits preferably by email but you can write or phone. Talks Clare and Martin are available to give talks to your local hobby group; association; school; or establishment. The topics which we offer range from a general bee keeping talk for complete beginners to specialized selection of subject matter from disease to swarming or history to biology. We can come to you with a projector and laptop or you could come to us. Outreach and mentoring We can help you with your bees at home by coming out and troubleshooting or advising you on management issues. Please feel free to contact us using the form below: What is your name? What is your Telephone Number? What is your email address? Please leave your comment or question here.

Chapter 6 : Beekeeping At Buckfast Abbey | Betterbee

This is a very interesting book, a condensed history of Br. Adam's beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey, situated on the moorland area of Devonshire, U.K.

A mixture of theory and practical experience to start you off on your journey with honey bees. The course is designed to cover most of the bee keeping season from the spring build up and swarming to the honey harvest and the preparation of the bees for winter. A full information pack will be given out for you to keep. We have around 8 beehives that we look after together in a beautiful woodland setting. This is an ideal opportunity to get more hands on experience if you have completed a course but anyone can come to just watch and learn, including children. We can provide suits. There is no commitment so you may come along as often or as little as you wish. We usually meet at 1. Check with Clare first incase plans have changed. We will teach you about these This course will also cover a variety of techniques and methods which any beekeeper can employ to create anything from: From 2 - 4pm on the following Saturday afternoons: Saturday afternoon on 22nd April and 6th May from 2 - 4pm. How to recognize when things are not going right for your colony. Plenty of hands on experience including a practical workshop session looking at actual combs illustrating the most common brood diseases and problems. Saturday July 22nd from 11am - 4pm. Come and chat about your bees. Together we can thrash out solutions for any problems you may have with your girls from management dilemmas to disease issues. Or just come for coffee and a chat with other bee keepers to while away a Saturday morning. A problem shared is lightened and made less intimidating when you can discuss it with likeminded folk! It could be just a group of friends or a family group who want to experience the wonder of bees up close and personal. Family groups must be accompanied by at least one adult. Then youngest child age restriction is 5 years. All visits last a couple of hours and can include a talk, a visit to the bees bee suits provided and weather permitting and some light refreshments with a chance to chat and ask questions. The maximum group size is around 10 give or take a few These dates are available for Abbey visits all on Sunday mornings between 10am and 12pm. Visits need to be pre-booked preferably by email but you can write or phone. Talks Clare and Martin are available to give talks to your local hobby group; association; school; or establishment. The topics which we offer range from a general bee keeping talk for complete beginners to specialized selection of subject matter from disease to swarming or history to biology. We can come to you with a projector and laptop or you could come to us.

Chapter 7 : Brother Adam and his Buckfast Bee

The Buckfast bee is a breed of honey race dayv1.com is a man-made bee race, a cross of many strains of bees, developed by Brother Adam (born Karl Kehrle in Germany), who was in charge of beekeeping from at Buckfast Abbey in Devon in the United Kingdom, where the bees are still kept today.

PI B S Hallsberg Sweden With his permission From the American Bee Journal , 2 , , p Brother Adam wants to combine the best qualities from different races into a new bee, a combination race, in order to bring about a super bee that gives a maximum crop with a minimum of work. Brother Adam has devoted a lifetime, nearly 70 years, to developing a new bee, the Buckfast bee. He was born Aug. As a year-old boy he arrived in at Buckfast Abbey, the Benedictine monastery in Devon, England for the purpose to devoting himself to life as a monk. In he began his work with the bees and in he took over the responsibility for the bee yard. Brother Adam has in his book *Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey*, page 52, formulated his aim of breeding as follows: But just like the corn breeding program, like crosses followed by selection can give us better bees. Brother Adam wants to combine the best qualities from different races into a new super bee possessing a combination of qualities that give the modern beekeeper maximum crops with a minimum of work. When the Acarine mite came to the British Isles, it exterminated the native black bees. The surviving 16 colonies were all headed by Italian queens mated with native black drones. About of these nuclei are usually wintered and the young queens used for requeening the honey-producing colonies in the following spring. Four to six colonies headed by a sister group are placed on the mating location in Dartmoor for the purpose of drone production. They have two-thirds of one frame Modified Dadant each of drone comb. Artificial insemination is used for the crossing experiments. The first includes his original strains, the Buckfast bee. The second one is formed from his experimental crosses between other races and the Buckfast bee, and their developing generations. The development of a new crossing into a line that will show a reasonable genetic stability takes at least seven years. Then, one has only the desirable qualities left from the foreign race in the new combination. About a developed combination with the black French bee, and about one with a Greek Carniolan type bee, was used in inserting traits from these races. In Sweden we also have Buckfast strains which originate from colonies that Brother Adam says belong to strains that have traits from Saharian and Anatolian bees. According to his findings the very light-colored bees are highly susceptible to the Acarine mite. Only 20 per cent of the emerging queens are left for the mating nuclei. Half of these queens are eliminated after the first young bees have emerged. The rest are wintered in nuclei and tested in honey-producing colonies next summer. One method that has played an important role is the testing of daughter groups. He one year obtained about 30 daughters each from 15 breeders. The poorer half of these daughters were given away in autumn even if they were the poorer half, they were good. The rest were wintered either on four or eight half-size Modified Dadant combs. The bees have to make it through the winter with heather honey which they have gathered themselves and sometimes a small amount of sugar. So, no cleansing flights are possible over a period of about five months duration. Early in March the consumption of stores by weight is ascertained and the relative loss between the different lines and crosses evaluated and thereafter their various characteristics of economic value. All colonies are requeened every year except colonies headed by breeders. Most of the new wintered queens are used for March requeening. Brother Adam distributes a like number of the new queens from each breeder in his different bee yards in order to make as fair a comparison and selection as possible. The best of these evaluated queens and their mothers can be used for future breeding work. Brother Adam does not name the queens after the strains to which they belong; they just get the number of the hive. But every queen, worker and drone at Buckfast Abbey has a known descent and for his original strains a recorded pedigree going back over a period of more than fifty years , both on the maternal and paternal side. The strains of the Buckfast bee are not as varied as is normally the case for different commercial strains. And, they are not inbred for forming multiple hybrids. It is this hard selection, together with the use of qualities from different races, that is making the Buckfast bee so successful. One of the first countries to import the Buckfast bee was the United States. In Sweden the first Buckfast queens were imported from the one breeder in the United

States. Many beekeepers found them so good that they wanted to start their own breeding program. They began developing isolation areas. The beekeepers in these areas agreed to keep only Buckfast bees to make it easier to get Buckfast-mated queens. They also started a rigorous selection program from among their U. Buckfast queens and their daughters. But, it was not easy due to the heterogeneity of the daughters. This was the beginning of his friendship with Brother Adam and of his great interest in the Buckfast bee. He is deeply involved in the planning of the breeding work with the Buckfast bee. We do not have the Acarine or Varroa mites in Sweden. Therefore, it is now against the law to import living bees from countries with these mites. He keeps them cool until he comes to Sweden. It is desiccation that is the great danger for the young larvae. In Sweden they are immediately cared for by broodless and queenless nucs before grafting. In Sweden we have two mating stations on isolated islands with Buckfast bees under the control of the Swedish Beekeeping Association SBR, at least one private island for the same purpose and many private isolated mating places on the mainland. Several areas are one-race areas with only Buckfast bees. Artificial insemination is also used. The breeding material we obtain from Buckfast Abbey is formed into what we call strains. Strain for example is formed from the offspring of a queen that has been heading the colony in hive number at Buckfast Abbey. The virgin queens raised from the eggs from England are mated on our mating stations. Next year the best of them are placed on the islands as drone-producers. From all over Sweden breeders are sending their virgin queens for the purpose of mating with these excellent drones. Both first and second inbreeding generations as well as strain crossings are made. For every mated and laying queen, we pay a royalty to Buckfast Abbey. In we had a very good strain combination of our own, and it will be used in on one of our islands. We now have seven strains on the mating islands. The above-mentioned colony which has produced pounds kg is headed by a queen mated with drones. At the bee yard, to which this colony belongs, the colonies with at least 50 per cent of heritage gave a pounds kg honey average with pounds kg as the top result. One should perhaps mention that the bee yard is placed where there is plenty of nectar the whole summer. The average honey crop for the whole of Sweden is just below 66 pounds 30 kg. High-producing areas are often located on the border between "wild" and cultivated areas which can give nectar most often from maple, dandelion, fruit-trees, raspberry, dutch clover, alsike and red clover, rape-seed, linden, fireweed and heather. The fact should be emphasized that Buckfast bees never primarily are bred for color. This results in a rather broad variation in color both between the different strains and in a certain strain. But usually the queens are banded, with the yellow being a leather brown color. The workers often have one or two and sometimes three yellow bands and they are mostly gray-haired. The drones are the most stable in color. They are dark with two bronze bands, and in some strains only a small tendency to the bronze bands can be seen. The size of the queen varies from very big to small. The seven strains in Sweden are, the following: All Buckfasts are normally very gentle. And, the fact that has surprised - and pleased - so many beekeepers in Sweden is that they are gentle any time of the day, also in the late evening and in any weather. A colony control beekeeper he gets queens from different breeders for the purpose of testing in Sweden, Gunnar Henningsson, says that compared to Italians, Buckfasts have more good qualities assembled in each colony. Beekeeper experience in Sweden indicates that Buckfasts are more hardy, more uniform in quality, more productive, have a better disposition and a lower swarming tendency. The Italians are not so hardy and are less uniform in other qualities. But, in good weather in a high nectar producing area, they can be very good. The Carniolans are hardy and usually have a very good temper. But, their egg-laying is more dependent on pollen availability. The native black bee is hardy, but often is aggressive and tends to swarm. This aggressiveness creates problems in Sweden during natural queen matings since these drones are often the most probable candidates to mate with free-flying queens. Beekeeper experience in Sweden indicates that Buckfast drones bring about better honey production when crossed with other races than other drones do. The best crossing seems to be one with 75 per cent Buckfast heritage a crossing followed by a recrossing to Buckfast drones. The pure Buckfast bee has shown itself to be so productive today that I doubt that it would pay for me to cross it to get still higher yields. The few extra pounds of honey I would eventually get are not worth the unreliable uniformity of the descendants, which can mean a lower average crop and further selection work from the beginning to get genetic stability. But for a large commercial breeder, I believe it is economically practical to experiment with crosses and then

incorporate them in regular strains like Brother Adam does. From the American Bee Journal , 2 , , p

Chapter 8 : Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey Book Review - racedaydvl.com

Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey. 1st July Blog Topic What's on at Buckfast Abbey?. The loss of biodiversity caused by monocultures and the widespread use of pesticides is widely acknowledged to be causing honey bee stress and colony losses across the globe.

Working in the apiary 2 This post is also available in: Moreover, any hive management scheme will be greatly influenced by the race of the honey bee. When it comes to types of honey bee, there are three distinctive taxonomies: Hybrid genetic or a cross between two sub-species Mongrel. The mongrel is a type of bee where one or both of its parents are a cross. Brother Adam used to describe the mongrel as a creature with unknown pedigree. Basically, the mongrel is an F2 or lower. In time other races were added to the crossing. The creation of the Buckfast bee started in , right before the local bee was eradicated by an epidemic. Buckfast honey bees in one of our apiaries. You can see the distinctive lighter color of the bees. The color of the Buckfast bee is described by its creator, Brother Adam , as being similar to the old Italian Honey Bee, whose color was darker than nowadays. However, the selection was never carried out in order to obtain a color uniformity, as this would have had a negative impact on other more important traits. This is the reason for the lack of uniformity in color of the Buckfast bee. When it comes to characteristics that directly impact the performance and economical value of the race, the uniformity is excellent. Among these qualities we can name the very prolific queens, the very low swarm instinct, gentleness and a high resistance to diseases. It also produces less propolis than other races, overwinters extremely well, using less honey stores, great honey producers, builds up rapidly in the spring while maintaining a strong colony during the entire summer. The most important trait of a bee race has to be a low swarming instinct. All the other strong points are useless if a race has a high tendency to swarm. Swarming is one of the biggest challenges of the modern beekeeper. There are of course some races that will be inclined to swarm despite all the precaution measures taken. That;s certainly not the case with the Buckfast Honey Bee. A pro beekeeper, tending to more than Buckfast colonies, said that when working properly with it, the Buckfast Bee has a swarming instinct so low that it becomes unfeasible to carry out periodical control visits. Based on our experience in working with the Buckfast Bee, as well as from the feedback of our customers, we can confirm this without any doubts. A quality Buckfast Honey Bee will swarm only under exceptional conditions. All of these excellent traits of the Buckfast Honey Bee are a manifestation of the heterosis qualities of a hybrid. The Buckfast Honey Bee.

Chapter 9 : Where are the bees? - Review of Buckfast Abbey, Buckfastleigh, England - TripAdvisor

The bee department at Buckfast Abbey has changed from honey production to education. For more information on the different bee keeping courses and events throughout the year, please click here. Galleries.

It is not an easy task to make a report on beekeeping as it is pursued at Buckfast Abbey in South Devon. There are also certain factors which, although significant, we consider to be of secondary importance; these include the type of district, the climate, and whether the bees are kept for a hobby or on a commercial basis. In this short article, we shall deal with these secondary factors first, inasmuch as they are characteristic of the methods used in Buckfast; after this we shall give a description of our special methods of queen rearing, which we regard as the essential principle upon which our success rests. Buckfast is in the south-west of England, only a few feet above sea level and only a few miles from the Atlantic coast. This situation, and the influence of the Gulf Stream, determine the climate; here we have neither the severe winters of the Continent nor their long, continuously hot summers. The weather is extremely unsettled and changeable, but on the other hand the close proximity of Dartmoor offers the advantage of a second honey flow in August, just after the main flow from clover in June and July. Sources of nectar of secondary importance are: Among the fruits, apple blossom is of real importance; we have no cherries, pears, etc. The structure of our hives and equipment is in line with these circumstances. The Buckfast Abbey hive is similar to the Modified Dadant, but accommodates twelve frames instead of eleven. The honey supers are half as deep as the brood boxes, i. We have also made several important changes in the design of our hives and equipment to facilitate rapid and comfortable operation, and to simplify transport to the moors. At present we have colonies for honey production. They are distributed in ten out-apiaries of colonies each. We do not have our hives in rows according to the general practice in England and America, but in groups of four. The entrances of the four hives in each group face outwards and in different directions north, east, south and west in order to minimise drifting. Our management is intensive rather than extensive, and our goal is a high annual average honey production from each colony. We have so simplified all our equipment and methods that a minimum of time and labour is required, since everything unnecessary has been avoided. On the other hand the aesthetic aspect of apiculture is by no means neglected. The average annual honey yield over the last thirty years has been 30 kg 66 lb. Thus we have a favourable balance compared with the average production in America or in Europe. We claim Buckfast as the holder of a record achievement in honey production not only in Great Britain but probably in the whole of Europe, namely the greatest honey inflow over a five-day period. Another eight colonies did only slightly less well. However, it is not the records of individual colonies that count, but the high average production from the entire apiary over many years. Honey and wax extraction. Our harvesting equipment was designed to tackle big honey crops with ease in the shortest possible time, and the extracting equipment is entirely power driven. The uncapping machine has a steam-heated knife which moves horizontally. The cappings fall on to copper steam coils in a container; these promptly melt the wax which then separates from the honey. As honey falls on to the coils at a considerable rate, there is no danger of its being spoilt by overheating. There is only a momentary contact of the honey with the coil, and an outlet provides for the drainage of the container, leading the honey into the extractor by means of a pipeline. The wax, which has a lower specific gravity, floats on the top of the honey and is run into moulds automatically. In earlier years we had found the pressing of heather honey a very troublesome job, but by means of a hydraulic press of special construction we have overcome the difficulties involved. The extracted honey, whether centrifuged or pressed, is pumped into storage tanks. We have eleven of these, each of 2. Automatic control of the temperature of the water circulating in the coil has been provided, and this prevents overheating of the honey. An automatic bottling machine fills pound jars an hour. The problem of equipment depends so much upon the circumstances that it is useless to set up any fixed rules, and for this reason we regard the equipment as a secondary factor. Bee breeding and queen rearing. The solution of this problem is of major importance to every beekeeper; and it means breeding the best possible queens of the very best strain for every colony. By means of systematic queen rearing undue swarming can be prevented, a high average honey yield can be secured, and resistance to diseases so strengthened that disease

will appear only as an exception. This statement requires a short explanation. We do not believe greatly in the various treatments generally recommended for bee diseases, such as the Frow treatment or the use of sulphur drugs. These may retard the spreading of the disease, but they certainly do not stop it. In this country, and especially in the vicinity of Buckfast probably due to its particular climate, acarine disease is prevalent. However, by means of careful selective breeding throughout a period of twenty years we have overcome the inherent susceptibility to this disease to such an extent that it practically never occurs. Whenever we introduce bees from any other district they succumb to acarine disease within a year or so. Our wide experience in the campaign against acarine disease, which goes back to the years when it reached the peak of its virulence, has shown clearly that resistance and susceptibility to this disease are inherited, and moreover that they are inherited through the queen; the drone has no direct influence on this resistance or susceptibility in the first generation. Whether this is similar with the brood diseases has yet to be proved, but our observations have given ample indication that resistance to them is inherited. It requires many years of wide experience and exceptional knowledge to breed this quality and at the same time to retain other characteristics of economic importance. In our opinion the increase of resistance is the only way to attain permanent freedom from bee diseases. The Buckfast bee is a cross between the native British and the Italian bee; this cross was produced thirty-five years ago, shortly before the native bee was exterminated by acarine disease. In the meantime no fresh blood has been introduced into the strain, except for experimental purposes. The harmful effects of inbreeding, which have now been demonstrated in America as a result of artificial insemination, were clear to us twenty years ago. Continuous inbreeding is possible only when it is practised on a sufficiently large scale; experience has taught us to rely on a number of breeding queens for the breeding of both queens and drones in order to eliminate undesirable characteristics, and also to obtain optimal results. This is the only method by which we can make valid comparisons on which to base our selection of the purest strains and the most productive offspring; it is also the only way by which real progress can be made every year. For instance last year we bred from six breeding queens; this year our average crop has been This is not a chance occurrence, as these 22 colonies were distributed among all our ten out-apiaries. Moreover, the colonies which give this high performance also have all the other good qualities which we have aimed at. The appearance, gentleness and prolificity of the Buckfast bee are similar to those of the Italian, but the excellent vigour, the longevity and the unique white capping of the native bee have not only been retained but greatly improved. Other qualities which have been achieved through our breeding are resistance to acarine disease, absence of propolis and of swarming. All this would have been impossible without a queen-mating apiary. The Swiss beekeepers have given the world a valuable example by their scientific bee breeding and by the introduction of mating stations. Artificial insemination is of great scientific value, but the use of mating apiaries is still the only means by which we can produce reliable super-quality queens. We have already mentioned the close vicinity of the wide heather-covered plateau of Dartmoor, and there, after a long search. Also, Dartmoor offers the striking advantages of being almost uninhabited and of having no trees whatsoever, and the climate on the moors is so rough that no swarm can survive. Owing to the particular climatic situation, we had a difficult problem to solve in the design of our mating nucleus hive. We made numerous experiments to find the type best suited to our purposes. The first trial was made with half-size British standard frames, in boxes accommodating four nuclei, each of three half-size frames. These proved to be very good for summer use, but they were too small for overwintering. In the end, the Dadant half-frame proved to be the only suitable one for our needs; consequently we built our mating boxes to accommodate 16 Dadant half-frames, dividing a box into two crosswise to take them. Another division lengthwise, by means of moveable division boards, gives four compartments each holding four half-frames. These mating nuclei can support themselves in a normal summer, and are strong enough to overwinter the fertile queen; on the other hand they are small enough to prevent the breeding of drones. Our feeders are designed to suit this type of hive, and they depend on the same principles as those used in our honey producing hives. All the four nuclei have simultaneous access to the syrup. At present we have mating nuclei, which enable us to overwinter approximately fertile queens in the mating apiary. Our stock allows us to requeen our colonies every spring with queens which are in the full vigour of their youth. Extract from *The Bee World*, 31 12, , p