

Would you like to know more about keeping Bees?

Harrow Beekeepers' Association.

Did you know that beekeepers in the Harrow area collect over a ton of honey from their hives in a good year? Most of their hives are sited in back gardens, where bees can harvest nectar and pollen from flowers, shrubs and trees grown by enthusiastic suburban gardeners. In fact, so wide is the variety of plants grown that suburbs provide one of the best sources of forage for bees today; better than the countryside, which has largely been given over to intensive agriculture with grasses and cereals, yielding no honey and where selective weed killers have eradicated the wild flowers and weeds used by bees for forage.

Harrow Beekeepers has been established for over 60 years. It runs courses each year for beginners and provides an apiary where the association's bees may be looked after with the help of an experienced member. Each year it holds a Honey Show with displays for everyone to see and products for sale at the August Bank Holiday. Why don't you visit our stand and learn more about bees. Try some honey- it may have been collected from your own garden!

For more information contact:-

Chair. Judy Earl 020 8427 9179

Secretary. Aline Bowers 020 8907 9832

Education Officer. Jo Telfer 0208 868 3494

About bees and honey

For thousands of years man has studied bees and hunted them for their honey and wax, as long ago as 6000BC. 2500BC Egyptians began keeping bees in earthen ware pots so that large amounts of wax and honey could be gathered more easily.

The honey bee is often confused with bumble bee or -even worse- a wasp. The honeybee is a social bee and lives in a colony in a wooden box we call a hive. The bumble bee, also a social insect is round and fluffy in appearance. They live in a small hole usually in the ground and only gather nectar for their own small brood. They all die in the winter except the new queens who hibernate. Honey bees, however, store enough food to last them through the winter. A colony of honey bees may be as many as 50,000 in summer, consisting of one queen about 200 male bees called drones and the rest are female worker bees. A bee will live for only 3 weeks in the summer time as its wings wear out after foraging each day. In the winter time they can live longer and so the colony is able to survive eating the honey stored in the combs. A good bee keeper makes sure that when the honey is removed that the bees have enough for themselves. The beekeeper will place the combs into a centrifuge to extract the honey, and then filter it before placing it into a jar. Bees also collect pollen, which they need to feed to the young larvae. As they cross-pollinate flowers they also contribute £165 m to the UK agricultural economy.

About keeping bees

If you are thinking that you would like to try your hand at keeping bees, which is an absorbing and rewarding hobby, then the best advice is to join an Association like Harrow Beekeepers. Here you will receive not only practical advice and help from experienced beekeepers, but also a very warm welcome. We run a course each year, in spring to help beginners get started. Each Sunday morning, we meet at our apiary to chat, buy equipment, look at bees, borrow books and benefit from regular training sessions held there once a month. In addition to our own library, Gayton Rd

public library devotes a section to beekeeping. Before committing yourself to spending money on equipment and bees it is strongly recommended that you come to our apiary and look into a hive of bees and do the course. Afterwards we will help you get set up with a hive bought through our association and acquire some bees perhaps through collecting a swarm, or if you prefer, you will be able to manage an association hive with an expert helping you for the first season.

We are affiliated to the British Beekeepers Association and through them we have 3rd party liability insurance plus a bi monthly magazine with the most recent information regarding techniques and welfare of bees.

Please do call us if you wish to have more information or look on line at www.harrowbeekeepers.co.uk