International Bee Research Association

The world's longest established apicultural research publishers



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PRESS RELEASE

[immediate 7/11/12]

Bad weather threatens British honey bees

Beekeepers throughout Britain are saying that this has been the worst summer for honey bees for decades, and that this will have knock on effects for next year. The miserable summer has led to bee colonies having to be fed to prevent them from starvation, and they have produced little or no honey. In addition, the bad weather has prevented young queen bees from mating successfully, which will lead to failures next season. But this local problem draws attention to much deeper problems which affect bees worldwide.

IBRA Science Director Norman Carreck says: "This has been the worst year for honey bees in my experience. Beekeepers need to urgently check all their hives to ensure that they have sufficient food to take them through the winter. It will be an anxious winter, as only in the spring will it become evident whether colonies are headed by queens that have successfully mated".

But bad weather is just one of the many problems facing the world's bees. Honey bees face continuing problems with the parasitic varroa mite, which scientists worldwide agree is the most important single threat. It is also believed that other diseases may interact with the effects of certain pesticides. Other bee species, such as bumble bees and solitary bees also face difficulties, and perhaps the greatest underlying problem for all bee species is a lack of suitable food for them, mainly due to worldwide changes in land use. Bees need a continuous supply of both nectar and pollen in order to thrive, but many gardeners are, however, uncertain which plants are best for this.

IBRA's new book "Plants for bees" by William Kirk and Norman Howes will enable gardeners to make informed decisions about what to plant. This lavish book introduces the different bee species and their varying requirements, and then discusses each bee plant in turn, listing their value to bees, together with information on their flowering period and growth conditions. This book is essential for the gardener and anyone with an interest in nature conservation.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:-

1. The book "Plants for bees" is available, price £25, from the IBRA website:-

http://www.ibra.org.uk/articles/plantsforbees

- 2. The International Bee Research Association ("IBRA") is the world's longest established apicultural research publishers and promotes the value of bees by providing information on bee science and beekeeping worldwide.
- 3. IBRA publishes the peer reviewed scientific journal the *Journal of Apicultural Research* founded by IBRA in 1962. It includes original research articles, theoretical papers; scientific notes and comments; together with authoritative reviews on scientific aspects of the biology, ecology, natural history, conservation and culture of all types of bee.
- 4. IBRA publishes and sells books on bee science, bee conservation and beekeeping and also provides bee information services. IBRA is a Registered Charity, and its Council of trustees boasts some of the world's leading bee scientists.
- 5. Membership of IBRA costs just £33.00 annually. Membership benefits include receipt of four quarterly issues of *Bee World*, our accessible and topical journal on latest bee research, news, reviews and other relevant information for the bee scientist, beekeeper, and anyone with an interest in bees.

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