

Dear Beekeeper

I am a long standing member of the South Chilterns Beekeeping Association ([SCBKA](#)) and will be giving a talk on the development of a local bee breeding programme and how your beekeeping can impact on this and vice-versa. *All local beekeepers are welcome to attend the Meeting.* I will touch on:

Why I am setting up a local bee breeding group  
The Importance of Record Keeping  
Choosing Your Breeder Queen  
Modified Equipment  
Drones and Culling  
Advantages and Importance of Working as a Collective

You are probably already aware that due to the threat of importing new pests and diseases into the UK, *the BBKA have now stepped up their campaign to actively discourage the purchase of imported foreign queens, nucleus and packaged bees, they are also actively encouraging the breeding/purchase of locally bred bees.*

Italy (one of our biggest importers) now has the \*Small Hive Beetle firmly established in the South of the Country and [\\*Tropilaelaps mite](#). If either of these arrive and become established pests in the UK, in contrast, dealing with the Varroa mite will be like a walk in the park! Viruses are mutating at a much faster rate than ever before e.g. \*Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus (CBPV) has no known cure and is proving to be very difficult to eradicate once it takes hold in an apiary. \*See National Bee Unit for information.

As a member of the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association ([BIBBA](#)), last year I decided to instigate a local bee breeding programme. My intention is not to strongly advocate breeding just the British Black Bee *Apis Mellifera Mellifera*, instead, my aim is to breed a locally adapted bee that is gentle, productive, and potentially hygienic. *In order to do this, I need the help and participation of other local beekeepers who share a similar goal.*

Even if you are not interested in rearing your own queens, I would ask that you buy British, preferably locally bred, queens and if these are from a commercial breeder it is important that you ask for certification to prove that these have not been imported. In particular (and I know this will be contentious), I would ask that you avoid purchasing Buckfast bees as they are F1 hybrids. The F2 offspring and in particular the F3 strains become increasingly aggressive and their drones ruin any hope of local selective breeding for a gentle trait.

I hope many of you can make it to the Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and look forward to meeting you and having an interesting discussion based on my talk.

Kind Regards  
Duncan Heather