

The cold spell has finally caught up with us and the bees have, for the moment, hunkered down for winter. I have not seen any bees flying in the last couple of visits I have made but I am confident they have enough honey stores to see them through the winter. At this time I hope that there will be some left for me when the nectar starts flowing again in the early spring.

The bees will not need any attention from me now until the days get longer and some warmth is again felt in the air, unless we have a severe and prolonged drop in temperature. If this occurs I may put some insulation on top of the top bars to help them conserve some heat.

This period is now a time to build more hives ready for some splits and also for a swarm or two if I am lucky enough to catch or attract some. It is also time to catch up on my reading. My current book is 'The Buzz about Bees - Biology of a Superorganism'. It is well written, extremely informative and doesn't get bogged down with jargon. It is immensely readable and doesn't rely on the reader having a previous knowledge about bees. The photos are also amazing.

I also follow some blogs and I have found time to catch up on recent posts from Brigit Strawbridge who always has something interesting to say.

[\[http://beestrawbridge.blogspot.co.uk/\]](http://beestrawbridge.blogspot.co.uk/). Her most recent post is titled '[Neonicotinoid Pesticides: Why Have They Still Not Been Banned?](#)' and not only does this post raise questions for us to think about but it also includes links to more in-depth research.

Finally a couple of bee facts. Larvae are fed up to 1300 times a day. If each feed took just 5 seconds of bee time that is equivalent to 10 hours work for one bee. The queen lays a 1000 plus eggs a day [more than her body weight!]. The larvae are fed for around 6 days before they are capped. So one day's worth of larvae take 60,000 bee hours to feed. However, the next day another thousand bee eggs are laid.. and so on. Busy bees.