



Varroa Treatment Options

Practical Fact Sheet

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Please note: This series of MBKA Fact Sheets are intended to accompany practical sessions and demonstrations at members' apiaries during the season.

Of course, there is no "right way" to keep bees and most objectives can be achieved in several different ways. The advice presented in these notes is therefore selective, representing the method or methods used commonly and generally accepted as "best practice".

They should be regarded as guidance notes. It is expected that revisions will be frequent in the early phase of their production!

Autumn has been the traditional time for dealing with varroa and Bayvarol/Apistan have been excellent products for many years. However, in spring 2007, resistance to these products is widespread and consequently beekeepers must start to employ alternative, less individually effective control methods. IPM, Integrated Pest Management, is the only way forward so become familiar with it.....

- Consult NBU's "Managing Varroa" booklet
- by monitoring, establish whether infestation is light, medium or heavy
- assess the state of the colony, consider the time of year

Armed with this information, informed decisions can be made about the available treatment options and the best option for the colony at the time.

The treatments and husbandry methods are described in the Managing Varroa booklet; see also the chart showing the approximate times of year that various options might be applicable.

UK Approved varroacides

- Apistan – (Pyrethroid) and Bayvarol (Pyrethroid) – both now unreliable.
- Apiguard – (Thymol) – use as per label directions; a small eke (ca. 5cm) is recommended to allow full access and provide a head-space.
- ApiLife Var – (Thymol + essential oils) – use as directed
- Thymovar – (Thymol) – use as directed
- Mite-away Quick Strips (MAQS) – Formic acid, use as directed.

Husbandry methods (no chemicals)

- Shook swarm with or without bait combs (destroyed when capped)
- easy to do, effective, syrup-feeding crucial
- Q-trapping using proprietary comb cage
- easier than it looks! Strict time-table. Often good honey yields

Other methods

- Dusting - talc or icing sugar – time-consuming, ineffective.
- Organic acids – oxalic, formic, lactic – use during brood-free period (Nov/Dec?). Beware – some are toxic/corrosive to bees and beekeeper! Variable efficacy, some reported winter losses (See Fact Sheet no. 5)