

Reader's comments on *The Bee Friendly Beekeeper* by David Heaf

The comments listed here have been received by various means including handwritten letter, private email and posts to e-Groups

JH, Hants, 17.9.10

I was thrilled to receive a copy of your book yesterday and pleased to note the quality paper and 'easy to read' font. The colour pictures next to the relevant text gives the book a richness not seen in the manuscript text. My wife felt the book to be very 'reader friendly'.

After browsing sections for a couple of hours, I am convinced that your work is substantial. It will be a significant tool to help people consider the issues, change attitudes and practically achieve sustainable beekeeping.

The use of photos from other Warré beekeepers and acknowledgement of ideas from the Warré forum gives a great feel of group ownership. Well done on pulling it all together.

GW, 21.9.10

I have now read your book. May I say how well researched it was and how well Warré was covered and brought into the 21st century, but with some of his more lengthy and pedantic opinions being nicely condensed.

TW, Oregon, 22.9.2010

I haven't had time to really sit down and peruse it in detail yet but some of the features that stand out right away are 2 appendices with great diagrams to build a Warré hive and a hive lift. There's a whole chapter on Warré hive modifications, etc. Wonderful pictures there of everything from Delon's floor to octagonal and cylindrical hives, spales, and Bill Wood's neat comb knife!

This is a lovely book. I'm going to pour a pint now and sit down in my favorite chair and dig into the book. Wow.

PC, Devon, 23.9.10

Many thanks for sending me your book, which is really first class.

AC, Perthshire, 26.9.10

I am enjoying the book - The Bee-friendly Beekeeper

EB, Brisbane, 29.9.10

It looks very professional and the illustrations are very informative, congratulations!

KW, Kentucky, 30.9.10

Our state apiarist is coming for a visit today. He has LOTS of questions regarding Warré hives, especially now that he's getting inquiries about them. I'm praying that I'll be able to clearly express what he needs to understand while avoiding information overload. I think the reading I've done in your book, David, has been good preparation for that.

PA, Wales, 1.10.10

I've almost finished your excellent book and wasn't going to contact you till I did! However, life puts challenges and opportunities in our paths.

PM, Somerset, 3.10.10 & 13.10.10

Have read your book, I think it's brilliant!

Thoughts or suggestions:

In the prologue the contrast between natural and artificial swarms seems not strong enough to me.

p.34: internal lay out – sounds like the Langstroth lay out is better

p.42: include more about Tautz's observations about the comb as means of communication etc. Emphasise it's importance more.

Over emphasis on jurisdictions where frames are a legal requirement?

Include more about how somethings are not always effective or the ideal approach is not yet known–p.48

bait hives and swarm lures, harvesting.

p.94: typo 'Rumania'

Add to glossary: md rib, introgression, immune pathway redundancy

p.96: include common names for plants p.96

KA, Denmark, 7.10.10

I think the book is interesting and well documented. It has been a pleasure to read.

TM, New South Wales, 11.10.10

I am writing to let you know that I received my 10 copies of your book yesterday. Congratulations on putting together a clear, thoughtful, attractive, and thoroughly readable text! I have read through once, and look forward to continue using it as a fantastic information resource and grounding point for my own beekeeping endeavours.

JW, Switzerland, 12.10.10

Finally I have managed to read your very nice book, it was a great read, thank you! Your style is lucid, neither apologetic nor offensive and a valuable source of information. But it is more, it is the account of a bee-keeper, who loves the colony, who is curious and does not only talk about participant, but tries to be one!

BH, Germany, 16.10.10

Your book is most excellent. I enjoyed reading it. Keep up the good work!

HCH, Phoenix, 18.10.10

I also just purchased a copy of your book "The Bee-friendly Beekeeper" and I am enjoying it greatly. Just received my copy today - so thrilled!

I hope to be one of the presenters at our local adult education Bee School. The Bee School is run by conventional beekeepers with a heavy focus on Langstroth hives, augmented with numerous chemical treatments and the standard frequent hive inspections. To their credit they do offer a few hours of podium time to "non-conventionals". I need to really educate myself in order to present the Warré school of thought in a cogent manner.

Thank you Mr. Heaf!

PE, Warwickshire, 28.10.10

...some of us find David Heaf's classifications of us as beekeepers, and of our methods, as more than a little insulting to say the least. The idea that we should follow the teachings of some obscure French monk because he knew more than us I find bizarre to say the least. Warre died nearly 60 years ago and therefore had no access to the wealth of knowledge available to us now. His teachings are, however, promoted with an almost religious fervour - and we all know how religions can attract followers.

Why spend so much time (and paper and ink) describing these in so much detail if you are not trying to score points? It is absolutely clear to me that the 'dominator' is the bad guy- the bee farmer, the breeder etc – and the participant is the eco-friendly good guy (who just happens to keep Warrés or some form of Top Bar hives).

Time to move on, as they say.

DB, France, 4.11.10

I have enjoyed having your book. You asked for comments: of course it is important to get some reaction from your readers. Sorry I have not replied sooner. I understand it must have worried you to hear your “beek” friend’s criticisms!

I do not find it easy to write you a review but I shall, if I may, offer you some comments as well as explain a little my way of reading books!

I find your book very attractively presented, with well produced colour photographs and illustrations which make it a pleasure to read and to handle.

I see nothing wrong with your referencing system which I see someone else commented on... I am used to and *like* looking up references!

As with any book (and we have a huge number of books and in particular bee books, from Crane’s huge tomes to Chandler’s informally produced Barefoot Beekeeper), I dip into them when I want a particular bit of information. I rarely read a book from cover to cover (unlike my wife!). I very much like Thomas Seeley’s work, “The Wisdom of the hive” and his new book “Honeybee Democracy”, and his discussions of feral nests and how some of these have survived despite varroa (the paper on the bees of the Arnot Forest) I have used your book to look up things to do with varroa and propolis (and other topics too), as I am particularly interested in looking at breeding or developing bees with varroa tolerance and the properties of plant resins and propolis and their potential in combating varroa infestation. We recently found a thriving abandoned hive in a nearby wood, and are taking a lot of interest in observing it on a regular basis. It is tantamount to being a feral nest, in my view – it has been there untended for over five years.

Your book is very extensive in what it covers and will give me a great deal of food for thought in the future too. Because you are a Warré man and we have top bar hives, I would have liked some more coverage of TBHs, and we shall be staying with this type of hive.

I heartily congratulate you on working so hard and producing such a valuable book. It is sad that writers can expect rather sharp criticism from others – I hope you have received appreciation too, that will encourage you to continue...!