

episode 73 show notes and advice

Episode Description

Today Arthur talks to Claire and Ian Nichols who run Epping Good Honey, making small batches of seasonal raw honey. With hives in Epping Forest, their honeybees forage in this wild, ancient woodland, as well as in local urban gardens. Their Instagram account shares their beekeeping journey along with lots of helpful information about bees. On today's episode they chat about why they love working with honeybees and how we can help to look after them, whether we keep bees or want to garden in a pollinator-friendly way.

In this episode, discover...

- How Epping Good Honey make their artisanal raw honey and all about the biodiversity of Epping Forest
- Why it is so important to buy local honey
- The best bee-friendly garden flowers to fill the June gap
- Claire and Ian's top tips to help protect honeybees

episode 73 advice sheet

About Epping Good Honey

Claire and Ian come from a fine art and design background and started out with one hive, with Ian as beekeeper. As the business has grown, Claire does everything else from Instagram and admin to jarring up the honey. They used to sell at markets but now just supply local delis and restaurants, working with chefs who love the unique flavours of their honeys. They are true artisanal producers, making each batch of honey by hand. Ian has a second job working for the National Bee Unit, part of DEFRA, responsible for evaluating bee diseases and dealing with non-native invasive species like the Asian hornet.

They keep their hives in Epping and their bees forage in Epping Forest, an ancient woodland. When they had their honey tested by the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology, pollen from 26-45 different flower species was detected, including pollen from small leaved lime trees. These trees are an indicator of native, ancient woodland, demonstrating that their bees are indeed foraging in Epping Forest. Arthur is keen to find some beekeepers local to Perch Hill, to try their honey when dahlias are in full bloom to see what this honey tastes like. Dahlias 'Waltzing Mathilda' and

'Bishop of Auckland' are always covered in bees and Single dahlia varieties are fantastic for pollinators.

Claire and Ian's top tips

- Try to support your local beekeepers and buy local honey. Then you experience seasonality as what the bees forage affects the flavour of honey, like wine or cheese, which is wonderful.
- Grow pollinator-friendly flowers like alliums, salvias, lavender, buddleia, foxgloves and poppies to provide pollen and nectar for bees. Trees provide vital forage for bees too.
- Lavender and herbs like marjoram, chives, rosemary and thyme are fantastic for bees and great kitchen garden plants too.
- Think about the June gap and try to make sure you have some nectar-rich plants in your garden at this time. Blackberry brambles are often lifesavers for bees if they flower early.
- Provide bees with water. Add some bird baths to your garden with a few pebbles in the water so the bees can perch. Bees need water to create the wax for their honeycomb and to dilute honey stores that will granulate over time.
- Mow less.
- Don't use pesticides.

What to do if you are stung by a bee

If you are stung by a bee, scrape the sting out as fast as possible. The sting has a venom sac which will keep pumping venom if you don't get it out.

What to do with swarm of bees

Contact the [BBKA](#) – the British Beekeepers Association. Your local division will have a swarm list and be able to send someone who can help move the swarm safely.

If you live near Epping Forest you will be able to buy Claire and Ian's delicious honey from local delis. If not, they strongly recommend you buy local honey and support local beekeepers. To learn more about bees, their Instagram account, [@eppinggoodhoney](#) is a wealth of knowledge and inspiration.

- Find out more about [how to create a bee-friendly haven](#) in your outdoor space.
- Listen to Sarah and Arthur's talk about what they do to help protect our bees in our podcast episode: [celebrating world bee day](#)
- Hear biologist Dave Goulson talk to Sarah about how we can [help save our insect populations](#)