

## **Drifting and dangers of drifting bees and how to avoid: Yvonne Green 2020**

Honeybee drifting is common when hives are close together. Often unintentional and usually caused by a prevailing wind.

Guardbees check chemical cues and genetic factors/ comb wax smell of drifting newcomers and if profile matches or nearly matches they let them in.  
Around 30% of drifters are generally allowed in.

In times of sufficient resources, nectar etc more drifters are let in, in times of scarcity they are often rejected or killed.  
Combs with no stored honey may make guard bees more aggressive.

Hives in a line with a prevailing wind can result in the furthest downwind hive having more bees and stores. The wind blows the bees down to the last hive.

Dangers : Spreads disease and parasites.  
Variations in colony strength  
Reinfecting of clean hives.  
Returning mated queens can return to the incorrect hive/nuc

Management: Paint hives different colours. Bees prefer light colours not dark.  
Avoid straight lines and choose circles  
Have hives with entrances facing different directions  
Ensure distinctive landmarks are present such as shrubs, plants, hedges and trees.