Plant common name: **Apple**

Latin name: *Malus pumila*

Scientific family name: **Roseaceae**

Common family name: Rose

Plant height: cultivated trees usually kept short but can grow to around 20 feet if left alone.

Flowering period: varies around the country, and with seasons too so, April – May. Mid-May in Nairnshire.

Provides: nectar and pollen. The latter is an excellent source for honey bees with an above average crude pollen of 25%.

Utilised by: honey bees, bumble bees and solitary bees such as the red mason bee

**Honey**: yes, but probably of more use to rapidly growing colonies than to beekeepers in Scotland. Honey harvested in the warmer climes of England. The trees are only in flower for around 2 weeks. The honey is light amber with good flavour and density but it can vary with locality and season and some honey is dark.

**Apple**

Summer is nearly upon us when I see apple flowering mid- May in my garden. The flowers are open and bowl shaped so the nectar may easily be diluted and washed out in heavy rain. Honey bees tend to work for pollen in the mornings when the nectar may have been diluted by dew, and then nectar later in the day when nectar is more concentrated.

There are so many apple varieties and some have white petals and others pink to crimson tinged flowers. Like others in the family, the symmetrical flowers have 5 petals and 5 sepals.

The bees love visiting the rose family of fruits that includes: pear; cherry; quince; plum; and medlar but there are no rewards from mulberry and fig trees.

Because apple is last to flower the weather is usually warmer then and the flowers more productive nectar-wise when they do bloom. They are well visited by honey bees who are essential for pollination because apple trees need pollen from a tree of a different variety for the seeds to set. So cross pollination and genetic diversity is assured when bees are involved. Commercial apple growers will plant apple trees of a different variety in another nearby row to ensure that this happens.

**Pollen** under the microscope (x 600 magnification)

Colour: pale yellow

Shape: triangular

Size: medium 30-50 µm, this grain 36 µm

Exine features: thin with no rods

Surface: smooth

Numbers of furrows 3

Number of apertures: 3

Other features: none noted