

# Beelines

*Newsletter of The Beekeepers Club Inc. Est 1998.*

**May 2016.**

Mission statement:

*To enhance the learning and better practices  
of the art of beekeeping within our community.*



Flow hive frames.

*Meeting venue; Senior Citizens Club. 895-901 Doncaster Road Doncaster  
East. Melway 47k-1. Opposite Dan Murphy's.*

*Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month 7.00pm for 7.30pm.*

*Guests and Visitors are Welcome*

*Enquiries and information:*

*[editor@beekeepers.org.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.org.au)*

## Next Meeting.

19<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

7.30pm. Beginners Corner

8.15pm Bee Pests and Diseases.

Presentation by Joe Riordan. Victorian Senior Apiary Inspector.

16<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Honey and Photographic competition.

21<sup>st</sup> July 2016

AGM

### Upcoming Events.

Making and using hive scales and electronic beekeeping.

Facilitator. Andrew Wootton. 20<sup>th</sup> August 2016 (date to be confirmed)

Venue. Community rooms Saxon Street Brunswick.

Microscopy workshop.

Studying and understanding pollen make up, bees and honey testing.

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016.

Venue. Community rooms Saxon St Brunswick.

Queen breeding.

Workshop and practical training on raising queens.

5-6<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

Venue. Community rooms Saxon St Brunswick.

Perth WA field trip

2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Keep an eye on the events page of club web site for registration and event details

## *Winter Jobs.*

Remove all supers not covered by bees, and /or those lacking honey stores.

Pack colonies down to reduce space and to allow good temperature and humidity control.

Check the food supply, there should be a minimum of six/eight full frames of honey in the hive for colony winter supply.

If necessary move the hive to a sunny position, to capture early morning winter sun, and to avoid facing the hive entrance towards prevailing winds. Remember if you move the hive then no more than a metre at a time, or alternatively move hive a minimum distance of 3 klms from existing location and then return to new winter location 2/3 weeks later.

Keep the hive and colony away from damp conditions, place on a stand to keep off wet ground if necessary.

Leave the colony undisturbed throughout winter. If you must open a hive during winter do it in the quickest minimum time and on a sunny day with little or no wind. Check hive weight during winter as a guide to food consumption by the lift test. Gauge weight when you close up and use as a guide during winter by lifting the rear of the hive every week or 10 days during winter, if it becomes too light then feed may be required.

If you have to feed use a sugar syrup, dry sugar or candy.

Repair and repaint hive equipment.

Fit new wax foundation to frames 2 to 3 years old and looking black.

Such simple instincts as bees making a beehive could be sufficient to overthrow my whole theory."

— Charles Darwin

## Screened bottom boards provide Varroa management option.

Beekeepers are being urged to consider the use of screened bottom boards, after a study revealed they had no impact on the productivity of the hive compared to conventional bottom boards.

The research has been conducted by the Honey Bee and Pollination R&D Program as part of efforts to prepare the industry for the Varroa mite, which is expected to devastate honey production and pollination efforts if it arrives in Australia, as it has in other countries around the world.

Screened bottom boards are considered an effective weapon in the management of Varroa and the project, run by Dr Doug Somerville from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, compared the two options in a variety of seasonal conditions and locations.



Spokesman for the R&D Program, James Kershaw, said many beekeepers have been concerned that screened bottom boards expose honey bee colonies to drafts and greater variation in hive temperature.

“The results of this research demonstrated no difference in the productivity of honey bee colonies. In fact, the screened bottom boards provide many advantages for beekeepers, not just in the management of Varroa,” Mr Kershaw said.

The bottom boards are a 3mm holed wire mesh. Where Varroa is present, they are often used in conjunction with sticky mats, stopping the blood sucking parasites getting back into the hive if they are dislodged and fall through the screen onto the ground.

“One of the main benefits right now for Australian beekeepers is the lack of build-up of debris on the floor of the hive with a screened bottom board. Excessive debris is an ideal haven for wax moth larvae and small hive beetles, which are major pests of bee hives.

“The ventilated bottom boards have shown no decrease in productivity from winter cooling, and they provide ventilation which can reduce humidity and mould within the hive.

"They also enable apiarists to lock the colony into the hive by using an entrance shutter. In an emergency, this allows for hive repositioning during the day, limits honey bee exposure to harmful chemicals and reduces the risk of the colony overheating in the hot Australian climate.

“To ensure Australia is prepared for a Varroa incursion it is important that beekeepers adapt to best practice and the research shows screened bottom boards can provide substantial gains in preparation for the mite’s arrival.

“The use of screened bottom boards alone will not control Varroa mites, but they can be a significant benefit in their management," Mr Kershaw said.

Acknowledgement for text to the RIRDC Canberra.

There are still a few outstanding accounts for the family day and courses. If you owe please see Yvonne at the next meeting and finalize.

## *Centre for Integrative Bee Research. CIBER*

*The opportunity to visit CIBER and have such an extended time with Professor Baer and his team is a one off chance to have direct contact with a world leading research scientist in honeybee research.*

They maintain two separate bee yards at the University of Western Australia, one on campus just a few meters away from their lab and a second one off campus. Bee yards are used to breed and maintain the animals that are needed for experiments. They also maintain experimental colonies, used for field experiments where they can study the response of colonies or individuals (for example queens) to an experimental stimulus. For example, they provide honeybee queens with seminal fluid - or components of it and quantify changes in queen physiology or behavior.

The honeybee lab is at the Centre for Evolutionary Biology, which is setup to accommodate experimental work. For example they have several artificial insemination machines, which are used to collect sperm and haemolymph samples; they also inseminate honeybee queens prior to field experiments, to study the effects of seminal and spermathecal fluid on sperm survival.

Currently CIBER is undertaking a large number of research programs which will be discussed at our visit.

CIBER was also involved in the making of the world acclaimed documentary "More than Honey" and maintains the official movie blog.

CIBER is a world leading research unit in the study of honeybees and the opportunity to visit this renowned establishment is a real opportunity to learn more about bees and increase our knowledge at a higher level than would otherwise be available to us.

For those who want to take their knowledge of the honeybee to the next level this should prove to be a most satisfying field trip.

## Perth Field Trip.

Planning is well advanced and I can now outline the proposed itinerary.

Leave Melbourne QANTAS 8.35am Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Saturday on arrival at Perth, check into hotel and then travel in the afternoon to SaxonBee Enterprises at Gidgegannup, approx. 45km from Perth. SaxonBee is Australia's largest supplier of Australian bee pollen, return to hotel, no formal activity Saturday night.

Sunday visit to 2 large commercial beekeeping and packing operations bus tour through points of interest in and around Perth on the way.

Sunday night, dinner and social night with WA Bee Council representatives. (note this may be changed to the Saturday)

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July. Morning to early afternoon at CIBER Uni of WA. Lectures and presentations on the various bee research projects currently being undertaken by Professor Baer and his team. Inspection of the CIBER facility.

Tour of Perth highlights on way to airport for 5.00pm departure arriving Melbourne 8.30PM.

The cost is proposed at \$ 695.00 per person, including airfares, hotel accommodation, breakfasts and bus travel.

There will be a surcharge for single rooms but at the time of publication I cannot confirm that cost, but most likely \$90 per room per night, \$ 180 for the trip.

Booking details are now on the club website; go to events page to register your intention to travel. Limited to 50 guests only.

## Juniors Club.

We have now secured premises for our proposed Junior Beekeepers Club, and expect the first session will be under way in July.

The location is the Community Building and Gardens, Saxon St Brunswick, where we have already placed training hives.

So if you have a child or grandchildren 14 – 17 and want them to follow in your footsteps then take the opportunity and enrol them in this club. The syllabus will give an excellent introduction into beekeeping.

Modules will include:

Biology of the Bee	Natural history of the bee
Pests and Diseases	Manipulation of the hive
Robbing and extraction.	Correct use of equipment
Constructing and maintaining hive components.	
Modules in microscopy and biology.	

The course will involve presentations by visiting bee experts, hands on hive work and woodworking and frame embedding.

Meetings will be held 2nd Saturday of each month (12 per year) 9.30am – 12.00.noon  
Annual club cost is \$ 40.00 per student.

Protective clothing will be supplied.

From July we will require 5 or 6 members to volunteer to roster for bi monthly services at the Junior beekeepers club. Dependent upon final enrolment numbers we will need at least 1 person to assist our course facilitator at each meeting, and occasionally step in to take the course.

For further details contact Don Muir [editor@beekeepers.org.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.org.au)  
ph. 0404 38 1942



## Flow course.

The club held the second of two Fundamentals of Beekeeping Courses for purchasers of the Australian invented Flow Hive on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May.

The 2 day course was held at the Saxon St Community Centre Brunswick and was attended by 60 participants, mostly new to beekeeping, so it was a great opportunity to introduce beginners to beekeeping and provide the basic information to ensure responsible beekeeping.

The course held over Saturday and Sunday consisted of modules covering

- A history of beekeeping over the last 9000 years
- Inside the hive, the organization of a bee colony
- Types of hive structures.
- Hands on hive opening, including lighting a smoker
- Apiary code of practice
- Biology of *Apis mellifera*, and diseases and pests of honeybees.
- Swarming and prevention
- Preparing for winter.

On the Sunday, Stuart Anderson, co-inventor of the Flow Hive took the afternoon session and explained the background and process in the invention cycle of the flow hive.



Stuart Anderson co-inventor of Flow Hive. Presented on the Sunday afternoon.

Sessions then followed with Stuart on the assembly, use and maintenance of the flow hive.

This was the second of the 2 day courses, so a total of some 120 participants have attended, and has proved beneficial to the club not only financially but also and importantly by the number of participants who on taking the course have now joined the club.

From these courses we have also gained considerable experience in mounting extended training sessions and from the very positive feedback, we are confident that all our club members will benefit through the improvement in both presentation and course material we now have access to.



Practical modules in frame making and embedding were taken by Helmut.



The venue presented good seating and acoustics which contributed to the overall comfort of participants.

The club has now built an extensive PowerPoint teaching library.





Stuart demonstrates the flow hive frame separation process.



## Our Honey is Good.

Preliminary results from a massive five-year research project show that some types of Australian honey promise to be every bit as good as New Zealand's manuka honey, when it comes to fighting bacteria.

Scientists involved in the study are calling on beekeepers from every corner of the country to continue providing honey samples from bees visiting *Leptospermum* plants, and they have launched a website to provide regular updates.

The research is being led by the institute at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). It is funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Capilano Honey Ltd and Comvita Ltd under the Honey Bee & Pollination R&D Program, which is jointly funded by RIRDC and Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited.

Beekeeper and spokesman for the Program, James Kershaw, said it's important that beekeepers don't assume their honey's not wanted.

"We've heard that some people think the *Leptospermum* in their area doesn't have the right qualities – but the team collecting the samples wants to be the judge of that!" Mr Kershaw said.

"If someone has access to *Leptospermum* honey, they're encouraged to send in 200-500g, some information about the collection location, and plant samples.

"From there, researchers can identify the different properties in different species and establish what's good in particular areas."

The new website (<https://ozhoneyproject.wordpress.com>) provides background and updates on the project, tracks results, and outlines how beekeepers can get involved by sending in samples or hosting researchers doing fieldwork.

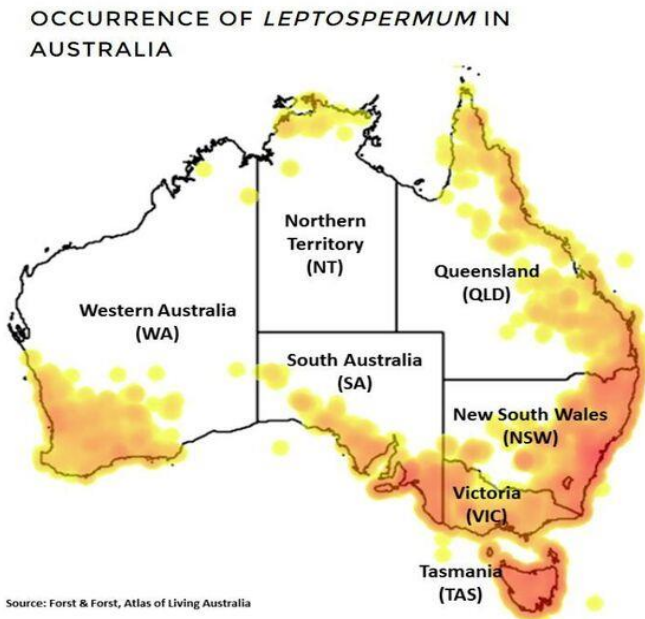
With increasing microbial resistance to antibiotics world-wide, including the so called 'last-line' drugs, greater focus is now being given to the antimicrobial

qualities of *Leptospermum* honey, and honey dressings are increasingly being used in hospitals and clinics to treat wound infections.

There is concern that New Zealand manuka honey production will be insufficient to meet global demand and great opportunities exist for the Australian honey industry to capitalise on the growing market for medicinal honey.

Beekeepers with access to *Leptospermum* honeys are encouraged to visit <https://ozhoneyproject.wordpress.com> for more information on the project and how to get involved, including submitting samples.

For more information about the Program, go to [www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybee-pollination](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybee-pollination)



*Acknowledgement to The Honey Bee and Pollination program, Horticultural Innovation Australia, and Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation for text and content.*

## Common hive types.



Top Bar : Popular for backyard beekeepers due to its simplicity, ease of access, no heavy lifting, and few accessories required. Costs range from very cheap (building your own) to high-end.



Warre : Invented by Abbe Emile Warre. The colony is generally enlarged by adding boxes beneath the existing boxes. This is called nading and is a method of providing space to the colony, particularly in early spring, without fear of chilling the brood or disturbing the cluster. Not compatible with other hive structures.



Langstroth. The most popular hive structure used in Australia and the world. It accounts for about 75% of all managed beehives. Can be either 10 or 8 frames. Invented by Reverend Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth in 1852. Is based on the “bee space” and has removable frames,

Note that the Victorian Livestock Disease Control Act 1994 – Section 123, states that a person must keep bees in a structure that has removable frames.

### Winter Flowers:

The below are bee friendly plants which can offer a winter food source for bees.

CINERARIAS, PRIMULAS, CAMELLIAS, IMPATIENS, NASTURTIIUMS  
FORGET ME KNOTS, NATIVE HIBISCUS, CARAMBOLA, PRIMROSES  
POLYANTHUS, SNOW DROPS and SALVIAS.

## Honey Competition.

The annual honey competition will be held during the June meeting.

Jars will be available at the May meeting.

When presenting honey for judging remember the following:-

- Fill jars to fill ring at start of the screw lid threads, do not overfill.
- Do not allow honey to get onto inside of lid.
- No wax or scum around top of honey
- Strain honey to remove all particles
- Try and reduce air bubbles

The judging criteria is based on .

- Colour
- Flavour
- Density
- Aroma
- Presentation.

*Disclaimer: Material and information published in any publication, training course, leaflet or web site of the Beekeepers Club Inc, is produced for general information only. Although published in good faith, the Club and/or any officer of the club will not be liable for any loss suffered by any person for action taken on the basis of such information.*