

BEELINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC

SEPTEMBER 2017



2017 Photo Competition 3rd Prize (Equal) Amanda Lamont

UPCOMING EVENTS

BEGINNERS COURSE

FUNDAMENTALS OF BEEKEEPING

Session 1: 6th September 7:30 pm

Session 2: 13th September 7:30 pm

Session 3: 20th September 7:30 pm

Session 4: Date TBC, Practical-hands on at club apiary.

Heidelberg Lower Hall, St Johns Anglican Church,
1 Burgundy St, Heidelberg

JUNIOR BEEKEEPERS CLUB

16th September. 10.00am. 33 Saxon St, Brunswick.

CLUB MEETING

RAISING QUEENS

21st September. 7.00pm Doncaster Secondary
College, 123 Church Rd, Doncaster.

BENDIGO BRANCH V.A.A. 38TH ANNUAL BEEKEEPING FIELD DAY

Sunday 8th October 2017. 9.30 am-3.00 pm
Harcourt Leisure Centre, 63 Bingham's Rd,
Harcourt.

COMMITTEE FOR 2017 - 2018

Executive

President	Mat Lumalasi
Vice President	Helmut Huber
Secretary	Amanda Lamont
Treasurer	Stuart Stone
Training & Education	Andrew Wootton

Committee

Alan Walton
Lyndon Joss
John Treloar
Dan Milic

Ex Officio

Beelines Editor	Don Muir
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LIVING SCIENCE WEEK AT QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET



The AAA+ team. From left Graham, Don, Gamble and Ingrid.

TRICKY QUESTIONS... INGRID GALITIS

I spent an enjoyable two hours or so in the intermittent winter sunshine supporting The Beekeepers' Club stand for the "Living Science at the [Queen Victoria] Market" event that had been sponsored by CSIRO. However, as a relative newcomer to beekeeping, I confess to some prior trepidation fearing difficult questions beyond the realm of my expertise but I wanted to be involved and I figured that our resident experts would be on hand to answer the more tricky and technical aspects.



Andrew, passing on some of his knowledge and as usual holding his audience in his hands.

Intrigued adults enquired about the three castes of bees or honey flavours or types of hives or just how to go about becoming a bee keeper. Okay, I could deal with those questions.

One chap asked about drone activity in the hive and was horrified to learn that after his indolent life and sky high bit of fun, the drone's endophallus is ripped out of his body and he quickly dies. Others wanted to know about the benefits of New Zealand Manuka honey. This was an 'Oh dear!' moment and a tricky one beyond my limited knowledge (and wouldn't you know it, our experts were in deep discussion with other visitors), but I was able to say that research is currently being conducted in Australia; that some Australian leptospermum honeys also have antibacterial properties; that they vary in colour compared to the dark thick NZ Manuka honey and that most honeys have some degree of hydrogen peroxide activity due to the enzymes that bees add. That response appeared to satisfy.



Mark keeping guard over our new observation hive

Those with children hovered in the background whilst their kids eagerly studied the bees' activities behind the glass of the observation hive. Much to my relief, questions asked were relatively straightforward. What are they doing? Why? What is that? (larvae; capped cells). Why has that one got its head in the cell? Why can't they go outside? "Which is the queen?" asked one little girl.

Well, I know that! The one with the pink dot of course and, see, she is a little longer than the other bees. But clearly, that response was not only inadequate, but entirely unsatisfactory. A little face turned up towards me, and I was asked, "Well, if she is the queen, why isn't she wearing a crown?"

Indeed! And I am absolutely certain that even our Club experts do not have the answer to that one.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The club held its AGM during the August Club Meeting. The meeting opened at 7.38pm with reports from the President, Secretary and Treasurer.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Don Muir

The achievements of the club over the last year included:

- Membership peaked at nearly 370 financial members.
- Finished the year in a very sound financial position
- Secured the new meeting venue on favourable terms and conditions, a recent survey conducted by the committee resulted in a 100% approval by members of the new venue.
- Implemented a public and products liability insurance scheme for members, with policy premium included in existing club membership fees.
- Agreed on and approved new Articles of Association held over 2 SGMs during the year.
- Secured a site for a dedicated club apiary with adjoining meeting room and storage facility
- Completed a number of successful bee keeping courses
- Initiated and commenced a site mentor program with over 130 members participation
- Further developed the syllabus for the Junior Beekeepers section
- Published a field note book and hive record book which was distributed free of charge to all members
- Conducted 2 field trips to WA and Whirrakee and Gells honey Maryborough.
- Purchased additional training aids
- Purchased additional equipment for members hire and use.

The outgoing President completed his report by welcoming and congratulating the new committee, and thanking the old committee for their dedication and cooperation over the last year highlighting how well the committee had worked together and also thanking all club members for their support of the committee as well as his opportunity to preside over the club.

SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT

Andrew Wootton

Membership is currently at 243 having peaked at 366 in May. It will be increased by members paying at the AGM.

Monthly meeting attendances were: Oct (96), Nov (95), Dec (58), Jan (101), Feb (111), Mar (83), Apr (70), May (69), June (42) and July (89). These are recorded using the barcode scanner and probably slightly under-represent the actual numbers attending.

Beginners' courses were held in Sept 2016 (27 registrants), Feb 2017 (27 registrants) and April 2017 (11 registrants). These courses are a significant source of membership recruitment. At a more advanced level, a Makers' Workshop was held Aug 2016 (10 registrants), a Queen Rearing Workshop in Nov 2016 (10 registrants) together with a Winter Workshop in July 2017 (27 registrants).

Total course attendances 112. There were 25 Steering (mentoring) visits held between January and April with 100 guests in addition to the 25 hosts and 25 mentors. The club published the Field Notebook (copy to each member) and sold 100 copies to the West Australian Apiarists Society and is in negotiation for further sales to the Ballarat Regional Beekeepers.

We produced a Promotional Postcard which has been distributed to various retail beekeeping outlets. Two leaflets "Thinking of taking up beekeeping" and "What sort of hive should I get?" have just been printed.

With the purchase of the observation hive, a pull-up banner and aprons with logos, we now have an outreach capability. This was utilised at the "Living Science at the Market" festival.

The West Australian Apiarists Society, the Victorian Apiarists Association and the Brisbane Amateur Beekeepers Society have all adopted the Wild Apricot membership software package on advice from us. One objective for us will be to increase our use of the forums to provide social-media-style advice and interactivity.

TREASURERS ANNUAL REPORT

Demi Lagos

This detailed the very sound financial position of the club, outlining all areas of income and expenditure. Due to club confidentiality, the full report has not been published in this newsletter.....(Editor).

All reports were proposed, seconded and unanimously approved by all members.

AGM MINUTES AND ELECTION

Minutes of last year's AGM and minutes of the two SGM.s held were all proposed, seconded and accepted by members without discussion.

In accordance with our Articles of Association all committee positions were declared vacant, The Chairman announced the club had a single nomination for each position and under the new articles of association no further nominations would be called for. The nominations were read out and those nominations were duly elected as the executive and committee for the coming year.

The outgoing Chairman handed the meeting over to Mat Lumalasi the incoming President.

The new President thanked the outgoing President and committee and then conducted the only business item on notice, to establish the annual subscription for 2018 -2019.

PROPOSAL

"That the members adopt the recommendation of the Club Committee to set the 2018-9 annual subscription fee at \$70 for individual members, \$100 for family membership and \$50 for junior membership if paid before 31st August 2018 and \$75, \$105 and \$55 respectively after this. The subscription is prorated monthly after 31st December. The subscription includes the members' insurance cover and a honey test fee which will be paid by the Club".

The proposal was accepted unanimously by the members.

No further business was discussed and the AGM formal meeting was closed at 7.58pm.

THE AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY BIOSECURITY CODE OF PRACTICE

As I detailed at the last meeting the "code" has been legislated in Victoria and all beekeepers must observe the code and abide by all the sections that apply. As a beekeeper you are now required to:

- ✓ Register with the Department
- ✓ You must supply an accurate count of your hives
- ✓ Display your registration number on the side of every box
- ✓ Notify the Department or pests hotline of any identification or suspicion of specified endemic pests or disease
- ✓ Maintain strong hives to stop robbing
- ✓ All hives must have easily and fully removable frames
- ✓ Carry out at least 2 full inspections of brood boxes (4 months apart)
- ✓ Sugar shake , or alcohol wash or drone uncapping at least twice per year for arthropod pests such as Varroa
- ✓ Maintain accurate hive records
- ✓ Ensure your bees have sufficient supply of water.
- ✓ Annual AFB culture test.

The above is not a full list and I advise all to study the code and apply its requirements. Hard copies of the code are available at the door at the club meeting.

SMOKER FUEL.

I find that the paper bark from our native trees can be shredded through the motor mower (and catcher) into smaller pieces instead of unravelling the bark itself .In a short time you can have enough to last forever. I do use a protective breather mask as there is some dust and I am naturally wary of dust.

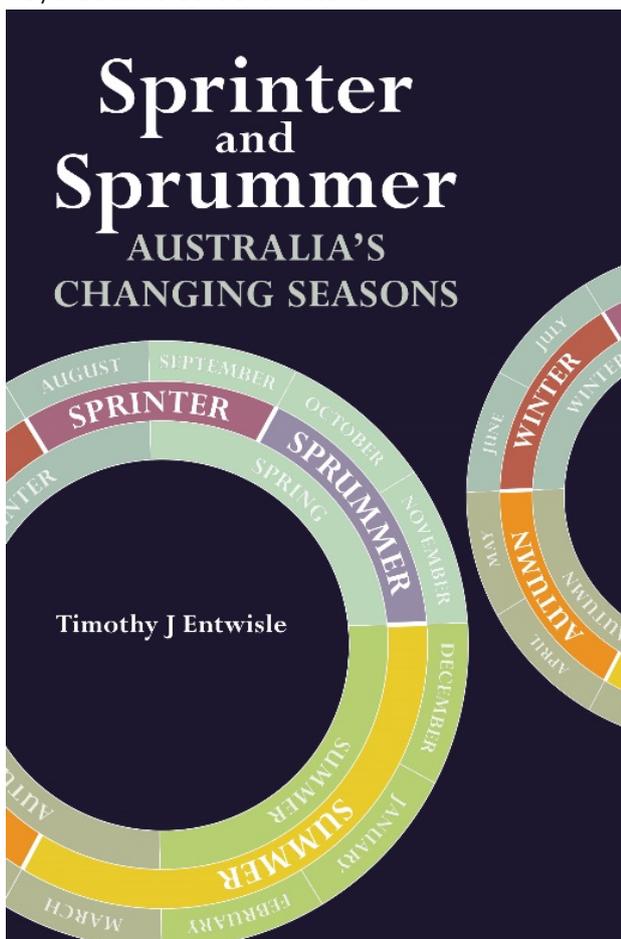
Yes, we sometimes do strange things!

Keith Piper

FIVE SEASONS IN A DAY?

Andrew Wootton

Melbourne, notorious for its fickle weather, is often derided for having four seasons in a day. Perhaps this needs updating? I've recently been reading "Sprinter and Sprummer" by Professor Tim Entwisle, Director and Chief Executive of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.



In this, he makes a compelling case for Melbourne and Sydney abandoning the traditional four seasons and instead using five. This is based on what is actually going on in the botanical world, rather than a calendar imported from European antecedents.

In August and September, blooming starts and the wattles are a blaze of colour – it's clearly not still winte: Sprinter.

October and November bring changeable weather and a second peak in flowering: Sprummer.

December to March (a four month period) are high summer, it's unarguably summer (and hot!).

April and May are the true autumn months with leaves turning brown and fungi fruiting.

Winter is June and July with most plants dormant.

What about the bees? Obviously their biology is governed by what is going on in the plant world. And this 5 season concept matches their behaviour much better than does the traditional 4 season model.

Colony build up requires pollen and nectar – newly available in August, so the trigger for egg laying needs to precede this. Brood rearing continues throughout August, delivering a healthy population of adult bees for September.

Swarming season follows. We see the first swarms in September and this reproductive drive continues through Sprummer until December.

As summer sets in, the bees' attention turns to survival and the need for winter stores. The focus switches from growing bees to stockpiling provisions. Swarming season is over. But these hard won resources need to be defended against predators – sting those intruders!

Autumn brings the signal to shut down brood rearing. A small cluster during winter will use less stores. The queen (largely) stops laying and the brood nest contracts.

After June 21st the days begin to lengthen. This is the signal for the queen to start laying eggs and the colony to start rebuilding its population. The cycle begins again.

As beekeepers we respond to these seasons. Sprinter and Spummer are swarming season and require us to manage our colonies for control. Summer brings our major honey gathering and the possibility of harvest. Autumn is the signal to pack down and ensure adequate winter stores. Winter is for leaving well alone (and for your European holiday).

SWARMS

There is now a simple form on the website to collect data about swarms. If everyone records the swarms they collect, we can share useful data about when the season starts and finishes. We only need postcode, size and date, so it only takes a minute to post.

NEW CLUB APIARY SITE HEIDELBERG



Overlooking the St Johns Parish Community Gardens, 1 Burgundy St, Heidelberg. The apiary subcommittee consists of Andrew Wootton, Mat Lumalasi and Stuart Stone. An official launch in conjunction with the community gardeners is being planned, likely to be on Sunday 15th October. More details when available.

NUC NANNY PROGRAM

To assist our many new beekeepers in getting started we are launching a new program. The concept is that we purchase queens from a commercial supplier on your behalf and then supervise you setting up a nucleus hive at the club apiary, using frames of brood from the club hives. Then over the next weeks we will assist with inspections, monitoring release and laying. The program will extend over a month requiring weekly weekend apiary visits. On completion you will take the nuc home to install in your own hive. The cost will be \$120 and we hope to start early in October. Please contact Andrew Wootton if interested (training@beekeepers.org.au). This idea has unashamedly been lifted from the CCF, thanks Barry!

NB: Strictly limited availability due to resources constraints.

NEW MEMBERS: AUGUST

Welcome to: Federico Arellano, Jackie Boode, John Boode, Ovi Constantin, Kathryn Goldsmith, Corrie Heslop, Dimitri Konstantopoulos, Len mcKeown, Lillian Murphy, Hon Len Ng, Sandra O'Grady, Vincent O'Grady, Florian Poppe, James Riches, Hong Tee, Jimena Valencia, Sarah Whitehouse

QUEEN RAISING COURSE

Last year we ran an advanced training course in November. We are considering a repeat, please contact me if interested so we can gauge demand training@beekeepers.org.au.

LEMON BALM

Also known as Balm, Melissa, Balm Mint, Blue Balm, Garden Balm, and Sweet Balm, from the family Lamiaceae.

This ancient herb was dedicated to the goddess Diana, and used medicinally by the Greeks some 2000 years ago. The generic name, *Melissa*, comes from the Greek word for bee and the Greek belief that if you put sprigs of balm in an empty hive it would attract a swarm; equally, if planted near bees in residence in a hive they would never go away. This belief was still prevalent in medieval times when sugar was an extremely expensive luxury and honey a more common sweetener.

POSITION VACANT

A vacancy is available as editor of Beelines. If you are interested in contributing to the club through the newsletter, then contact Don Muir for a rundown of the role.

A publications sub-committee will assist and support production of the newsletter.

While on the subject of Beelines - all members are invited to contribute an article at any time on their beekeeping exploits, Flow hive experience or any matter of general members' interest. Copy should be received by the 3rd of the month for publication. Email word documents to editor@beekeepers.org.au.

Don Muir 0404 38 1942

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