

BEELINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC

FEBRUARY 2019



Upcoming Events (see [website](#) for full details and registration)

Club Monthly Meeting

21st February 2019, 7:00 PM

Doncaster Secondary College

123 Church Rd, Doncaster 3108

Dr Kale Sniderman,

School of Earth Sciences

University of Melbourne

Verifying the origin of Australian honeys by analysis of their pollen content.

Banyule Kids ArtyFarty Festival

March 17th 11 AM - 4 PM

Sills Bend - Warringal Parklands

Beverley Rd, Heidelberg 3084

The community garden will again have a booth at the festival and will have the club's observation hive on display. We are looking for club members that can be rostered on for

an hour or so. If you can assist, please email: secretary@beekeepers.org.au

Club Apiary Hive Inspection & BBQ

11 AM, Saturday 23rd Feb 2019

A routine hive inspection followed by a bbq will be held at the club apiary for any new or interested members. Bee suits and gloves will be available to borrow.

Please register (free) on the web site to help with catering.

Note: You need to be logged in to see the event.

Intermediate Course—Improving your beekeeping

The March 16th course has sold out. Another to be announced shortly.

President's Report

It's been a busy few months for the committee with lots of news to report.

Firstly, insurance. It came to our attention that the policy held with AON insurance was not what we were initially told it was. It didn't cover some of the specific things we thought it did and we went in search of a new policy.

There has been some delay in reporting on this as we were waiting on some brokers getting back to us with something suitable as a replacement and now we are happy to announce that we have a very decent policy, covering all of the things we had always assumed plus more. We have full cover for swarm collections, even where money is exchanging for the service, liability and indemnity protection during transportation of bees and even cover for sales of honey, as long as it is not your primary income.

We were very happy with the policy and implemented it immediately to ensure you are all covered. We will be sending out a new certificate of currency in the next few weeks.

Secondly, a new meeting venue.

Yes, we are moving!

It's always a tricky process to pick up everything and move to a new venue, but it is something we have been investigating for around 6 months now.

Our new home is in North Blackburn, within 2 minutes of the Eastern freeway, in a freshly renovated facility.

The new space allows for breakout rooms when needed as well as lending itself to a more social format. Our first meeting at the new venue is planned for **March 2019**. We will be delivering this news in all formats over the next month to ensure we inform all members. (see announcement in this newsletter.)

Next up, the honey competition.

Last month we started handing out jars for the annual honey competition. This year we've brought it forward to April when it is more likely you will have honey that hasn't crystal-

lised. We will have jars available at the next two meetings for anyone that missed out and the April meeting will be the competition night.

We have our intermediate course coming up in March. This is the course that takes what you have learned in the beginners course and expands it to practical skills with many activities and loads of opportunity to ask all the technical questions that you have been thinking about. See our website for more details as we may be offering a second Intermediate course as a result of demand.

See you at the February meeting.

Mat Lumalasi

President, Beekeepers Club Inc.

We Are Moving!

The Beekeepers Club Inc is relocating to a new meeting venue **as of MARCH 2019**.

The committee has found a more suitable venue within a short distance from our current meeting venue.

The new venue has lots of great facilities with the ability for multiple rooms for breakout sessions, ample car parking, disabled access as well as an lounge area to relax and socialise.

The new venue is:

**NewHope,
3 Springfield Rd,
Blackburn North VIC 3130**

(On the corner of Middleborough and Springfield Rd, enter from Springfield Rd)

We will be having our last meeting at Doncaster Secondary Collage on February 21st and will be meeting at the new venue from March onwards.



2019 Victorian Clubs Conference



The Conference Steering Committee is pleased to announce that the 2019 Victorian Clubs Conference tickets are now available to purchase.

We have been working hard to get everything organised in the background so that we could make this happen on 14th of February because of St Valentine being the patron saint of beekeepers.

It's going to be a bumper Conference offering keynote speakers in plenary sessions, as well as three parallel beekeeping streams. At this stage we are looking to confirm up to 20 wonderful speakers.

There is an early bird price available until the 15th of March, please make use of this opportunity.

See: <https://vicbeeclubs.com.au>

Welcome Club Newbees

We extend a warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined the club:

Mark Dowling	Mordialloc
Mike Hall	
Alex Chen	Glenroy
William Stapelfeldt	North Blackburn
Lynn Fields	Hampton Park
Roger & Nicole Geerts	Templestowe

Annual Honey Competition – April 2019

Get your best honey ready!

Categories:

- Light Honey
- Medium Honey
- Dark Honey
- Creamed Honey
- Honeycomb
- Wax Candles / Sculptures
- Mead / liqueurs
- Honey cakes, biscuits, slices
- Bee/Beekeeping related photos



Keep in mind:

Jars for the competition are available from the member sign in desk at the February & March meetings. Jars which have not been provided by the club will not be accepted.

Capped honey frames should be in a suitable stand or container.

Photos (digital submission) to be emailed to secretary@beekeepers.org.au by April 8th, 2019 or alternatively bring your printed photo entry to the April meeting ensuring sizing is (15 x10 cm).

Entries for honey cakes, biscuits, slices to be brought to the April meeting.

Terms and conditions of entry:

Non-professional entries only for honey cakes, biscuits and slices.

By submitting photos, entrants agree that these may be used in the club newsletter or other material. published by the club.

Photos may also be taken of other exhibits and used in club material.

Entries will be stored by the club in a safe and secured area and returned at the end of the April meeting.

In the Hive

Mat Lumalasi

It is looking like there are some very contrasting things happening in different places around Melbourne. Some microclimates are still without any flow for the season and seeing bees being fed to keep them alive, whilst other areas are continuing to boom with nectar.

The very warm weather generally sees the bees go into more of a self-preservation mode rather than foraging, where bees will shift their attention to water gathering and spend their time managing the temperature of the hive via evaporative cooling or creating a physical barrier to prevent the sunlight heating up the hive. This is the main reason that the Apiary Code of Practice require beekeepers to have a *reliable* water source available on the property as this prevents them from finding your neighbours pond or pool (which are generally very reliable) and creating a nuisance for all. A few things to remember are that bees need something to land on and drink the water because they can't swim and secondly that the water should ideally not be placed in the immediate vicinity of the hives (~5 m) is the "clearing" area for the bees when leaving the hive and they will try to avoid collecting anything from their toilet, understandably.



We have also seen some slightly less tolerable behaviour from the bees when inspecting and more so, harvesting. Our observations for this, nectar flow, or lack of to be more specific. It is looking like we are between flows in



most places and when inspecting the hives, we have a few things going on. The bees are waiting for scouts to come back with good news of a new food source to start working and until this happens, there are many more bees bored inside the hive waiting for something to gain their attention, you. Also we have a situation where they have foraged and stored some good quantities of food to get them through the winter and we come along and claim this as ours and start harvesting. Without fresh nectar coming in as both a distraction and backup, the bees can easily become very defensive about their stores.



So if it's not weather (low pressure fronts), not specific nectar and not a typically intolerant hive that acts more defensively than normal, consider that it may be that they don't want you taking their hard earned food and be sure that if you do, there is more coming soon to replenish the stores before Winter.

Workshop to Support Bee Biosecurity Officers in Beekeeping Clubs

Nicole Owens



On 3rd February, John Treloar and I attended this workshop along with 2 members from most bee clubs in Victoria.

Daniel Martin, Nikki Jones and Jessica Millar (our Apiary and Bee Biosecurity Officers from Agriculture Victoria) ran excellent sessions on the importance of Bee Biosecurity awareness, and the importance of relaying this information back to our club members. Barry Cooper (Program leader) and Danielle Lloyd-Prichard (Education Officer Honey Bees, Total Agricultural College NSW) also presented.



Sugar Shake Surveillance Program

Would you like to be involved in the varroa mite surveillance team?

Join over 400 volunteers around Victoria and perform the sugar shake test when request-

ed, 3 times per year. All instructions are printed on the shaker, and a handy cup is included to scoop up the required number of bees for the test.

Email:

honeybee.biosecurity@ecodev.vic.gov.au or ring Nikki, 0428 617 071, if you're interested. We encourage our members to be involved in the program. The more beekeepers involved in biosecurity, the better chances are that we can protect our bees, hives and the social and economic impact on our community.



A couple of interesting facts to come out of conversations:

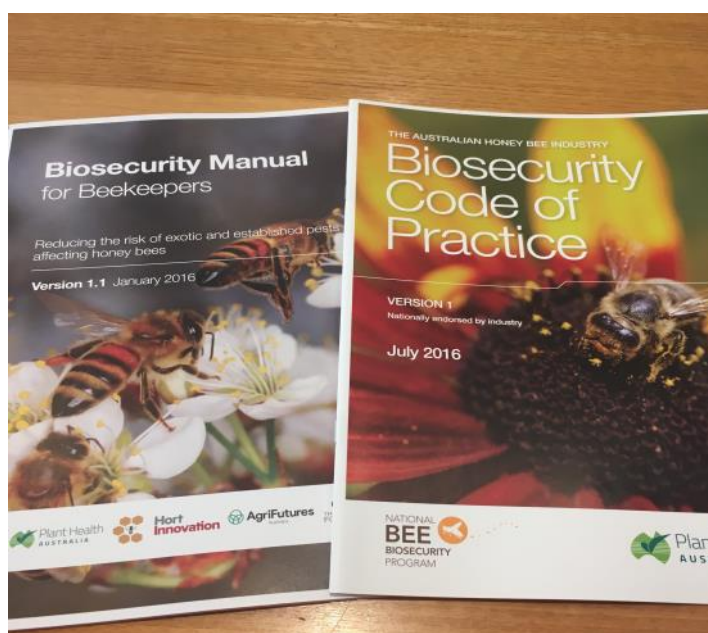
- Honey in the hive works as a thermal insulator, so it's best not to harvest honey if there's very hot weather coming.
- Ant problems? Ants are more active in the heat (although on that 40+ degree day, I didn't see any around my hive) Don't use AntRid, bees are attracted to the sweet liquid. Think carefully before using ant sand or spraying the ants. The ants may carry this into the hive, and it will kill your bees.
- Start your colony with clean, new equipment. If you are using going to use second hand equipment, have it treated before you add your colony of bees. American foulbrood spores can be viable for 50 years in untreated equipment.

Biosecurity is everybody's responsibility!

Our club aims to ensure all our members follow the Biosecurity Code of Practice, and adhere to the Apiary Code of Practice. We have added a copy of these two publications to our library for borrowing. These publications can also be downloaded via these links.

<http://beeaware.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Australian-Honey-Bee-Industry-Biosecurity-Code-of-Practice.pdf>

<http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Biosecurity-Manual-for-Beekeepers.pdf>



Please take the time to read these. It is very important to understand your obligations as a beekeeper.

The next steps

Our club averages about 10 new members each month; many are new beekeepers. We will be introducing a "Back to Basics" tips for beekeepers. Keep an eye out for these segments in our monthly newsletter, our monthly meetings and our Facebook page (search The Beekeepers Club Inc)

Grant submissions

As part of supporting biosecurity education, we are hoping to apply for some community grants to assist with funding programs for our members. I will be attending a "how to apply for grants workshop" just after this newsletter is published. If you have experience in grant

applications and would be able to offer advice and assist in this process, it would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact me,
nicoleinmelbourne@outlook.com

Back to Basics

Beekeepers must be registered in Victoria!

It is essential that there is an up to date register of beekeepers and their contact details, so they can be notified quickly in the event of an emergency disease or natural disaster. (Part B: 1, Page 7. Biosecurity Code of Practice, July 2016).

Registration is simple. There is no charge for online registration when a person keeps at least one hive but not more than 5 hives and registers online using the DEDJTR website. (There is a fee for postal submissions).

Click here for the registration information and online forms:

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/honey-bees/beekeeper-registration-and-hive-disposal>

Once registered, you will be given a certificate which includes your beekeeper's registration number, along with an expiry date (2 years).

Each hive must be clearly and legibly marked with the allocated hive identification code.

Registration is for a period of two years, after which it must be renewed. The department will routinely forward application forms to beekeepers before the end of the two-year registration period. Contact the Bees Registrar on 1800 356 761 if you don't receive a renewal of registration form.

WHAT TO DO NOW

Unregistered? Register now!

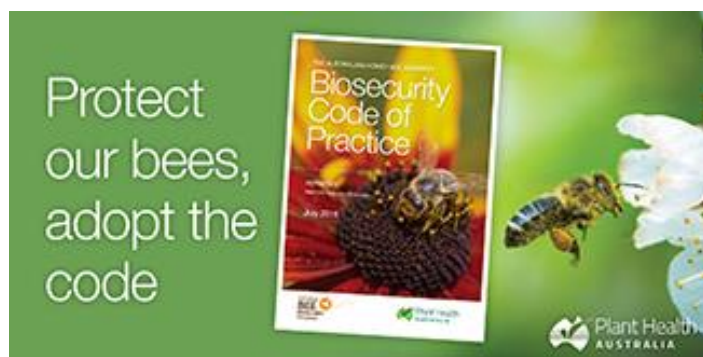
Registered? Check your certificate to ensure you are within your expiry date, and renew if needed.

NEXT??? 'Bee' an advocate.

If you are talking to a new beekeeper or promising beekeeper, ask if they are registered? Looking at someone's hive, and they

don't have a hive identification code labelled on their boxes?, ask if they are registered, and encourage them to do so.

It's up to all of us to maintain bee biosecurity and comply with the code of practice.



Foundationless Frames

John Treloar

In my second year of beekeeping I tried using foundationless frames with mixed results. This beekeeping season I decided to revisit them and share my experience.

Using starter strips has several advantages over using full sheets of foundation in new frames. It saves a lot of wax foundation, expense and the need to embed wires. If the frames are placed in the brood nest they don't split it up like full sheets of foundation do. If you do 'cut comb' honey, it doesn't have the thick sheet of wax foundation in the middle.

I fix a 2 cm wide strip of foundation into the top bar slot with wax to give bees a place to



build on. You can get about 10 frames from a single sheet of foundation. A pizza cutter is

great for cutting the strips. Some beekeepers don't even use wax – just a strip of wood (sometimes painted with beeswax) as a guide.

Bees can draw a frame of comb from a starter strip just as fast as they can from a sheet of foundation. They will do it if they need the comb and they are on a nectar flow (or being fed syrup).



The mistake I made years ago was putting the foundationless frames in the honey super. The bees needed space to store nectar and quickly. The comb they drew was very uneven and large (drone) comb. Okay for storing honey but not suitable to be reused in the brood box. Even this season when I put the foundationless frames in the brood box they occasionally drew a mix of worker and drone comb because they wanted more drones. This isn't an issue as the frame can either be used later in the honey super or the drone comb can be cut out and the frame drawn out again.

Another mistake that people make is putting all foundationless frames in a box. Without full frames as a guide, bees are more likely to draw irregular cross comb. I recommend alternating foundationless frames with either drawn comb or foundation so that they'll draw it straight.

Finally, some people are surprised that the bees will draw comb around the supporting wires, so frames look just like wire-embedded foundation. Occasionally they don't and you'll have an odd line in the comb but this can be ignored. Remember that you can't make bees do anything, you can only work with their instincts!

Flora – February 2019

Mat Lumalasi

Not too much to mention this month as it looks like we are a little in between flows.

I have had a report of Sugar Gum flowering in some of the suburbs, with other suburbs not yet flowering and the other one to mention is Grey Box showing signs of bud burst in some areas north of Melbourne.

Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*) is native to South Australia originally and has been utilised as a good wind break tree, firewood source and furniture wood tree across the southern states of Australia. It can sometimes be mistaken for the Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and has shown to be very termite resistant and tolerant of poor soil.



Grey Box (*Eucalyptus macrocarpa*) is endemic to all of Australia. It is a medium-sized tree to 25 m high, the trunk typically forming a Y-shape. The specific name *macrocarpa* comes from Greek *micros* meaning small, and *carpos* meaning fruit, referring to the small fruit.



Bee Swarms?

John Treloar

As a general rule, the main swarming period finishes around Christmas. Bees can swarm later in the season if they're overcrowded or being bothered by a pest, but not often. This season the majority of the reported swarms was before the end of November.

In recent weeks I have had a number of reported 'bee swarms'. Several of these have been bee colonies in compost bins - a common occurrence. Collecting these bees is a cut out, a whole different situation to collecting a swarm. Unlike a swarm, they have built comb, collected nectar, laid brood and orientated to their new hive.

In other instances the so-called 'bees' were darting in and out of a hole in the ground, had created a nest in a cardboard box in the garage and another had a suspended paper nest. Sure signs they were, in fact, wasps.



Before attending a swarm it is important to get some details:

- Name and address
- Contact number (in case they fly off before you get there)
- Size of the swarm
- Where the swarm is located (ladder required?)
- How long they have been there

Most people have mobile phones so I also like to have them send me a photo of the swarm. A picture can tell a thousand words.

If collecting a swarm or doing a cut out, people should be mindful of the risk of introducing pests and disease into their apiary. The new colony should be kept quarantined for 2 to 3 brood cycles to ensure it is healthy.

This can be on your existing property, just at some distance from your existing hive(s) to prevent drift. If the hive is weak, close down the entrance so the bees can more easily defend the hive so it won't get robbed.

Practice good hygiene when working between hives and don't transfer any hive components from the new hive. You also need to keep good records such as when and where the colony came from.



Bee



European Wasp



Asian paper Wasp



Paper Wasp

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