

BEELINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC

JUNE 2018



Photographic competition winning entry: Roland Gibbons

Upcoming Events (see website for full details and registration)

Club Monthly Meeting

21st June 2018, 7:00 PM
Doncaster Secondary College,
123 Church Rd, Doncaster 3108

July Monthly Meeting

19th July
Allergy to bee stings

August Monthly Meeting

16th August
AGM

Skep Making Course

7-8th July
Selling out soon...

Beginners Course

15th Sept
Good availability...

Nuc Nanny Course

13-27th Oct
Selling out soon...

Editorial

The Victorian Beekeeping Clubs Conference was an outstanding success (see report page 3) and it was great to see a strong contingent from our club attending. The Beekeepers Club has offered to organize the next conference in 2019 and our proposition has been favourably received. Watch this space.

Social Media

Over the last 3 years we have maintained a number of discussion forums on our website (mentoring, buy/sell/swap and FAQs) Although these webpages receive substantial traffic, it's not easy to assess their impact. Although it is possible for members to subscribe to email alerts and receive notification when new content is added, few have signed up. On the other hand, beekeeping sites on Facebook receive enormous numbers of posts. Would it help to move our interactive postings to this platform? It's easily done, and we can create a closed group to restrict postings to members only. So if Facebook is where you spend your browsing time, let me know.

Elections

As we approach the end of the subscription year, we will soon be seeking nominations for next year's committee positions. Please don't assume that it's a closed shop, a healthy organisation always needs new blood with fresh ideas. So give some thought to signing up and helping steer your club. Chat to a committee member at one of the next club meetings and see what's involved.

Andrew Wootton, Secretary

Mind your beeswax

Reports in the press ([Guardian](#) and [ABC](#)) indicate that wax prices are rocketing due to global shortages.

Of particular concern is the prospect of hipster men with unkempt beards. You have been warned — start processing or suffer the consequences!

In the News

A swarm of Asian bees (*Apis cerana*) was found in Darwin on May 13 after a local beekeeper was called out to catch a swarm. All bees, including the queen, were destroyed.



Apis cerana. By Vengolis [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons

Asian honey bees are a significant threat to Australian honey and pollination industries as they are the natural host of varroa mites and can carry other exotic pests and diseases.

No external mites (*Varroa* or *Tropilaelaps*) were present. Further examination for internal (Tracheal) mites and DNA identification was being carried out to see if they came from Far North Queensland or were a new incursion from overseas.

Hive sites available

Recently two requests have come in with offers to host a hive in their garden. Since I'm not sure if everyone is monitoring the website (see editorial) these are posted here too.

North Balwyn with heaps of native and flowering trees and bushes in the area.

Ashburton on a full size block with substantial areas of veggie patches, grass, fruit trees, perennials and shrubs along with some established ornamentals and other big trees.

Contact the [secretary](#) for further details.

Victorian Beekeeping Clubs Conference 2018

John Treloar

With 260 attendees, the sold-out inaugural Victorian Beekeeping Clubs Conference held in Ballarat last Saturday was a great success. Beekeeping continues to grow in popularity as reflected by the growth in the number and size of beekeeping clubs around the state. Victoria now has 7,600 registered beekeepers managing 116,000 hives.

Guest speakers included "beevangelist" Doug Purdie, Stuart Anderson (Flow Hive), Benedict Hughes (CERES) and our own Mat & Vanessa (Rooftop Honey).



Famous faces: Mat and Vanessa with Costas, Doug Purdie and Stuart Anderson at the Victorian Beekeeping Clubs Conference..



Doug Purdie

The keynote address was given by Professor Ben Oldroyd on his research into the importance of drone genetics in queen breeding. The number of drones a queen mates with also affects the size of the brood area, nest temperature control, disease resistance and honey production.

Total College honeybee educator Danielle Lloyd-Prichard spoke on training and DEDJTR on bee biosecurity. Conference facilitator Costa Georgiardis was entertaining as always.

Associate Professor Kymble Spriggs, specialist allergist & immunologist at the University of Melbourne discussed varying responses and treatment for stings. With desensitization therapy over 90% of people treated don't have a future severe reaction.



Requeening

Andrew Wootton

Recently some members have made enquiries about replacing queens. Although you're not going to be doing this until spring, it's good to plan.

Bees have been successfully managing this process for themselves for millennia. So why might you want to interfere?

Temperament

It is irresponsible to keep excessively defensive bees as well as unpleasant for you as the beekeeper. You certainly don't want bees that attack the neighbours when they mow their lawns. You really want bees that you can work without gloves and preferably in shirt-sleeves. It makes good sense to requeen a defensive hive, but you should apply a 3 strikes rule as any colony can act up occasionally. The usual triggers are mishandling (especially lack of appropriate smoke), weather (thunder) or a dearth in nectar flow. So give them a warning but then don't hesitate to make the decision.

Productivity

Occasionally you will get a hive that just doesn't flourish and performs poorly compared to others in the same location. Perhaps the queen was poorly mated. Although inbreeding is rare, hybrid vigour is real and desirable. Requeen.

Age

Young queens in their first year are much less likely to swarm than colonies headed by older ones. Some commercial beekeepers requeen annually as a matter of course.

Disease

With hives showing chalk brood or Nosema infection, requeening is advisable. Hygienic behaviour is genetically controlled and so swapping to a genetic profile that deals with disease is helpful.



First Obtain Your Queen

Make sure you have the replacement in your hand before proceeding. There are many potential pitfalls to queen production. Queen breeders have to contend with rogue virgin queens killing cells, poor weather delaying mating, postage delays etc and you don't want to be caught out.

Find and Remove the Old Queen

Easier said than done? But you can only introduce a queen to a queenless hive, otherwise you have no chance of success. However, there are some strategies to make this easier and a couple of more desperate manoeuvres you can adopt.

A first approach is to reduce the number of flying bees in the hive during the search. Move the hive back a few meters whilst replacing with an empty box. Wait a while, so the foragers will have returned to original site. Now you are dealing with fewer and less defensive bees.

Separate the boxes so the queen can't slip between them. I bring enough lids or boards for each box. Remove frames 1 and 8 so she won't escape on to the walls. Check the frames with open brood and eggs, she won't be on honey or sealed brood. If you have a spare box, you can transfer the frames to this as you inspect and then finally examine the hive walls.

In desperation you can shake all the bees through an excluder. Set it up over an empty brood box on the hive floor and with another empty brood box above. Duct tape around

the lip of this is helpful to discourage escape. As you shake the bees into the strainer, slip the now empty brood frames below so the bees are encouraged to go down. Use lots of smoke to encourage them further.

Finally, you can always make up a nuc (queenless of course¹) and introduce your new queen to this. This buys you plenty of time to make multiple queen finding attempts on the original colony. Eventually you will do a newspaper combine between the now queenless old colony and the new queenright nuc (see later for more details).

Should you wait for the colony to realise it is queenless? Although some authorities advise that you should wait 24h or even several days, I never have. If you leave it long enough, the bees will commence raising emergency queen cells and are more likely to prefer these to the introduced queen. I have always added the caged queen immediately.

Install the Cage

Queens are sent in mailing cages with a candy plug to facilitate slow release. If you need to wait a couple of days until you introduce, then a drop of water on the cage every day will ensure they don't dehydrate.

Remove any cap or cork that may be covering the queen candy and insert the cage between 2 brood frames. Many authors suggest placing the cage candy upwards to prevent a dead attendant bee from blocking the exit. However, if the candy becomes sticky and melts in the heat of the hive, it can dribble down and engulf the queen, so I always mount it sideways.

Wait a Week

The secret to success is not to look! Everyone agrees that the hive should be left undisturbed for at least a week. Don't be tempted to peek in to see if she has been released, this can disturb the bees and cause them to reject her.

Inspect and Confirm

After a week to 10 days, open up and check that the cage is empty. By now there will be

some eggs and you should be able to find your marked queen.

Variants

Nucleus and newspaper combine

Strong aggressive colonies are often reluctant to accept a queen. With a valuable new queen, it may be advisable first to get her laying. A small queenless nucleus colony will readily accept a queen. The queen can then be safely introduced into the strong hive using a newspaper combine. Wait until the young queen has been released from the shipping cage and has commenced laying a brood nest, then remove the old queen from the original hive and cover the brood box with a sheet of newspaper. Place another brood box on top and make several slits in the paper before adding the frames with the new queen and colony. Over the next couple of days, the colonies will happily unite.

Aggressive colony

This is probably the commonest reason for requeening and also the trickiest. Both because it's difficult to find the queen under sustained assault and due to them being less likely to accept a new queen. Here's a suggested method². People I have recommended it to have had mixed success – I don't know how closely they followed the recipe, but it certainly makes sense to me.

Move the entire hive back about 10m. Place a new hive with empty combs and foundation on the old stand. Add the caged queen and a feeder with syrup. Now wait for a day or even two. Then open the old hive and find the queen. As all the foragers will have returned to the original hive stand, there will only be young nurse bees to deal with. Shake all these bees in front of the original stand. Return the brood frames to other hives.

1. To be sure of this, you could add frames of brood (shaken free of bees) over a queen excluder and wait for the nurse bees to come up through to look after the brood.

2. Illingworth, L. (1940). A Safe and Simple Method of Requeening a Bad-Tempered Stock. *Bee World*, 21(1), 2-3.

2018 Annual Honey Competition Results

Photo Competition

Light Honey

Sue Zuber	1st
Kent Henderson	2nd
Mary Florian	3rd

Medium Honey

Ingrid Galitis	1st
Bec McBride	2nd
Ingrid Galitis	3rd

Dark Honey

Sue Zuber	1st
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Creamed Honey

Geoff Bryan	1st
Bec McBride	2nd

Comb Honey

Sue Zuber	1st
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Liqueurs / Meads

James Gibbon	1st
John Treloar	2nd
Bec McBride	3rd

Baked Section

Vyvian Hirons	1st
Maureen Koegel	2nd
Ingrid Galitis equal Jennifer McInnes	3rd

Photographs

Roland Gibbons	1st
Roland Gibbons	2nd
Kathryn Goldsmith	3rd



1st: Roland Gibbons



2nd: Roland Gibbons



3rd: Kathryn Goldsmith

In the news.....



Club member Damien Hoban made the news showing bees at his local kindergarten

KIDS LEFT BUZZING

THERE was a buzz in the air at Goodstart Early Learning Preston when children were treated to a visit from live bees for National Honey Month.

During May the children have been learning about bees, how they make honey and the role of beekeepers.

Reservoir beekeeper Damien Hoban said it was terrific to be able to show the children bees up close.

"They've been learning about them all month, so it was only fitting they got to go nose to glass with some bees," he said. Mr Hoban said the youngsters were fascinated with the insects and the sweetest moment of the day was getting to taste honey cut straight from the comb.



Jackson, 4, and Charlotte, nine months, with beekeeper Damien Hoban.
Picture: HAMISH BLAIR

Beechworth Field Trip

Saturday 16th June-Sunday 17th June.

It's a sellout, so sorry if you missed this exciting foraging trip. We visit Andrew Nicklaus' Apiary, Beechworth Honey Shop and Beekeeping Museum, the Walkabout Apiary and the Milawa Cheese and Mustard Factories. Lynton Briggs, renowned queen breeder will be guest dinner speaker.

The bus leaves from Doncaster Secondary College 123 Church Rd, Doncaster, 3108 at 8am sharp. Please ensure you are there in plenty of time. All day parking is available in the street (no weekend restrictions) and the school car park will also be open.

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