

# BEELINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC

## JUNE 2019



Samuel Davies in one of his club competition winning photos for 2019

## Office Bearers

<b>President</b>	Mat Lumalasi president@beekeepers.org.au
<b>Vice-President</b>	Helmet Huber vicepresident@beekeepers.org.au
<b>Secretary</b>	Vanessa Kwiatkowski secretary@beekeepers.org.au
<b>Treasurer</b>	Linda Ferguson treasurer@beekeepers.org.au
<b>Training Facilitator</b>	John Treloar training@beekeepers.org.au
<b>Beelines editor</b>	John Treloar editor@beekeepers.org.au

## Committee Members

Debbie Webber  
Nicole Owens  
Tony Penwill  
Corrie Heslop—Apiary manager

## Upcoming Events

(See [website](#) for full details and registration)

### Club Monthly Meeting

20th June 2019, 7:00 PM—9:30 PM

NewHope,  
3 Springfield Rd,  
Blackburn North VIC 3130  
(Cnr of Middleborough & Springfield Rd)

### Simon Mildren, HiveKeepers

Innovation in beekeeping – an Australian company looking at the technology gap in beekeeping.

### Frame Making Workshop

Saturday 13th July 2019, 1-4 PM  
Club room, St Johns, 1 Burgundy St,  
Heidelberg.

Learn how to assemble new frames and recycle old ones. Participants will take home 4 frames with foundation.

Tea/coffee and snacks provided.

BYO small hammer if possible.

Numbers limited to 12 members.

Cost: \$35

This event has sold out but there is sufficient interest to hold another.

### Introduction to Beekeeping Course

Day 1: 14th Sept 2019  
9:30 AM—4:30 PM, NewHope

Day 2: 21st Sept 2019, club apiary  
11 AM—12:30 PM

The training venue has changed to NewHope. Day 2 will be 1-2 hours practical hand-on in the hives at the club apiary.

Places are filling up fast!

## President's Report

With the AGM is just around the corner, it's time to ask if there are any members who are interested and willing to get involved with the running of your club. Committees are very interesting beasts and have been both challenging and extremely rewarding over the years, with our current committee being one of the latter. We have formed a highly efficient machine that is working really well together, evident in our committee meetings where important, logical decisions are being made with ease.

I believe that having a gender balanced committee has been pivotal to our success. Looking around at a club meeting it is easy to see a pretty even balance of members and having that represented in the committee is important and should continue.

As we continue to hone our committee skills, we now understand that we need more "profiled" positions in the club for its continued success. This opportunity can also be recognised as a gateway for new members to "test the waters" for getting more involved in the future.

We are currently looking to see positions of Apiary Officer, Newsletter Editor, Web manager, Membership Officer, Social Media Officer be filled by either committee or general members, so if you have any of the skills necessary and are looking to get more involved, speak to a committee member about how to take the next steps.

Another area we are looking for people to get involved with is supper. We envision a leader to manage a supper roster for the meeting nights and overseeing the smooth running of supper. We have some very talented cooks in our club and we should be encouraging them to share their wares with the members with homemade goods as well as the purchased supper. We allocate a monthly budget towards supper and welcome the idea of reimbursement towards members' food over pre-packaged food.



Our first winter apiary activity was successful with the first steps in customising the club room in Heidelberg in preparations for some winter workshops for members such as the frame making in July and possibly a bee wrap workshop in August.

Again, the committee welcomes ideas and feedback about what you, the members want from your club.

**Mat Lumalasi, President**

## Welcome Club Newbees

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

Andrew Stanish  
Ian Browne

Diamond Creek  
Hawthorn East

## Honey Test Reimbursement

From July 1st, 2019, the club will be subsidising the cost of one AFB honey test by \$35 for full members (not pro-rata) per membership year.

To claim it, please email a copy of the receipt to [treasurer@beekeepers.org.au](mailto:treasurer@beekeepers.org.au) along with details of the account you would like the money deposited into. Alternatively, contact the treasurer to make suitable arrangements.

## Victorian Beekeeping Clubs Conference 2019

By Nicole Owens

Did you attend the conference this year? If you didn't, here is what you missed.

June 15th our club was the host for the 2nd annual Victorian Beekeeping Clubs conference. We had over 350 registered attendees. The furthest attendees were from Perth, WA, and Mackay, QLD.



Friday night, over 80 attendees came together for the welcome dinner. The food was delicious, and we finished off the evening with a bourbon based honey hot toddy.

Our own Deb Webber was MC and we were fortunate to have comedian, science communicator, and Melbourne beekeeper Alanta Colley, entertained us with her show "Days of our Hives" It was a great start to the conference, with meeting old friends and new friends, showing each other pictures of bees and hives and all things beekeeping on phones.

Saturday started off early with registration opening at 8am, and the first session of the day began at 8.30am. Our beekeepers settled into their seats after collecting their bag goodies, ready to learn and be inspired. Costa Georgiadis, (ABC Gardening Australia host), was our MC, and not only entertained us, but was able to beautifully meld together two totally different talks for all of us to think about how we can advocate for our bees and our environment, (Professor Ben Oldroyd on bee

mating, and Hilary Kearney, on the business of storytelling).



Gavin Jamieson was presented with an award for his outstanding contribution to tireless services to beekeepers and clubs.

After the first 2 sessions, a quick morning tea break and a chance to visit the atrium with trade stalls, the sessions broke off into 3 streams. With 3-4 different speakers and topics to choose from in each session, the most difficult part of the day, was to decide which door to walk through. Our speakers included Stuart Anderson, Dr Liz Barbour, Professor Madeleine Beekman, Peter Marendy, Dr Nural Cokcetin, Dr Julia Grassl, Vanessa Hoo, Benedict Hughes, Corinne Jordan, Jessica Millar, Joe Riordan, Ben Moore, Dr Kymble Spriggs, Julia Grassl and Dr Ken Walker.



*"Bees with backpacks" A global initiative to advance our knowledge about bee colony health.*



*Dr Julia Grassl, Group Leader: Honey Bee Health Research Group*

After afternoon tea, we all regrouped in the main room to listen to Dr Amy-Marie Gilpin speak about the effect of climate change on pollination and pollinators and the implications for beekeepers.



A 45 minute Q & A panel provided a lot of great questions and answers from throughout the day. Then there were some very happy faces as the raffle prizes were drawn. As the conference drew to a close, there was time to catch up, network and talk to both speakers and attendees (and take selfies).

To continue our efforts on the war on waste, where possible we did not use single use plastics and we used recycled or recyclable products. It was encouraging to see some attendees using their own reusable coffee cups/ mugs and water bottles.

A huge thank you to:

The Steering committee: Vanessa Kwiatkowski, Amanda Lamont, Mat Lumalasi, Maureen

Koegel and Deb Webber, Scott Denno and Amanda Collins.



Our sponsors Moonee Valley City Council, Agriculture Victoria, Becs Beehive, Junkies, Rooftop Honey, Ballarat Regional Beekeepers Inc, Australian Manuka Honey Association, Ballarat Beekeeping Supplies, Steritech and the VAA.

Vox pop:

**"Great venue, it is fantastic to see so many beekeepers in the same room."**

**"There are so many great speakers, I want to see them all."**

**"There is such a diverse group of beekeepers in this room."**

**"I learnt so much in that talk, what a terrific presentation."**

**"I am so grateful the Beekeepers Club have organised this event. I hope to come to one of your meetings soon. You look like you have a great bunch of members."**



*One of Benedict Hughes tips...*

## Flora – June 2019

We have noticed a few things in flower as we drive around the streets of Melbourne.

Unlike small shrubs and herbaceous plants, some trees can flower for many weeks. We are still seeing Red Ironbark, *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*, in flower in the northern suburbs. This is easily identifiable by the black, burnt appearance of the trunk.

There are reports of banksias flowering as well as some wattle varieties starting to flower. Wattles are a good source of pollen in the winter months. Flowering is occurring in the Mallee region, North West of Victoria. Many commercial beekeepers moving hives up there in order to build up hive strength for pollination of the almond orchards in August.

In gardens you should see rosemary, correas (native fuchsia), some lavenders and cool season salvias. Let us know if you've seen any good sources that your bees have found that we haven't mentioned.

Mat Lumalasi, President



*Rosemary provides a good source of nectar, flowering between June and October. The quality and quantity of pollen is low.*

## Club Room Refurbishment



About 8 or so members gathered at the club apiary in Heidelberg last month to start the upgrade of our club room.

We disposed of some of the excess cabinets, installed some new shelving and a workbench on the back wall in preparation for future winter workshops. The use of modular garage storage is a good fit for the room and will continue as budget allows with plans to extend all the way down the window side of the room.

We have our first workshop in July of frame making/repairing with some interesting equipment used for the tasks on show.

Thanks to all that attended and helped.

Future workshops are in the pipeline. Watch this space and our website.



## Fondant (Sugar Candy)

*An Emergency Winter Feed for Bees*

**By John Treloar**

Fondant candy is an excellent way to emergency feed bees in winter when it is too cold to feed syrup. Fondant contains about 12% water and already has most of the sucrose converted to glucose and fructose, making it more readily available for the bees.

### What you need:

Candy thermometer

3 cups white sugar

1/8 tsp cream of tartar

**Note:** If you use more than this the mixture won't crystallise - you'll end up with glucose syrup.

2 1/4 cups boiling water

Metal mould(s) - 20 cm square loaf tin, aluminium tray, etc. Plastic may soften or melt.

Baking paper

### Method:

1. Line the loaf tin with baking paper.
2. Combine ingredients and stir to dissolve the sugar over a moderate heat.
3. Without further stirring, heat to 115°C. This will take about 20 minutes. The syrup will remain colourless. The temperature is important to get the correct consistency and a candy thermometer really is required. If the syrup caramelises it will be harmful to bees.
4. Stand the saucepan in a sink of cold water to cool the syrup. Stir to keep the cooled syrup on the bottom and sides mixed with the hot syrup in the centre. As the mixture cools you will feel it thicken and see it start to turn white. Take the saucepan out of the sink if it is cooling too quickly - it will only take a minute or so from starting to turn cloudy to setting hard! While it is still liquid, pour into the mould. The slab should be about 1 cm thick so that it will fit under the hive lid.
5. Once cooled, remove the slab of candy from the mould. There's no need to remove the paper from the candy. Store in a plastic bag until needed.

On a warm day when the bees are flying freely, place the candy directly on top of the frames and cover with the hive mat. Replace as necessary.



*Bees can consume a block of fondant in just a few days.*

### Note:

1. Fondant is just sugar and is readily dissolved off the saucepan and spoon.
2. Bees need access to water so they can dissolve the candy but there is usually sufficient condensation within the hive in winter for this.
3. The bees won't store sugar or fondant in the comb.
4. Any candy left at the end of winter can be used to make syrup for the bees.
5. This is an emergency food and should not replace feeding syrup when possible.

### Did you know?

Tartaric acid is an organic acid that naturally occurs in many fruits including grapes, tamarinds and citrus. Cream of tartar is the potassium salt of tartaric acid which forms naturally in winemaking.

Heating table sugar (sucrose) breaks this disaccharide down to two simple sugars - glucose and fructose. Bees use the enzyme *invertase* to speed up this reaction. Cream of tartar also acts as a catalyst and it also helps prevent crystallisation. The resulting mixture is sometimes called *inverted* sugar syrup as it rotates polarised light in the opposite direction as the original sugar.

The exchange of nectar from returning forager bees to house bees is called **trophallaxis**. Later these bees extend their tongues to expose the droplet to the warm air to help cure the nectar into honey.

## In the Hive

"You call that Winter?" I've been taunting the gods with this year. It has been very lame so far and we have seen evidence to back this up in our CBD apiaries.

Just last week we saw drones.... Yes, live drones flying in and out of the hive.

Pollen is still coming in, meaning the queen is still laying and they have not really shut down for winter and so much activity on the sunny days shows workers still keen to forage.

A few things to be careful of as result I suspect.

If the colonies are still large where you are, keep a closer eye than usual on food supplies. Active bees and larger colonies need more food than a tiny cluster over winter.

Secondly, be ready for a large, strong colony in spring. If there is any reason for them to swarm, they will be waiting for the first warm days in August to go.

Early swarming of a non-cramped hive can be an indicator of a good long season ahead as the bees can afford to split without needing to.

Now.... logs, logs, logs.

Who has them, who looks at them?

With the biosecurity legislation being made official, it is a legal requirement to be registered and to keep records of hive inspections.

Now is a good time, if you have them, to go over your records and see what information they can provide to you in the off-season. This is a great way to help understand how your apiary works and how it might be different to others around you and its especially good to have actual data rather than anecdotal memories.

What date was your first open of the year? Do your hives swarm every year or every second year? Is one hive always weaker than another? Were they grumpy at certain times of the year? Did you re-queen and did it make a difference? How was your harvest compared to the rest of the area?

All this info can help piece together why certain things are happening the way they do.

For example, one hive being nastier than another, even after re-queening. Is this hive in the shade? Are the bees annoyed by pests in the hive (SHB)?

Tracking weather with inspections can also

tell a good story later when reviewing records.

I can foresee these records in the future leading to some more interesting information beyond bees.

Our mysterious Eucalypts and their flowering habits could be revealed from long term analysis of beekeeper data. A win for all.

There are some apps around now that can keep track of inspections using phones and tablets, some better than others.

Logs are your friend.

**Mat Lumalasi, President**

## Editor's comment

A diary is a great way to keep records; it's how I started. There are some things you must record: date of inspection, observations, hive strength, pests, etc. I also recorded when boxes were added or removed, if comb was being drawn, what plants were flowering at different times in my area and anything else of interest.

You can find inspection sheets on the Internet but you should decide for yourself what information is important and useful for you. I've found some records are just too detailed, such as what's on each frame. There's no use in recording information that you don't want and won't use.

It's fascinating to be able to look back and compare the seasons—things flowering early or late, when the nectar flows started in previous years, the best honey producing hives or those with the best temperament or disease resistance (to diseases such as chalk brood). This becomes a valuable resource when deciding which hive to raise queens from.

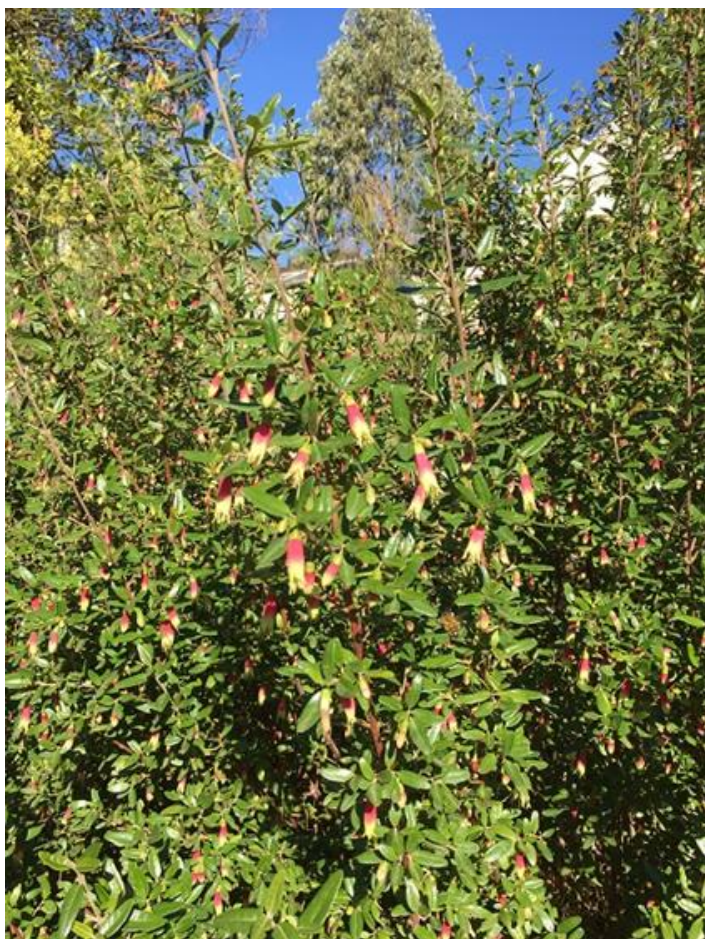
As hive numbers increase a diary becomes more cumbersome. It becomes increasingly difficult to find and track the history of individual hives. This is where the one record sheet per hive layout comes into its own.

Another innovation I now use is voice memos on my mobile phone. While I'm not a big fan of any record managing app (I did try out HiveTracks a few years ago) I find it quick and easy to make a recording of my inspection while on site at one of my apiaries. It's too easy to forget things by time you drive home!

## In the Apiary

**By John Treloar**

We had some very pleasant 'bee' weather as autumn came to an end. Pollen and some nectar was coming in keeping hive weights stable. This native fuchsia (*Correa reflexa*) near the club hives was humming with the buzz bees in late May.



My own hive weights have also remained very static for the last month. This is a sign that the queens have effectively shut down egg laying and few stores are being consumed as there's little or no brood to feed.

Pine needles make excellent smoker fuel. They are at their best when they are fresh and not too old and dry. At the last club meeting Sue Zuber pointed out that pine trees were shedding their needles so I hope you made the most of it and stocked up for spring.

Another winter solstice is almost upon us (June 21st). From here on the days are slowly starting to get longer and before you know it the bee season will be upon us. Use the next two months to be well prepared for it.

Hopefully you froze frames & boxes that came off the hive(s) before storing them in an insect proof way. I like to check mine from time to time over winter just to be sure wax moths don't reinfest them.

Repair, repaint and rebrand old boxes. You should also look to recycle 3 or 4 old frames from each hive every year. Cut out old or poorly drawn (drone) comb and put in fresh foundation. The cells get smaller with each bee raised as the cocoons are left embedded in the cell walls. Smaller cells result in smaller bees. Old comb can also harbour disease, pesticides and attract pests.

Take care that you don't stretch the wire (particularly if it's stainless steel) when cutting out the old comb and that will save you the time and cost of rewiring. Melting out old wax in a steamer is also effective. Loose wires can be tightened with a crimper. Very old or damaged frames can be burnt.

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