BEELINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC

NOVEMBER 2018

Participants in the 2018 Queen Rearing workshop inspect their grafting results

Upcoming Events (see website for full details and registration)

Club Monthly Meeting

15th November 2018, 7:00 PM
Doncaster Secondary College,
123 Church Rd, Doncaster 3108

Fire Prevention and Bushfire Management
Amanda Lamont
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Christmas party, December 20th

Keep the date free!

See inside for details.

Club Apiary Hive Inspection

Saturday 24th Nov 2018, 11:00 AM
A routine hive inspection 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 manage numbers.

Beginners Course

The next Beginner Beekeeping course will be held on 9th Feb 2019.
See website for details and registration.

The Beekeepers Club Inc. Festive December Meeting – 20/12/2018

In keeping with tradition, we are delighted to be hosting our December meeting with the Garden Group @ St John's in Heidelberg.

Set amongst the beautiful lawn behind the Church, there will be games & fun to have for all.

We'll have a Pizza Truck, Lebanese delights from Melbourne's original bakery and of course sweets included!

This is a picnic style theme, BYO Picnic Rug & Drinks (Soft drink will be provided) Price: $10 members, partners & guests

An email will be sent out to members with details of how to RSVP for this event.

Swarm Data Collection

We've had 33 swarms reported on the club's website since late September but I have heard of more swarms collected but unreported. They have been spread fairly evenly over that time and across suburbs. Prahran has recorded the most swarms (4).

If you have collected a swarm, please go to the club web site, Members-Only menu and click SWARM DATA COLLECTION to record it.

The scissor lift wasn't hired to collect the swarm in the photo! By good fortune, workmen were on site fitting new air conditioning and kindly lent a helping hand.

Welcome Club Newbees

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

Mei Choo Choo	Glen Waverley
Scott Jaquest	Ferntree Gully
Luisa Valmorbida	South Yarra
Josef Kieleithner	Glen Waverley
Herbert Kieleithner	Glen Waverley
Amanda King	Venus Bay
David Press	Eden Park
Geoffrey Gwilym	Eltham
Paul Holland	Nunawading
Joe Manovella	Heidelberg
Peter Morrow	Homewood
Harry Worthington	Blackburn

Please take advantage of our club resources, including meetings, library and apiary and most importantly our club members knowledge. If you have any questions about beekeeping just ask. I also recommend our forum page for Q&A's.

New Facebook Presence

Nicole Owens

Find us on Facebook, " Like & Follow" us , search for The Beekeepers Club Inc or @thebeekeepersclubinc.

Social Media provides opportunities for people to gather in online communities to share interests, education, information and foster community, connection and engagement.

Facebook is not replacing the website, but will replicate information in different forums used by many people on a daily basis.

The Beekeepers Club hopes the social media forums will provide the following outcomes:
Advertise upcoming classes, social events and meetings.
Provide current news articles, advice for beekeepers.
Engage in feedback, interaction and collaboration.
Spark interest in like minded individuals and a potential source to recruit new members.

Content is only created on behalf of the Beekeepers Club by authorised members. The use of social media is used to support our club and members.

Behave with courtesy, honesty and respect. Comply with relevant laws and regulations. Reinforce the integrity, reputation and values of the club.

The following content is not permitted under any circumstances:
Abusive or inappropriate content.
False of misleading content.
Advertising other businesses, clubs or personal interests.

If you would like to assist with the Facebook page, or other social media forums, (eg. Instagram) to help promote our club and courses, please email Nicole: nicoleinmelbourne@outlook.com

Beekeeper survey - please complete

Plant Health Australia are conducting a short survey with beekeepers across Australia to find out how healthy Australian honey bees are, and what pest and diseases may be causing problems.

The results of the survey will be used to decide what assistance you may need to keep your honey bees healthy.

Your valuable input is needed and appreciated.

Please complete the short 10 min survey in the link https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T3L95YC

Survey closes 14 December 2018.

Also just so you know, your cannot be identified and raw data will not be distributed to third parties.

If you have any questions please contact Jessica Millar on 044724 5558 or jessica.millar@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Can swarming be prevented once a colony has decided to swarm?

Jorg Kemper

What I am about to describe is purely anecdotal, but I would like to share it. The conventional wisdom is once a colony has decided to swarm it cannot be prevented from doing so. Performing an artificial swarm is the usual management.

On two occasions I have had colonies preparing to swarm and I did not want to perform a split. The last time was a few weeks ago when minor surgery prevented me performing timely inspections due to restrictions on lifting. I had a clue a local colony was about to swarm as I noticed increased activity around my bait hive. (I put the bait hive out from spring to early summer and for the last nine years it has regularly caught 1 to 2 swarms. For 2 to 3 days before a swarm enters the box a pronounced increase in bee activity around the hive is noticed, as scouts look for a new location.) On inspection of my hives, made tedious by the inability to lift full boxes, I found one preparing to swarm, with queen cells containing eggs, larvae and royal jelly. None of the queen cells were yet capped. The colony was doing very well, with lots of bees and an abundance of honey being put down. I didn't need any more colonies and didn't want to weaken this strong colony by splitting it.

My management revolves around confusing the bees and giving them something new to do. The existing colony consisted of three 10 frame boxes, the top box consisting mostly of capped and uncapped honey. Firstly, I removed all the queen cells, even the play cups. I brought out a new box containing 10 frames with undrawn foundation. I then removed three frames from each of the bottom two boxes, leaving the two outermost frames on each side, taking out both the third frames from each side and a frame from the centre of the box. New undrawn frames were placed into the gaps. The six frames which I removed from the bottom two boxes were placed into the new box and again were interspersed with undrawn frames. This became the new third box. The box of mostly honey went on top of the now four box tall hive. What I've done is the opposite of what we usually try to do; keeping the brood frames together in the same position we found them when we started our inspection.

You do need to inspect a week later to make sure the bees have abandoned their attempt to swarm. On doing so a week later there is not a single queen cell, not even play cups. The split up brood is doing well and the new frames inserted between brood frames are drawn out and some have eggs in them. I think what I have done has confused the bees and given them lots to do as they draw out frames which have suddenly appeared in the midst of the brood nest. I stress I've only done this twice, but so far it has worked well for me and may be worth considering if you don't want to or can't perform an artificial swarm.

Editor's note:

Congestion in the hive and lack of space for the queen to lay are two prime triggers for swarming. Where possible these should be addressed before queen cells are started. Prevention is better than cure and early intervention is more likely to be successful. Jorg's two successes are worth considering before performing an artificial swarm, which can also be done if adding space and opening up the brood nest don't work.

In general, frames are put back in the same order and orientation *unless* you have reason move things around. While I often pyramid frames up into an added box to encourage the bees up, if I have a strong colony I tend to "checkerboard" it with frame of foundation or starter strips.

Queen Excluders—to be or not to bee

John Treloar

A queen excluder is a grill of metal or plastic with gaps large enough for worker bees to squeeze through but the larger queen and drones can not. (The later is an important fact to remember to avoid trapping drones above the excluder).

Metal grills may have a longer life but care must be taken not to bend the wires when prying apart the boxes with the hive tool, rendering them ineffective. Plastic queen excluders are cheaper but may have a shorter life.

They are often used to confine the queen to the brood chamber and prevent her laying the honey super(s). There's no doubt that you don't want to harvest honey frames that contain brood. Not only are you destroying brood but it taints the honey. Wait the 2 weeks it takes for capped brood to emerge.

Some beekeepers refer to queen excluders as 'honey excluders' as the workers can be reluctant to pass through the excluder, potentially reducing the honey crop. Squeezing through the small gap can damage the bees, shortening their working life. Worker bees can also treat the excluder as a ceiling, waxing it up and creating a barrier to the upper boxes. It should also be noted that bees are reluctant to draw comb above a queen excluder.

To many, having a queen excluder for each hive is an unnecessary expense and additional piece of equipment that needs to be maintained and stored.

I don't routinely use excluders on my hives. In spring, as boxes are added to the hive, the queen may well move up and lay in those boxes. However, as the season progresses (and as room is made for the queen to lay in the lower boxes), the workers backfill the upper boxes with nectar, forcing the queen down. Honey bees naturally store honey furthest from the hive entrance and brood closer to it.

Some beekeepers do not like to extract honey from dark (ex-brood) comb. This is my preference too but I find that the small amount of brood that has been laid in any honey super combs is minimal and doesn't affect the honey.

After extraction, honey combs that have had some brood laid in them can always replace old, dark brood combs in the brood chamber. It is important to recycle or replace old brood combs which can harbour disease and encourage pests. Over time the cell size decreases (with embedded cocoons), producing smaller bees. Queens also prefer to lay in fresh comb.

Even if not used to keep the queen out of honey supers, queen excluders are invaluable. For example, if you're having trouble locating the queen, they are useful to confine her to a single box, making your task much easier. The Demaree method of swarm control uses a queen excluder and queen breeders use a queen excluder to raised queen cells on a queen-right hive.

The use of queen excluders will always be a contentious issue among beekeepers. I have no problem with their use— you just need to understand why you are or aren't using one in a particular situation. As with most things in beekeeping, give it a go and decide for yourself.

The club is in the process of upgrading to a full digital library lending system.

The new system will utilise a barcode on our nametags to simplify the lending process by simply scanning your card and then the book(s) you want to borrow.

New nametags have been printed and will be available to pickup at the November meeting.

The new system also fully automates the return procedure and will email members as a reminder to return books when they are due.

During this setup process, the library will not be available at the November meeting.

We request that ANY library books that are currently on loan be returned at the November meeting. Any long overdue books will be very much appreciated and all fines will be cancelled.

Thanks and we look forward to activating our new library at the January meeting.

Mat Lumalasi, President.

The Beekeepers Club Inc – War on Waste Reminder

In effort to help reduce waste, we are looking at how we as a club can minimise its environmental impact.

As beekeepers who care for bees & therefore our environment it would be fantastic to set an example for other clubs.

One of the areas for consideration is disposable cups. More than 1 billion disposable cups are used by Australians each year, approximately 92% go to landfill. According to businessrecycling.com.au, that equates to 2.7 million coffee cups per day.

We invite you to bring your re-usable cup to the next club meeting. Every little bit helps!

Extractor Hire

The club has 2 extractors, electric uncapping knife and filter basket available to members.

There is no charge for a maximum hire of 2 days. A deposit of $75.00 is fully refundable on a clean, timely return.

Late returns will be charged $5.00 per day thereafter.

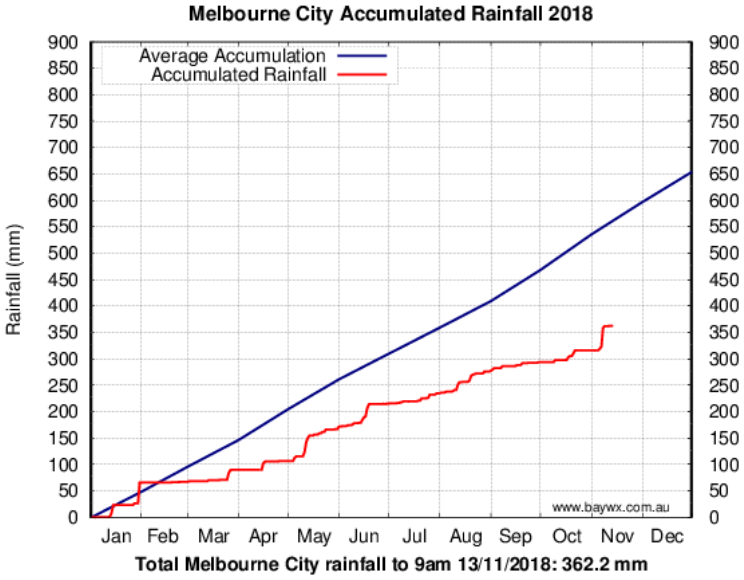
To hire, please contact mat@rooftophoney.com.au or phone 0414 406 136.

In the Hive

John Treloar

I started harvesting honey on October 14, a month earlier than the earliest start in the past 7 years. One hive in Boronia has already yielded 14 deep frames in the last 4 weeks. Learn from this and don't let your hive get honey bound.

Even after the recent good rain we had, Melbourne is about 200 mm (or one third) below its average for this time of the year.



The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast a hotter and drier climate outlook in many areas for November to January. Don't take too much honey too soon hoping for a good autumn flow that may not eventuate and leave your bees short. Know what's happening in your hives and manage them appropriately.

Tip

When transporting bees, ensure the frames point in the direction of travel. If perpendicular to this, the frames can flap when braking and accelerating, potentially killing bees.

Also be mindful of the temperature in a vehicle. Crowded bees can quickly overheat and perish.

Queen Rearing Course

The Queen Rearing hands on workshop was run at the club apiary on November 3rd and 4th. It covered the biology of queens, drones & mating; grafting and non-grafting techniques; honey bee genetics and more.

The participants are to be congratulated on the success of their first attempts at grafting larvae, which yielded 9 mature queen cells. These were harvested 10 days later and put into mating nucs.

October 2018 was the first anniversary of the official opening club's apiary at Heidelberg. It has proved a popular hands on experience for new beekeepers, a valuable training resource and a great venue for club activities.

Scrabble—the process whereby bees scratch or scrape with their legs to gather pollen