

BEELINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE BEEKEEPERS CLUB INC

NOVEMBER 2019



Ripponlea Botanica Festival, Sunday 20th October

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

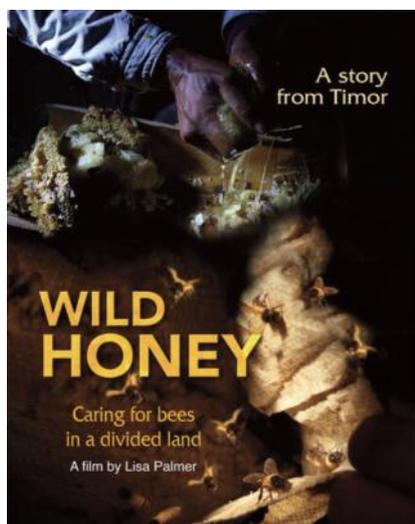
Club Monthly Meeting

21st November 2019, 7:00 PM

NewHope,
3 Springfield Rd,
Blackburn North
VIC 3130

Film Screening: Wild Honey - Caring for Bees in a Divided Land

with guest Director
& Producer -
Dr Lisa Palmer



Guest Speaker: Ian Brown

A lifetime of Beekeeping

Club Apiary Hive Inspection & BBQ

Saturday 23rd November 2019, 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.

Templestowe Hotel (Festive December Dinner)

19 Dec 2019, 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
23 Parker St, Templestowe Lower VIC 3107

Beekeeping Beginners Course

A beginners course will be run in February.
The date to be announced shortly.

President's Report

The year is fast drawing to a close for us beekeepers and with the season continuing the way it has been, it will be only a flash before it is done.

The end of year celebrations have already been planned at the Templestowe Hotel this year for a sit-down meal, keeping the apiary lawn option free for a summer function. Win-win for the members.

The committee is continuing to discuss social ideas for members and we look forward to seeing the best of them come to life.

Our education program has seen an incredible amount of demand this season where we are now considering running our weekday evening courses in addition to our weekend courses.

This tells us that beekeeping is still very popular, if not more than ever. This is great for bees.

As ever, for us at a committee level, it is both concerning and exciting to see such interest in the hobby.

We currently operate under some very well defined legislation, written heavily in favour of the beekeeper and we see it as our clubs' responsibility to educate urban beekeepers well, in order to retain our rights. Knowing and being compliant with the code of practice is paramount for us beekeepers.

I always like to remind the members that we rely on feedback from the members in order to understand what we doing well and where we are missing the mark, so as always, let us know what more we can do for you as a member and it's always worth considering if you feel you have something more to give to the club. The committee is always looking for fresh, motivated people to get involved and take over the reins for the next chapter of the club's evolution. If you want to know more about what's involved or how you could make a difference, come and speak to the committee and let us know.

Mat Lumalasi

Festive December Dinner

Join us for dinner for our last meet up of the year at the Templestowe Hotel.

We have reserved the restaurant upper floor so we can socialise and celebrate the club's successful year.



The Templestowe Hotel is known for their International Buffet with up to 37 dishes are prepared with fresh, seasonal ingredients, providing a range to accommodate all tastes. Modern Australian favourites such as soups, salads, seafood and roasts are combined with popular international cuisines, including Indian, Italian, Asian and Mediterranean.

The event is being generously subsidised for members and guests. The Buffet is open from 6pm onwards. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Pricing*

Members: \$10.00 (regular buffet pricing: \$28.90, seniors \$23.90)

Non Member Guest: \$18.90

Kids: 6-12: \$10.00 (under 5, free)

* RSVP is required for booking purposes.

Welcome Club Newbees

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

Ian Boyd	Ivanhoe
Christina Cheah	Doncaster
Grahame Daniel	Ferntree Gully
Vicki Hilder	Heathmont
Liz Malinowski	Moonee Ponds
Robert & Susan McNab	Hawthorn East
Andrew & Nicholas Okalyi	Park Orchards
John & Siew Rowe	Blackburn North
John Shearer	Ringwood North
Matthew Sweeney	Melton West
Howard Williams	Donvale
Neil Wright	Reservoir
Andrew Yen	North Warrandyte
Sabel Hunter	Mount Evelyn
Brian Wrench	Hawthorn

October Meeting Recap

For those that missed last month's meeting, it was well supported with 120 members, guests and visitors attending.



Rob Waddell, from Grand Ridge Propagation nursery, spoke on Australian *Leptospermum* (Tea tree) species for honey production.

There are many varieties of *Leptospermum* from *scoparium* (Manuka) to *polygalifolium* (Jelly bush) and *whitei* (Tea tree). Australia has more than 80 species.

Manuka is the most famous and it is found in Tasmania, Victoria & southern NSW as well as New Zealand, where it is the basis of their medicinal honey industry.

The *Leptospermum* species have different flowering periods which is an important consideration so that you don't have competing forage at flowering time if you want high bioactive *Leptospermum* honey.

Honey has long been known to have broad-spectrum antimicrobial properties due to its acidity (low pH), high sugar content and presence of compounds such as hydrogen peroxide. It is the presence of methylglyoxal (MGO) in *Leptospermum* that explains the 'Unique Manuka Factor' (UMF).

MGO is produced from dihydroxyacetone (DHA) present in *Leptospermum* nectar. It takes 12 to 18 months for honey to reach its peak bioactivity. Heating decreases the final bioactivity.

The levels of DHA (& therefore MGO) varies a

lot not only between species but also between plants of the same species. Seedlings should be purchased from sources that have tested genetics.

Australian honey abuzz with high-value antibacterial activity



22.10.19

Australia has at least seven *Leptospermum* species that produce honey with exceptionally high levels of antibacterial activity, providing the scientific basis to facilitate the entry of Australian honey producers into premium medicinal markets.

That's according to a new report led by University of Technology Sydney Professor Liz Harry, in conjunction with researchers from the University of Sydney and University of the Sunshine Coast.

Funded by the AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program, Professor Harry, Director of the UTS itthree institute, and the collaborative research team tested more than 5000 honey samples and 2000 nectar samples, covering more than 50 species of *Leptospermum*.

Praised for its antibacterial and healing properties, medical-grade honey sourced from *Leptospermum* plants has become a modern treatment for wounds and skin infections.

The latest study found at least seven Australian *Leptospermum* species produced medical-grade honey with exceptionally high antibacterial activity and many other *Leptospermum* species that produced honeys with therapeutically beneficial activity, as well as others that would fall under high-value premium table honeys.

University of Technology Sydney Research Associate Dr Nural Cokcetin said the research pinpointed several Australian regions, such as south-east Queensland, northern New South

Wales and western Tasmania, as 'hot spots' to yield these high value honeys.

"Australia has 84 of the 87 species of *Leptospermum*. Yet before this study, the antimicrobial activity of our *Leptospermum* species was almost unknown, both locally and globally," said Dr Cokcetin.

"The research puts Australian honey producers on the world stage, positioning them as a leading and potentially abundant source of medical grade and high-value *Leptospermum* honey."

The report found that specific chemical components relating to antibacterial activity of several Australian *Leptospermum* honeys was similar to that of its Manuka counterpart in New Zealand.

It also discovered that appropriate storage conditions of Australian *Leptospermum* honey was vital to reach its full potential, and outlined key differences between anti-fungal and antibacterial traits.

AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Manager, Research Annelies McGaw said the latest research was an important step in enhancing the worth and profitability of Australian honey.

"The research provides scientific evidence to support marketing claims that enable Australian honey producers to gain access to premium therapeutic-based markets," said Ms McGaw.

"Its findings are an important tool to help build the sustainability of Australia's beekeeping industry. It also presents a stimulus for diversification of commercial honey production in Australia."

Ms McGaw said the research team had communicated findings extensively and generated significant interest from members in the beekeeping industry, as well as in scientific and medical fields.

"The report shows that Australian honey could play a pivotal role in the clinical prevention and management of health conditions, such as skin and wound infections," said Ms McGaw.

"More broadly, it provides key recommendations to further advance the value of Australian honey and make it easier for beekeepers, consumers and the medical community to understand its importance."

To access the report, visit agrifutures.com.au/publications

For more information about the project visit <https://ozhoneyproject.wordpress.com>

<https://youtu.be/3VTqtFvh3go>



Photo credit: Vanessa Valenzuela Davie care of University of Technology Sydney

Honey bee health survey



A short survey has been developed to find out how healthy Australian honey bees are and what pest and diseases might be causing problems for beekeepers.

The results from the survey will be used to decide what help beekeepers might need to keep their honey bees healthy. It will also provide statistics for use by the industry.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, Plant Health Australia, and AgriFutures Australia, encourage all Australian beekeepers to take part in this survey, which will only take 10-12 minutes to complete.

The survey closes on 31 December 2019.

[Take the survey](#)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KJX69VV>

Pesticide Kill



ABC Hobart

October 26 at 12:00 PM

Yesterday, an Ulverstone resident found this devastating result after someone unfortunately sprayed near or around her bee hives.

"If anyone has any information on spraying in the areas of Kimberley Road and Castra Road, Ulverstone please let me know as 80 hives and about 300 neucs (baby hives) have been severely affected. The carelessness of using herbicides and insecticides can be catastrophic and cause devastating long term damage. 😞"

| Rachael Sculthorpe



In My Apiary

Things can change pretty quickly in the apiary. I caught a large swarm that filled an 8 frame deep and drew out the start strips in a few weeks. I hadn't bothered with a top mat as it was a temporary hive. A week after my previous inspection where all had been fine I encountered this:



They had not only filled the lid with comb but filled it with ripened honey! Not a big problem but a sticky mess to clean up.

Using a hive mat discourages the bees from building comb in the lid. It also stops condensation dripping back down on the bee cluster, particularly over the cooler months.

Canvas or 'lino' make a good choice for a top mat. Felt-backed lino is an option as adult small hive beetle get stuck in it. You may lose a few bees to this too, but not many. The bees may end up propolis the mat.



Underside of hive mat showing trapped SHB & some bees

In the Hive

Mat Lumalasi

Nectar, nectar, everywhere!

Nectar is pouring into hives and it's looking like a huge season for us all.

Ground moisture has resulted in masses of flowering throughout the metropolitan and regional areas. Continual light rain is perfect for flowering to continue all the way through the season if we keep the soil moisture levels up. What we don't want to see is huge storms while flowers are out and the nectar gets "washed out" and the flowers get damaged.

There is pre-budding of Eucalypt varieties as another indicator of what's to come this season.

With all the nectar flowing in faster than the bees can "ripen" the honey, beekeepers need to stay diligent. Do you want the honey that's out there in the trees in your hives? The bees can only bring more nectar in if there is room to store it all.

This is the time of year where our hives get taller and taller, with most of them up to 5 supers high and a few with 6 boxes.

We need to make sure that the hives don't become honey-bound, where the workers backfill the brood chamber, resulting in the queen having nowhere free to lay and, eventually, swarming.

Once the nectar is on the hive, the bees can work on it in their own time to ripen it into honey.

As long as the colony is strong enough, they can look after the entire stack and give great yields.

Just last week, we attended one of our sites in Richmond and removed 3 fully capped boxes (60kg) of honey from a single hive and no bees even noticed we were robbing the hive with so much fresh nectar still coming in. We would have missed out on such a bounty if we didn't have the hive managed properly.

This is the season for making honey. Let me know about your harvests.

Queen Rearing Workshop



On November 2nd & 3rd the club held a sold out queen rearing course for 10 enthusiastic club members who had a very enjoyable time and learnt lots.

The course covered the biological principles of queen rearing which then gives an understanding of the myriad of techniques and variations of raising queen bees.

For the hobby beekeeper looking at raising only a few queens we discussed non-grafting techniques. These range from simple splits to ways of encouraging bees to draw queen cells by cutting foundation (the Miller method) to cutting out brood cells and hanging them vertically (the Alley/Hopkins method) and even confining the queen to lay in plastic queen cups (Jenter & Nicot systems).

The photo above shows participants grafting larvae into queen cups. This allows many queens to be raised from your best queen—one that produces plenty of honey, is gentle & quiet on the comb, disease resistant and not prone to swarming. The number of queens is only limited by the resources (bees/combs/food) that can be harvested from other hives and equipment!

Again there are many ways of continuing the grafting process with queenless/queen right cell starter/finisher colonies. What do they say about asking 3 beekeepers...

Back To Basics

John Treloar

It is easy to put human thinking and emotions onto bees. Thinking things like: “*The bees will be angry as I’m stealing their honey*”. But bees are instinctive insects with tiny brains. They don’t think or even see the way we do.

Bees react to various stimuli:

- Jarring
- Rapid movements
- Mammal odours
- Dark colours
- Hair & wool

Other defensive factors include:

- Genetics
- A nectar dearth
- Certain nectars (such as messmate) & some pesticides
- An approaching storm
- Robbing by other bees
- Previous disturbance
- Older bees
- Alarm pheromone

It is important to keep these factors in mind when inspecting your bees. Be in the right frame of mind and not in a rush. Don’t act like you’re in a suit of armour in your bees suit thinking you can’t get stuck and work roughly.

If possible, inspect your bees on a warm, sunny day with no strong wind. Many of the forager bees will be out working and you’ll have fewer older bees to contend with.

“Listen” to what the bees are telling you. Be aware of their level of defensiveness. Do they dart out of the hive at your veil when you lift the lid or do they ignore you? Are they lined up across the top bars? Do they follow your hand if you move it slowly from side to side?

As they become more defensive they will start to ‘buzz’ you. They may then bounce off your veil before finally trying to sting.

Most ‘newbees’ wear leather gloves. I find these too thick to feel the bees and you are more likely to accidentally squash bees and aggravate them when picking up frames. The finger tips also tend to get stuck under the end bars. They are also not so easy to clean.

Other options include dishwashing gloves (which are okay) or thin nitrile (‘sandwich’) gloves. I’ve settled on a happy medium called ‘Sensitive Touch’ which feel a bit like balloon rubber. They are close fitting, give good feel and protection. While it is possible to get stung through them this rarely happens.

Use all your sensors, not just sight. How does the hive sound? Is it starting to roar? Have you ever smelt alarm pheromone?

Always smoke a hive and give them a minute to respond to it before opening the hive. Even for a small nucleus colony, which is much less likely to be defensive, have a lit smoker handy.

Don’t over use the smoker—it will become ineffective and you’ll only panic the bees. A gentle puff onto the bees should be all that’s required to move them out of the way or turn the heads of the guard bees watching you. If you do get a sting, smoke the area to mask the alarm pheromone that is released.

Keep your bee suit clean particularly if the bees have stung it. The veil should be hand washed as it will rip in a washing machine. I also hand wash my ventilated style suit in some laundry powder in the trough.

Having angry bees is no fun for you or your neighbours. It means you are less likely to get into your hives and inspect them the way you need to. Gentle bees make beekeeping a pleasure.

The Apiary Code of Practice states that:

Honey bee colonies managed in urban areas must be maintained with young queens of a docile strain. Docile queens are specially bred and sold by queen breeders. Docility is one of the main selection criteria.

Chasing Beeswax

Michele Ramage, a site Principal at a flexible learning centre in rural Victoria, Benalla, has contacted the club seeking beeswax.

The aim of the centre is to reengage young people in education. They are a government alternative education setting.

Their students will be running a Christmas stall and are wanting to make beeswax wraps for environmentally friendly options to sell at the stall. Michele was wondering if any club members had any beeswax available to either donate or sell to our students to enable this project to continue.

Contact Michele on 0418 952 215 or email michele.ramage@wssc.vic.edu.au

Mentor Opportunity

We have a club member in Port Melbourne who has completed a beekeeping course and is looking for someone to observe them carry out a few hive inspections. He would like assistance identifying any issues and discussing what the remedy would be.

If you are able to assist, please contact Andrew on 0402 542 901 or email Andrew@scentaustralia.com.au

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