

BEE NEWS

July 2024

Issue 149

Monthly newsletter of the Sunshine Coast Beekeepers Inc.

www.sunshinecoastbeekeepers.com.au



Best Honey in the World Competition. Handing over the trophy from last years' winner Kylie Aalbers to the winner for 2024 David Kanowski

NEXT MEETING - AGM

Saturday, 27 July 2024 at the Club House, 43 Farrell Street Yandina.

Morning tea and catch up starts 9.30am, BYO plate of food to share. Meeting to start at 10.00am. As part of our AGM we are catering lunch for all our members

Election of all positions.

John Baker to present to the meeting about the QBA Conference he recently attended in Townsville.

President's Report

Happy winter everyone! Or is it? We have had swarms reported to us already, so the bees certainly don't think it's winter anymore!

It's been a very busy time for us over the past couple of months. Celebrating our community through the Greatest Honey in the World (in our opinion!) competition, and the Sunshine Coast Agricultural Show. Our club dominated the show competition and we were proud of both our entrants, and our volunteers. It was brilliant to share each day with the volunteers on the stall. Sharing a passion for beekeeping, the environment, and our community is a real privilege.

I want to thank John Baker, our Biosecurity

Champion, for his diligence in keeping on top of everything going on in the biosecurity space. Having John is an asset to our club and it makes me feel very confident that the challenges we face with managing varroa will be all that much easier with the informed direction from John. If you haven't yet renewed your subscription, please use this as motivation. Please encourage other beekeepers to join our club and know that as a community we are strong.

If that isn't enough motivation, then we are providing lunch after the AGM on Saturday at the meeting! Next month we are going to cross live to India so I can't wait to see you this Saturday to share the plans.

Have a bee-utiful week!

Katie Livock

President

Report on the success of the Nambour Agricultural Show

Thanks to everyone who helped set up Exhibition – Ron & Lynne, Tom, John and Alby.

The Club sold a lot of honey products and honey. This year, we sold \$3,015. In 2023, we sold \$2,143.

Competition – David, Sue and Kathy, Paul and Graham assisted.

Graham won 9 awards for his honey.

Honey judging – report from David Lee the Show Steward

Controversy surrounded aspects of judging. Rules will be reviewed for next year.

Biosecurity is much more involved.

All entries will need their hive number of the entry.

Workshops for New Beekeepers

Our next Beekeeper's Courses will be held on the following dates:

- 10 August 2024
- 12 October 2024

All participants must agree to the Club's covid rules.

Booking is essential.

Book online at:

www.sunshinecoastbeekeepers.com.au/workshops.



The Club Online

To save our members time searching online, the Club's website has links to the best beekeeping information and websites we can find.

www.sunshinecoastbeekeepers.com.au

Also, check out our Facebook page for more Club news.

www.facebook.com/pg/sunshinecoastbeekeepersaustralia/posts/?ref=page_internal

Biosecurity News

On 2 July 2024, the “Varroa 101” webinar hosted by the National Varroa Mite Management Program (NVMMP), and the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) was held. For those who missed it or want to see it again you can view at this link: [Varroa 101 Webinar](#).

The next NVMMP webinar is to be held on Tuesday 30 July 2024, Details will be published when available.

These are very informative webinars and are essential for those wishing to prepare the anticipated varroa incursion. You can sign-up via the Varroa Response Hotline on 1800 084 881 or online at [National Varroa Mite Management Program e-news](#) to receive all the latest news, updates and webinar announcements.

On 17 July 2024, Biosecurity Qld hosted a Transition to Management (T2M) Webinar.

If you missed it, it will be available online in due course. I will notify when that happens.

The National Varroa Mite Management Program (NVMMP) now recommends undertaking regular monitoring actions best suited to your hives and circumstances. In Queensland, while there is no known varroa mite, that is every 16 weeks. It will be a different story once the mite is here. NSW Beekeepers have noticed that, where Varroa mite detections are increasing, undertaking monitoring actions every 16 weeks has been insufficient. They are seeing increasing cases where Varroa mite has had a substantial impact on colony health within the 16-week period since the beekeeper’s last monitoring activity. This will be discussed at the future training seminars.

Bee informed with the new varroa mite surveillance map! This interactive tool displays the number of beehive health checks where varroa mite (Varroa destructor and Varroa jacobsoni) has been reported as NOT present.

All alcohol wash results, including negative ones, MUST be reported via the Bee123 link. Contact me with any questions.

John Baker

Winter / Spring Swarm Season

According to Grant Eisenmenger, winter (if you can believe it, I’m not sure) is over and swarm season has started. Bees moved into a house on Wednesday and by the next Monday they were removed and had already some new comb erected. Anyone interested to become trained as a swarm catcher and volunteer please contact the Secretary.

Swarms

Southern: Ian Meyers, 0412 694 058.

North Coast, Sippy Downs: Grant Eisenmenger, 0401 720 004.

Buderim: Tom Cowburn, 0418 143 206.

North and central areas: Alby Taylor, 0418 882 282.

Maleny and surrounds: John Baker, 0418 791 149.

Active monitoring is a must!

Active monitoring is critical for early mite detection and colony management.

Varroa mites are very good at concealing themselves.

Visual observations are not an effective method of surveillance.

No active monitoring = risk of colony decline before detection.

NOTE:

Monitor a minimum of 4 times per year (at least every 16 weeks)

Best practice = monthly monitoring

Reporting mite results

National Varroa Mite Management Program



What can beekeepers do now?

Regular checking hives for varroa mite (every 16 weeks) using the alcohol wash method. All checks should be reported using the [Bee 123 website](#).

Immediately report unexpected hive deaths, deformed bees, bees with parasites, poor brood patterns and dead brood to Biosecurity Queensland.

Keep your contact details and apiary sites up to date and renew your [biosecurity entity registration](#) when due.

Keep accurate and up to date records of hive movements ([single use record movement form for bees](#)), hive checks, and any bees bought or sold, including queens.

Keep up to date with the relevant state authority for movement requirements before entering or leaving the state.

Keep up to date with the latest varroa mite situation on our website and subscribe to our bee e-alert.

To report varroa mite, contact Biosecurity Queensland [online](#) or by calling 13 25 23.

Saturday Rosters 2024

We would also like to thank all the members who volunteered to work at the club for last year.

AUGUST

03/08/24	Open	Bryan O'Neill Jason March	Kathleen March
10/08/24	Course	Alby, Tom, Graham, Evan	Katie Livock
17/08/24	Harvest	Peter Petsch Arlene Rutherford	John Baker
24/08/24	Open	Ron Button Bill McBryde	Grant Eisenmenger
31/08/24	General Meeting	Keith and Felice Eastwood	

If the dates don't suit OR you are unable to attend please email Lynne Hulm - secretaryschees@gmail.com

Sale, Purchase, Swap

A separate sheet is attached to the newsletter each month headed "Sale Purchase Swap". This will be for the information of members only and will not be downloaded onto the website with the newsletter.

If you would like to list anything could you please send an email with photograph if required to the Newsletter Editor at the following email address: lineb@internode.on.net by the Friday the week prior to the meeting each month. This will coincide with our committee meeting when any additional inserts to the Newsletter are discussed. This provides me with a deadline.

Your Club Health and Safety

Covid has become a circulating virus we will need to be prepared for from now on into the future. We also have influenza ,mycoplasma pneumonia, respiratory syncytal virus (RSV) which are cuirculating

Mandatory masks are not going to be recommended and will be left to personal choice.

There is a strong recommendation for regular vaccinations which will provide protection against serious disease.

Do not forget the lessons learned during the pandemic – hand hygiene and social distancing and if you are sick stay home and get better.

Honey Extraction Dates

NOTE – all members wanting to use the Club facility for extraction of honey must first book with Lynne Hulm the Secretary to make sure we are not overbooked. You must let Lynne know how many frames that you want to extract honey from.

- 17 August
- 21 September

Please ensure that you assist with the cleaning up following extraction of honey.

Borrowing the Clubs spinners to extract honey at home:

- The spinners have been bought for the use of all members.
- Contact the Secretary Lynne Hulm to place your name on the list to borrow a spinner.
- The Spinner must be returned to the club by 9:00am the following Saturday cleaned and ready for the next member to borrow.

Honey Crystallisation Put to Bed

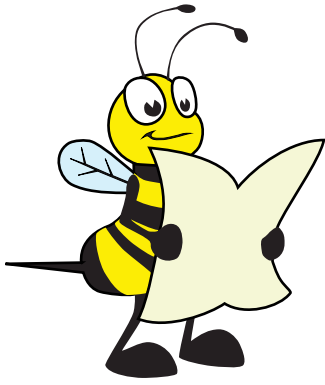
John Baker

Honey is a saturated solution of sugars, the two principal ones being fructose and glucose. The amount of glucose and fructose varies between different honeys according to the type of nectar the bees forage on. Honey generally has 30-44% fructose and 25-40% glucose. The over abundance of sugars causes the solution to be unstable and depending on the ratio of the two sugars, crystallisation occurs. So Crystallisation is a natural process. It is glucose that comes out of solution to form crystals, because it is less soluble than fructose. As small crystals form, more form throughout the honey which becomes more stable and thicker. Some honeys crystallise non-uniformly with the crystallised portion lying below the liquid honey. Because glucose crystals are pure white, crystallised honey tends to have a lighter colour.

The likelihood and the rate of crystallisation is greater with a high glucose content (high G/F ratio). There is no likelihood of crystallisation with a ratio of 1/53, but honey with a ratio less than 1/11 will crystallise quickly. Some studies suggest the glucose/water (G/W), is a better indicator with a ratio less than 1/7, showing slow crystallisation and greater than 2/0, fast. Increased water content can lead to fermentation.

Crystallisation is enhanced by the presence of seed crystals, pollen grains, and pieces of beeswax in the honey and by the storage temperature. Below 10oC crystallisation is slow and most rapid around 10-15oC. Honey resists crystallisation best at temperatures above 25oC with the crystals dissolving at 40oC. Above 40oC will damage the properties of honey.

Reference: "A Closer Look – Honey crystallisation", Clarence Collison; The Australasian Beekeeper, #125.12, June 2024.



BEES IN THE NEWS

Hobby beekeepers launch Varroa Warriors, work with scientists in battle against bee-killing mite: ABC Central West, by Tim Fookes, 21 June 2024

A couple of amateur beekeepers in Orange have launched a support group called the Varroa Warriors to discuss organic ways of treating their hives.

Several synthetic treatments are available, while two non-synthetic chemicals, Formic Pro and Apriguard, are on the market.

But Ms Ashelford is keen to explore other options.

“As natural beekeepers, we prefer avoiding the use of chemicals on our hives,” she said.

“Putting chemicals in my hives goes against my beliefs, as putting in chemicals means we’re not giving bees the chance to build up natural resistance.”

In an attempt to find answers, Ms Hutabarat and Ms Ashelford formed a group called Varroa Warriors.

At its launch, dozens of beekeepers from around NSW met to discuss the spread and what options were available.

“We will need to save our hives because they can’t survive themselves,” Ms Ashelford said.

“When varroa arrives, we want to do what we can as naturally as possible.”

The group has begun working with academics and citizen scientists to find answers to their questions.

ANU Professor Sasha Mikheyev said he was working with Varroa Warriors as part of his research group, the Australian Bee Observation Network.

“What we have seen worldwide is that some populations of feral honeybees develop natural resistance to varroa,” Professor Mikheyev said.

“The mechanisms of how they do this are unclear..”

Sting operation: Kenya uses hidden bee hives to fight timber smugglers: 15 July 2024

In Kenya, locals turn to bees for help — logging threatens the stability of the mangrove forests along the coast and, therefore, the environment.

Kenyans are planting beehives in the mangroves under threat to attack illegal loggers and stop environmental destruction.

As loggers continue to operate illegally, the community

has reassumed its power to respond. Nothing prevents locals from planting beehives covertly along the coast to protect the land instead.

As reported by AP News, in Mombasa County, where the hives have been stationed, 50% of the mangroves are in a state of degradation. That’s over 4,570 acres. So, humans have teamed up with bees as they will protect their turf— attack.

“As such, when the loggers start cutting down whichever tree, the bees will attack due to the noise.”

“Mangrove honey is also classified as top quality and medicinal,” as per AP News. A valuable item, a liter can bring in \$6 a liter, not an insignificant sum.

Honey bees vote to decide on nest sites – why we should listen: 1 July 2024

Man made boxes have little in common with the wild nests that featured in honey bee evolution. Are we are missing something from the evolution of wild bees that might help managed bees today?

Swarming honey bees send out scouts to find suitable nests, measure them for fitness against a list of criteria such as height off the ground, volume, entrance size, and entrance location. They communicate this information to the rest of the scouts. Then the scouts engage in a voting system to select the best one and move the entire swarm sometimes over a kilometre to the new nest.

Disease, predators, parasites and climate change are threatening the future of managed honey bees, pollinators of our food crops. Yet research into these pressures and honey bee behaviour rarely takes account of the nest preferences of honey bees shaped by evolution.

Heat retention is important for honey bees as they need to keep the internal temperature of part of their nest above 20°C all year round and part of it close to 34°C for most of the year.

tree nests lose substantially less heat than the conventional hives used by researchers.

How bees could help war-hit families in Ukraine: BBC, by Dani Thomas, 28 June 2024

Heat retention is important for honey bees as they need to keep the internal temperature of part of their nest above 20°C all year round and part of it close to 34°C for most of the year.

Beeswax could be crucial to help preserve food in war zones like Ukraine, according to researchers.

UK scientists have been helping beekeepers in the besieged country to develop new wax wrappings for perishable foods amid Russian attacks.

They have been able to test different combinations to come up with some of the most potent for food preservation.

“The magic is in the mixture,” said Prof Baile.

He said “a piece of cloth or even paper” is combined with beeswax and other naturally occurring antimicrobial plants, like sage, to form the wraps.

She said the power cuts had led to a “significant” amount of food waste.

“[The wrap] can be used for bread to keep it fresher, fruit and vegetables to keep them fresher.”

2024 Executive and Committee

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Club Patron: Alby Taylor

Life members: Merv Wruck, Chris Johnson, Bill Spencer, Ken Evans

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