

# The Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers Inc.



Preparing your hives  
for  
WINTER

*Compiled by John Polley*

# When to inspect and what to look for

- Inspect late April or early May at the latest
- A sunny day on the warmer side
- Did you see the Queen??
- Evidence of queen activity, i.e. eggs, grubs or sealed brood
- Are there Queen or Drone cells
- Is the hive busy

# Honey in the hive

- How much stored honey is in the hive
- A full brood box will need a full super of honey on top for winter in the cooler areas
- A weaker brood box will need at least 5 full frames of honey
- If feeding Sugar Syrup, 2.5kg of white sugar is equal to 1 frame of honey
- Mix Sugar/Water ratio of 2:1, discard after 3 days and replace with a new batch

## **Comments by Kevin Finn (Beekeeper extraordinaire)**

**A full brood box requiring a full super of honey would only be in areas where it is cold (like Stanthorpe) and there is little chance of the bees getting out.**

**Just my opinion, as I have never left a full super of honey on and I have never fed. In areas like Nerang & Bonogin I have already reduced from three boxes down to two with the only exception being a couple of really strong hives.**

**At Benowa & Ashmore there is generally something coming in all the time and I have left them in three boxes but I have removed surplus honey.**

**Kevin**

## Strength of hive

- If the bee numbers are reduced, bring the hive back to a single brood box to make it easier for them to control the hive temperature
- Ensure that the bees have an adequate store of honey to last them through winter
- Reduce the hive entry on weaker hives
- Observe the hives regularly through winter to ensure activity

# Disease Status

- ✓ If anything is amiss in your hives or you are unsure what to look for, contact one of our experienced club members or a committee member who will help you out
- ✓ The four brood diseases you may encounter are; EFB (European Foul Brood) - AFB (American Foul Brood) - Sacbrood and Chalkbrood
- ✓ And of course our old friend the Small Hive Beetle (SHB)

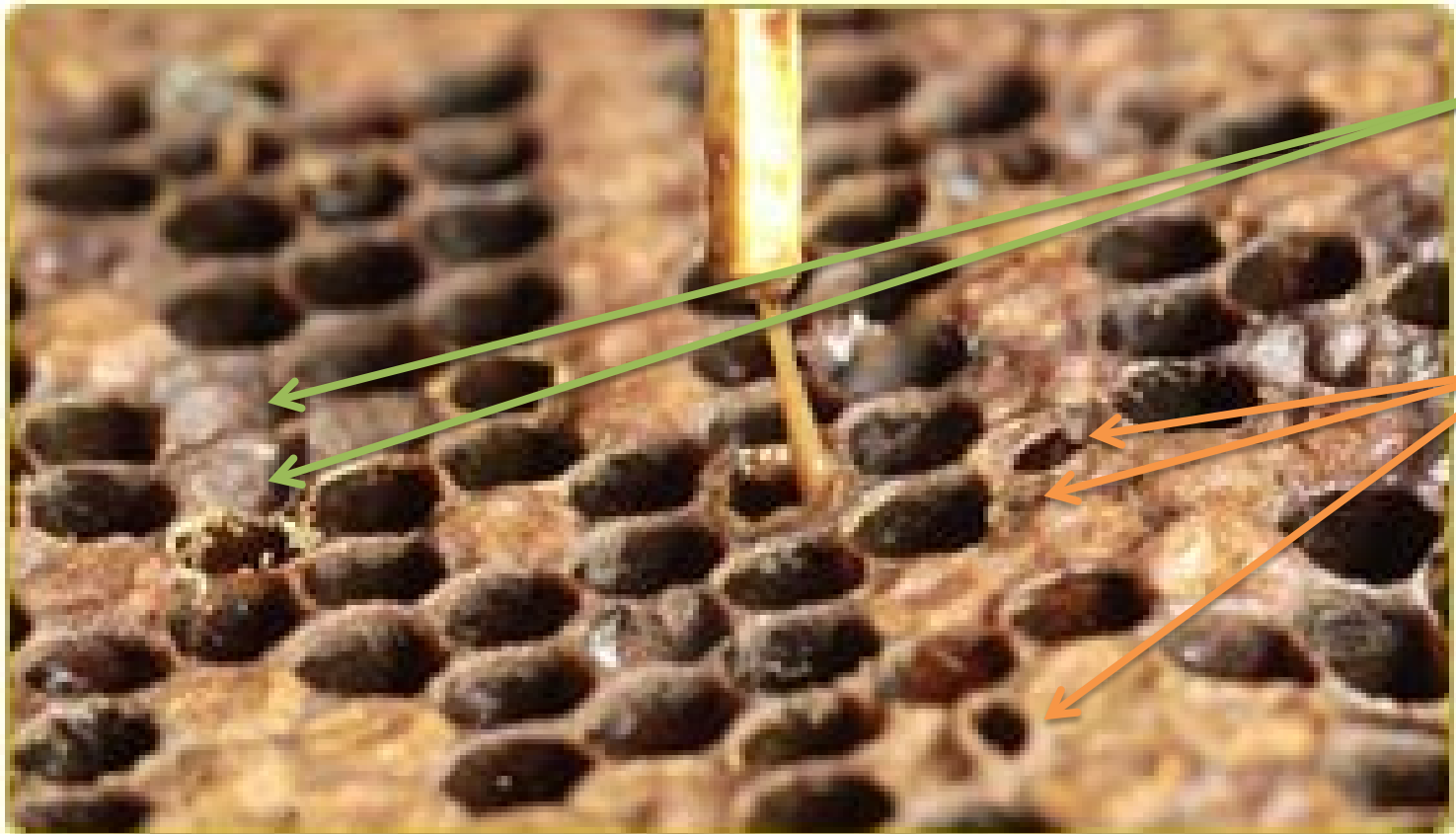
<u>Disease</u>	• <u>Symptoms</u>
European foulbrood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• twisted around cell wall</li> <li>• white through to discoloured</li> <li>• yellow to dark brown</li> <li>• watery, granular larvae occasionally ropey</li> </ul>
American foulbrood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discoloured through to dark brown</li> <li>• unsealed or with perforated sunken discoloured capping's</li> </ul>
<b>Sacbrood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>discoloured yellow through to black, gondola shaped in capped cells or under perforated caps, easily removed</b></li> </ul>
Chalkbrood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• white and mouldy</li> <li>• hard larvae</li> <li>• white or grey/black mummies in cells on the floor,</li> </ul>

A classic symptom of European foulbrood is a curled upwards, flaccid, and brown or yellowish dead larva in it's cell, pictured above.





# Close up comb showing symptoms of American Foul Brood (AFB)



Dark sunken capping

Perforated cell caps

# Sac Brood

The pupae do not develop or shed the last skin which locks in the pupae as it rots containing the spores.

The brood is pointing downwards but that is because the head does not develop:



## Chalkbrood.

Chalkbrood is caused by the fungus *Ascosphaera appis* and it affects both sealed and unsealed brood.



# Small Hive Beetle



These amazing little creatures can.....

.....do this to a hive that swarmed 4 days prior





## During Winter



- ✓ Pop down and say G'day to your girls each weekend
- ✓ Check external SHB traps (now you know why it was better to spend the extra dollars on the bottom board with built in SHB traps)
- ✓ Observe to comings and goings of the bees, are they busy on a warm day, are they bringing in pollen