

# BeeAware Newsletter



## Australia's biggest livestock movement creates quite the buzz

European honeybees have been trucked to the vast almond plantations of the Sunraysia region, where it is their job to pollinate the flowers, so the trees produce almonds. About 120,000 hives will be transported to the state's north-west. The move to Sunraysia is the biggest transportation of livestock in Australia.

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## Pollination agreements avoid getting stung

When hiring hives for pollination, many beekeepers and growers find it a good idea to have a pollination agreement. These are useful because there's no confusion over what the grower thinks they are hiring and what the beekeeper thinks they need to supply. Contracts become very important if there are any problems with what's supplied or something happens to the bees when they are working the crop.

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## Asian honey bees found in wine barrel

A wine barrel used as a table on a Hyde Park family's veranda is the latest home for Asian honey bees in Townsville. Biosecurity Queensland officers working on the Varroa mite eradication response were alerted by the home owner after she noticed bees entering a small hole at the side of the barrel. There were no Varroa mites found in the nest or on the bees.

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## Bee hunt continues in Townsville

The fight to eradicate Varroa mites from the Townsville area continues with the help of 'balloon bee traps'. Biosecurity Queensland officers will spend the next six months wandering through Townsville's parks with the devices in a bid to draw out the pests. The traps are baited with Asian honey bee sex pheromones which male Asian honey bees are attracted to.

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## Massive increase in bee hive arrivals to almond orchards forecasted

Biosecurity experts say managing a predicted increase in bee hive numbers arriving at almond plantations will bring challenges, but the right systems should safeguard the industry. The Australian almond industry wants to find an additional 70,000 bee hives over the next five years, on top of the current 195,000 that are brought in to pollinate its expanding orchards.

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## Beekeepers want better access to native forest

National and multinational agribusinesses are planting more almond trees and raising demand for bees to pollinate their commercial orchards. Beekeepers say this will create more demand for public land, including state forests, to feed bees throughout the year.

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## Gardeners urged to support urban bees with flower growing



Urban beekeeper Doug Purdie is on a mission to get backyard gardeners to "think like a bee" and grow more flowers, arguing the insects are essential for plant biodiversity and food production.

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## New Zealand experts to help combat Varroa mite threat

Australia's horticulture research and development corporation has combined forces with Plant & Food Research New Zealand to strengthen Australia's defences against Varroa mite and enhance crop pollination through a \$5 million targeted research project.

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## Genetic bee research paves the way to sweeten imports plan

Australian beekeepers are a step closer to protecting themselves from the devastating Varroa mite with a new test likely to allow imports of honey bee semen from resistant breeding stock without putting the industry at risk from another pest – Africanised bees.

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## New Zealand's honey bee industry is buzzing

New Zealand's honey bee industry is growing rapidly, with the number of hives reaching a record of around 650,000. This is despite a study which says honey bee populations are declining. A new study says that New Zealand agriculture stands to lose between \$295 million and \$728 million annually if the local honeybee population continues to decline.

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## International colony losses nearly 12% last year

The number of honey bee colonies fell by nearly 12% last winter, an international study indicates. Beekeepers in 29 countries reported that, out of nearly 400,000

colonies they managed, 12% had failed to survive the winter. The preliminary findings were made through a study by honey bee research association COLOSS.

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## Manuka: New Zealand moves to trademark the word

Australian producers have been alarmed by moves in New Zealand to trademark the word Manuka. Despite the fact the plant grows natively in Australia, New Zealanders say the word, the plant and the honey the bees make from it is theirs.

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## Bumblebees are not only workers, they can be shirkers too

A new study which tracked four bumblebees over the course of their lives found a surprising discrepancy in their attitude to foraging for food for the hive.

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## EPA bans Bayer's belt insecticide in first-of-its-kind decision

German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer AG has lost a battle with the Environmental Protection Agency over an insecticide (flubendiamide) used on about 200 crops in 49 states.

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## Continued focus on neonicotinoids is distracting from real threat

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, continued focus on neonicotinoids by environmental groups detracts from and potentially worsens real threats to bees.

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