

THE WAGGLE

Newsletter of the Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers Inc.

'Furthering knowledge in Beekeeping by assisted learning and practical experience'

www.gcrb.org.au

Edition: June 2021

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President's Chat

What's Flowering in the region

Hive Report

QBA

WORLD BEE DAY

Conference

Report

Meeting

Report

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The Waggle is the journal of the Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers Inc. It is distributed to members monthly. The editor will consider adverts from businesses relevant to beekeepers to run free of charge where they contain a discount or special offer to GCRB members. Please email gcrb.editor@beekeepers.asn.au

From the Editor

June is well and truly here, and the weather is definitely getting cooler just to prove the point.

The last month has been a relatively busy month for the club with World Bee Day and the QBA Conference and Open Day. Thankyou to the team for the reports for those events.

In this edition I have included an article from the Northern Rivers club in relation to feeding bees which members may find useful if they have to supplement their hives.

Along with a number of Club members I attended the QBA Open Day held at the Beenleigh HS on Sat 5 Jun. There were approx. 30 displays set up, and a few bargains to be had for the discerning shopper. As with these events the biggest outcome is always the networking and new people you encounter.

As we are now in June, members can expect to start to receive account statements from ABA NSW in the next couple of weeks for the 21/22 membership fees. At a recent Committee Meeting it was agreed that the Club membership will remain at \$10.00. The ABA NSW set their membership fees independent from the Club and, at the time of writing, they have yet to indicate whether their fees will increase or not.

I would like to thank Greg, Fiona, Drew, Mike and Kevin for their excellent input into the content of this edition. Remember, I am always on the lookout for content to make YOUR newsletter relevant to YOU.

See you at the next meeting

Yours Aye

Windy

President's Chat

The club has been actively involved in several events since my last chat. The World Bee Day on the 20th May was a great opportunity that several of our members took to lend a hand in promoting this great campaign. It was great to see our club on display at the Bunnings Nerang event, then to back it up two days later for our own Carrara Markets club level World Bee Day stall was amazing. I must admit that it did take a lot of organising by a number of people, but the effort was certainly worth it. Thank you to the When Bee Foundation for managing the campaign nationally, I'm sure we will be involved again next year.

On the 3rd and 4th of June committee member Fiona and I attended the Queensland Beekeepers Association (QBA) State Conference and AGM. Fiona has prepared a brief report as an overview of the conference that will be in this edition. I must say the QBA did a good job considering the challenges they faced to make this event even happen in the first place. I also think the QBA did a pretty good balancing act, trying to accommodate the small contingent of backyard/hobbyist beekeepers alongside the larger commercial operators as membership to the Association is for all beekeepers not just commercial beekeepers. The spread of guest speakers provided something for all in attendance. It was great to see a number of club members at the Field Day on Saturday the 5th June. I'm sure everyone managed to find an item they couldn't resist from one of the many exhibitors.

We have an interesting club morning coming up on the 19th, I know there has been a lot of notice given to members in that regard, so all I will say is, see you there.

Keep warm

Greg

"The Appy Apiarist"



Hive Report

An early start saw a reasonable attendance at our monthly hive check. In keeping with the rest of the region no surplus honey was found but the winter honey stores are quite good.

Hive #1 had a winter reduction to one brood and one super with the manipulations well done by Windy.

The Flow Hive rejuvenated super was installed by John Crawford and the Appy Apiarist and appears very good.

After finding the #5 hive to have the queen above the excluder we altered our plans and went back to hive #4 where Fiona did a very good talk on winter brood and stores.

May Meeting

We had a great meeting on 15 May at the Vietnam Veterans Complex in Nerang, with a good turnout of members. We welcomed Grace from Bunnings Nerang and her husband Bradley to our meeting, and new members Keith and Tony.

Fiona and Mike worked together to give detailed explanations of what is happening in the hives and what members should be looking for during a hive inspection. It was most worthwhile and all members present learnt lots. Interestingly, in number five hive they found brood in the super which means that the Queen had got past the excluder. They also found some hive beetle present. Thanks to both Fiona and Mike. John Crawford replaced the flow hive super which he had repaired and painted – thanks John.

Back in the club house we all enjoyed a sausage sizzle expertly cooked by Peter and Greg. Greg then introduced Kevin Finn who gave an outstanding, illustrated presentation on Reading the Entrance and Understanding Your Bees. Everyone present found it very informative and learnt heaps. Thanks, Kevin, for your excellent presentation.

See you next meeting.



World Bee Day Events

Our two World Bee Day stalls at Bunnings Nerang on Thursday, and Carrara Markets on Saturday were both very successful. I have attached two photos showing the Bunnings and the Carrara stalls. Altogether



the club raised around \$554 over the two days. Special thanks to all those that manned the stalls, especially Rebecca Laws (Qld Bee Biosecurity Officer) Kevin Finn and Greg Foster who were there all day. It was also great to see a number of members drop in and say hello. Kevin's display hive was a big hit with many people looking at it for 10 + minutes, watching the bees and looking for the Queen.

A very special thanks to Bunnings Nerang and Southport for their generous donations of



100 potted flowering plants, and two gift cards for our raffle. The people who purchased something from

the stall all got a plant. Thanks too, to IndigScapes who kindly donated 30 tube stock native plants, and the Vietnam Veterans Men's Shed who loaned us the tables for the stall.

We received a number of enquiries which sound promising and which will be followed up over the next week or so.

Queensland Beekeepers' Association Conference Report June 2021

Keeping honey bees is largely the same the world over and the same can be said about commercial and hobby beekeepers. They have similar problems and concerns and many of these were addressed at the Queensland Beekeepers' Annual Conference. The topics covered were wide ranging; the health of our bees, invasive pests and communication with farmers.

There was a presentation about the current bio-security issues concerning Varroa Jacobsoni and its eradication from around the Townsville area. Apis Cerana colonies were destroyed as a precaution and sentinel hives are in place around the Queensland ports of entry. They informed us that it will be soon announced that the area is varroa free.

There were other great presentations about pesticide poisoning and the relevant risk factors and some new studies into honey bee nutrition. Dr Jamie Ellis was his usual ebullient self and created a lot of interest with his presentations via video hook up from Florida on both days. Day1 Jamie discussed, "understanding the risks of pesticides to honeybees" and Day2 he tackled, "are pollen substitutes good for honeybees". Both Greg and I encourage you to access their Two Bees in a Podcast presentations on your home computer, they can be located at this website, www.ufhoneybee.com

Honey bee health was high on the agenda and we were reminded of our obligations in testing for invasive pests and reporting our

findings. Our test results should be reported to demonstrate that we are testing and the results recorded by Bio-security Queensland. The new purple hives are photographing the returning bees and can identify varroa mites on our bees, entering the hives – a terrific step forward in varroa detection.

Daniel Cooke a PhD student from the Qld University of Technology talked on the history of the development of beehives which was fascinating and explained his teams further research into thermal losses in the hive. Our honeybees work so hard to maintain even hive temperatures; hive type and location can significantly help to reduce thermal losses. He also explained the crucial role that frames of capped honey play in maintaining a stable year-round brood temperature.

Some other subjects covered were, adulteration of honey and wax from chemicals and syrups given to the bees, co-operation with farmers to reduce the risk of pesticide incidents, native title and permits for bees in our national parks.

The trade stands were full of gadgets and educational information. The field day was a great way to meet fellow beekeepers, buy some equipment or see new equipment in the flesh and there was a bio-security forum for questions and answers.

All in all, it was a full on three days and I would encourage any fellow club members to attend another conference, whenever it is in our area again. Networking with beekeepers or just learning from commercial beekeepers, it was a highly informative three days.

Whilst the conference is run by the commercial beekeepers, we are an important part of the industry. The talks were relevant for the hobby sector alongside our commercial colleagues. It is a great way to see new equipment and make out your wish list for the future. Hopefully, next year's conference will be a short travelling distance away.

Jokey of the Month

I don't mean to "drone" on but I think you'll love this bee joke!

What do you call a bee you can't understand? A mumble bee.

For Sale

Uncapping System. 3-piece uncapping system. Never been used. I have constructed a smaller system so no need for the larger shop bought system. Will sell for \$50. Contact Windy on 0414 617 716 or email windy738@hotmail.com

Polystyrene Containers. Containers with lids. Most of them have had cryovac seafood in them on ice. They are 200 mm deep and 575 x 385 mm, and make ideal storage containers or simple solar wax melters.



Selling for \$0.50 cents each. Contact Drew Maywald on 0400 959 043 or email at drewmaywald@gmail.com

Tasks for June-July

The cooler months are the perfect time to get into the shed to make up and paint new boxes as well as making and wiring new



frames for the upcoming season. Just be careful in the shed that you don't finish up in the emergency department having splinters removed like one of our members recently did.

Feeding Bees

This article is reproduced with the kind permission of the Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association Inc.

There is a lot of information on the internet about feeding bees. Two good sources are the Agriculture Departments of NSW and Victoria. The information supplied here is from the Victorian source.

“Honey bees store honey in the hive for food:

- during winter
- when nectar-secreting flowers are scarce.

When nectar is in short supply or unavailable, bees draw on the honey stores in their hive. You need to frequently monitor the amount of stored honey during these times because when it has all gone the colony will starve.

Starvation can be prevented by:

- moving bees to an area where plants are yielding nectar
- feeding them white table sugar
- feeding them syrup made with white sugar.

Bee colonies can be kept alive for long periods by feeding white sugar.

Honey as feed for bees

Do not feed bees honey unless it is from your own disease-free hives. Spores of American foulbrood disease can be present in honey.

Feeding honey from an unknown source, such as a supermarket or even another beekeeper, can cause infection in your hives.

If you feed suitable honey to your bees, place it inside the hive. Never place honey in the open outside the hive — this is illegal under the [Livestock Disease Control Act 1994](#).

How and when to feed bees

Don't leave sugar syrup or dry sugar out in the open. You will end up feeding bees from nearby managed and feral colonies as well as your own. It is a waste of money. Feeding in

the open can also cause robber bee activity in the apiary as well as the spread of bee diseases.

Place sugar syrup or dry sugar inside the hives towards evening — as this minimises the risk of bees robbing hives that have been fed.

Feeding dry sugar

Medium to strong bee colonies can be fed dry white table sugar placed on hive mats or in-trays under the hive lid.

Bees need water to liquefy the sugar crystals. They will source water from outside the hive or use condensation from inside the hive.

Some beekeepers prefer to wet the sugar with water to prevent it from solidifying. This creates a partial syrup.

Don't feed dry sugar to weak colonies as they may be incapable of gathering sufficient water.

Regardless of colony size, feeding dry sugar works best during autumn and spring when humidity is relatively high. Hot, dry summers make it hard for bees to dissolve sugar crystals into liquid.

A colony at starvation level should be fed sugar syrup first before dry sugar is given. This will give the bees immediate food without the need to liquefy crystals.

Bees will generally not use dry sugar when they are able to collect sufficient nectar for the colony's needs. The sugar will remain in the hive or be deposited by the bees outside the hive entrance. A small amount of dry sugar may be converted to liquid and stored in the cells.

Making and feeding sugar syrup

There are differing views about the correct amount of sugar to use in syrup.

Some beekeepers prefer a ratio of 1 part of sugar to 1 part of water — measured by weight (known as 1:1). The 1:1 syrup is generally used to:



- supplement honey stores
- stimulate colonies to rear brood
- encourage drawing of comb foundation, particularly in spring.

Other beekeepers prefer a dense syrup of 2 parts of sugar to 1 part of water (known as 2:1). The stronger syrup is used for food when honey stores in the hive are low. You can measure the sugar and water by either weight or volume as there is no need to be 100% exact about the sugar concentration.

Heat the water in a container large enough to hold the water and sugar. As soon as the water gently boils, remove the container from the heat source. Pour in the sugar and stir until the sugar crystals are dissolved.

Never boil the mixture after the sugar is added. The sugar can caramelize, becoming partially indigestible and toxic to the bees.

The syrup must be cooled to room temperature before it is fed to the bees. The cooled syrup can be placed in the hives using one of 4 methods.

1. Container feeder with sealable lid

Fill a clean container (such as a jar or a tin with a push-down lid) with sugar syrup. Drill or punch the lid with 6 to 8 very small holes. It is a good idea to remove the cardboard insert commonly found in jar lids.

Cut two 12mm high risers from a piece of wood and place them across the top bars of the frames that are in the top box of the hive. Invert the filled container and place it on the risers.

Place an empty super on the hive to enclose the feeder and replace the hive lid.

The risers provide a bee space between the top bars and the holes in the container lid.

2. Plastic bag feeder

Partially fill a plastic freezer bag with sugar syrup until it's approximately half full. Gently squeeze the bag to expel all the air, then tie the neck of the bag using an elastic band.

Place the bag on the top bars of the frames in the top box of the hive, under the hive cover.

Use a brad or very small diameter nail to punch about 6 to 8 small holes in the upper surface of the bag. The bees will suck the syrup through the holes.

Never put the holes on the under surface of the bag as the syrup may leak out faster than the bees can gather it. This can lead to loss of syrup outside the hive and cause robbing by nearby bees.

It is important to have a bee space between the upper surface of the bag and the under surface of the hive lid so the bees can access the syrup. If needed, a wooden riser of the dimensions of the hive can be used to raise the lid.

3. Shallow tray feeder

Place sugar syrup in a shallow tray (such as aluminium foil tray) under the hive lid.

Bees need to be able to reach the syrup without falling into the liquid and drowning. Grass straw or wood straw (such as that used in cooling devices) can be placed in the syrup for this purpose. Do not use any straw or floating material that has been treated with (or been in contact with) chemicals as this may be hazardous to bees.

The hives should be on level ground to prevent loss of syrup and a riser may need to be used if the tray is not shallow.

4. Frame feeder

Place sugar syrup in a 'frame or division board feeder' which is a container, the size of a full-depth Langstroth frame. It has an open

top which sits in the super as a normal frame does.

The feeder requires flotation material so bees can access the syrup without drowning.

How often to feed

It is normal for bees to:

- remove syrup from a feeder
- reduce the water content
- store it in the combs as if it were honey.

A medium to strong colony usually empties the feeder in a matter of days regardless of the feeder type used.

For colonies with virtually no stored honey and no incoming nectar, the initial feed will be largely determined by:

- the amount of brood
- the size of the colony
- to some degree, the size of the syrup container.

It is safer to over-feed a colony than to skimp and potentially cause the death of the colony.

Try an initial feed of around 1 to 3 litres, then frequently check the combs to see how much syrup has been stored. Use this to guide to determine how often and how much syrup to feed your bees. Feeding can be stopped when nectar becomes available.

Properly ripened syrup should have a moisture content of around 18%. Syrup that is not ripened properly will ferment and adversely affect bees.

Bee colonies with insufficient stores for winter should be given enough syrup to boost their stores before the cold weather of autumn sets in. This will enable the bees to fully process the syrup.

Sugar contaminates the honey

Sugar remaining in combs must not be extracted with the next honey crop. The sugar will contaminate the honey and the extracted product will not conform to the legal standards set out in the [Australia New](#)

[Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 2.8.2 - Honey.](#)

It is ideal if the amount of sugar you give the hive is fully eaten by the bees at the time hives are placed on a honey flow. This is not always possible to achieve.

During expansion of the brood nest, sugar stored in brood nest combs may be moved by the bees to the honey super.”

There is on the internet a video by Bruce White, the ABA Biosecurity Officer, on Feeding Bees. In this he covers another easy method, where syrup is sprayed from a height of about 45cm onto an empty drawn comb, filling the cells. The comb can be turned over gently, and the other side filled. Just Google it.

What's Flowering in the Region

During June flowering plants continue to support our bees throughout the region. These include, but not limited to, the following:

Brisbane Wattles – Two varieties of this tree are currently in flower, the Black and the Golden wattle. Both provide a moderated source of pollen to the bees.



Banksia – This tree provides ample nectar and pollen for bees, and often flowers in association with paperbark trees. Honey colour is dark amber.



Sheoak – A number of this species are currently flowering during June including the Black and River varieties. These trees provide a useful supply of pollen. It is not a nectar source.



Ironbark – At least four varieties of Ironbark are flowering during June and include the Caley's, Dusky-leaved, Grey and Tumble-down varieties. The honey from this tree has a medium density and mild sweet flavour, while useful quantities of pollen can be obtained to assist in maintaining colony strength.



Additionally, the Red Ironbark, more commonly known as Mugga, is also flowering.

Hickory Wattle – Apiaries sited near Hickory Wattle may obtain a good supply of pollen; however, the light-yellow pollen is poor food and doesn't proportionally simulate brood raising.



Golden Penda – This tree provides both pollen and nectar for native bees. These tiny

bees are smaller than a house fly so through close observation, you can see them sneak right into the centre of a flower to collect nectar. You will also see the pollen collected and stored on their back legs.

European Honey Bees *Apis mellifera* also love Golden Penda however they have trouble getting right in where the Stingless Bees go for nectar.



Gums – At least three varieties of gum are now flowering including the Blue, Scribbly and Spotted gums. Valuable pollen and nectar supplies are obtained regularly from the Blue Gums during late winter and early spring but there is limited pollen and next to no nectar from either the Scribbly or Spotted Gum.



Others – Some of the other species' flowering are:

- Forest Boronia
- Glycine
- Golden Candlesticks
- Mountain Coolibah
- Paperbark Tea Tree
- Swamp Messmate
- White Box

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The club would like to thank Rachael & Vern for their generous support

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