

The Waggle

Spring Edition 2022

Newsletter of the Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers

Furthering knowledge in Beekeeping by assisted learning and practical experience



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Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers

The Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers (GCRB) meets on the **third Saturday** of every month, at the Veterans Support Group Men's Shed, 18 Leagues Club Drive, Nerang. Meetings start at **8:30 am**.

Club Contacts

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Presidents Report

Well here we go again, with the impending flow about to unlock this amazing cycle of nature. I hope you have prepared your apiary, if you feel as though you are struggling please reach out to the club for guidance. Let's hope La Nina doesn't eventuate as harshly as predicted in the months ahead.

I would like to thank the committee for stepping up in my absence over the last two club mornings. It's comforting to know that the club has the ability and systems in place to absorb and continue functioning with people temporarily missing.

Thank you to our Bio Security Officer Fiona and Secretary Drew for being vigilant and guiding our club through this current Varroa incursion. I know we have been getting a flood of emails and information thrust upon us in recent months, I encourage you to see these as an indication of the seriousness of the situation. We are all vulnerable to lethargy regarding Varroa as we have been very lucky for so long, but the "she'll be right" approach won't work if the spread breaks out. So please continue to be vigilant when working your bees and read your emails.

I'm waiting with anticipation for our Queen Breeding team of Fiona, Kevin and Mike to hopefully be in a position by early October to have made a start on this first for our club. It will be a great resource to eventually have documented and available for all our members to be involved in and learn from.

I would like to give our new members a heads up on a possible Beginners Beekeeping course that we may be holding soon. It hasn't been run by the committee as yet and I may get in trouble, but we have normally run a couple of these courses each season and I get the feeling we will be having one before too long. Keep an eye out for Drews regular members brief for up to date information.

This will be my last piece in the Waggle as President, we need to have some new input and involvement on the committee and my couple of terms have now come to an end. At our AGM on the 16th October we will be electing a new President and Treasurer. I will still be heavily involved in our little bee club as I have got so much from it that I still need to continue giving back to the club. I encourage you to think about it as well, you'll get back more than you'll put in, I can assure you. With that in mind I hope we are flooded with enthusiastic members in the weeks ahead. The good

thing about any volunteer committee is that you can give it a go and after a while if you aren't comfortable in the role you can easily step down.

Well that's too much from me, sorry to our editor Don for my large word count.

I hope to see you at our next club morning.

Greg

"The Appy Apiarist"

New Members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to GCRB.

Justy Rogers	Alex Ratajczak	Joe Bird	Bridget Goodwin
Wade Geering	Shaun Fyfe	Phil Baxter	Waree Branjerdporn
Hugh Parker	Kate Crocker	Daniel Svasti	Sam Branjerdporn
Murray Wallace			

Please make all new members welcome at club meetings.

Bio-security

What you can bring to meetings and What you can't

As the current COVID pandemic started to impact on our lives, the Club also realised that the biosecurity risks to the Club's hives also need addressing. After much discussion way back in 2020 the following biosecurity rules were implemented to keep both beekeepers and bees safe:

Veils/Bee suits - While the club does have a number of veils available for members and guests it was decided that personal veils or bee suits posed a low risk to activities. Members and guests can wear their own veil/bee suit while attending the Club Hives.

Gloves – This is a two-part issue with the bottom line being that only Club supplied gloves are to be worn. The first part is to prevent the spread of COVID. Latex inner gloves are to be worn by all members and guests who intend to put on bee-resistant outer gloves, which are the second part. The Club outer gloves are to be worn to protect both your bees and the Club bees from the transfer of pathogens between apiaries.

Hive Tools – Only Club hive tools are to be used within the Club apiary. This, again, is to prevent the transmission of pathogens between apiaries.

So, the bottom line is please bring along your veil/bee suit for use at the meetings but please leave everything else at home. This way both your bees and the Club bees have one thing less to worry about.

Bee Books

Looking for a present or gift idea for the Apiarist in the family, or want to buy a good book on Beekeeping

The following books are good for general bee information and standard (Langstroth) hives. They do also cover off on Warre hives and Top Bar hives:

- **Backyard Bees** – A guide for the beginner beekeeper by Doug Purdie (ISBN 978-1-743-36508-3)
- **The Bee book** – Beekeeping in Australia by Peter Warhurst & Roger Goebel (ISBN 978-0-734-50330-X)
- **The Bee – A natural history** by Noah Wilson-Rich (ISBN 978-1-78240-596-2).
- **Beekeeping for Dummies** by Howland Blackiston (ISBN 978-1-119-31006-8)

The following is mainly to do with Top Bar hives:

- **The Barefoot Beekeeper** by Phillip Chandler (ISBN 978-1-326-19225-9)

For Slovenian (or A-Z) hives this book is about the only one out there:

- **A-Z Beekeeping with the Slovenian Hive** by Janko Bozic (ISBN 978-1-545-50916-6)

If you are interested in Native bees then these books are very informative:

- **The Australian Native Bee Book** by Tim Heard (ISBN 978-0-646-93997-1)
- **A Guide to Native Bees of Australia** by Terry Houston (ISBN: 978-1-4863-0406-6)

Another handy book regarding the flora to be found that will support your bees is:

- **Honey Flora of Queensland** by S T Blake and C Roff (ISBN 0-7242-2371-1)

Spring Management Practices for Australian Beekeepers

[Spring Management Practices for Australian Beekeepers: An Overview - Bee2Bee](#)

Spring has sprung and you – and your bees – are about to get very busy. Good spring management practices are essential. Here's an overview of what will keep the average beekeeper busy in spring.

Regular Hive Inspections Are Key to Spring Management

As the weather warms and your colony is growing you will need to keep a closer eye on your hive. As a rule, you should inspect you hive as soon as possible in the spring and continue inspections every seven to ten days throughout.

Always inspect your hives on fine, mild days to minimise stress to your honey bees. Never open your hive in very windy, wet or otherwise unpleasant conditions.

These inspections will inform all other spring management practices.

Assessing Your Queen(s) – The First Task in Spring Management

On your first inspection in spring you need to check on your queen. It is important to review her egg-laying performance as early as possible.

There are several signs that your queen is not doing too well. These include poor brood distribution, the laying of drones only, or workers laying eggs.

It's good to have a queen supplier lined up in advance in case you do need a replacement. If you haven't got one yet, a list of Australian queen breeders is available via Aussie Apiarists Online.

Supporting Spring Colony Growth Through Nutrition

In the first inspection and onwards you will also need to check on your hive's honey stores. If the winter honey stores have been consumed you MAY need to supplementary feed your bees sugar syrup.

Remember, if colony numbers are still low, the older bees may not be able to forage enough to support optimal growth. You also should consider whether enough floral resources are available in your area.

Alternatively to feeding sugar syrup, you can add back any honey frames saved from the same hive when you prepared it for winter. **Do not feed honey from another hive** unless you are 100% certain it is disease free.

You can also give the hive a great boost for the spring build-up by feeding pollen, or pollen/protein substitutes.

And of course, make sure a reliable water source will stick around as the weather warms up!

Replacing or Adding Hive Components

You will also need to check if any combs need replacing when you first open your hive. Early spring is a good time as some brood box combs may be empty or almost empty.

Remove any old, dark, thick, heavily gnawed or broken combs. Combs with too many drone cells can also be removed or relocated to a honey super.

Then, as the brood grows you will need to identify when to add a honey super. You'll want to make sure you don't add it too early or too late.

The Australian Beekeeping Guide rule of thumb is that when the hive cover is removed and bees "virtually bubble over the sides of the box", a super is likely necessary.

Swarm Prevention and Management – Don't Lose Your Bees!

According to the Australian Beekeeping Guide, the impulse to swarm is strongest in spring and early summer.

This is a primary reason for inspecting your hives regularly. You'll need to keep an eye out for the signs that your hive is going to swarm so that you can prevent or prepare to capture a swarm or you could lose half your colony!

Chat with other beekeepers for ways of preventing swarming.

REMEMBER: Swarming is a natural instinct of a bee colony to ensure survival of the hive.

Keeping an Eye on Brood Health

There are many nasties that could endanger your honey bee colony. Inspecting the brood is integral to good spring management.

Depending on which state you're in, you'll need to watch out for signs of American Foulbrood, European Foulbrood, Chalkbrood, Sacbrood, and the rare Stonebrood in the brood combs.

Remaining Vigilant for Other Pests and Diseases

Of course, you'll want to keep an eye out for signs of other pests and diseases in the hive. Tropical areas have to deal with hive beetles, for example, and the effort to keep Australia Varroa Mite free is ongoing.

Every beekeeper needs to remain informed and vigilant.

GCRB Hive Swarmed: Drew informed me that we had Hive #4 at the club swarm into a tree next to the hives. The swarm was so heavy it broke the tree branch it had settled on. Luckily we were able to catch the swarm. Drew suggests it may pay to go into the brood and see how much space there is for the queen to lay eggs and whether any queen cells are being developed. A quick solution for a brood that is filling up is to take two outer frames from the brood and put them in the super, making sure that the queen is not on them. Replace the two frames with two stickies or 2 frames with foundation around the centre of the box separated by at least one existing brood frame. If the frames removed from the brood are full of honey, with no brood on them, the honey could be harvested. The key is to make room for the queen to lay eggs and hopefully avoid a swarm from occurring.



EKKA Honey Court – supplied by “Windy” Hill

On Friday 12 Aug 2022 I finally managed to attend the EKKA despite living in QLD for the last nine years. How much of the EKKA did I see? Not very much unfortunately!



The reason I didn't get to see much is that I spent the day volunteering in the Honey Court talking about and demonstrating the joy of beekeeping. The Honey Court is set up by the Queensland Beekeeping Association (QBA) to promote beekeeping to the people of Queensland. The Court is manned by a core of people and supplemented by volunteers. The options for volunteering are either half or full days with entry being free.



Throughout the day there are demonstrations of opening a hive and explaining what is happening with the girls. I volunteered to jump in to do the demonstration a couple of times while one of the others narrated the actions. The only drawback was the lack of airflow in the display area meaning if I got too eager with the smoker I finished up in a coughing fit, so I learnt to work with minimal smoke.

The hive display is normally followed by a demonstration of how to extract the honey, as well as demonstrations on how to make hand cream using bee products and candles from wax.

All the entries into the honey, wax and mead competitions were on display in the Honey Court area which were of interest to many people. I even managed to pick up a few pointers talking to the others manning the Honey Court about how to show the products, so now I have a little more confidence for our annual competition at the end of the year.

The day was very busy with honey sales and talking to people about beekeeping. I was a little surprised by the number of questions regarding the varroa incursion in NSW as there has only been minimal reporting in the Qld media about it. At the same time, I got to speak with some very knowledgeable beekeepers and managed to learn a thing or two. Hopefully my mead making skills will improve now.

All in all, it was a very worthwhile day even though I was exhausted by the time I got back home. I would thoroughly recommend anyone to volunteer to do some time at the Honey Court at future EKKA's as I intend to do. Even if you only do a half day you can then stay and have a look around the rest of the show.

Yours Aye

Windy

Pictures from The August Meeting





For Sale

Extractor

Below is a photo of a 30+ year-old home-made extractor which has been donated to the club. Price will be a donation to the club.



For Sale

Flow hive 2 + 6 frame brand new fully assembled and stained with adjustable ant legs ready for bees. \$ 1100.00 Phone Mark Francis 0421677730



Varroa In Perspective

Member Steve Hill, sent in this interesting photograph which shows what the Varroa mite means to the bees.



Editors Notes

Please Note: I will be out of country from 31 August – 12 October 2022. If you have any subscriptions for the **Summer Waggle**, please hold onto them until after 12 October.

Submissions for the Summer edition – please have to me NLT the 25th of November. Prefer you use the dhewett5865@gmail.com address.

Photos – have you any photos of your bee hives. It is interesting to see the different set ups, paint jobs and locations. Send me your pics and a small description for the Summer edition!!!

Here is a picture of my first flow hive and location from September 2021. Things have changes a bit with the addition of a second hive and a bit more shrubbery.



Cheers for now

Don H