

# The Waggle

Winter 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

I'm purposely not going to talk about the "R" word because if you are like me your over it, so let's move on.

Our last club day was the first I've experienced where we couldn't add an outdoor component down at the hives to our morning. Our guest speaker Qld Biosecurity Officer DR David Schlipalius and the large club contingent remained indoors and was treated to a great biosecurity rundown on many a varied topic with an enthusiastic Q and A by all. Thank you, David, once again for your time we always enjoy your visits.

World Bee Day on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> May a small club contingent manned a busy table fully loaded with everything bees at the Nerang Bunnings store. It was positioned right at one of the entrances and was very popular with the Bunnings shoppers. Club member Roger mentioned that a friend of his in Texas saw our post #worldbeeday2022 so we certainly spread our wings on that one. Unfortunately, our large HOTA Farmers Markets stall planned for the Sunday was cancelled due to the poor weather.

The committee has been working methodically under the guidance of our Secretary Drew on a new initiative based on an American program called Hives for Heroes that club member Roger had been informed of. We intend on running a similar program and calling it Hives Helping Heroes. I can't really mention too much and will probably get in to trouble for leaking this much out, but wanted to give you the heads up and advise that Drew will be providing the full reveal shortly, so stay tuned.

Our Flow Hive workshop on Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> May provided by founder of the Flow Hive Stewart Anderson was another great example of the club committing to providing the membership with interesting and informative guest presenters. Stu's story of the Flow Hive invention, relaxed style and knowledge base was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

At our next club morning committee member Fiona Fernie will be providing a talk on preparing your hives for Spring, Fionas talks are always next level and who can't resist that intriguing Scottish accent. She will be also representing our club at the QBA Annual Conference being held in Warwick on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June. I look forward to reading her report from the conference.

I hope to see you on the 18<sup>th</sup> at our next club gathering, I'm confident that we will be robbing some honey so we will need all hands-on deck. Until then, keep the sunscreen handy!

Greg

"The Appy Apiarist"

## **New Members**

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

Martin Carroll	Trevor Coombes	Michelle Dart	Jason Hicks
Marie Keyes	Matt Rossman	Peter Rudolph	Rocki Tahar
Richard Walker			

Please make all new members welcome at club meetings.

## **Club Biosecurity**

### **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.

## **Beekeeping Tasks for Winter**

<https://www.ecrotek.com.au/blogs/articles/beekeeping-in-winter-climate>

### **Keeping your bees cosy in cold weather:**

Winter is a natural rest time for bees. After building up their honey stores through spring and summer, they're ready to hole up in the hive and stay out of the cold and rain.

Winter can be a rest time for beekeepers too. If you weatherproof your hives, make sure they're in a good position and feed your bees extra if needed, you should be able to get them through with minimal hive checks. Although winter is well underway now, it's not too late to sort out your hives and help them thrive.

Although some parts of Australia are lucky enough to have mild, dry winters, other areas experience very low temperatures, high winds, storms, flooding, frosts, and snow. Your level of weatherproofing depends on where you live – although it's always good to keep an eye on the forecast in case your region gets an unexpected cold snap or winter storm.

Here's how to care for your bee hives through the winter – wherever you are:

### **Protect your bees against the elements:**

Like us, bees prefer to be warm and dry during winter. Weatherproofing your hives can help protect them from cold temperatures, wind, and heavy rain.

Keep your hives cosy by adding solid bottom boards, if you don't already have them. Reduce hive entrances to minimise the amount of cold wind entering the hive – without preventing your bees from getting in and out. If you live in a particularly chilly area, consider using a hive cover as well – this is a plastic, padded tube that slips over your hive to add another layer of protection against wind and cold.

For wind and storms, weigh down the hive lid with bricks or stones and add slanted boards to protect hive entrances and ventilation holes.

Speaking of ventilation – it's an important consideration too. You want your hive to be warm, but not damp and stuffy, as this can lead to mildew and disease. If you think your bees aren't getting enough fresh air, add a couple of small ventilation holes near the top of the hive, on the vertical lip of your lid to avoid any rain getting into the hive.

### **Packing down for winter:**

Bees use a lot of energy to heat and clean the hive, so packing hives down for winter by reducing their physical size can make it easier for them to maintain warmth through winter. This means removing empty frames and boxes and reducing the number of hive entrances. You can also rearrange the inside of the hive to maximise efficiency. In autumn, you should have left enough honey stores in your hives to get them through winter. Position these honey-laden frames at either end of your brood box, with brood frames clustered together in the middle.

Although it's more complicated, you could also think about combining a smaller, weaker colony with a stronger one to increase its chances of getting through the winter.

### **Feeding bees in Winter:**

When you harvest your honey towards the end of autumn (or summer if you live in a particularly cold area!), you need to leave enough to keep your bees fed through the winter. In Australia, an average colony needs around 8 frames – or roughly 18kgs of

honey – to keep it going. Of course, this depends on where you live – in colder areas, more frames may be needed.

If your bees don't have enough honey in storage, or if their honey stores shrink more quickly than you expect, you may need to supplement their food to help them survive. Depending on your preferences and systems, this could mean using honey reserved from a previous season, or feeding with sugar water. Don't feed with pollen supplements at this stage – pollen can trigger a population increase, which could mean you need to supplement with even more feed.

### **Check and change:**

Although you should minimise hive checks during winter, you shouldn't ignore your bees altogether – even if getting outside isn't that appealing.

Check your hives at least once a month during winter, preferably on a warm, dry day. Lift the lid briefly to check food stores, look for dampness or mildew, assess hive health, and sweep dead bees, twigs, or leaves from entrances. If you notice that food supplies are low or see signs of disease, or a queen less hive, you will be able to supplement or treat before it's too late.

Towards the end of winter, watch for bees leaving and re-entering the hive – they should start collecting pollen early as they gear up for spring. If you're concerned about the low level of activity, supplement with pollen to help them start the season on a strong footing.

### **Get ready for SPRING!**

The best way to use your spare time in Winter is to prepare for the busiest time of year for bees and beekeepers - Spring! Identify any boxes, lids, bottom boards, queen excluders or other equipment that might need to be replaced when the weather warms up. Coming into spring, as long as it is warm enough, you will also then make room in the brood box for more brood by extracting the honey in your brood box that kept the bees warm through winter...

It's all about being prepared:

If you keep a good eye on your hives, make sure they're weatherproofed, properly positioned and well-fed, your bees should make it through the winter without much trouble. As with almost anything with beekeeping, it's all about being aware, and being prepared.

## 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)

## Club Visit by Phil and Griffen Baxter

We had an excellent turnout to the GCRB March meeting in March. We started with commercial beekeeper, Griffen Baxter doing the disease inspection on Hive 5.



Phil Baxter



Griffen Baxter

Griffen's presentation and explanation of what to look for and what to do was outstanding, and everyone gained by seeing a disease inspection conducted by a professional beekeeper. Griffen was assisted by Phil Baxter who has many years of experience in beekeeping.



The members present asked many questions and we would probably still be there if Greg had not intervened! Congratulations to Griffen and Phil on a fantastic day and being prepared to share their knowledge and experience with us. One member commented "Best meeting ever!" Griffen is looking at possibly conducting a field day for members at one of his hive sites much later this year. We will keep you posted about that.



**Swarms** – The following article is for info only and is not to be assumed as the only way to prevent/limit swarming.

**Swarming is the bees' way of multiplying.** It is a completely natural occurrence that every beekeeper will encounter at some time or another. A successful colony will breed and become large. At this point they will decide to split and create another colony. The bees will start to produce a new queen and the old queen leaves the hive with around a third of the colony.

**Signs that the bees are about to swarm** - There are several things that indicate that a colony might swarm:

1. They start to produce queen cells
2. There is no more room in the brood box
3. Clusters of bees appear near the entrance of the hive

When a hive is filled with honey and has no room for new eggs, worker bees search for a suitable place to set up a new colony. After the queen has mated, she takes about half the worker bees and starts a new colony in the new location. A new queen is left behind with the other half to continue the old colony.

**From late August through Spring conduct weekly inspections for signs of swarming**

**Queen cells** - If you discover a queen cell which suggests that the colony is making a new queen you will need to decide whether to leave it or whether to remove it. A colony with a strong queen, plenty of space and a secure home are unlikely to be thinking of swarming.



A queen cell

Seldom in a queen's first year will the colony swarm but as with most things about bees they can do something out of the normal.

An older queen becomes part of a very crowded hive which also can become honey bound and that can cause a colony to go into swarming mode with the subsequent loss of 1/2 of the bees including the queen, and possibly some annoyed neighbours. Swarming normally happens early Spring.

That is the reason that Fraser Coast City Council had banned bee hives in all residential areas they control. Too many bee keepers not caring for their bees. They are the first but I predict they won't be the last.



## Hive and Extractor For Sale

Member Anna Mauger, needs to sell her hive and three frame Italian Extractor, as illustrated below.

### Hive



The hive is 21 months old and has had no honey extracted from it, so it should be full of honey. **Hive Price as shown: \$375.**

### Extractor





As you can see from the photos, this extractor is in perfect condition and has never been used. **Extractor Price: \$500.**

For more details contact Anna on 0431 027 725.

**Wanted** – from Steve “Windy” Hill

I am after a dozen red wine bottles.

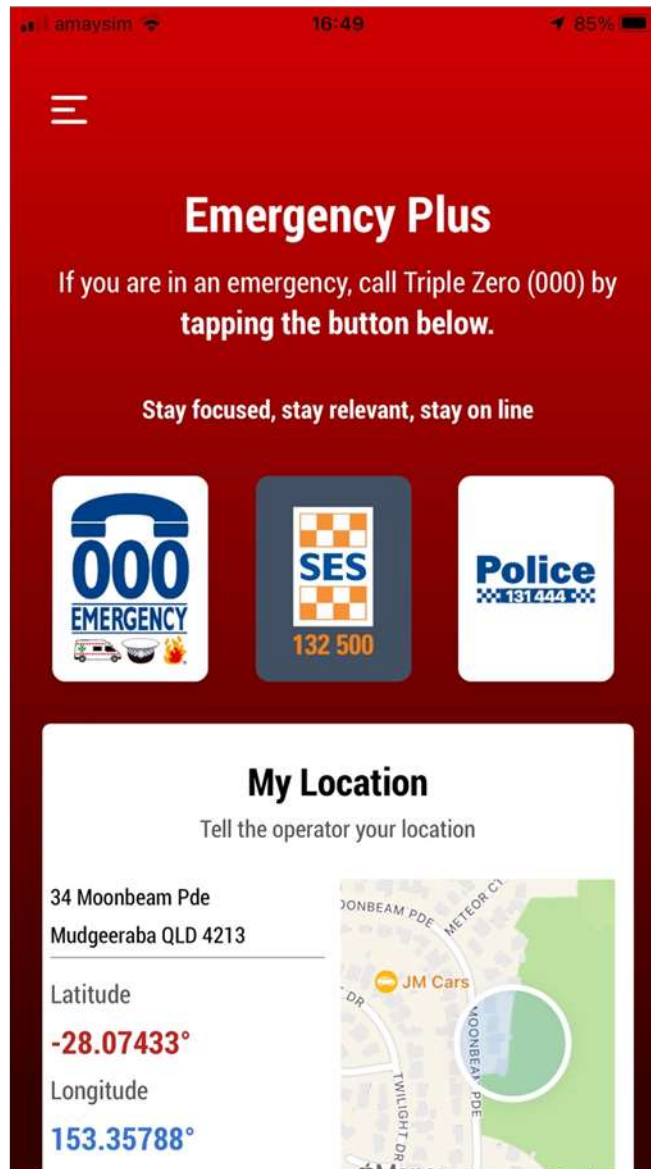
Happy to pick them up at the next meeting after the Waggle comes out.

I am after them to bottle my mead in.

## Emergency Plus

Emergency Plus is an app that could save lives. If you find yourself in an emergency situation, or are helping someone during an emergency, open the Emergency Plus app on your phone and you be able to tell emergency services exactly where you are. The app does not rely on being able to get a signal as it connects direct to a satellite.

If you are in a town it will give the address of where you are located plus the Latitude and Longitude of your position making it very easy for paramedics etc to find you.



As you can see from the image above, you can also dial 000, the SES or the Police direct from the app. You can download this app from your online Apps store and the best thing is that it is free!

## Warwick Branch of the QBA Annual Open Day in 2022

**Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc.**  
**OPEN DAY**

**Saturday 25th  
June 2022**

**Warwick QLD**  
Location:  
Condamine Apiaries, Wheatvale via Warwick

**Entry gates  
open 8.30am**

Beekeeping Trade suppliers are onsite for the day, offering demonstrations and product sales.

Expert Panels and Specialist Presentations are offered throughout the day.

Food & Drinks available for purchase at the event.

Check out our Facebook page for more information:  
<https://www.facebook.com/qldbkeepersassociation>

For trade exhibit information contact Paul Reid via email: [skyscreamer17@gmail.com](mailto:skyscreamer17@gmail.com)

Dear Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers

The Warwick Branch of the QBA will be proudly hosting our annual Open Day in 2022.

We're absolutely buzzing about coordinating this fun day out for the entire family.

Come along for a day jam-packed full of great educational activities, beekeeping discussions and presentations, and displays and demonstrations from beekeeping supply businesses.

If you've caught the beekeeping buzz and you're keen to be a part of one of the fastest growing industry in the agriculture sector, be sure not to miss this event

### **No Cook Sugar Bricks**

Adapted from 8 Frame Honey, Bywong NSW:

If you need to feed your bees during winter try feeding hard sugar rather than syrup. Syrup (particularly at a ratio of 1:1, encourages the queen to start laying eggs. When there are eggs in the hive the bees raise the temperature to about 34 degrees to keep the eggs and young larvae warm. This increases the amount of food the bees need to consume, creating a vicious cycle where you need to keep feeding them so that they don't starve. On the other hand, if you give the bees hard sugar they consume it without the queen being stimulated to lay eggs.

If you need to give a colony an emergency feed try making no cook sugar bricks.

Here's How: Add 10 to 15 drops of water into 1kg of white sugar and mix it together until it has the appearance of snow or crystals. If required add a few more drops of water, but the less water the better.

Scoop the mixture into cake tins lined with grease proof paper (for easy release), and pat it down firmly, making sure it isn't higher than the gap between the top of your frames and the internal section of the hive lid.

In 24 to 36 hours the sugar will harden and be ready to be inserted into the colony that requires it. Wait until the warmest part of the day and when it is not raining. Wearing the proper PPE (veil, gloves etc) quickly lift the lid of your hive and put the sugar brick into the hive on top of the frames on a piece of baking paper or on a brown paper bag.



You can make them into any size or shape, but it is important to remember that each brick needs to be flat and thin like a pancake.

### **From the Bee House – Windy Hill**

Despite the abundance of wet weather the hives have, for the best part, remained dry. There have been the odd day when the landing pad on a couple of the hives has had a bit of water on them, but otherwise no rain has impacted the hives. This has led to many days of the girls bearding the hives as they stay at home due to the weather. Having the hives in a house has let me check on the girls to see how they are doing despite the inclement weather. Now that I've had the hives for a couple of years, I believe I am well on the way to being able to judge how the hive is travelling just by looking in the back of the hive.

I would like to thank all of the members who came over to the two field days I had to show case my Slovenian hives. I certainly hope it was informative and you now have a better understanding of what I am on about when I start talking about my setup. I am always prepared to have a long chat about Slovenian hives and would be more than happy to help setup a bee house if anyone wants to go down that path. There is planning afoot to do more field days in the future (2023) so that any new members who would like to see what I am on about get the opportunity.

Hopefully by the time the next issue comes out this wet weather will have of abated and the girls will have had a chance to get out and about. Like them I am certainly over the rain.

### **Editors Notes**

Submissions for the autumn edition – please have to me NLT the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August. Prefer you use the [dhewett5865@gmail.com](mailto:dhewett5865@gmail.com) address.

Cheers for now

Don H