



## Asian honey bee and varroa in Townsville

The Queensland city of Townsville is on alert after varroa mites (*Varroa jacobsoni*) were found in a feral Asian honey bee hive spotted by wharfies in a container stand on 27 June at the Port of Townsville. Not long after, another nest was found in a bird nesting box in a backyard about 9 kilometres away in Annandale. More recently, a new swarm of Asian honey bees was collected at Hyde Park. Although the Asian honey bees are of concern, the real focus of the response is the mites that they were carrying, and pathogens that the mites are capable of carrying.

For news stories on this incursion click [here](#).



## New hive created by a designer, not a biologist

An industrial design and technology graduate from Loughborough University, England, has created a beehive using UV-stabilised polythene. Each plastic part has two thin wall sections with a void in-between, which improves insulation. The hive also has humidity and temperature sensors and a microphone, the data from which can be checked via a mobile app.

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## Bee semen could be used against bee pathogens



An Australian study has found that certain proteins in bee semen could be used to make medicines for pathogens that threaten bee populations.

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## Hives destroyed as outbreak discovered

An outbreak of endemic brood disease American foulbrood which led to 400 honey bee hives being destroyed in a town in South Australia has prompted a reminder for apiarists to be on guard for this disease, which is the most serious disease of honey bees present in Australia. See the American foulbrood page on [BeeAware](#) for information on managing this disease.

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## How honey bees 'telescope' their abdomens

In 2015, a team of researchers from Tsinghua University in Beijing used a high-speed camera to observe how honey bees curl their abdomens, confirming that bees can manipulate the shape of their abdomens, but only in one direction. Now the same team has identified the mechanism behind that movement. Specialised membranes that connect a honey bee's abdominal segments are thicker on the top of the abdomen than on the bottom, allowing curling in just one direction.

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## The colony-killing mistake made by backyard beekeepers

While experts welcome the rising national interest in beekeeping as a hobby in the US, they warn novices may be inadvertently putting their hives — and other beekeepers' hives— in danger because they aren't keeping the varroa mite population in check. Many hobbyists avoid mite treatments, preferring a natural approach, but that's often a deadly decision for the bees.

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## Air pollutants degrade floral scents

Polluted air can modify the chemical composition of floral scents, increasing the time it takes for insects to find floral plumes when foraging. Plant-pollinator interactions could be sensitive to changes in floral scent composition, especially if insects are unable to adapt to the modified 'scentscape'.

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## Picky eaters: bumble bees prefer nutrient-rich pollen

Bumble bees have discriminating palates when it comes to their pollen meals, according to researchers at Pennsylvania State University. They found that bumble bees can detect the nutritional quality of pollen, and that this ability helps them to selectively forage among plant species to optimise their diets.

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## How queen bees repress workers' fertility

Researchers from New Zealand's University of Otago have discovered the molecular mechanism by which queen honey bees carefully control the fertility of worker bees.

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## Avocado farmer swears by native bees to pollinate his crop

A northern New South Wales avocado farmer believes native bees are better at pollinating avocado flowers than European honey bees because of their size.

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## Technology uncovers sub-lethal effects of pesticides

A micro sensor fitted to a bee has been used to record the insect's movement in and around bee hives.

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