



THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

Bimonthly newsletter for
THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

Better Apiculture Through Knowledge

Volume 46 Issue 2

www.beekeepers.asn.au

April/May 2009

**YOUR INDIVIDUAL WEBSITE PASSWORD FOR ACCESS TO
ALTER SWARM COLLECTING DETAILS WILL BE ON THE
ENVELOPE WHEN RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER**

Annual Field Day Report

*ABA Field Day was hosted by Parramatta Branch, James
Ruse Agricultural High School, Carlingford on Saturday
7th February*

Notes courtesy of Jim Wright

Welcome: Peter Thorley, President Parramatta branch

Practical Demonstration: Opening a Hive, Splitting a
Colony, Requeening: Bruce White

The first part of this in-the-field demonstration was primarily directed at beginners but it went on to be a masterly presentation with valuable information for even experienced beekeepers.

Opening and Manipulating a Hive

Light the smoker on the roof of and adjacent hive, pack it well with fuel (pine needles the best) to avoid sparks.

Protective clothing advised and demonstrated (though Bruce initially wore none, later reluctantly donning a veil when the bees proved to be quite aggressive!)

Begin the process by examining the front of the hive, looking for pollen bearing bees. One hopes to see pollen of several colours indicating that the bees are gathering a variety of pollen for some are low in protein (vary 4%-40%) which is essential for nutrition of the bees.

Smoke the hive, aiming smoke directly at the bees, not into the air around then hive.

Work behind or at the side of the hive. Emlock (named after its inventor, a beekeeper named Emmett) and hive tool were demonstrated.

The lid is removed and placed upside-down nearby.

After smoking the bees again the frames are loosened with the hive tool and removed one by one beginning with one second from the end. To get a good look at the comb, shake the bees off to the front of the hive. In the process of doing this, Bruce explained and demonstrated features to look for in a comb. There was evidence of early European Foul Brood which was carefully shown. Instead of healthy white "c" shaped larvae in the bottom of the cell, a few

deformed greyish larvae were evident. Bruce emphasised that this relatively benign disease due to bacterial infection of the larvae is treated with the antibiotic oxytetracycline.

Finding the Queen

The standard method of searching for the queen frame by frame was demonstrated, with eventual success, and the young active queen was seen by onlookers.

Should the queen not be found by this direct method, an alternative approach was described. Take an empty box. Put a queen excluder on top of it, shake all the bees off the combs in front of this box, place the original box with combs and brood on top of it with a lid on. The bees will enter the empty box, ascend to the combs and brood; but the queen and drones cannot get through the queen excluder and will be found on it in an hour or so's time.

Association's AGM & Inter-Branch Colonel Pulling Look upon this event as 'participation' rather than 'competition'

Sunday, 19th April, 2009

will be held at the Hunter Branch venue:

Hunter Region Botanic Gardens on the Pacific Highway
between Hexham Bridge and Raymond Terrace.

Apiaries Judge – Nick Annand DPI

Quiz - Eddie Sjinstra

Branch Entries Judge – Local Queen Breeder

Col Wilson of Hunter Valley Apiaries

Requeening

The queen bee is the only animal that can be sent by post! They can be bought from queen breeders and delivered by post; anticipate their arrival and do not leave in a hot letter box. Types of queen cages were demonstrated. The queen is accompanied by a few escort worker bees to feed her on the candy (honey and icing sugar) which plugs the spout-like exit passage.

The old queen is found, squashed and rubbed on the cage or dropped into the hive.

The cage with the new queen is placed between the top bars of adjacent frames with spout angled upwards any dead

escort bees will not block the exit. The bees inside and outside the cage will eat the candy and free the queen after a few days, by which time the bees will have accepted her new smell. Do not open the hive for ten days. When checking after this interval there is no need to search for the queen, simply look for eggs and young larvae. If there are none the queen has not survived and there will be multiple queen cells.

Requeening can be done any time of day, best in late spring (from September on) or autumn.

Making an Increase—Splitting a Colony (How to make two colonies from one.)

Turn the hive brood box (hive A) around 180 degrees, put another empty box (hive B) beside it with the entrance pointing in the original direction. Find the queen in A; transfer her and half the brood, honey and pollen bearing frames into B. The field worker bees will return to hive B where the old queen is. Requeen the original hive A which does not have the older field bees which are the ones likely to kill a new queen.

If the queen cannot be found:

Turn the original hive A 180 degrees and put a new box beside it with queen excluder above it. Shake all the bees from A in front of B, and put A with frames of brood over the queen excluder on B. The bees will pour into B and up to A, but the queen and drones will remain in B.

Transfer some frames of brood with bees from A to a nucleus hive, move about two km, and requeen. Restore remaining frames from A to B where the queen is.

Choosing Sites for Bees, Urban and Rural: Doug Somerville

This excellent presentation was supported by a four page hand-out. The following is a brief summary.

Decisions concerning siting of bees can be considered under three headings:

Effect of the bees on the Public

Effect of the site on the Bees

Effect on Yourself

The Public

This is of paramount importance, for any complaint from the public means the bees have to go. Doug illustrated this point with many examples from his own experience. Consider proximity of neighbours, swimming pools, flight paths of bees. Follow the established code of practice for urban beekeeping. Give neighbours generous gifts of honey.

The Bees

The availability of honey flow is important, but in an urban situation pollen is not an issue—there will be plenty available. From this viewpoint, site is not an issue for a few hives in a suburban area. But in the commercial world, 70% of honey comes from eucalypts which are rain dependent and may not flower for 2-3 years, so for a migratory beekeeper knowledge of flora is essential. Water availability is important; ensure that bees have access to some form of supply other than the neighbour's swimming pool.

Avoid excess exposure to sunlight in summer, and too little in winter. Bees against a brick wall in summer may suffer from reflected heat. Avoid windy sites.

Consider pests; ants, cane toads, European wasps.

Though not a major concern in the suburbs, do not locate bees near someone else's bees. For commercial beekeepers stocking rates are important.

The possibility of flood or fire, theft or vandalism must be considered.

Yourself

Ensure that you have access for adequate care of the hives. If on property other than your own, ensure that you have permission. There are problems with siting bees in national parks and state forests.

Swarm Collection: Alex Taylor (North Shore Branch)

Because spring swarming commonly occurs because bees have out grown their available space, primary swarms usually have a strong queen. Because swarming bees are full of honey, smoke is usually not necessary; in fact it is likely to alarm them. Use dry combs in the box, stickies are likely to attract robber bees.

Approaches to various situations were discussed, emphasising that each one presents its own unique challenge. Bees in a wall cavity are a special problem, and a vacuum device to suck them out was demonstrated.

Retrieval from a possum box was discussed, and Dave Wilson showed a novel method of framing feral combs using a wire mesh cage incorporated in a standard frame.

Also an novel device for capturing high swarms was demonstrated.

Assembling Bee Gear: Peter Annetts

“Get all your gear ready before you need it. It takes 3-4 weeks to get a hive ready.”

Hives are made of soft wood which must be treated to avoid dry rot. Soak the ends of unassembled hives in copper naphthanate (diluted to 10% with turps) for one day and paint the rest of the timber. This is toxic so avoid skin contact; wear gloves and do it in a well ventilated area.

Allow to dry three weeks before painting and dry well after painting.

When assembling a hive use glue and nails two and a half the thickness of the timber.

Dry well after painting.

Brand brood boxes with your registration number. Bruce White indicated that it is now legally acceptable to paint you number on the box.

Assembling frames, wiring and embedding foundation comb was demonstrated.

Honeybee News

The Journal of the NSW Apiarists' Association Inc.

Published bi-monthly

Annual Subscription - \$33

Visa, MasterCard welcome

For more information contact:

The Editor

PO Box 352, Leichhardt NSW 2040

Email: honeybee@accsoft.com.au

The ABA news letter needs articles from clubs and individuals. Information, inventions, techniques, stories club events can all be included.

Remember your club news letter can be included in the ABA news letter envelopes for your club members if you get it to Dave Wilson as a pdf or MS Word attachment to an email.

AHBIC has produced some training material to assist recognised training organisations to provide assistance in apiary training. This material is available free of charge to any RTO. If you wish to take advantage please contact AHBIC at 02 92210911 or email This e-mail address is being protected from spambots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it

Australian Beekeeping Traineeship Program

Do you want to become a beekeeper? Do you want to improve your skills and knowledge about bees and the Australian beekeeping industry? Do you want to improve your management skills? Specialised beekeeping traineeships are now available in:

Certificate II in Agriculture specialising in Beekeeping

Certificate III in Agriculture specialising in Beekeeping

Certificate IV in Agriculture specialising in Beekeeping

These certificates are nationally recognised. They will provide an excellent grounding in beekeeping skills and knowledge, as well as the general skills needed to be a good all-round employee or manager of a beekeeping business.

They cover:

Carry out regular livestock observation (bees) (RTE2144A)

Carry out workplace OHS procedures (RTE3713A)

Comply with industry quality assurance requirements (RTE3901A)

Construct and repair beehives (RTE2217A)

Contribute to personal skill development and learning (BSBCMN304A)

Extract honey (RTE3321A)

Identify and report unusual disease or plant pest signs (RTE3407A)

Manage honey bee swarms (RTE3153A)

Manage pests and diseases within a honey bee colony (RTE3415A)

Manipulate honey bee brood (RTE3155A)

Open and reassemble a beehive (RTE2157A)

Operate in isolated and remote situations (RTD2703A)

Recognise plants (RTC2016A)Requeen a honey bee colony (RTE3154A)

Remove a honey crop from a hive (RTE3320A)

Transport livestock (bees) (RTE3131A)

Use a bee smoker (RTE2305A)

There is also material that can be used to make existing farm chemical safety courses more relevant to beekeepers. You can design your own training program by selecting units of competency that are relevant to your interests and the work that you will be doing. Courses may be available by correspondence or workshops or a mix of both.

Government assistance may be available for commercial beekeepers who want to employ a trainee. Amateur beekeepers will also be able to undertake the training programs if they wish.

To find out more you can contact: The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council - 02 9221 0911 Rural Skills Australia - 1800 647 798 - Your nearest Registered Training Organisation.

STOLEN BEEHIVE MATERIAL RECOVERED.

NSW DPI received information about a neglected apiary which only had 5 hives alive out of approximately 40 hives. The remaining hives were scattered about the site. The site was not leased to any beekeeper.

Given the state of the apiary and the fact that 9 different beekeepers registration numbers were observed on the hive material the situation was highly suspicious as it appeared to be stolen material.

The matter was reported to the Rural Crime Investigators (NSW Police). After investigation by NSW DPI and the Police the rightful owner was identified and contacted. The owner retrieved the material from the site.

The owner of this material was identified due to two factors

1. Some of the boxes and other hive material including frames, lids, and escape boards were identified with the registered owners number and,

2. Records kept by NSW DPI revealed history of some of the material being on sold to the rightful owner.

Thus this is an excellent case why it is important that all beekeepers correctly identify their hive material and notify NSW DPI of the disposal of their hive material.

Beekeepers should report all cases of stolen or vandalised hive material to the NSW Police Rural Crime Investigators (nearest Police station).

Correctly identifying hive material and reporting stolen hive material to NSW Police Rural Crime Investigators will assist in the retrieval of your hive material.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Northern Rivers Branch

President/Secretary: Merv McDonald 66283687

Treasurer: Peter Dickson-Smith 66492009

Illawarra Branch

Reminder our meetings & Field Days start at 7pm and 10am respectively.

Please be on time for our newly elected President, Bob Nicholas.

March 29th – Sunday programme – Field Day 10am. Mowing, clean up and extraction.

April 20th – Monday night meeting 7pm. Guest speaker Dave Wilson, Secretary of ABA, speaking on the ABA progress and the Website for swarm patrol.

April 26th – Sunday field day – requeening.

May 11th night meeting 7pm. Speaker Ross Rickard from AQUIS to tell us of the work he is involved in protecting our quarantine status.

May 31st – Sunday Field day 10am. If weather permits – tree and shrub identification.

Bob Nicholas (President)

Geoff Henning (Secretary) 9528 4292

Ken Mooney (Treasurer) 9709 5484

Central Coast Branch

Meetings held on 3rd Wednesday of the month commencing 7.30pm at SOHIER COMMUNITY HALL, entry off Shirley Rd., Ourimbah, on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Starting time 7.30pm. All things relevant for amateur beekeepers.

New visitors are more than welcome to attend.

President: Martin Roberts (02) 43721381

Secretary: Toni Mitchell (02) 43321597

YOUR NEW ABA WEBSITE www.beekeepers.asn.au IS YOUR BRANCH REPRESENTED?

Macarthur Beekeepers Assoc Inc

Meetings at Jack Nash reserve at 7:30 pm

Field days at Campbelltown apiary at 9:00 am

President: Bruce Wallis 9605 6688

Treasurer: Jean Haavasalu 46818540

Secretary: Barry Austen 48 851 705

Nepean Branch Inc.

We meet a week late, due to Easter. **Sunday April 19th** 9.30 am Meeting at Nepean (Emu Plains) Highschool. Bring your suit, veil and your lunch. We will discuss closing down for winter. Practice closing down a hive or two?

We meet a week late due to Mothers day. **Sunday May 17th**. 9.30 am Meeting at Nepean (Emu Plains) Highschool. BYO Lunch, suit & veil. Close down further where necessary. General Working Bee to clean up the shed. Dress in old cloths.

The Nepean Branch members have had ample opportunity this season, to get first hand experience in extracting. If you are not allowed to do this in the kitchen, or bathroom, there is always outside. The tent was costing \$100. The apiary is about 300 metres away, the bees soon get the smell of what goes on, hence the suiting up of all the workers. Most are beginners, learning from the few who know what to do and why. To uncap we used scrapers. This leaves very little cappings. It was the 3rd time this season that we did extract with all hands on deck. What a season! And still more nectar coming in. Thanks all for a terrific effort. For further info ring Eddie Sijnstra on 47513941 or 0408 024 295 or e-mail: sijnstra@tpg.com.au

President: Eddie Sijnstra (02) 4751 3941

Secretary: Paul Richardson (02) 4739 0381

Hunter Valley Branch

Meetings held fourth Sunday in the month at Hunter Region Botanic Gardens.

???April meeting brought forward to NSW Assoc AGM & Comp – Sunday 19th April???

May meeting fourth Sunday of month - 24th May

Tocal Small Farm Field Days 1st, 2nd, 3rd May.

Saturday, 24th October – Tocal Beekeeper's Field Day

President: Ted Flower (02) 49681483

Secretary: Jim Wright (02) 4959 3138

Parramatta District Branch

2nd Wednesday of month. Field Day on following Sunday.

Meetings held at James Ruse High School Ag Section, Carlingford

Meetings in Agriculture classroom – field days in club apiary – entrance via Baker St

Wednesday meetings 7:30 pm start

President: Peter Thorley

Secretary Dave Wilson 94842596

Treasurer: Norm Webb

Extractors Claudio Natoli 9629 9621 Ray Szymanski 9869 2400

The Amateur Beekeeper is the newsletter for The Amateur Beekeepers' Association of New South Wales Incorporated.

Contributions to The Amateur Beekeeper are welcome. Material must be submitted, in writing, to the Editor before the 15th of month to be considered for inclusion in The Amateur Beekeeper the following issue or subsequent issues at the Editor's discretion. Articles published do not necessarily contain the views of the Editor unless specifically expressed and whilst every care is exercised, the Editor and/or Council of ABA (individually or corporately) do not hold themselves responsible for errors or omissions. Information contained in this publication is provided as general advice only. For application to specific circumstances, professional advice should be sought. All inserted material must be booked with the Editor and may not necessarily contain the views of the Editor and/or Council of ABA. © 1998 All material in this newsletter is copyright and cannot be reproduced in part or in full without prior written consent.

