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Amateur  
Beekeepers  
Association  
NSW

# THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS  
FEBRUARY • MARCH 2021

**9** THINGS TO  
KNOW  
WHEN YOU  
**EXTRACT  
HONEY**

**FREE**  
**honey**  
**testing**  
Ask your club  
for details

**LEARN AT  
HOME**  
Beekeeping videos  
that deliver the facts

The allure of  
**BLUE FLOWERS**

**Poisoned!**  
How to report it





# Amateur Beekeepers Association

NSW

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The *Amateur Beekeeper* is the journal of the Amateur Beekeepers Association of NSW Inc. It is distributed to members six times a year, in December, February, April, June, August and October.

The editor will consider adverts from businesses relevant to beekeepers to run free of charge where they contain a discount or special offer to ABA members. Please email [editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.asn.au)

Do you have a photo you'd like to be considered for the cover of the next issue. Send it in to [editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.asn.au)

# President's report

Hello and welcome to 2021, the first year we will renew club and ABA memberships midwinter instead of midsummer!

The change to a July-to-June year means membership and insurance will now cover a full beekeeping season. It also allows clubs and the ABA to handle renewals and schedule AGMs at the quietest time of year instead of the busiest.

Summer is moving along at a cracking pace. Here, at the edge of the Blue Mountains, I am enjoying a fabulous mix of hot days, cool days, and well-above-average rainfall. My garden threatens to engulf the house, and spring-flowering plants are seizing the opportunity to push out a second flowering at the wrong end of summer. I've had trees – some of which I'd never even seen in flower before – laden with plums, peaches and apples!

Of course the damp weather brings its own perils, with many beekeepers reporting an increase in chalkbrood and small hive beetle. But these are problems we can handle: contact your club biosecurity officer if you need advice.

A bigger problem that will be harder to handle: the *Varroa destructor* mite being kept at bay at Australian ports by the vigilance of our quarantine and biosecurity forces. We all know we need to be prepared for the eventual arrival of this unwelcome visitor.

We have seen over the past year the devastating impact that a disease such as COVID-19 can have on the human population, and it's not a huge stretch of the imagination to see potential parallels with a future varroa incursion. One thing we have learnt from COVID-19 is how vigilance, traceability and good hygiene can be extremely effective tools in our biosecurity toolbox.

On the subject of varroa, the ABA has been participating in Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) discussions on identifying effective treatments for Australian conditions. Interestingly many of the techniques used successfully overseas rely heavily on bee's having a long "brood break", which is something we tend not to experience and which might render these strategies less effective here. It appears that further research needs to be done in this area before we have a solution.

**Sheila Stokes**

[president@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:president@beekeepers.asn.au)

# Our huge vote of thanks

**T**HE ABA wishes to acknowledge the service of three committee members who have recently stepped down. Their contributions to the association and recreational beekeeping are extensive and much valued.

**Dave Wilson and Arthur Garske** have both served on the ABA executive for many years in addition to their pivotal roles at Parramatta Beekeepers. Dave has most recently been the ABA's education officer, after a number of terms steering the association as its secretary. Dave managed member records in a hectic period when the ABA's membership began expanding rapidly and when manual registers and printed newsletters were the order of the day. Dave's articles have been regular highlights in this journal.

Arthur has stepped down as the ABA's public officer. He contributes to this journal and is well known for his talks on beekeeping first aid at club events, field days and gatherings.

The ABA thanks Dave and Arthur for staying on for an extended period after last year's AGM was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

**Vince Schnyder**, as ABA secretary, is familiar to many clubs and members. He has instigated many special projects in the past several years, most notably renegotiating club and beekeeper insurances available with ABA membership. Vince joined the ABA executive after successfully launching the Northern Beaches club and brought a wealth of professional expertise to the committee.

**Ana Martin** becomes the new ABA secretary, in addition to membership officer. Editor **Sue Carney** becomes the ABA's public officer.

The committee is delighted to welcome **Kathy Knox** onto the team. Kathy is education officer at Gold Coast Beekeepers, has been a delegate representing amateur beekeepers on the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and has a long list of relevant experience in beekeeping, teaching and community organisations.



## BIOSECURITY

# AFB in honey: Get tested for free

The ABA is collecting 75 samples of honey from around NSW for a programme to keep AFB in check

**A** GAIN THIS year the ABA is participating in a testing programme that checks the level of American Foulbrood (AFB) spores in NSW honey samples. This scheme not only identifies apiaries where hives are in a critical stage of AFB disease but it flags low levels of infection where clinical signs may not yet be evident. Just as important for beekeepers and researchers: it reveals areas where AFB *isn't* at detectable levels.

Normally recreational beekeepers wanting to get honey tested need to pay a diagnostic fee to a laboratory. However the ABA has arranged with the NSW DPI for 75 samples to be analysed for free.

We are asking each NSW based club in our network to send us three samples of honey – one from the club apiary and two from members' hives, or three from members' hives. Each sample needs to be 75 ml or 110 grams (not any less). The sample can be from one or a combination of hives in an apiary.

Jars need to be identified with the beekeeper's contact details (phone, email and address), location of hives, number of hives contributing to sample, and date collected. This information should be written on a slip of paper securely attached to the jar by rubber band.



Full details of the project and how to join in are being sent to each club. Please contact your club's biosecurity officer for information on how you can participate.

The ABA will follow up with beekeepers directly to explain their individual results and to help with any questions arising from a positive reading.

The process for analysing samples is explained in the [August 2020 issue](#) of this journal (page six).

**AFB is a fatal and incurable disease affecting honey bee brood. It does not affect humans so AFB spores in honey are not a health problem for consumers.**

Details of how to spot signs of AFB in a hive and how deal with an infection are detailed in the **Biosecurity Manual** sent to ABA members with 2020/21 membership. Or check out these three sites:

[beeaware.org.au](http://beeaware.org.au)

[beekeepers.asn.au/afb](http://beekeepers.asn.au/afb)

[dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/pests-diseases/afb-awareness-month](http://dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/pests-diseases/afb-awareness-month)

## Tell me about . . . B-QUAL



B-QUAL has been developed by the Australian honey industry to certify producers for quality and food safety.

Any producer of honey, bee products or bees – commercial or recreational – can apply to join the scheme. It involves meeting set criteria and passing an annual independent audit. B-QUAL certification shows that a producer meets Australian food standards and meets the requirements for exporting to markets such as the EU.

The B-QUAL website contains [seven short videos](#) explaining the scheme, requirements and benefits. "It is also proposed that the adoption of a national quality standard will form the basis of an ongoing programme, to ensure industry best practice and ongoing industry training," states [bqual.com.au](http://bqual.com.au)

Recreational beekeepers pay around \$1100 to complete initial certification. For details of the benefits, check out [bqual.com.au/Why](http://bqual.com.au/Why) or call 1800 630 890

## TECHNIQUES

# How to keep foundation from warping

**Arthur Garske explains a method he has used for many years to embed foundation so it doesn't buckle**

I haven't read about this technique in any modern bee books. I originally saw it in Tarlton Rayment's 1916 book "Money in Bees in Australasia". I have used it since I started beekeeping and I can vouch for it!

Beeswax when heated expands considerably. So if a sheet of foundation is embedded cold then put into a hive between frames of brood or honey that bees are looking after or working, it will stretch as it warms. You can get away with it if the bees draw the foundation immediately. However if it is not drawn immediately it will buckle out of shape.

To ensure nice regular comb, foundation should be embedded in a heated room. A heated room is probably not available to the average backyard beekeeper. However I can achieve the same result by careful use of the sun.

Working in warm sunlight, place your cold foundation into the groove on your frame. It is easy to move it to centre it while cool. Then stand the frame on an angle against a wall facing the sun. I do this with three or four frames. As you place the next frame against the wall, the first frame that has been standing in the sun

[Last issue](#) we published a piece by Brian Window explaining the properties of wax, and how to use this knowledge to encourage your bees to produce perfect honey combs



is ready to embed. Go ahead and embed that sheet of foundation. Then put a cold sheet in a new frame groove and place it against the wall in the sun. The next frame is ready to embed.

Depending on the heat of the sun and the swiftness of your embedding technique, you get into a pattern of embedding one heated frame and then putting a cold sheet in the groove of a new frame. You can tell if the wax foundation is getting too hot because the sheet is too floppy when lowering it onto your embedding board. You just have to wait a couple of minutes for it to cool down — but remember you have frames standing against wall heating up, so you might have to move them into the shade till you catch up.

If the foundation is too hot when embedded, it is liable to split between the wires as it cools.



## SAFETY

# Poisoned? Please report it!

**Have your bees been unintentionally poisoned by an agricultural chemical?**

Did you know that you can – and should – report the problem to the authority that regulates farm and veterinary chemicals? This helps regulators keep tabs on chemicals such as pesticides that are already in use and, if necessary, it can change the rules.

The regulator is the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), and the scheme to monitor any problems from chemicals already on the market is the Adverse Experience Reporting Program. Anyone can file a report (called an Adverse Experience Report or AER.) For beekeepers, an 'adverse experience' includes poisoning of bees on their own property

For further details and to file a report go to [apvma.gov.au/node/311](https://apvma.gov.au/node/311)

**Have you filed an Adverse Experience Report in the past five years?** We are keen to hear about your experiences. Please contact [president@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:president@beekeepers.asn.au) We are seeking feedback to share with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council which is currently assessing how the reporting system works for beekeepers.

# 9 Things Every Beekeeper Should Know About . . . Extracting Honey



## REDUCE COMB BREAKAGE WHEN USING AN EXTRACTOR WITH BASKETS

After spinning to remove the honey, *gently* move the frame sideways to free the comb from the basket wires before pulling the frame up to remove it from the basket. This is especially important when extracting white combs (combs that have never had brood in them) as they will be fragile.

## WARM HONEY FLOWS MORE READILY

It helps to remember this when you plan your tasks, particularly if you live in a cooler region. Inspecting hives to remove frames is easier in the middle of the

day (since many bees are out foraging) and if you can arrange to extract the honey from the frames while it is still at hive temperature, all the better. Honey in frames left to cool will not separate from the wax as easily, and cool honey takes longer to sieve and pour.

**DON'T BE GREEDY** Honey won't spoil if left on the hive, so err on the bees' side when deciding how much to leave. It's easy to forget that capped honey is the bees' pantry to get them through lean times.

## AVOID BLOCKING THE STRAINER AFTER EXTRACTING

Uncap combs with a knife. The cutting action removes slices of wax whereas a cappings scratcher or uncapping fork removes small particles of wax. These particles often end up mixed with the honey being extracted and can block the strainer.

**WASH USED EQUIPMENT IN COLD WATER** It may seem intuitive to use hot water but opt for the cold tap. Beeswax quickly hardens in cold water making clumps easier to hose away; hot water melts the wax so you could well end up with a thin coating on all your gear.

**USE A MICROWAVE TO RENDER THE CAPPINGS AFTER EXTRACTING THE HONEY** See how to do this at [illawarrabeekeepers.org.au](http://illawarrabeekeepers.org.au). Look for the video on Rendering Beeswax a step by step Beginners Guide

Beeswax is a valuable by-product of honey extracting and wholesales for about \$18 a kilo.

**LET YOUR HONEY STAND FOR A WEEK BEFORE BOTTLING.** Open the bucket's lid and scoop off the whitish froth – air bubbles that have risen to the surface. (Beekeepers entering their honey in shows will repeat this process several times.)



## NEVER!

It's NOT okay to leave honey-coated equipment out in the open for bees to clean up. This shortcut is often touted online. However it's

a biosecurity no-no and contravenes the Australian Code of Practice for Beekeepers.

Honey can contain the microscopic spores that cause American Foulbrood disease in honey bees. If you see posts encouraging open feeding of honey to bees please politely point out the dangers.

## ALWAYS!

Sticky frames and equipment can be put back inside the hive that the honey was extracted from. Or wash it somewhere where bees can't access the runoff.

## BEEKEEPING ADVENTURES

# Diamond days

Jim Wright reflects on his 75 years as a keeper, as he says farewell to bees

**A**fter 75 years of interest and amateur activity in the world of bees, there comes a time to say "goodbye".

*My interest began in 1943 at the age 13.*

*Brought up on a farm outside Coffs Harbour I was fascinated by bees on the flowers and crops and by the smell of bee hives on neighbouring properties. It was these neighbours who got me started, one giving me a*



**MY FIRST HIVE TOOL, MADE FROM AN OLD FILE, AND MY FIRST PENDER SMOKER. THIS WAS A LITTLE 2-INCH ONE, ALL I COULD THEN AFFORD**

*box and making a hive tool from an old file (see photo left), and another the first swarm out in spring.*

*I used to ride a horse to school through the bush and one spring morning I spied a swarm hanging accessibly on a tree. I was late for school that day!*

*For beekeeping supplies I used to save up and order by mail from Penders in Maitland,*

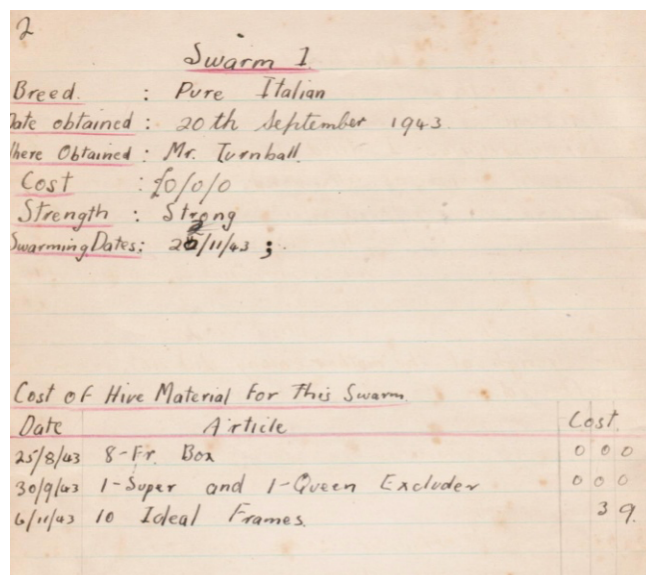
*paying by postal note for delivery by train. I couldn't afford much so instead of full sheets of foundation comb I just put a narrow strip under the top bar. Combs were rather wobbly and difficult to manipulate which was one reason why I found it quite a challenge to go down to the brood box.*

*With a move to town from the farm and eventually to Sydney University Medical School, the bees had to go and did not re-enter my life till I settled in Newcastle some 14 years later.*

*I walked out to my front garden one spring morning and there was a swarm on a shrub. So I thought, "I'll have you"; and rang Penders, now much closer than in my boyhood.*

*To my delight, Penders still had my record on their books (long before computer records) and proved to be as cooperative and helpful as before. It was shortly after this that the Hunter Valley Branch of the Amateur Association of NSW was formed in 1964, but I was not aware of its existence and muddled along in my own way with backyard beekeeping till retirement some 30 years later.*

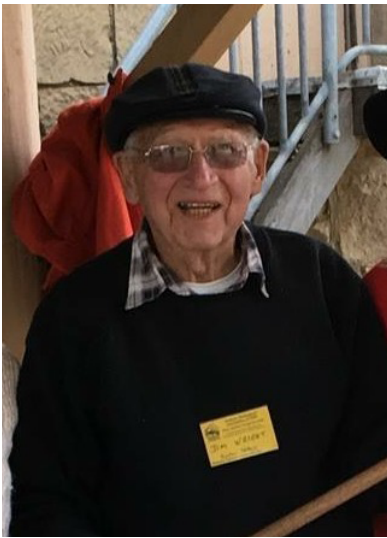
*Joining this club in about 1996 was transforming. It was a small group then, meeting on a picnic table under a tree in the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. A brief business meeting was followed by a visit to the small apiary where I learned so much, and more important, gained more confidence in handling bees.*



**ABOVE: BEEKEEPERS MUST KEEP RECORDS. IT IS MANDATORY NOW; IT WAS NOT IN 1943 WHEN AS A 13-YEAR-OLD BOY I KEPT DETAILED NOTES IN THIS BROWN PAPER COVERED EXERCISE BOOK, INCLUDING DETAILS OF MY FIRST BEE SWARM.**

**BELOW: MY COPY OF W.A. GOODACRE'S BOOK PUBLISHED IN 1941 AND PURCHASED ABOUT 1943**





**JIM WRIGHT, IS A RETIRED NEWCASTLE PEDIATRIC SURGEON AND A LIFE MEMBER OF THE ABA**

*There were two mentors, one a source of practical knowledge and the other an ex-science teacher with more focus on the biology of bees. In the apiary, however, they invariably disagreed with each other's techniques, argued and gave conflicting advice.*

*Other members found this confusing, but having been involved with learning and teaching all my professional life I found it not only amusing but highly rewarding, a clear indication that there are many ways of doing things. The learner takes in the different approaches, tries them, adopts the method that works best for him, modifies it to become his own and then passes it on.*

*Today, the Hunter Valley club has grown to over 350 members, and the state body to over 4,000. Involvement with this association over the last 24 years resulted in life membership and was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.*

*My strong advice to any beginner or aspiring beekeeper is to join one of its many affiliated clubs. More important than book learning is the gaining of confidence derived from hands-on practice with experienced fellow members. Attend meetings, field days and share in the practical work in the club apiary. You get out of such an organisation as much as you put into it.*

*Beekeeping is hard work, hives loaded with honey are heavy and there comes a time with advancing years and physical frailty that keeping bees as they deserve to be kept is no longer possible and all one can do is talk, teach and write. Then as faculties fail, motivation diminishes and even that mantle of activity has to be passed on to others.*

*Beekeepers are a friendly bunch and involvement with the hobby and the Amateur Beekeepers Association has brought many life-long friends and untold rewards. But now with the frailties of a 90-year-old I must say a very reluctant farewell to bees.*

## **ABA MEMBERSHIP Q&A**

**"WHEN'S MY RENEWAL DUE?"**

Current memberships and insurance carry through to 30 June 2021. Prior to that date we'll send everyone an invitation to renew online.

**"CAN I GET A REPLACEMENT CARD?"**

You can order a new one via the [online store](#) for \$5. You will be asked for your membership number which you can find on your [online records](#).

**"CAN I JOIN MORE THAN ONE CLUB?"**

Of course! Email [membership@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:membership@beekeepers.asn.au) with details of the second ABA club you wish to join. You'll need to pay the new club fee. Unexpired club membership fees are not refunded.

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## SCIENCE

# The allure of blue

*This article first appeared in*  
**THE CONVERSATION**

## Adrian Dyer examines the fabulous attraction of the colour blue

**A**t a dinner party, or in the schoolyard, the question of favourite colour frequently results in an answer of “blue”. Why is it that humans are so fond of blue? And why does it seem to be so rare in the world of plants and animals?

[We studied these questions](#) and concluded blue pigment is rare at least in part because it’s often difficult for plants to produce. They may only have evolved to do so when it brings them a real benefit: specifically, attracting bees or other pollinating insects.

We also discovered that the scarcity of blue flowers is partly due to the limits of our own eyes. From a bee’s perspective, attractive bluish flowers are much more common.

### A history of fascination

The ancient Egyptians were fascinated with blue flowers such as the blue lotus, and went to great trouble to decorate objects in blue. They used an entrancing synthetic pigment (now known as Egyptian blue) to colour vases and jewellery, and semi-precious blue gemstones such as lapis lazuli and turquoise to decorate important artefacts including the Mask of Tutankhamun.

Blue dye for fabric is now common, but its roots lie in ancient Peru, where an indigoid dye was used to colour cotton fabric about 6000 years ago. Indigo blue dyes reached Europe from India in the 16th century, and the dyes and the plants that produced them became

important commodities. Their influence on human fashion and culture are still felt today, perhaps most obviously in blue jeans and shirts.

Renaissance painters in Europe used ground lapis lazuli to produce dazzling works that captivated audiences.

Today many blues are created with modern synthetic pigments or optical effects. The famous blue/gold dress photograph that went viral in 2015 not only shows that blue can still fascinate — it also highlights that colour is just as much a product of our perception as it is of certain wavelengths of light.

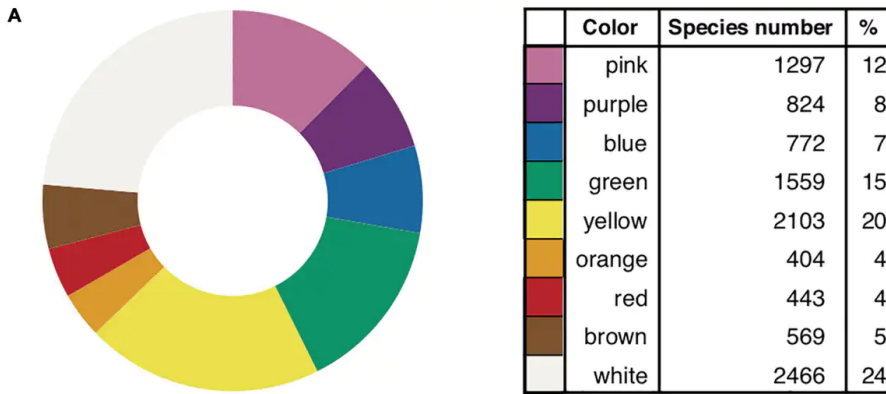
### Why do humans like blue so much?

Colour preferences in humans are often influenced by important environmental factors in our lives. An ecological explanation for humans’ common preference for blue is that it is the colour of clear sky and bodies of clean water, which are signs of good conditions. Besides the sky and water, blue is relatively rare in nature.

### What about blue flowers?

We used a new [online plant database](#) to survey the





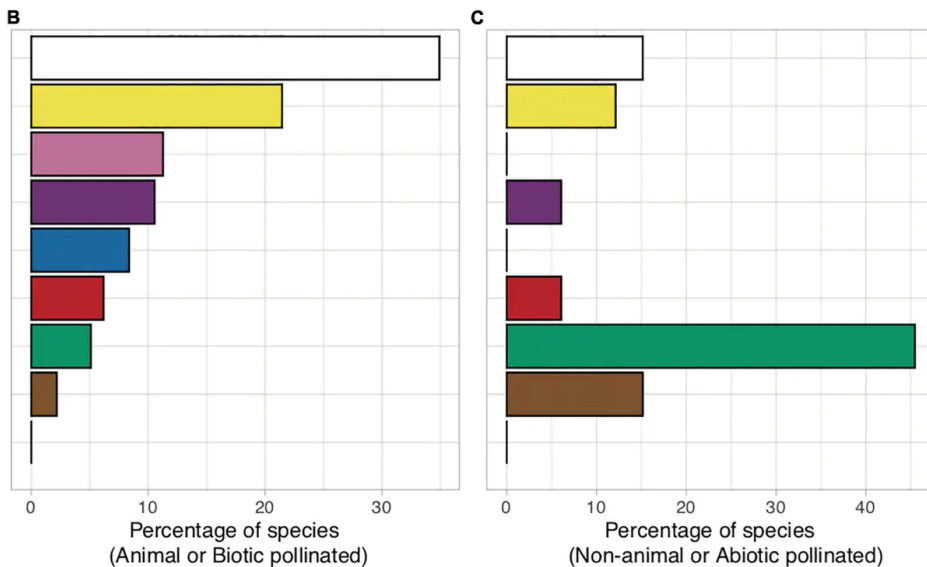
**GLOBAL FLOWER COLOUR FREQUENCY FOR HUMAN VISUAL PERCEPTION (A) SHOWS WHEN CONSIDERING ANIMAL POLLINATED SPECIES LESS THAN 10% ARE BLUE (B), AND FOR WIND POLLINATED FLOWERS ALMOST NONE ARE OBSERVED TO BE BLUE (C).** DYER ET AL., AUTHOR PROVIDED

[field of research.](#)

### Why understanding blue flowers is important

About one-third of our food depends on insect pollination. However, world populations of bees and other insects are in decline, potentially due to climate change, habitat fragmentation, agricultural practices and other human-caused factors.

The capacity of flowering plants to produce blue colours is linked to land use intensity including human-induced factors like artificial fertilisation, grazing, and mowing that reduce the frequency of blue flowers. In contrast, more stressful environments appear to have relatively more blue floral colours to provide resilience.



the relative frequencies of blue flowers compared to other colours.

Among flowers which are pollinated without the intervention of bees or other insects (known as abiotic pollination), none were blue.

But when we looked at flowers that need to attract bees and other insects to move their pollen around, we started to see some blue.

This shows blue flowers evolved for enabling efficient pollination. Even then, blue flowers remain relatively rare, which suggests it is difficult for plants to produce such colours and may be a valuable marker of plant-pollinator fitness in an environment.

We perceive colour due to how our eyes and brain work. Our visual system typically has three types of cone photoreceptors that each capture light of different wavelengths (red, green and blue) from the visible spectrum. Our brains then compare information from these receptors to create a perception of colour.

For the flowers pollinated by insects, especially bees, it is interesting to consider that they have different colour vision to humans.

Bees have photoreceptors that are sensitive to ultraviolet, blue and green wavelengths, and they also show a preference for “bluish” colours. The reason why bees have a preference for bluish flowers remains an [open](#)

For example, despite the apparent rarity of blue flower colours in nature, we observed that in harsh conditions such as in the mountains of the Himalaya, blue flowers were more common than expected. This shows that in tough environments plants may have to invest a lot to attract the few available and essential bee pollinators. Blue flowers thus appear to exist to best advertise to bee pollinators when competition for pollination services is high.

Urban environments are also important habitats for pollinating insects including bees.

Having bee friendly gardens with flowers, including blue flowers that both we and bees really appreciate, is a convenient, pleasurable and potentially important contribution to enabling a sustainable future.

Basically, plant and maintain a good variety of flowers, and the pollinating insects will come.

**ADRIAN DYER IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT RMIT UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE.**

FULL DETAILS OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ARE AVAILABLE AT [JOURNALS.PLOS.ORG/PLOSONE/ARTICLE?ID=10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0226469](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0226469)

## EDUCATION

# Learn from home

**B**RUSH UP on your obligations under the beekeepers' Code of Practice. It's never been easier to get hold of the details. The code is available at [beeaware.org.au](http://beeaware.org.au) either as a free PDF or click on the green tabs to go directly to the section you want to read. (Useful on a mobile phone.) The Code is available in English, Greek, Arabic, Italian and Turkish.



**BROADEN** your knowledge of beekeeping. Read Abbé Warré's manual for keeping bees in basic hives and according to what many refer to as 'sustainable' principles. [Beekeeping For All](#) is his classic manual and available free online. Read or download a PDF of the English translation prepared by Pat Cheney and David Heaf at [thebeespace.files.wordpress.com](http://thebeespace.files.wordpress.com).



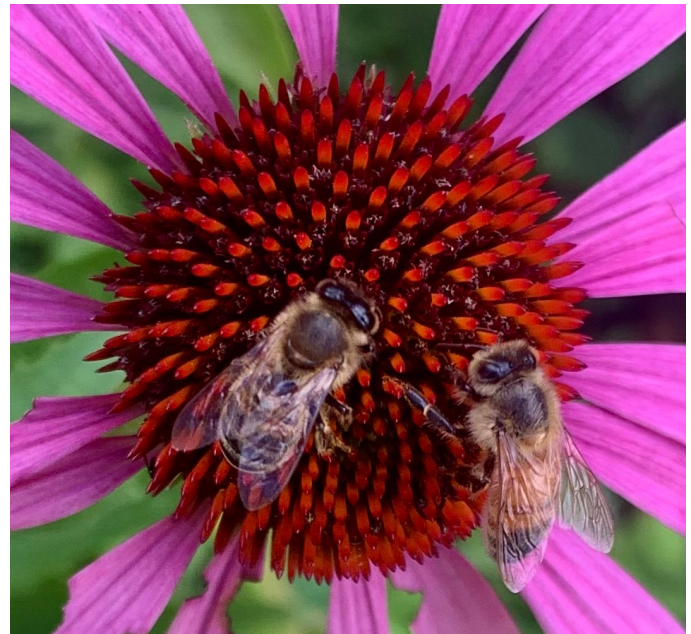
**DISCOVER** Australia's newest introduced bee, the [European carder bee](#). This bee was identified in Sale, Victoria in March 2020, and is *not* thought to be a threat to the environment or to honey bees or native bees. Download a factsheet so you can spot it if it heads your way. [agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/other-species-detected/european-wool-carder-bee](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/other-species-detected/european-wool-carder-bee)



Explore the bright and information packed [ACT for Bees](#) website. Australian Capital Territory beekeepers have created a site packed with useful resources, particularly for teaching schoolchildren about bees, and for deciding how to encourage bees into your garden. The links to native bee sites and the organic food directory are well worth a look too! [actforbees.org](http://actforbees.org)



**WATCH AND LEARN** with Illawarra Beekeepers. The club continues to upload useful and instructional videos on practical aspects of beekeeping, at [illawarrabeekeepers.org.au](http://illawarrabeekeepers.org.au). The latest videos look at avoiding bee stings and how to treat stings. Featuring Bruce White and former ABA president Dr Lamorna Osborne.



**THAT IS THE QUESTION!**

## BEE LAUGHS

**Thanks** go to members who shared their favourite bee puns or jokes for the chance to win a family movie pass to **MAYA THE BEE: THE GOLDEN ORB**

### OUR WINNERS:

**Marina Tuskan (Parramatta)**

As someone who has come to appreciate the joys of gardening since becoming a beekeeper:  
"Be careful smelling the roses. One day you might just inhale a bee."

As a fan of Japanese cuisine:  
"What do bees eat with their sushi?  
Wasa-bee."

And as a fan of the Beatles:  
"Whisper words of wisdom, lettuce bee."

**Tom Ward (Central Coast)**

What's a bee's favourite sport?  
RugBee  
What does a bee wear to the Beach?  
A beekini  
What's a bee's favourite Spice Girls song? Wanna – bee!

## OUT AND ABOUT

# Beekeeping in . . . **the Snowy Mountains**

We asked members to share pictures of their backyard setups



**This is Roger Crofts' story:**

*"As a new member (12 months) with Bega Valley Beekeepers I am pushing the boundaries trying to produce honey at Moonbah, just out of Jindabyne.*

*As you can see the bees do it tough in the height of winter.*

*I added a super in September; the brood box was very strong after a check in November; and when I inspected the hive in late January the super was nearly full of capped frames of honey and a strong population of busy bees.*

*I am planning to do a honey extraction early February, weather permitting. The large linden tree in my backyard, along with rosemary, lavender and roses have provided sufficient nectar to do the job!"*

**SHOW US  
YOUR BEES!**

SEND YOUR PHOTOS  
to [editor@beekeepers.  
asn.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.asn.au)

## CLUB NEWS

### Wagga Wagga

**A**wax extruder will make processing comb, cappings and honey a little easier for members of Wagga Wagga Beekeepers .

The club used its 2020/21 Club Grant to purchase the machine which simplifies and speeds the separation and recovery of honey and beeswax. Club president Glen Gaudron explains, "We are now able to process



wax cappings and top bar hive honey very efficiently without having to strain it through muslin. A much more hygienic way to process honey!"

The club meets regularly on the campus of Charles Sturt University, where members look after a range of hives, including a top bar and Flow hive.

## BECOME AN ABA VOLUNTEER

The Amateur Beekeepers Association represents recreational beekeepers in industry forums, and provides a range of services to affiliated beekeeper clubs and members.

The association has grown rapidly in recent years and continues to be run entirely by an eager team of volunteers.

Do you want to help? Do you have professional skills and some spare time to assist on either regular or one-off projects?

We are looking for members with business or organising skills who are keen to lend a hand. In return, you'll pick up a range of experience and will be helping to support a growing community of bee enthusiasts. You can be based anywhere across our network of clubs and must be a current ABA member.

Contact [president@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:president@beekeepers.asn.au) with details of how you could help.

# Sugar Shake 2021



NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer Mark Page reminds everyone to check for mites before the weather gets too cool

*The annual Sugar Shake Month initiative encourages all beekeepers to inspect their hives for exotic bee pests such as varroa mite (Narrosa destructor and V. jacobsoni) and report the results to the NSW Department of Primary Industries. Not only is inspecting your hive best practice, it is a good opportunity for all NSW registered beekeepers to comply with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice (the Code).*

*Section 3.2 of the Code states that in at least two brood inspections per year (at a minimum of four calendar months apart), at least one hive per apiary must be examined for arthropod pests, including varroa and tropilaelaps (Tropilaelaps clareae and T. mercedesae) mites, using one of the following methods:*

- a. Sugar shake*
- b. Alcohol wash*
- c Drone uncapping*

*A video demonstrating how to do a sugar shake test is [available here](#)*

*Take a photo of the sugar shake test or your hives and enter your Sugar Shake result [here](#)*

*Alternatively, email results to [bee.biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bee.biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au) or message 0409 299 415. Please provide your name, bee registration number and postcode where the test was conducted.*

*In previous years, we have promoted April as Sugar Shake Month, but if it is too cold to disrupt brood in April, then carry out your sugar shake test any time from now onwards, before wintering your bees.*



A VARROA MITE IN ICING MIX

*By examining your hive or hives you are not only following best practice as a beekeeper, you are also contributing to wider surveillance data.*

*Why is widespread surveillance important? The health of the beekeeping industry is important in itself, but it also has flow-on effects to pollination-reliant industries and the wider community that benefits from healthy hives, their products and the services they provide. The surveillance data also supports Australia's export trade of queen and packaged bees.*



VARROA ON DRONE BROOD



DEFORMED WING VIRUS

*Varroa mites infest honey bees in every major beekeeping area of the world, except Australia. Mites feed off adult bees and brood, transmitting viruses such as Deformed Wing Virus and Slow Paralysis Virus, weakening the colony and resulting in the death of the hive. The benefits of being free of varroa mites include healthier hives and, as we don't have to treat hives with miticides, reduced production costs and some of the cleanest honey and wax products in the world.*

*If you find a suspect exotic bee pest, you must contact NSW Department of Primary Industries immediately.*

*You can report suspect pests by calling the Exotic Plant Pest hotline on 1800 084 881.*

*Early reporting of an exotic bee pest like varroa mite as is one of the most important factors in eradicating any incursion.*

PHOTOS: MARK PAGE

## DIY BEEKEEPER

# Moves made easier

Beekeeper Clive Bailey shares his solutions for carrying a few frames and for moving a hive of bees

### TRANSPORT LID

When moving hives a long distance, particularly on a hot day, the risks of the bees overheating in a locked down hive are high. I came up with the idea of taking an old super box, cutting it down to be about 5cm high and then stapling some fly screen to the top of the cut-down box.

The night before I move a hive, I remove its regular lid, place the transport lid on top of the queen excluder. (I typically move only a brood box, but you can use the transport lid on top of supers too.) I lock it down with an Emlock and put the normal lid on top of the hive to protect it overnight.

Once dark, I shut up the hive entrance ready for the following day's move. The next morning I remove the normal hive lid and then put the hive in the vehicle to transport it.



### FRAME CARRIER

About 18 months ago my back insisted that I come up with a solution to carrying supers of full honey frames. I came up with the frame carrier box that can hold up to five frames. It has a carrying handle which makes it very easy to carry a box in each hand.. A fellow club member, Mark Rice, took my basic design and modified to make it with a fold-down handle, turned into nuc box and also made a tool carrying box out of it!

Since then I've made about 20 boxes for other club members and they seem to be very popular.



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## \$5 LOG BOOKS

We have a limited number of 2019 (first edition) ABA log books to clear at \$5.

Get in quick if you want to snap up the last ones left in our store.

[beekeepers.asn.au/shop](http://beekeepers.asn.au/shop)

## QUEEN BEE REARING

### LEARN HOW TO RAISE YOUR OWN QUEEN BEES

This two-day course is for experienced beekeepers

Where: Illawarra Beekeepers, 98 Eton Rd, Sutherland

Date: Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st February 2021

Time: 9.00 am to 4.30 pm both days

Registration: 8.30 am Saturday. (You must pre-book.)

Cost: \$299 Morning and afternoon tea provided

Course includes two days of instruction from expert beekeeper Bruce White, and a copy of the NSW DPI AgGuide on queen bee breeding. Participants may get to take home successful grafts.

Proceeds benefit the local club.

Please email [education@beekeeperssutherland.org.au](mailto:education@beekeeperssutherland.org.au) with your expression of interest in attending this course.