

Bee Biz

The Newsletter of the Northern Rivers Amateur
Beekeeping Association Inc.

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NOV / DEC 2020

From Kevin Virgen:

Presidents Report

*"And now I wander in the woods,
when summer gluts the golden bees..."*
William butler Yeats 1889

Hi Folks!

Another month has passed with little change to the social distancing guidelines so I predict that we will not be able to hold a full-on field day until 2021. The committee have been considering what activities to have on the agenda so if you have any preferences of some aspect of beekeeping that you would like to delve into, please notify the secretary forthwith.

The mini field days are still happening as new members join the club and have been well received. Back to the hives and we find reports of a bumper honey harvest! My experience however, is that it has been a pretty ordinary season so far. Looking forward to next year with a major disrupter exiting the political arena it should be a calmer more positive year for

human kind on the planet.

That's all the news from Byrangerry Creek this month where the women are strong the men good looking and the children above average!

Cheers,
Kevin Virgen.

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From Brian Window :

Secretary Report

The club activities are still severely limited by the COVID regulations- my understanding is that we are limited to gatherings of less than 30 people in an outside environment. The committee has decided to postpone the usual annual get together and picnic at the end of November to the New Year, when we should be able to celebrate with a COVID- ending party.

Members are reminded that as the club is shifting to the financial year rather than the calendar year (in line with the NSW ABA), memberships will not be due until May- June next year.

If members look on the NSW ABA website (beekeepers.asn.au), they will see that the club now has two membership grades- Full member, who pays the ABA membership and the NRABA Supplement of \$5, and Associate Member, who pays \$5 and gets all the benefits of membership but without the vote. This category is intended for partners of beekeeping club members, people interested in beekeeping, and beekeepers who are members of other ABA affiliated clubs.



MERRY
Christmas
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR

From Geoff Manning:

Flowering Report



NOV / DEC 2020



On Show:

BLACK TEA TREE



BRUSH BOX



SWAMP MAHOGANY



Not too much change from the last report, that I can see.

The “Rough Barked Apple” (*Angophora floribunda*) and “Bloodwood” (*Eucalyptus gummifera*) were mentioned last month as possibilities, but have not put on any bud that I have seen. A reminder as to why it is called “Apple”: If one cuts into the living tree with an axe or tomahawk the timber resembles a freshly bitten into apple. Bloodwood is named for the blood coloured gum that is seen oozing from the trunk on occasion, and the thin layers between some annual rings.

Black Tee Tree, *Melaleuca bracteata* is flowering. It is inclined to grow along some watercourses, and if there is enough, it does benefit bees. A major honey tree that is common around the area, is the “Brush Box”, (*Lophostemon confertus*). The problem is that it rarely gives honey anywhere east of the richmond range. It flowers regularly, virtually every year. It is showing some bud, and if you are near by then it will give you some useful pollen. In the years and in the districts it yields, a super a week is possible for a month. It is choice honey.

A close relative, “Swamp Mahogany”, (*Lophostemon suaveolens*) is showing some early bud. Top honey when it decides it is its turn. It flowers most years and is one of the species that flower in bursts. It is common in the clubs catchment area, preferring low country, but will try the hills if moisture levels are high enough.

FLOWERING REPORT | by Geoff Manning

Bloodwood



Botanical Name:
Corymbia intermedia

Found on the North Coast of NSW and extends into Queensland, it is found mainly on heavier soil within 80 km of the ocean. It is often associated with Stringybarks and White mahogany.



Medium sized to tall tree usually 24-33 m in height.



The bark is light brown, subfribrous, tessellated and friable, with a pale underneath layer.

Smooth-barked Apple



Botanical Name:
Angophora costata
Aka: Smooth-barked
Apple Gum

This tree is common along the coast, pockets of the divide and northwards of Bundarra well into central western Queensland.



A medium sized tree, 15-18 m high.



has deciduous bark that sheds in oval flakes in late spring and early summer.

Swarming



By now most of you will understand that a beehive exists to breed another beehive, not to give you and me honey, or indeed to pollinate many of our food plants. Swarms are a good way to get more hives should you want more, especially if it isn't from one of your hives originally. The downside of it being from one of your hives is that hive has lost a fair number of bees. More importantly it has to mate the virgin left behind. On average twenty per cent do not make it back to the hive from one of their mating flights. Unless you find out early enough that hive will die out. The window of opportunity since Small Hive Beetle is very short. As soon as the bees realise they are "hopelessly queenless", i.e. No pheromone feedbacks, they stop policing the hive for undesirables such as Small Hive Beetle eggs and larvae. So an explosion of the pest in many cases and the hive is slimmed out in a few days.

Typically a swarm issues and settles somewhere close by. Scouts set out to find a suitable hollow. Sometimes if they cannot find one they will up and move off some distance, settle again and have another try. On occasion they do not find anywhere suitable, but will put up with a sheltered spot, usually with a low light level, heavy foliage or such. The example on the left is one such swarm that didn't find permanent conditions. The one that did has been there for around five years (*see the Fig Tree example above*). Swarms that cannot find a place will start to make wax after a few days and are then hard to get into the box. It is a good idea to cut the branches/twigs off and remove them or place them under the lid. *Images & Information provided by Geoff Manning.*

From Brian Window:

Looking For American Foulbrood...




NOV / DEC 2020

Causes of Bee Death


American Foulbrood

A bacterial growth of spores that kills larvae, produces a rotting smell and transfers to other hives easily.




Colony Collapse Disorder

Sudden loss of a colony's worker bee population with few dead bees found near a colony are signs of this disorder. The direct cause is unknown.




Varroa Mites

These mites feed on the body fluids of bees they inhabit, spread quickly and can be hard to detect.




Tracheal Mites

These mites infect adult bees, including large breathing tubes near the base of a bee's wings, and make it harder for them to keep warm in winter.




Wax Moths

These moths attack weak colonies by chewing through combs of a hive. Larvae tunnel into combs and destroy the colony.



Pesticides

Commercial pesticides are tightly regulated but ones used by suburban homeowners are not. Bees land on plants that have been sprayed with pesticides and poison themselves and the colony.



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE
 Reporting by Kate Andrew
 Design by Mariana Chertok

Sources: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, EPA, Purdue University Department of Entomology, Bee Information Database, Insecticide Information at the University of Maryland-Water State.

AMERICAN FOUL BROOD:
A bacterial growth of spores that kills larvae, produces rotting smell and transfers to other hives easily.

There is a list of symptoms of AFB for beekeepers to look out for when looking in hives.

When I go through my brood boxes for any reason, whether the bees have been shaken off or not, I keep a keen eye for any perforations of the brood cappings. These are holes in the cappings over the cell, and I investigate them all. They can be a healthy larva in the process of being capped over, in which case I should see the healthy white larva through the perforation, they can be from a bee in the process of hatching, in which

case I should see the moving bee with its antenna, or they can be a cell where the bees have uncapped to remove the remains of a dead larva.

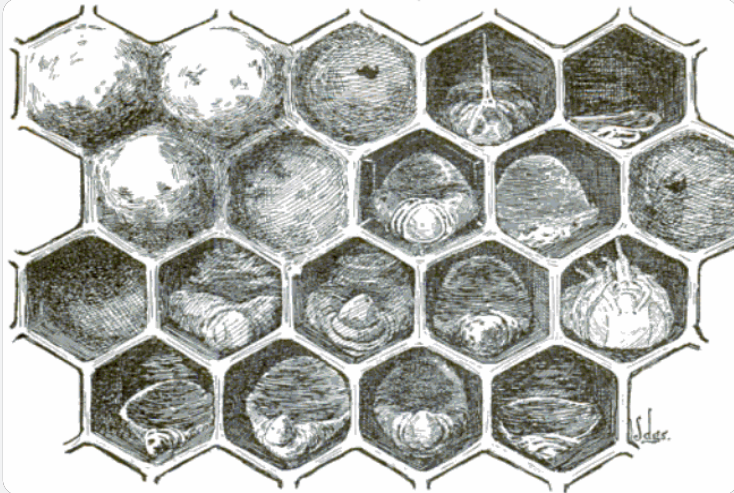
In AFB, the larva dies after being capped, and I should see a discoloured larva through the perforation.

I find a twig about match size, and do the roping out test -poke it in the cell, twirl it around a few times and pull out. The remains should be milk coffee or caramel colour, and rope out 10 to 30 mm. The bees are not able to remove the gooey remains, and they stay there until they dry to a black scale.

My preferred option is not to seek further tests, but to treat the hive as if infected.

Steritech Prep

Requirements for AFB irradiation of Hives



If you suspect you have American Foulbrood (AFB) please seek the advice of an experienced beekeeper to assist with diagnosis. AFB needs to be reported and treated as soon as possible, to reduce further infestation of other hives.

A FEW REQUIREMENTS FOR PACKING BOXES FOR STERITECH TRIPS

- (1) No unextracted honey
- (2) No live creatures if possible
- (3) Ten frame, eight frame, and nucleus boxes are all treated as one box for charging
- (4) Equipment must have no bee access when taken to delivery site
- (5) Hives assembled in 2 or 3 (preferred) high stacks with base with cleats and a migratory lid or non-protruding board
- (6) On short side of boxes, no landing boards over 50mm wide and no lifting attachments over 30mm wide
- (7) On the long side of boxes, no protrusions at all eg no Tek screws
- (8) Six sheets of newspaper to be put below stickies or stickies bagged inside super
- (9) Stacks to be clamped with Emlok with locking mechanism in middle on top. No twisted metal straps
- (10) Space can be found for telescopic lids and flat objects like clearer boards in the space between the short side of the boxes
- (11) Excluders can be part of a stack or slipped inside a stack
- (12) Stand-alone boxes can be taken; best if they are empty or full of frames
- (13) No joining together of two nuclei to make one (over-wide) unit

From The Hives...

By Brian Window

The flowering of the guoia yielded nectar quite heavily this year, and any beekeeper on the red soil would have collected quite a lot of it. It is a nice looking pale honey, with a strong flavour which is difficult to blend out. Some people describe the flavour as being like leatherwood, the highly fancied honey from Tasmania. The hives are being reduced down to the brood box and one box of stickies, partly to remove the guoia flavour, and to reduce the weight for moving. One lot of 16 will go out to Bungawalbyn into an area which was burnt almost a year ago. There are a number of good honey trees which are short budders like swamp mahogany in that area, and it may yield quite well. The other lot of 16 will probably go in the same area, depending on what happens to the first load.



Services Directory

NRABA Members

Paul Davey: Hive Care - Mullumbimby 0491 608 272

David Fairhall: Queen cells, mated queens, nuclei - Lismore 0444 513 771

Leland Eglington: Steel beehive stands
Alstonville 0455 555 136

Geoff Manning: Bee Hives -Lismore 6663 5211,
Mobile: 0400 221 602

Brian Window: Nuclei - Lismore 0466 790 736

Ross Wood: mated queens, nuclei - Grafton 0421 817 710

Not NRABA Members

Stephen Fowler: nuclei, hives, all sorts of bee equipment, buys
wax - Alstonville 0418 412 621

Merv McDonald: nuclei, hives, hive care
Alstonville 0439 166 016

Rob Stone: mated queens, nuclei - Casino 0487 598 105

Corrections and additions welcome

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A Little Note, from the Editor...

HELLO!

I'm Maddy Allen, and I am pleased to be the Editor of the Northern Rivers ABA Newsletter!

Email me with Swarm Stories, or beekeeping tips and experiences. Please send along pictures taken of what's flowering this month, or things relevant to Beekeeping or the Bee industry in the Northern Rivers.

Cheers for now,
M.

MINUTES NRABA COMMITTEE October 2020

Time 4 pm Thursday 1st October 2020

Place 54 Donnans Road, Lismore Heights

- Present Kevin Virgen, Ray Smith, Geoff Manning, Brian Window
 - Apologies Paul Towner, Madeleine Allen
 - Minutes of Committee meeting September 6th 2020 accepted m GM s RS passed
- Matters Arising
- Associate Membership The ABA secretary had said in his reply previously that the inclusion of the Associate Membership grade on the website would have to be done by Sheila Stokes, the IT person. Secretary has written to her requesting this change.

New memberships

- Six had been processed by secretary
- Spraying in Macadamias Secretary had produced about 40 brochures for President to drop in mail boxes in his vicinity. GM and BW had been to see Jeremy Bright, and he has said that he would change his pamphlet, and put the brochure up on the website

Secretary has approached FNC ABA about being on brochure as a supporter.

Correspondence

- New members All six had been sent welcome letter
- Registry Secretary had updated it so that ABA sent welcome pack to new members
- Enquiries about getting nuclei Secretary had obtained price information from Ross Wood nuclei at \$35 per frame and \$35 for the queen
- David Lloyd Secretary had sent him a card wishing him a quick recovery
- ABA Editor ABA editor had distributed considerable material to support running meetings. It was also mentioned that the \$1000 grant was available for the asking from the treasurer. It was agreed that the club should ask for the cash grant. m GM s RS passed

Reports

- Treasurer Steritec Trip costs
One full pallet (42 boxes) for Ross Wood

Miscellaneous freight irradiation total

\$17.55 \$191 \$396 \$604.5

Per box \$0.42 \$4.55 \$9.43 \$14.39

Two nearly full pallets of 66 boxes cost \$1209.10 gives \$18.32 per box for club.

Cost to club subsidy for 64 boxes at \$4 per box \$256.

All participants have been sent invoices and all have paid.

- Editor Committee members very pleased with work of new editor. Secretary to suggest to Editor some minor changes.

Agenda Business Items

(1) Mini field days Secretary to arrange groupings of new members to be invited to mini field days.

(2) New Members acceptance

The following were accepted as new members:

Mark Joiner, Cooper Schouten, Liam Eyles, Kim Eyles, Colin Roden, Greg Caddy, Julia Champtaloup, Jo Brabazon, Sean Brabazon, Rono Kahumbu Turner . m GM s RS passed

General Business None

Next Meeting:

Time 4pm 5 th November 2020

Place 54 Donnans Road Lismore Heights

Meeting closed 5.00pm

MINUTES NRABA COMMITTEE November 2020

Time: 4 pm Thursday 5th November 2020

Place: 54 Donnans Road, Lismore Heights

- Members present Geoff Manning, Brian Window, Kevin Virgen, Paul Towner
- Apologies Ray Smith
- Minutes of Committee meeting October 1st 2020; accepted m PT s GM passed

Matters Arising

Associate Membership

Sheila Stokes has put the associate grade on the beekeepers.asn.au website. Wording a little confusing; members should have a look

New memberships

Ten processed by secretary.

- Correspondence

- New members (10 new members sent welcome letter)

- Registry (updated so that ABA sent welcome pack to new members)

- Enquiries about getting nuclei

- David Lloyd has thanked the club for their wishes, and he is retiring from SCU

- Reports

-Treasurer

BW said that now minutes are approved, he will contact ABA treasurer to get \$1000 grant

-Editor

BW reported that the editor had incorporated the suggestions from the last committee meeting. The committee congratulated the Editor on the job she is doing (m PT s GM passed)

- Agenda Business Items

(1) Mini field days BW and KV reported that the mini field days they had held were well received.

(2) New Members acceptance

Alice Tancred, Nicole Dayman, Chris Carr, Jens Roestel, Lisa Czepnik, Tom Flanagan, William Nicholls, Katy Stewart, Ian Shephard, David Jordan were accepted as members (m PT s BW passed)

(3) Xmas party/ Field day

BW to find out numbers allowed by NSW Govt. for an outdoors day. The number at present is 30.

It was decided to delay the Xmas celebration until the New Year when COVID restrictions are relaxed somewhat.

- General Business

None

- Meeting finished at 5.24pm

Next Meeting

Time 4pm 3rd December 2020

Place 54 Donnans Road Lismore Heights