

# THE BUZZ



The official newsletter of the Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society Inc. Est. 1979

Website: [gcabs.net.au](http://gcabs.net.au)  [Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeping Society](https://www.facebook.com/GoldCoastAmateurBeekeepingSociety)



*Our hearts go out to those beekeepers who have suffered and are suffering losses due to the floods. This photo is from one of our members' properties in northern NSW (see p.7)*

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Held on the first Monday of each month, committee meetings are to plan current and upcoming events and discuss the direction of GCABS. We welcome any members interested in being involved in this process and development of GCABS

- Mon 4th April 6:30 – 8:30pm
- Mon 2th May 6:30 – 8:30pm

Meeting link: [meet.google.com/fyq-ujco-kth](https://meet.google.com/fyq-ujco-kth)

## DATE SAVERS

*The Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeper's Society inc. welcomes new members, existing members and visitors to attend. Non-members attending will be asked to make a gold coin donation.*

- **Sat 23/24 April - Intro to Beekeeping course.** [Click here](#) for tickets.
- **Sun 24th April 10am – 12pm Member Meeting.** Leonie Schwarzel GCABS committee member & Buzz editor, will give a presentation “All about Honey – Facts & Fiction” As an experienced and enthusiastic beekeeper and teacher, Leonie is bound to present a fun and informative morning. Venue: GCABS Clubhouse, Nerang Country Paradise Parklands
- **Sun 15th May 10am – 12:30pm Member Meeting.** This month our meeting will be an Apiary Farm Visit to ‘Mariefields’ in the spectacular Mt Warning Caldera. Activities will include World Bee Day celebration, hive inspections, sugar shake, workshops. Hosted by GCABS member & Mariefields owners, John & Carol Quayle. Address: 229 South Pumpenbil Rd, Tyalgum
- **Wed 8 to Sat 11 June – 4th Australian Bee Congress.** Further details see page 4.
- **Sat 11/Sun 12 June – 3rd Australian Native Bee Congress**
- **Sat 25/Sun 26 June - Mudgeeraba Agricultural Show** Venue: Mudgeeraba Showgrounds. For further details go to <https://www.mudgeerabashow.org.au/>

- **Sat 6/Sun 7 Aug – Botanical Bazaar Venue:** Country Paradise Parklands. [See https://www.botanicalbazaargc.com.au/](https://www.botanicalbazaargc.com.au/)
- **Fri 26 to Sun 28 Aug – Gold Coast Show.** Venue: Broadwater Parklands, Marine Parade, Parklands. Why not try your luck entering your honey or beeswax in the Apiculture section? Entries close Fri 5th Aug. For further details go to <https://goldcoastshow.com.au/homecrafts/>
- **Fri 4/Sat 5 Nov – Murwillumbah Show.** Further details TBA

## From GCABS President



*Our activities this month, for most beekeepers, continue to revolve around the weather, and whilst the lives of people, their homes and livelihood is the paramount concern, we are also concerned for our bees, and their own livelihood. I have been touched not only by stories of loss, but also stories of survival as, like us, bees do what they have to to keep going.*

*A good friend of mine, who lives in the northern NSW area and has quite a few top bar bee hives, shared this recently on Facebook, connecting our bees with the community spirit arising in his area during tough times, and which I found quite inspiring:*

*“Th s picture is of a bee colony in the middle of a swarm on our land. Holding fast to each other, communicating impeccably, unified impossibly by their purpose and intent to protect each other, to move together and to find and claim a new sense of Home. For the most part bees lead highly structured, disciplined lives. But it is during these moments of radical departure from order that we truly get to witness the power and beauty of their intrinsic connection with each other and the pulse of life. I feel this here in the experience of our towns becoming hives. (reprinted with permission)... Chip Richards*



*As I write this near the end of March, the rains are again pummeling the Gold Coast and Northern NSW region where our members reside. I wish everyone well as we look forward to the sunshine ahead.*

*Cheers... Colin Allen - President*



### ***A warm welcome to our newest members:***

*Ken B, Vivienne B, Daniel L, Graham R, Irene V, Michael V*

## **April Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland**

*Submitted by Jim O'Regan*

Banksia. Blackbutt. Broad-leaved Banksia. Broad-leaved Ironbark. Brown Bloodwood. Flooded Gum. Glycine. Golden Candlesticks. Groundsel Bush. Gum-topped Box. Hickory Wattle. Honeysuckle Oak. Malley Box. Mountain Coolibah. Paper-barked Tea Tree. River Sheoak. Rose Sheoak. Tumble- down Ironbark. White Box. White Stringybark. Easter Cassia (Easter Senna)



*White Stringybark*

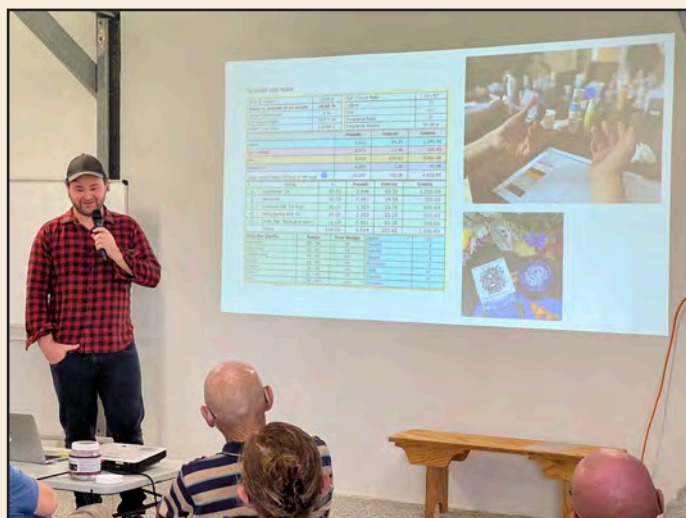


*Paper bark Tea-tree*

# March Member Meeting Review

by Colin Allen

This was our second member meeting in the new clubhouse, and was very well attended. The main presentation this month was something quite different! James from Whale Labs spoke to us about bee venom collection, the many uses it is put to, and their very innovative device for collecting the bee venom without harming the bees. He also spoke to us about how we as ordinary beekeepers can get involved, perhaps even as an additional revenue stream for larger scale beekeepers struggling in the current tough conditions.



*Bee venom collector - a mild electrical current on the platform the bees walk across to get to their entrance stimulates them to "sting" or release their venom. Unlike when they sting us though, they continue on unaffected. The venom is then collected from the glass plate.*

Did you know that the current price per GRAM of bee venom is \$20,300!! Other by-products from bee venom collection also attract very high prices. Of course, collecting that much bee venom takes a bit of time and work! Our thanks to James for a fascinating presentation.

As always, afterwards we enjoyed a nice cup of tea and coffee, good conversation and plenty of "bee chat". GCABS has an awesome community of members!





4th AUSTRALIAN  
**Bee Congress**  
CELEBRATING HONEY BEES  
At the heart of a healthy Australia



8 - 11 June 2022  
Rosehill Gardens, Sydney, NSW

After an extremely challenging few years for beekeepers, it is time to come together to celebrate honey bees, which we all know are at the heart of a healthy Australia! The congress organising committee are striving towards establishing a program that is both educational and empowering. Keep up to date with the event at <https://australianbeecongress.com.au/>

Key Dates:

- Early bird Registration Deadline: Friday 22nd April 2022
- Accommodation Booking Deadline: Friday 6th May 2022
- Registration Closing Date: Tuesday 31st May 2022

Scholarships are available and can be applied for by anyone who is eligible and would appreciate some financial assistance to attend this congress. [Download the application form here.](#)

### The 3rd Australian Native Bee Conference

For those interested in native bees as well, the 3rd Australian Native Bee Conference will be held 11-12th June, also at Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, Sydney <https://www.anba.org.au/anba-conference/>

## April is Sugar Shake Month

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Code of Practice has made it mandatory for inspections for exotic bee pests such as Varroa mite, Tropilaelaps mite and Braula to be carried out at least TWICE PER YEAR. Sugar shakes are an excellent way to test your bees for these exotic bee pests and April is a great month to carry out a test for the first half of 2022.



### What is Sugar Shaking?

This is an easy method involving capturing bees in a container and coating bees with icing sugar. It does not harm the bees. The process of shaking bees in fine sugar dislodges the parasites so they can be collected and examined. Unsure how to do it? Click on this video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCH8H6yXKcU> and/or <https://www.beekeepers.asn.au/news/2018/3/14/sugar-shake-testing-explained>

### Where can I get a Sugar Shaker?

Sugar shakers are available for sale from our clubhouse. Please note: Your sugar shake kit can be re-used multiple times but it must be cleaned between different hives and apiaries to avoid the risk of spreading infectious bee diseases.

If you think you've found anything suspicious, immediately CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE on 1800 084 881. Alternatively, submit a report and photos through the online reporting form. Full instructions are also available here: <https://beeaware.org.au/archive-news/its-sugar-shake-month/>

# Introducing our new neighbours – Native Plants Queensland

By Sky – NPQ secretary

NPQ- Gold Coast Branch is a local branch of a regional group, Native Plants Queensland, of the Australian Native Plants Society (Australia). We are focused on native plants local to the Gold Coast, from the coast to the hinterlands. There is interest and action that ranges from propagation, conservation, education, restoration, and gardening, as well as a bit of spreading of the good word and the glory that is a beautiful, locally endemic, *Corchorus cunninghami* or an *Alloxylon pinnatum*, or any one of our multitudinous local flora.

Our monies all derive from plant sales, excluding the grants that we were awarded for the shade house and the shade house furnishings. That makes propagation our meal ticket, our means to bring in speakers and to fund workshops, our means to propagate more, which led us to building the shade house adjoining your club space.

It is exciting for us to hook up with those interested in pollinators. Pollination is so essential. And while your pollinators are a bit more exotic than our plants, and they don't do that buzz pollination that I hear the Blue-Banded Bees do whenever I'm near the exotic Blue ginger (*Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*) that I have yet to replace, they keep me in the vege and fruit that I love.

*Syzygium australe* 'Resilience' and *Syzygium* 'Cascade'. The *Syzygium* 'Resilience' has pale grown foliage with reddish bronze new growth and white flowers in spring. *Syzygium* 'Cascade' is a hybrid between *S. leuhmannii* and *S. wilsonii*. Its beautiful pink new growth appears a quite a few times a year and it has pink powder-puff flowers. Both species are excellent screening plants that are resistant to psyllid attack and they can be pruned to shape.

The ramp garden next to the clubhouse has specially chosen small flowering native plants - some are permanent while others are short-lived. All are bee-attracting.

Our Shadehouse is closer to being put into commission with just the irrigation system to be installed. We are currently awaiting quotes.



*Resilience, Blue ginger, and below, Cascade*



## Seeking a Permanent Home for the GCABS

*Some thoughts from Col Payne, an original member, about the long journey from the formation of GCABS to finding our permanent home*

The people who were on the first TAFE Course on the Gold Coast, about 1979, were encouraged to form a Bee Club by John Rosser [Jnr] who ran the course. The meeting was held in the Gymnasium Hall at the old Gold Coast Showgrounds in Queen Street at Southport. I wasn't one of the people on that course but was already keeping bees and found out about the meeting and went along and also became a member.

We started with no funds, no home and a new Committee. We all paid 50 cents to the new Treasurer who spent our first purchase on a Ledger Book and Record Book for the Minutes. We had no meeting place and met at each other's homes. This was convenient because after the formalities we spent time opening and inspecting each other's hives. We robbed and extracted honey as we increased in knowledge.



The Second year at the AGM, Bob Harrison was appointed Treasurer. Our numbers had doubled and Bob saw that we needed a Membership Card to help us know each other. He used Rosser's Straw Skep (photo to left) for his inspiration.

John Rosser [Jnr] was our mentor and we spent many meetings at the Rosser Home at Benowa (now the Botanical Gardens) where John [Pop] Rosser & his wife Essie would often join in and lead us at our meetings. We would usually open the hives on site.

After a few years we gained the sympathetic ear of an Alderman who told us that the Barratta Street Rubbish Tip had ended its life and had been converted to parkland. The Alderman attended the meeting we held there and raised our hopes. He said that at the next Council Meeting he would propose that we be allocated a site where a small building would be erected which could be used by community organisations. At the next Council Meeting our plans went to smoke when it was decided to use the old Tip Site to erect a Council Works Depot and the Park and the Alderman disappeared into the sunset.

A couple of years passed and the Gold Coast & Albert Shires combined. We learned about a Council Site near the Gilston School which quickly came to a dead end.

We didn't have a lot of funds and we had a big setback when Clary Allan our Equipment Officer had a fire in his shed and we lost \$3,500 worth of uninsured Bee Equipment.

We thought we had a chance when Councillor Dawn Critchlow told us that there was a house on Council Land that we could have the use of in Hinde Street Molendinar. It all sounded too good to be true and soon after we were told that the house was to be demolished because it contained a lot of asbestos!

In more recent times we kept our hives and used a shed at Carinity Cedarbrook in Mudgeeraba. I had my doubts about that site because I have seen some large floods travel down the creek through there. It seems to be on a flood plain. We lost some hives there.

So it is a relief to now be in our new Clubhouse situated at the top of a hill and therefore not at risk of flooding!

Now we have to lobby the Council to erect a Toilet Block with a tap on in the Car Park!



*Pop Rosser*

## **FLOOD! – Our Bee Yard was 3 metres underwater**

*Leonie Schwarzel our GCABS Editor, has written about her recent personal experience of flooding at her property in northern NSW.*

During the last week of February, 2022, the weather experts described a “rain bomb”, a deluging rain event dumping a metre of rain or more over much of South East Qld. Meanwhile, in the Tweed Valley, we were experiencing some heavy rainfall but told to expect “minor” flooding. Then, on the 27th February, the rain bomb struck with vengeance: the flood warning was updated to moderate, then to major.

Five years earlier, the March 2017 flood had been the highest on record at our little farm near Mt Warning. Having marked the high water level from that time, we’d positioned our 11 beehives above that zone, believing they’d be safe from future inundation. Alas, not so.

At 10pm on Sunday 27th February the hives were fine. In the next hour everything changed drastically. By 11pm, the Tweed River which is usually a pretty babbling brook 80 metres from our back fence, had broken its deep banks and become a formidable, rapidly spreading force. The hive-stands were well under water, some of the double & single tier hives had already been swept away and the water was nearing the top of the 2nd box of our 3 tier hives. (Photo 1) Sadly, the water was too deep & rapid to consider attempting any rescue. We did however wade in to reach 3 hives that were in shallower water & we carried them up to higher ground. In all, 8 of the hives in the original location were swept away, along with two long, heavy timber hive stands. We estimate the water level there peaked at above 3 metres.



Unfortunately, by the following morning, the “higher ground” where we’d relocated the remaining hives had also disappeared under the relentless, rising waters (photo on front cover). This resulted in 2 of the remaining 3 hives being inundated nearly to their roofs but surprisingly, most of the bees had survived. We noted that one of those colonies had flown up & clustered in a nearby tree, then returned to the hive as the water receded. As soon as practicable, I swapped the wet boxes/lids/bases for dry ones & replaced the sodden frames of dead brood & washed out honey with fresh frames including a couple of built comb. The bees had diarrhoea for a couple of days (photo to left) but they are now recovering, rebuilding & being fed regularly.

During the next week, in a wetland downstream, several of our lost hives or parts thereof began to emerge from the slowly receding murky waters (photo below right). Sadly, the sight & sound of healthy, active humming bees had now been replaced by silence, stench, mud, maggots and mould. A heart-wrenching experience.



This flood rewrote history as it was considerably higher than any recorded to date. It is estimated that about 5000 hives were swept away in this flood event across northern NSW. Honey & pollination services will feel the impact in this region for at least the next 18 months. The repair of homes, businesses & infrastructure will take longer. When nature decides to ‘wash clean’, the results can be devastating.



## Selling/Buying Beekeeping equipment

Our club Secretary Kathy Knox has some suggestions about what you can do if you wish to sell any unnecessary beekeeping stock or find out what others have on offer?

### You can shop & advertise online at beekeeping forums such as:

- ‘Beekeepers of Brisbane & Surrounding Areas’ | Facebook group. A place where beekeepers can share their local knowledge, have a chat, share where to get good deals on supplies, sell nucs/hives as well as sell unwanted equipment.
- ‘Queens,Nucs & Bee’s in QLD for Sale’ | Facebook group. This Group is about selling Quality Mated Queens, Cells or Nuc’s [sic]. It will not be for a backyard breeder. All Queens should come from Quality Breeder Stock. For the Beekeeper with a few hives or Commercial Beekeepers
- Note FB marketplace does not allow live animals however you might find your audience there with a carefully worded advert.

### In person sales:

Attend a monthly members meeting and bring your best hat for horse trading, and the goods in the back of the car! Be prepared to spruik to the crowds and try your luck. Member meetings are attended by 60 - 100 members each month on and that’s our average during covid restrictions. Now restrictions are lifted we do expect to see more members able to come out to the monthly meetings. With 450+ members, there are plenty of new friends to make and who knows what you may learn! Monthly meetings are always free for GCABS members to attend.

### Advertise in the press:

**The Buzz:** Send photos and description of goods for sale to [goldcoast.editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:goldcoast.editor@beekeepers.asn.au)

**The ABK:** Small classifieds can be posted here but may attract fees depending on the nature of your business.

### Noticeboard at your beekeeper supply store:

Some of our suppliers have for sale and wanted ads on the wall. Wander in to see what you may find!

**\*\* CAVEAT EMPTOR \*\*** Ask your Mentor for assistance if purchasing live bees in an active colony. Ask the GCABS membership officer if you want to connect with a mentor in the GCABS. Caveat Emptor applies to second hand or used beekeeping hardware and due diligence is encouraged. Always keep barriers for biosecurity & if you don’t yet know what that means, please see <https://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/resources/training/biosecurity-online-training/>.





## **JOBS in Your Bee Yard this Month**

1. Due to heavy rain and flooding there are extra precautions to be taken by beekeepers in flood affected areas. Some good advice from NSW Dept of Primary Industries includes:
  - To assess your hives and hive sites where safe to do so. Wear PPE when dealing with flooded hives to protect yourself from contaminants.
  - Consider that the best course of action may be to destroy flooded hives. Hives cannot be disposed of in landfill. Bee proof the hives, then burn if safe and bury ashes at least 30cm deep. If not safe to burn, euthanise the bees and store hive in a bee proof manner until safe to burn.
  - Hives that are not contaminated can be thoroughly cleaned and bleached before re-use. Some hive material can be cleaned of contaminants and reused.
  - Protect remaining hives from small hive beetle, swarming and robbing. Provide fresh water regularly and sugar syrup if floral resources are low.
  - Report any abandoned hives to Agricultural and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647 noting the location and if possible, the identifying number on the side of the box. <https://mailchi.mp/3688b5444dcc/bee-biosecurity-news-october-5765988?e=3191969fdf>
2. With the bees being quieter due to the wet weather, it's a good time to render wax. It takes up much less space when it's in blocks compared to tubs of cappings.
3. Replace the good old Chux cloth on the top of the honey box or secured under the lid as a good way to keep beetle under control.
4. Make sugar syrup and fondant patties for supporting the weaker nucs so they can get a bit of stimulation before weather takes a cool turn.
5. Read the latest newsletters and research about honey and chalkbrood.
6. Cut branches back so bees get as much sunlight as they can through the cooler months.



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