


# 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)



## Angry Bees?

See page 5 for answers!

### DATE SAVERS

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

#### MEMBER MEETINGS

- **Sun 19th Feb 10am - noon** Redland Research Facility. We have organised a trip to Redlands Research facility where the Bayside Beekeepers Assoc keep their hives. ADDRESS: 26 -40 Delancey St, Cleveland QLD 4163. BYO chair and a plate to share please. See Bayside Beekeepers Visitor Information on page 8.
- **Sun 19th March 2023 10am-noon** GCABS Clubhouse. Guest Speaker Kevin Tracy (BeeZone Apiaries). Topics: Mystery Queen-lessness/Brood-lessness, Requeening- How/When/Why
- **Sun 16th April 2023 10am-noon**, GCABS Clubhouse. Topic: Mead tasting. Please BYO Mead plus a plate to share. Guests: Bayside Beekeepers Association

#### OTHER EVENTS

- **Sunday 12 Feb 10am – PLEASE NOTE** The ABA AGM will be held online. Members should have received an email providing details. Registration for voting must be completed before 9th Feb. **As ABA members it is very important that GCABS members attend AND vote.** There will be a guest speaker on the topic of where we are now with the VARROA Emergency Response. If you didn't receive the email and you are a registered ABA member, let me (Ann) know by email [gcabs.librarian@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:gcabs.librarian@beekeepers.asn.au) so I can forward it to you.
- **Sat 11 March 10-11am** Bee Venom Collector workshop (valued at \$100, but FREE for GCABS members)
- **Committee Meetings:** All welcome to attend our online Committee meetings. Email the secretary and ask for the link. [Gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:Gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au)

## From GCABS President



*Well, as anticipated, the balmy sub-tropical end of January has produced a number of swarms emerging here and there. I'd be inclined to make thorough inspections regularly! Luckily we will be having a topical and informative session at our March meeting covering re-queening so please bring your questions.*

*Meanwhile our February field trip to Bayside Beekeepers promises to be a wonderful excursion. Our friends at Bayside have a vibrant group which has been in operation for almost as long as GCABS. We are going to tour the Bayside training apiary, an important learning experience for GCABS as we plan our approach for our own apiary. Learn about Bayside operations, meet Bayside members, enjoy a morning out at Cleveland and social lunch together at the grounds. In exchange the GCABS committee have invited Bayside beekeepers to join us for our April meeting Mead Sampling!*

*Our memberships officer Esther has been working on updating our coordinated Mentoring program so if you have been a mentor please look out for communications from Esther. If you have received mentoring and experienced success, consider paying it forward and training with GCABS to become a mentor to a new learner. For those looking to connect with a mentor, please watch this space: we will be able to intake new learners in the near future.*

*Looking forward to seeing you all in February*  
Kathy

## Beekeeping training

TAFE non-accredited short course NONAC05019 presented by Kevin Tracy of BEEZONE Apiaries

NONAC05019  
**Complete Beekeeping Bundle**  
Non-Accredited Short Course

This Complete Beekeeping bundle will give you the skills, knowledge and experience to be competent and feel confident working with live Bees. It is aimed at anyone looking to work with Bees as a hobby or career.

Ask a question Apply Now

Download Course Brochure

**NEXT INTAKE**  
On campus: Robina  
Start date: 11 Feb 2023  
Duration: Sessions will be in classroom with excursions off site.

**STUDY LOCATIONS**  
Gold Coast

**WAYS TO STUDY**  
On campus

**WHAT YOU'LL PAY**  
Full Fee ⓘ \$460

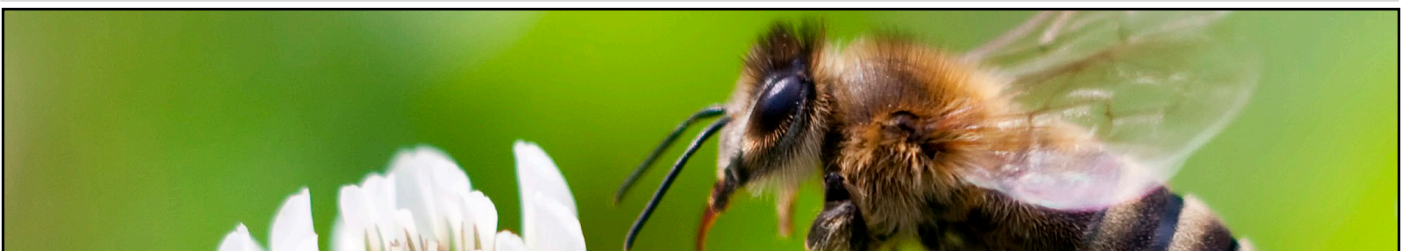
He offers a Beekeeping Bundle of 6 classes (\$460). Each of the classes can be purchased separately. For details click here: <https://tafeqld.edu.au/course/19/19122/complete-beekeeping-bundle>

His Beginning in Bees course (\$170) is also available on its own.

## GCABS Beginner class – 18-19 March 2023

You can register on Eventbrite using this link

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/18-19-march-2023-introduction-to-beekeeping-class-for-adults-tickets-522164918327>



## January Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

Submitted by Jim O'Reagan

Blackbutt. Blue Heliotrope. Broad-leaved Banksia. Broad-leaved Ironbark. Brown Bloodwood. Brown Box. Coolibah. Grass tree. Grey Mangrove. Gum-topped Box. Hickory Wattle. Mallee box. Mexican Poppy. Moreton-bay Ash. Paper-barked Tea-tree. Pink Bloodwood. Red Stringy-bark. Silver-leaved Ironbark. Small-fruited Grey Gum. White Stringy-bark.



*Pink Bloodwood*



*Blackbutt*

## Biosecurity - Varroa Update

by Keith Barton

In mid-January, the AHBIC passed a vote of confidence that the NSW Varroa Blue Zone was free from varroa mite.

<https://honeybee.org.au/national-vote-of-confidence-in-fight-against-varroa-mite-in-nsw/>

This is very encouraging news, however, the varroa emergency response is continuing. NSW DPI continues to actively work on the emergency response. NSW DPI has been euthanising hives and is now moving on to baiting operations within various varroa red zones.

At the time of this writing (23-Jan), the varroa control orders remain unchanged. The NSW DPI remains the authoritative body for updates to control measures, progress, and news updates. Please stay informed by checking with the NSW DPI Varroa Mite Emergency Response at the link below:

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroa-mite-emergency-response>

In Queensland, beekeepers are encouraged to perform regular mite testing using alcohol wash or sugar shake methods. Results of testing should be uploaded to Bee 123 (QLD DAF) which can be accessed via this page: <https://daf.engagementhub.com.au/varroa-mite/news/report-your-results->

## In The News

**Australian manuka honey producers score legal win over New Zealand producers in Europe, UK**

[https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2023-01-23/manuka-honey-legal-win-over-new-zealand-in-europe-uk/101876528?utm\\_campaign=abc\\_news\\_web&utm\\_content=mail&utm\\_medium=content\\_shared&utm\\_source=abc\\_news\\_web](https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2023-01-23/manuka-honey-legal-win-over-new-zealand-in-europe-uk/101876528?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=mail&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web)

**Bee Vaccine for American Foulbrood positive step for Australian beekeepers**

[https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2023-01-11/american-foulbrood-bee-vaccine-promising-australian-beekeepers/101839784?utm\\_campaign=abc\\_news\\_web&utm\\_content=mail&utm\\_medium=content\\_shared&utm\\_source=abc\\_news\\_web](https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2023-01-11/american-foulbrood-bee-vaccine-promising-australian-beekeepers/101839784?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=mail&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web)

FYI – Gold Coast newsletter on the Council requirements if you own beehives

<https://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/Services/Animals-pets/Animal-ownership-requirements/Bee-requirements-permits>

# January Members Meeting in Review

Thanks to Catherine Longworth

We had a well-attended and engaging meeting which began with an update on club projects. These include developing the landscaping around our clubhouse with Native Plants Qld and Nerang River Keepers. The bee-friendly shrubs planted earlier by NPQ beside the ramp are thriving and much appreciated. A grant for solar power to the shed has been submitted and looks promising.



Leonie Schwarzel led the main part of the meeting and discussed the Australian Honey Database project. This project is a partnership between AgriFutures Honey Bee and Pollination Program and NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to investigate and analyse the composition of samples from around Australia and create a database of characteristics from across regions.

The reason for the project stems from the unique composition of Australian honey as opposed to the world standard composition and grades, due to the unique properties of Australian flora and conditions that do not always meet the 'standards developed in the northern hemisphere by European standards' as set out in its interim report located at this [Link](#). Through testing and chemical analysis, the project aims to create a meaningful database that defines differences, that leads to education and confidence of consumers in Australian honey characteristics. The testing includes enzyme activity, electrical conductivity, moisture content, sugar content (glucose, fructose and sucrose), proteins, and other characteristics.



Leonie led a lively demonstration and sampling from member honey samples to be submitted to the project and discussed what is looked at in local honey judging shows. As a point of difference Australian honey sugar levels generally range up to 10% compared to the European stand of 5%. There was discussion around the level of a compound that can be tested, 5-hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF), which is formed when honey is heated via tropical climates or artificial heating. In particular, honey judging is firstly based on the PFUND scale

of colour from light to dark amber. Moisture content can be tested using a honey refractometer which can indicate the right time to harvest your honey. Judging primarily looks at the finish, colour of the jar not affecting the colour of the honey, clarity, brightness, aroma, and cleanliness (presence of pollen etc when unfiltered). The tip to remove any impurities is to place the jar on top of the fridge and let the contents settle with gentle agitation and remove them from the top of the jar. The entry categories also include granulation of candied and creamed honeys.

Leonie encouraged all members to participate in local shows as a way of demonstrating the variation in honey production and because it's a fun thing to do and you may even be a winner!

The meeting concluded with a delicious array of potluck lunch offerings and much socialising.

## Temper Temper!

by Leonie Schwarzel, Buzz Editor



No one likes a cranky colony. They can cause a lot of angst, particularly when the bees are in close proximity to our, or our neighbours, homes & gardens.

A current example from the editor's own experience! This week, whenever my husband or I step out the front door we are immediately stalked by several belligerent, buzzing bees; we've both been stung a few times, while simply minding our own business.

We've been keeping bees on this property for over 4 years with never a hint of any aggressive behaviour. Walking, gardening, mowing around the hives was uneventful. Hive inspections always a pleasure with the bees quiet & placid... until now!

So what prompted their change from calm to confrontational? Last week I robbed the hives of some honey. The moment I opened one very strong hive, the irate occupants attacked in a thick cloud of frenzied anger. With multiple stings to face & neck, through the veil no less, I made a hasty retreat. I shortly returned wearing a second veil & jacket over the first! Since that day, this colony refuses to forgive & forget. But to understand the true reason for their current bad temper, we need to look back in time. This colony has superseded its queen twice in the past 3 years, most recently just 3 months ago. Their 'original placid' queen had been bred for several traits including calmness by our local reputable queen breeder. The succeeding queens were bred onsite & had apparently mated with a number of feisty, feral drones, with the result that the 'calm' trait was lost & replaced with aggression. This behaviour was less noticeable & easily tolerated while the colony was small but now it has a powerful population with every bee carrying those feisty genes.

If you have an angry hive the best solution is to replace the queen with one that has been selected for good temperament. Currently, through a research program called Plan Bee – the National Honey Bee Genetic Improvement Program – bee temperament is being rated for gentleness on a scale of 1 (angry bees) to 5 (best friends forever) and calmness on a scale of 1 (rushing around the combs) to 5 (keep working like you aren't even there). Queens which rate a 5,5 are well worth paying for!

Letting colonies requeen themselves has long been a practice of mine without any behavioural change effect...until now. Clearly, my 'hot' hive has lost the gentleness trait, with the result that my family are under siege in our own yard. The solution? I'm picking up a new queen from a reputable queen breeder post haste!

<https://extensionaus.com.au/professionalbeekeepers/temper-temper/>



## Vale Bert Morris

*Compiled by his Old Mate and Original GCABS Member Col Payne*

Bert Morris was the 7th child of William and Nevenia Morris born in Casino on Feb 16th 1928 and christened Herbert William. Herbert after Herbert [Bert] Hinkler the famous aviator, and William, after his father William Arthur Morris. Bert moved to Southport in 1946 and was employed at the Labrador PO Store at \$2 per week which he banked.

In 1952 Bert bought a block of land, created Nevenia Street and built his home on No 16. In 1969 a friend Reg Callighan suggested that Bert should keep bees on a 'big block like that' so he did! Soon after the GCABS was formed in 1979, Bert & Reg both enrolled as members.

Bert had a number of careers before settling in at St Hilda's School as the bursar. Bert retired after 25 years' service. After the GCABS registered as an association compulsory audited returns were required and Bert was our 'Honorary Auditor' for a few years.



*Bert proudly displays a swarm from one of his bee hives*



*This device drains the honey from the frames using the power of the sun and very little labour*

Beekeepers are generally an inventive lot and often come up with different ideas which make collecting honey easier to achieve. One of Bert's inventions was to use the sun to help heat the honey in the frames and thus have it run naturally from those frames. Bert invented a special container which uses gravity and the natural slope of the honey cell along with the heat of the sun to get the honey to run out of the uncapped cells. It has been fairly successful for a small apiary like his and the honey runs out cleanly and pure like the nectar it came from.

On September 28th 2010 Bert was honoured and humbled to receive Life Membership of The Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society for his achievements in the Society. He was presented with a Certificate of Life Membership by President Alan Betts. Although Bert was no longer active on the committee of the Bee Society, he still attended meetings until recently. He kept bees right to the end and Jim and Olive Cavanaugh were kind enough to look after them on a regular basis.

The funeral was held at St Peter's Anglican church, Southport on Feb 2nd. Several GCABS members were in attendance and Col Payne, a founding GCABS member, presented a eulogy.



# GCABS Bee Garden

By Travis Green

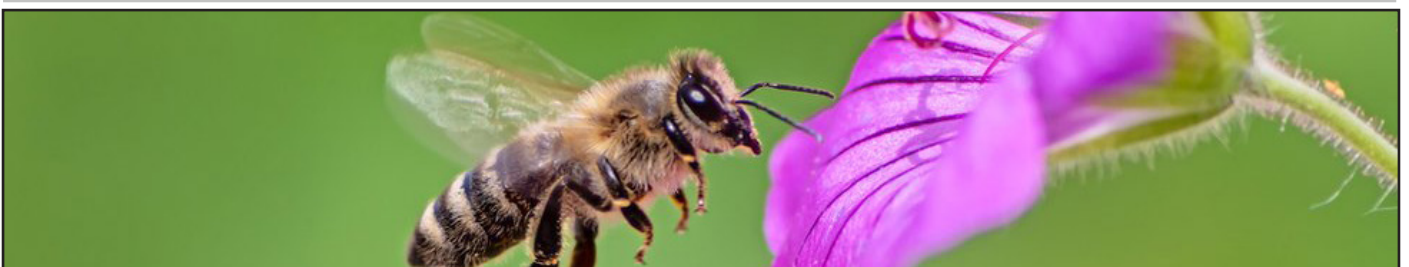
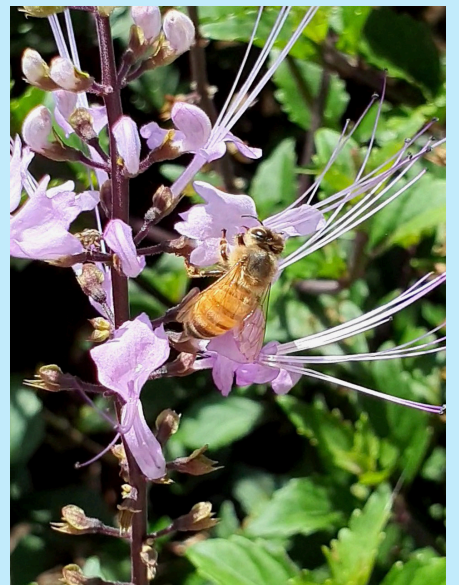
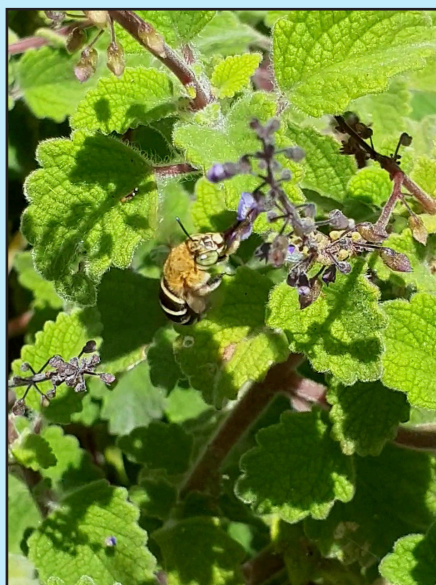
A wander through any garden is always filled with wonderful sights and smells, but if you choose to stop a little longer you will soon discover there is a whole new world waiting to be discovered.

At our recent January Club meeting, I decided to sneak off to our new native garden to see what life it was attracting. When we planned this garden in conjunction with Native Plants Qld – Gold Coast (NPQ-GC) members back in January 2022, our only input was that it should provide food for both European Honeybees and Native Bees.



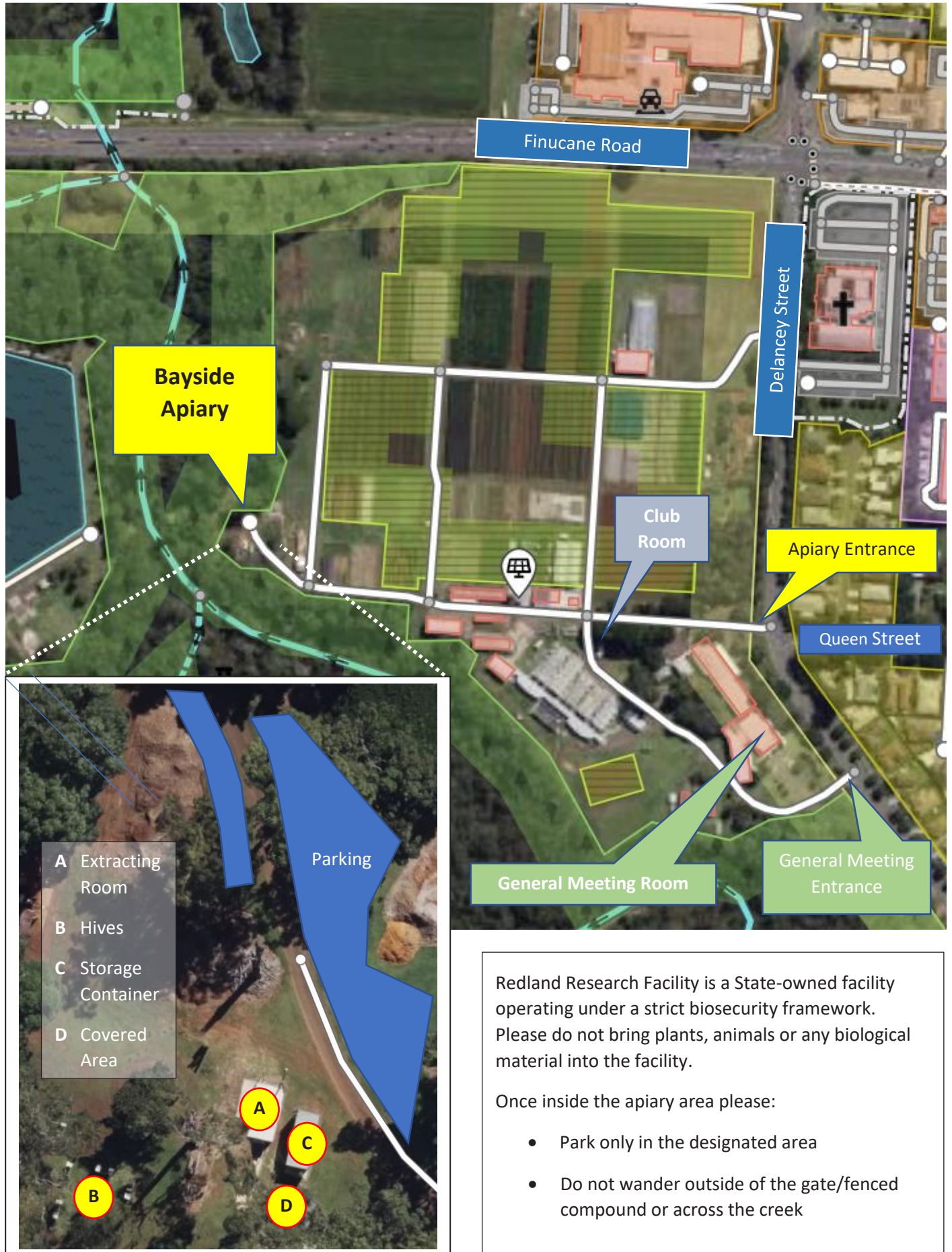
The native garden is looking great, and is already attracting a variety of insects less than a year from planting. I saw Resin Bees (*Megachile* sp.) darting through the purple Fan Flowers (*Scaevola aemula*); and then the Blue-banded Bees buzz-pollinating the native *Plectranthus*, of which we have several varieties. Of course, the European Honeybees were utilising a number of different plants, along with parasitic wasps and hoverflies; proving that a diverse garden will support many different types of beneficial insects.

A big thank you goes to the NPQ-GC members for the meticulous planning and care that has gone into developing this garden. Not only is it a beautiful garden to welcome people to our space, but it does a great job of feeding our bees too!



# Bayside Beekeepers Visitor Information

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Redlands Research Facility



Redland Research Facility is a State-owned facility operating under a strict biosecurity framework. Please do not bring plants, animals or any biological material into the facility.

Once inside the apiary area please:

- Park only in the designated area
- Do not wander outside of the gate/fenced compound or across the creek



## February Flower of the Month

Submitted by Esther Bligh

### Echinacea

Echinacea (cone flower) is a perennial with a large, daisy-like flower that likes full sun and well-drained soil. In those conditions it is very hardy. It is native to North America and has medicinal qualities. It took my bees a while to find them but now they are all over the pretty flowers. Echinacea flowers vigorously over many weeks in summer and withstands heavy rain.



## JOBS in Your Bee Yard this February

- 1. Inspect regularly** – at least once every 3 weeks. The middle of a still, warm day when fewer bees are around is best. Count full supers, check brood. Look for signs of pest or disease and take notes so you can compare next time you check.
- 2. Be vigilant with small hive beetle management.** Use traps – oil, chemical, diatomaceous earth, lime, textured wipes.
- 3. Watch for swarm signs** – Bee populations are at a peak now and often have a tendency to swarm in late January and February. It's a good idea to check on the queen and the brood each time you open the hive. The most significant sign that bees are planning to swarm, is queen cells in the brood box – larger, misshapen cells at the edge of the frame.
- 4. Give your bees enough space** - Make sure your bees have plenty of room to move by adding new supers sooner rather than later, usually when 7-10 frames are full.
- 5. Keep your hives cool** - This can be done by either placing them in a shaded area, using white hive roofs to reflect the light, adding ventilation holes in suitable parts of the hive.
- 6. Maintain a reliable water supply** - If you don't have a natural water source nearby, place a large container of water nearby and include rocks or pebbles for bees to land on. Refill regularly.
- 7. Harvest surplus honey** - Make sure you leave enough honey for the bees to see them through the winter. Many suggest leaving 7-8 full depth frames and only harvest frames when at least 90% capped.

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