


# 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)



## 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 15th Jan 2023 10am-noon** Topic: Honey Flavour & Sensory Profiling Workshop. Bring along a small jar of your honey for sharing. Every honey has its own colour, odour & flavour. Let's see how diverse our honeys are across the Gold Coast & NSW border regions. Venue: GCABS Clubhouse
- **Sun 19th Feb 10am - noon** Site visit. Details TBA

## OTHER EVENTS

- **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



*Hello and happy new year, as we launch into '23 please set the following dates in your calendars: January members' meeting Sun 15th (3rd Sunday), February members' meeting Sun 19th (3rd Sunday), March members' meeting sun 19th (3rd Sunday) .... I think you get the picture! Our dedicated committee of volunteers are eager to ensure our members gain maximum benefit from meetings - so if there is a topic you would like visited or re-visited, we are all ears. We love to see you all there and it's been so nice to chat over lunch and relax.*

*It's great to see so many new faces in the GCABS and familiar ones too. If you have friends or know a bee enthusiast please encourage them to come along and say g'day. New members and guests are always welcome.*

### **2023 goals**

*Our deed of licence with GCCC has been signed. Our committee is preparing a detailed budget for GCABS activities including future uses of the shed, training, outings, guests, equipment, biosecurity, newsletters and the like. Our sights are set on bringing bees to the Nerang Country Parklands. We have some further exterior landscaping and interior decorating to complete. We have a grant application pending with the state gov community benefit fund for a solar power system (outcome won't be known for a short while, but watch this space for updates). Many hands make light work so if you are keen to be involved in any capacity, please let us know how we can include you.*

*Historically, late Jan and early Feb on the GC have been swarmy seasons so please make regular full brood inspections of your colonies, in addition to controlling for beetles and surveilling for mites. Keep a weather eye out for introductory and intermediate training; maintaining your skills with current and relevant practical techniques is a worthy investment of time.*

### **Mentoring**

*I cannot thank enough the kindness of many mentors who have supported my learning since becoming a GCABS member. Through our coordinated mentoring program we facilitate skills exchange and build confidence in one another. If you are keeping bees and have likewise enjoyed the support of a mentor in GCABS, why not offer the same in turn to another? Positions in the coordinated mentoring program are temporary, flexible, friendly, voluntary and supported by GCABS resources. Get in contact with our memberships' officer to express interest in helping others to learn the art.*

*Looking forward to seeing you soon.*

*Kind regards, Kathy*

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

*Supplied by Jim O'Regan*



*Blue Heliotrope*



*Small fruited grey gum*

Brush Box. Coolibah. Flat Weed. Grass Tree. Lucerne. Maize. Mexican Poppy. Moreton Bay Ash. Poplar Box. Red Stringybark. River Red Gum. Rough-barked Apple. Rusty Gum. Silver-leaved Ironbark. Smudgee. Swamp Mahogany. Western Teatree, Hickory Wattle. Pink Bloodwood. Small-fruited Grey Gum.

## 2022 - The year that was

**Jan-Dec:** GCABS members participated in 11 monthly meetings. Topics included: Beekeeping from hobby to commercial, pest & disease management, bee venom, honey, the flow hive, swarm management, varroa destructor, small hive beetle traps, mead making & native beekeeping & splitting.

**Feb 2022:** First meeting ever held in our club house

**Jan – May:** Rain, Rain, Rain kept the bees mostly indoors.

**June:** Varroa destructor found in sentinel hives at Newcastle Port, NSW

**July-Dec:** Varroa d. detected at over 100 active sites in NSW, closest to our region was in Coffs Harbour. Thousands of hives euthanised throughout affected zones. Movement of hives restricted across NSW. Respondents, both professional & amateur beekeepers, volunteered their time to work with the DPI forming varroa d. response teams.

**Aug** GCABS participated in the Botanical Bazaar & Gold Coast Shows

**Dec** - GCABS Membership is currently 260.

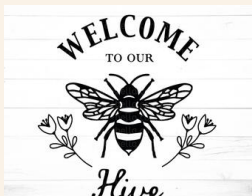


## Flower of the Month for Your Home Garden

*Submitted by Esther Bligh*

### The butterfly bush (buddleja)

The butterfly bush flowers in beautiful shades of pink, purple, white or yellow from November - May in a sunny or partly shaded position. Albeit it is not native to Australia, it is much loved by butterflies, native and European bees, as well as other insects. It is low in maintenance - only dead-heading and a cutting back in late autumn are required.



*A warm welcome to all our newest members:*

*Danielle O, Irene V, Kelly-Anne T, Megan Mc, Stephanie G, Tony M.*

# November Members Meeting in Review

Thanks to Catherine Longworth

Our member meeting on Sunday 20 November 2022 had about 70 members in attendance. Devoted to Native Bees, members were treated to various presentations and practical demonstrations followed by a delicious array of pot luck contributions for our end of year meeting.

**Giorgio Venturieri** from **Nativo Bees** presented information about his 35-year career as a professional bee researcher based on his earlier life in Brazil before coming to Australia to continue his work and establish Nativo Bees. Giorgio brought along hives to demonstrate the benefits of his design utilising the square, rather than rectangular, design of the hive boxes, specially designed roof tops and hive stands. Giorgio also demonstrated how the elements of his designs work for effective native beekeeping. The three-segment design (base, upper hive and super) includes double separators designed to lessen damage to honey pots and the bees themselves. This is achieved with the inclusion of two high quality acrylic and three stainless steel sheets.

**Kevin Tracy** from **BEE ZONE Apiaries** also presented a wealth of information about native beekeeping from using man made hives to logs. Kevin stressed that while native stingless bees may not sting, they do bite, and we should always be aware to use protective equipment. Bites to the face especially, can be very painful. While native bees produce small amounts of honey (known as sugarbag), this honey is very rich and tangy with a distinctive flavour. Members were treated to samples of sugarbag from Kevin's and Kathy Knox's hives during the hive splitting demonstration.

A number of questions arose about the placement of native beehives in different areas of the Gold Coast. Kevin explained that while the box should be situated in a warm part of a garden/property, with morning sun, beekeepers should monitor the degree of sun and heat as the box is much smaller and can retain heat. Native beekeepers should be prepared to move their hive/s which the native bees tolerate reasonably well.

Having donned veils, members were able to witness Kathy Knox split a native beehive which was donated to Mudgeeraba Scout group the following week. [CLICK HERE](#) to view a short movie of Kathy cracking open the hive in the above photo.



# Native Bees of our Region

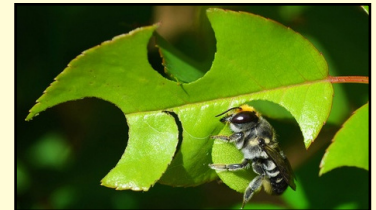
The Australian continent has steamy tropical rainforests in the far north, snow capped mountains in the south & hot dry deserts in the centre. Over 1700 species of native bees can be found across Australia's diverse habitats. So which native bees exist in our area of S.E Qld & Northern NSW? Here are the top 10:

1. Stingless Bees
2. Yellow & Black Carpenter Bees
3. Green Carpenter Bees
4. Reed Bees
5. Blue Banded Bees
6. Teddy Bear Bees
7. Leafcutter Bees
8. Resin Bees
9. Homalictus Bees
10. Masked Bees

The yellow carpenter bee (*Xylocopa* (*Koptortosoma*)) is the largest in Australia at 15 to 24 mm long. The females have a glossy black abdomen and bright yellow fur on the thorax. Males are covered uniformly with yellowy brown or olive fur. They are called Carpenter Bees because they cut nest burrows in soft timber such as the dead limbs of trees.



The leafcutter bee (*Megachile* family), is 6 to 15 mm long, They make rows of neat circular cuts on the edges of leaves in gardens. They then use the disks of leaf as a nest building material. They particularly like the soft leaves of roses, bauhinia & buddleja.



Resin Bees (*Megachile* family) nest in pre-existing holes or gaps in timber or stonework. They collect resins and gums to build partitions between their brood cells and to seal their nest holes. Beekeepers sometimes notice Resin Bees hanging around Stingless Bee hives, trying to 'borrow' a little resin for their nests. They are common residents in bee hotels.



## A Brief bio of GCABS 2022-2023 New Committee Members

**GCABS Secretary, Catherine Longworth** is a fairly new beekeeper of about 18 months so is very much in the learning phase. She has two hives in her small garden, a Langstroth and a Flow Hive. Before retiring officially from academia, she planned to learn and research hobby beekeeping and help save our precious bees and so she did the Introduction to Beekeeping course with GCABS Kathy Knox and became hooked. She enjoys playing music for her hives (they love opera), gardening around them and gifting their precious produce to family and friends.



**Biosecurity Officer, Keith Barton**, started beekeeping in 2020, but once stung quickly went "all in"! In a few short years he has set up a small beekeeping business 'Creekside Bees', manages more than 25 hives around the GC region, and works part-time with a Brisbane-based commercial beekeeping operation. For Keith, bees have become a way of life.



**Memberships Officer, Esther Bligh**, is originally from Berlin, Germany, and has lived on Tamborine Mountain for four years now with her husband and two teenage children. She got a flow hive in September, 2021, and is continually fascinated by these complex organisms. She loves everything about her new hobby and is constantly learning. She has also created a bee-friendly garden which she enjoys pottering around in. She is looking forward to being a member of the GCABS committee and wider beekeeping community.



# **Polyandry: what is it and why should honey beekeepers care?**

*Nadine Chapman*

Polyandry, a fancy word for something that hopefully all beekeepers know: honey bee queens mate with multiple males. The average is 12, but two Australian studies suggest this is an underestimate, with 28 mates being more likely.

Research show that the number of times a queen mates can have important repercussions for beekeepers. Too few mates results in colonies having increased likelihood of death, disease and queen replacement. Honey production is also lower in colonies headed by queens with low mate numbers.

In a bee colony the worker offspring from one father are referred to as a 'subfamily' or 'patriline.' The greater the number of subfamilies in the colony the better because workers from different subfamilies have different propensities to perform different tasks.

For example, it's great to have some hygienic bees in the colony to remove diseased brood. But if all the bees were fixated on this task other important things might get neglected. More subfamilies means that the colony can better adjust to changing conditions, such as temperature and floral resources.

Take temperature as an example. The optimal temperature for brood incubation is 34.5 C. If all workers in a colony are 'programmed' to begin fanning the nest to cool it down when the brood nest temperature reaches 36 degrees then the brood will get too hot. Sudden excessive fanning may then result in the brood becoming too cold. However, if there were a mix of subfamilies in the nest, each 'programmed' to start fanning the nest at slightly different temperatures, then the optimal temperature is more easily maintained.

So next time you are inspecting your hives, note how the workers are different in appearance in terms of colour & stripes. This means they have different fathers and that hopefully their queen mother mated with a considerable number of males.

Reference: <https://extensionaus.com.au/professionalbeekeepers/polyandry-what-is-it-and-why-should-beekeepers-care/>



*Different colours, different fathers*

## Making Mead - the payoff!!

*From Colin Allen*

You may remember in our October AGM and member meeting Keith and Leonie presented a great session on how to make honey mead (see photo below). As a lover of honey and not adverse to a good alcoholic drop I wanted to give it a try. Our still was setup and primed with all the required ingredients, and allowed to ferment for a month, carefully following Keith & Leonie's instructions. After a couple of "are we on the right track" calls to Leonie (we were!), it was finally ready.



Half expecting our first batch to be pretty ordinary we bottled it and gave it the taste test, and am delighted to report that it was DELICIOUS! I highly recommend anyone giving it a try - it is not that hard!

Refer back to Novembers Buzz issue for the full story on this. We will definitely be making more, as well as trying some of the variations discussed in the meeting.



## JOBS in Your Bee Yard this October

- Spend time observing activity at the hive entrance. Hive populations should be strong at this time of year. Inspect for problems if the population is weak or diminishing.
- Late Jan is often a time when a strong colony will swarm. Ensure they don't run out of space. Inspect brood boxes for signs of swarming (queen cells being built) & split if necessary.
- Clean & replenish SHB base traps regularly.
- Harvest Honey or add an extra super if needed. But don't take it all. Leave a few frames for the colony in case of a dearth of nectar due to rainy weather.
- Spend a little time online learning about Pest & diseases affecting honey bees with FREE courses. This is essential education for all beekeepers:
  - Honey Bee Biosecurity – Enrol by logging on through Plant Health Australia.
  - Total Ag College Varroa Mite online training

## COMMITTEE

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