


THE BUZZ



The official newsletter of the Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society Inc. Est. 1979
 Website: gcabs.net.au  [Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeping Society](https://www.facebook.com/GoldCoastAmateurBeekeepingSociety)



Swarm collection remnants with Keith Barton
Photo: Willowtree Apiary

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

Please bring a plate to share at our member meetings.

- **Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th:** March Beginners Course. [CLICK HERE](#) for bookings.
- **Sunday 17 Mar 2024 10am – noon.** The Bee Lady Corinne Jordan on Varroa resistant Queen Bee breeding program @ GCABS Shed. ALL WELCOME. Corinne is a long term member of GCABS and a regular contributor to our educational meetings.
- **Sunday 21 April 2024 10am - noon.** AFB and SHB management @GCABS Shed. ALL WELCOME.

- **Sunday 19 May 2024 10am - noon.** Swarm collection and management at GCABS Shed

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All welcome to attend our monthly online Committee meetings. [Email](#) the secretary and ask for the link. Seeking casual committee members to share the responsibilities on a rotating roster, no experience required.



WELCOME TO OUR HIVE!

GCABS is the Gold Coast's longest standing beekeeping club, offering a friendly environment and training for new to senior beekeepers. To all new members who have joined GCABS this month, we bid you a warm welcome.

From GCABS President



National Eucalypt Day 2024 Celebrating our Urban Champions

Celebrated annually on March 23rd, National Eucalypt Day is really becoming more of a National Eucalypt Festival with a Eucalypt of the Year poll entering its 7th year, events around the country, a celebration of #LoveAGum, and the awarding of the prestigious Bjarne K Dahl medal.

What trees and flowers do you see in your local area? With recent summer rains and periods of hot humid weather it seems everything is in flower at the moment. National Eucalypt Day is on 23 March each year. Take this chance to look around, appreciate what's growing on the verge or in neighbours yards in your part of town.

*The summer flavours are reflected in the beeswax and honey. For example the recent flush of Golden Penda (*Xanthostemon chrysanthus*) resulted in vibrant yellow wax being drawn on combs. The reliable Ivory Curl Tree or *Buckinghamia* is in full flower now too, a well known and fast growing pollinator attractor popular in gardens and parks, and as street trees about the gold coast. Find out more about national eucalypt day and Eucalypt Australia here: <https://www.eucalyptaaustralia.org.au/>*

Eucalypt Australia is the operating name of the Bjarne K Dahl Trust. It is a charitable trust that awards grants to support the conservation, education and research of eucalypts.

Kind regards... Kathy

March Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

Submitted by Jim O'Regan

Blackbutt, Blue Heliotrope (bluetop), Broad-leaved Banksia, Broad-leaved Ironbark, Brown Bloodwood, Flooded Gum, Glycine, Golden Candlesticks, Groundsel Bush, Gum-topped Box, Hickory Wattle, Mallee Box, Manna Gum, Paper-barked Tea-tree, Pink Bloodwood, Rough-barked Ribbon Gum. Small-fruited Grey Gum, White Stringybark.



Paper bark Tea-tree



White Stringybark



Blue Heliotrope

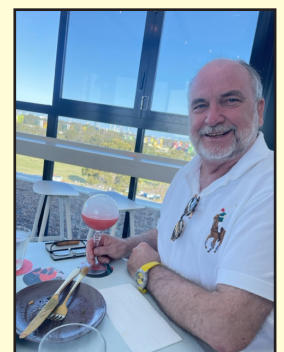


Golden Candlesticks

Meet Michael Wilson, Extractor Hire Guy

Submitted by Michael Wilson

Michael Wilson has been keeping bees for 5 years. My day job is a builder both Commercial and residential. This year I am hoping to maintain my 4 hives in a healthy manner. I joined GCABS approximately 4 years ago after my first bee acquisition.



Hall Hire

The GCABS hall is available for community groups to hire at reasonable hourly rates. To inquire please email secretary@gcabs.net.au

My Beekeeping Adventure - Jane Menke

My journey to beekeeping began as a child when my dear (now deceased Dad) Alan, kept bees while I was growing up. I would watch him with fascination and 'help' by eating the delicious honeycomb dripping with honey, straight from the hive. My Dad was what I call a 'bee whisperer', he always worked with his bees without gloves and was super gentle and always talked to his 'girls'.

Anyway, my Dad eventually got dementia and passed away in 2017. His bees were given away at the onset of his dementia journey and that was what I thought was the end of beekeeping for our family.



However, my four adult children had other ideas! Apparently unbeknown to me they all got together and decided that their mum (me) needed to carry on the family tradition of beekeeping! So, for my birthday in 2018 a big box was delivered to my door containing a full beginners kit of nuplas boxes and all the basic equipment I needed to start my first hive. I said thankyou to my kids (secretly wondering whose crazy idea this was!), but at the time didn't even open the box, and just stored it in my garage. I was very busy with work- travelling backwards and forwards to Papua New Guinea as a health professional, building my new home in the Currumbin Valley and caring for sick elderly family members, and felt like I needed beekeeping like a hole in the head!

Anyway, Covid 19 came along and the house was finished and I had a little more time on my hands. Everyone seemed to be making sour dough bread, getting chickens, growing vegetables and flowers and/or doing beekeeping as part of their 'stay at home' Covid therapy- so I decided to open the box still sitting in my garage. I worked out how to assemble the hive from Youtube and then wondered what to do next. I read lots but was way too scared to get some real live bees without some hands-on experience. My next step, after talking to some neighbours with bees, was to become a GCABS member and go along to a meeting. There I found a helpful and kind group of very knowledgeable beekeepers, who seemed very happy to share their expertise. I met dynamo Kathy Knox and enrolled in the Beginners Beekeeping Course. This was a fabulous weekend of theory and hands on practice with real bees- I still remember my heart almost beating out of my chest the first time I got to see real bees inside a hive. I loved it so much that I volunteered to attend a few more as a 'helper', slowly gaining more experience and confidence as I went.



However, the most fabulous part of the GCABS beekeeping course was the Mentor Programme. This meant that each attendee at the workshop was linked up with a very experienced beekeeper, living in their geographical area, and who was willing to share knowledge and guide each new beekeeper on their journey into keeping bees. To my delight and surprise the person I was linked with was an elderly gentleman called Alan (yes, my dear deceased Dads name!). I almost cried the first time I went to his place

and worked with him on his bees as I discovered that, just like my Dad, he was also a 'bee whisperer'. Alan never works with gloves and is super gentle with his bees, always disturbing them as little as possible and talking to them all the while, throughout the inspections of his hives. I worked with Alan perhaps half a dozen times, learning more every time I visited his place. He gently encouraged me throughout, and I will never forget the day when he said- ok it's time you took your gloves off for today's inspection!! That was scary but oh so good! I also remember excitedly identifying the queen in one hive and him being so happy for me. He was also on the end of the phone several times as I set up for my first Nuc, and then on several 'help!' occasions when I was not sure what I was doing with my rapidly expanding beehives.

During this time of learning the ropes of beekeeping I also was lucky enough to meet Olive and Jim Cavanaugh, two amazing and very generous members of the GCABS community. They were also working on Alan's bees one day and I was invited to come and learn from them as well. This gave me further insight into the importance of record keeping and being very systematic and thorough with inspections and cleanliness of my hives. Jim also very kindly made me some beautiful sturdy wooden stands for my expanding apiary, which I very much appreciated!



My journey into beekeeping has been wonderful- I have especially appreciated the Mentor programme-knowing that Alan is only a ten-minute drive away, and that he is still happy for me to pick his brains (although I do this much less now) on beekeeping matters.

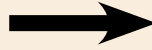
After three years of beekeeping I now have eight hives- (yes, I was warned at the first GCABS meeting I attended that I probably wouldn't stop at one hive!), all thriving and I am gaining confidence every day. My kids are very proud of me and still enjoy the endless jars of honey that they now get as Christmas presents!!

As I have gained confidence with the mentoring from Alan and my own increasing knowledge I have been able to informally help several of my neighbours with their bees- encouraging them to join GCABS and to register their hives. I have responded to cries for help when a neighbour's hive swarmed and settled into the underfloor lining of their home- that was a big day, but I successfully relocated the hive to a new box and it is thriving to this day. I still attend GCABS meetings whenever I am not working overseas, and learn something new every time. The recent Varroa testing workshop was invaluable for getting my head around this latest little challenge, and I came away much more confident in testing my own hives properly.

GCABS is full of amazing helpful, kind, generous people all with a passion for bees. The Mentor programme is a really important part of the process of passing on invaluable knowledge and experience from one generation of beekeepers to the next, and I am very grateful for it. I am now, after three years of beekeeping, feeling more able to continue the cycle of knowledge sharing, by becoming a mentor myself. I look forward to continuing this life long journey of learning and supporting new beekeepers as they begin their beekeeping journey.

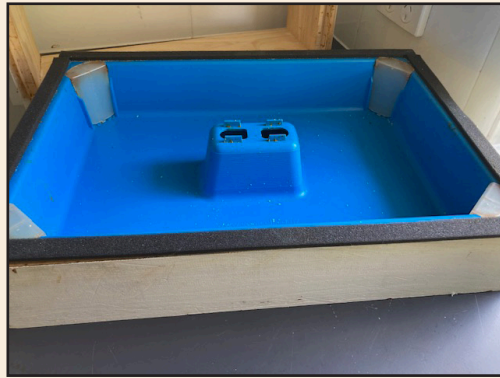
Jane Menke

How to clean stickies for storage



Have you ever wanted to store stickies for an extended period of time but just didn't have any space left in the freezer? When my family started complaining that the whole freezer is full with bee frames and no space for other things I started to investigate. The solution is to instigate an in-hive robbing event and have the bees clean the stickies for you so you can store them. This is what you need

- an inner cover with an opening in the middle
- a top feeder with the island cover removed
- your box with stickies



Place the inner cover with the hole open onto your top super. On top of your cover, place the top feeder with the middle island removed. Above the top feeder, add your box of stickies. To finish up, place an inner cover and lid on top of your box with stickies.

The idea is that the bees will think that the box with stickies is outside the hive and they rob it empty. After 3-4 days, the frames are completely cleaned of any honey and capping residue and there won't be many bees left in that box as their task is complete.

Then just take the top feeder and top box off and put hive back together. The frames don't just have no honey left in the cells but the frames themselves are also completely clean. It is quite remarkable.

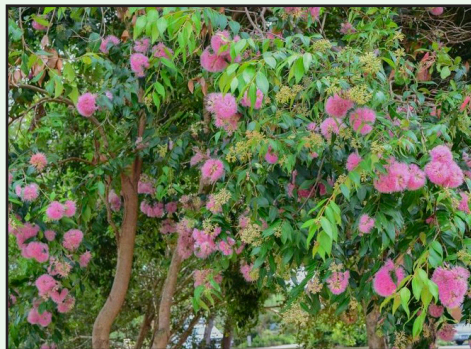


Sometimes the bees leave powdery clean wax behind in the top feeder. To finish off, put the cleaned stickies in the freezer for two days to kill any pests and then store in an airtight plastic container. They can stay there for many months and you can put them back in the hive whenever you need to.

Flowers of the Month for Your Home Garden

Submitted by Esther Bligh

Lilly Billy Pink Cascade (*syzygium cascade*) is a beautiful variation of lilly pilli. It has showy pink flowers in spring which are covered in bees and other insects. The slightly weeping bush grows to 3m high and 2m wide and responds well to pruning. New growth is an attractive pink and red and the pinkish fruits are edible and attract birds. It grows in sunny and partly shaded spots in the garden and is tolerant of most soil types.



Biosecurity Update

Keith Barton

For latest varroa mite news check the QBA varroa mite portal. This is updated regularly with latest news, and has a stack of useful information regarding varroa mite management.

<https://members.qbabees.org.au/QBA-Varroa-Mite-Portal>

On 13th Feb the National Management Group announced that the National Transition to Management Plan for Varroa Mite (“T2M”) had finally been approved. The T2M announcement is linked on the QBA site above and I encourage all members to read through this document.



Here’s a link to the latest update on varroa mite treatment registrations:

<https://honeybee.org.au/ahbic-varroa-treatment-table/>

Biosecurity Queensland is looking for “Biosecurity Champions” in each club. They’re after 1 or 2 people who are interested in promoting biosecurity within the club and being a key point of contact for the club relating to biosecurity notifications and updates. As the Biosecurity Officer for the club, I will be a Biosecurity Champion. If you are interested, reach out to me and I’ll send more information.

AFB has been detected in several locations across the Gold Coast. Four of my hives were taken by AFB, and other members have been affected also. AFB is not caused by mismanagement, it is an endemic disease that bees can contract from infected hives that are weakened and dying from AFB already. If you have unusually weak hives, or “mysterious” colony deaths, I encourage you to send brood samples to the Biosecurity Pathology Lab in Brisbane for testing. They will test for the presence of AFB and EFB, and is free aside from postage. If you have AFB, you must destroy the colony using an approved method, and then burn or irradiate the hive hardware.

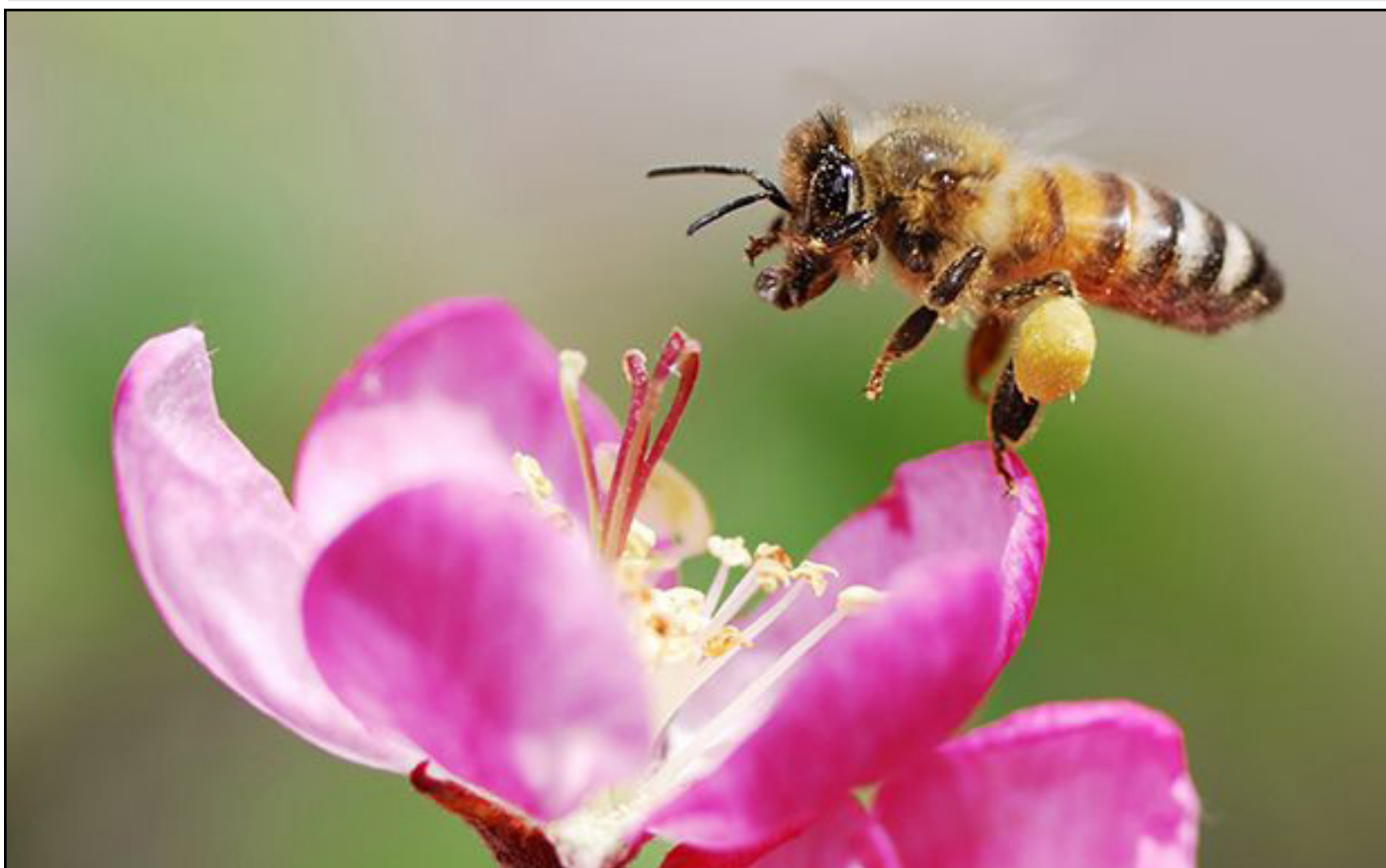
With all the hot and humid weather we have been having, small hive beetle and chalkbrood can be a problem. Perform regular inspections and look for any brood or pest issues. Follow the appropriate remedial actions for any brood issues or pest that you identify. If you are unsure what you’re seeing, consult the “brains trust” on GCABS facebook forum or call in another beekeeper for a second opinion.

JOBs in Your Bee Yard this Month

- Mowing around hives.
- Checking food supply in foraging areas - feed if necessary.
- Varroa Mite Washes.
- Pest & health inspections.
- Check queen fecundity (amount of fresh eggs and brood)
- Replace Queen now if necessary before slowdown in cool weather.

Trading Post

Looking to Buy? Gear to Sell? Send a clear written description and photograph to editor@gcabs.net.au for inclusion in the next buzz newsletter. Pictures say a thousand words.



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