



**Amateur
Beekeepers
Association**
NSW BEGA VALLEY

Bega Valley Beekeepers Inc.

May 2020 Members Update

World Bee Day 20th May

The UN has designated the 20th of May as World Bee Day in order to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators such as bees, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development.

In NSW the When Bee Foundation has organised two online events to celebrate this day - an online viewing of the award-winning documentary "HONEYLAND" and the Premiere of the Global Online Waggle Dance video - a compilation of waggle dancers celebrating World Bee Day around the world. Follow the link to find out more

<https://www.worldbeeday.org.au/region/nsw/>



Locally, there are a number of things we can do to raise awareness of the importance of bees and other pollinators, not just on this day but throughout the year - like giving a gift of a flowering plant.

Preparing Hives for Winter

Additional thoughts on winter hive management strategies from Lyall:

In the last newsletter Graham mentioned my idea of what to do with frames containing nectar and uncapped honey that you want to remove for winter.

The idea was to place the box containing these frames below the brood box.

The logic is that the bees prefer to store honey above the brood nest where it will act as a heat bank. They will move it up if they find it out of place.

I had two hives in Bega that were set up as Full Depth brood box, excluder, Full Depth honey for the bees, 2 Ideals for honey for me.

Both hives had plenty of honey in the upper Full Depth, and part filled frames in the Ideal boxes. Not many of the frames in the Ideal boxes were full or well capped.

I rearranged the frames in the Ideal boxes so that the fullest, best capped frames were in one box and emptiest in the other. I placed the box with the emptiest frames below the brood box, moving the queen excluder above this box to prevent the queen moving down into it and laying.

I went back after a week, and sure enough, all the honey had been moved out of the frames in the lower Ideal box. There was more capped honey in the top Ideal. I was able to take both boxes away harvesting the honey from the top box then put them both in storage until spring.

But no system is perfect. Some negatives that I encountered included -

- In one of the hives, the bees had already stored pollen in the lower Ideal frames. Not sure it will be any good by next spring. Lesson – several days may be long enough.
- There is a honey flow happening in Bega, so both hives were using the lower ideal as a ripening facility for incoming nectar. It was still thin and runny, so I was able to shake it out of each frame into the top of the hive.
- Each hive had to be unstacked and restacked twice to put the box under the brood nest, then remove it.
- There were still a few drones in the brood nest. I was surprised to find them stuck on top of the excluder when I came back after a week.

I had previously undertaken a similar exercise with old comb from a cut out that the bees had filled with honey. I put just those two frames into an extra box below the brood nest and sure enough they moved all the honey up. I was able to remove the dirty comb from the hive.

Lyll Zweck

Those Burning Bee Questions

Sebastian asks:

I've built a new hive stand that is higher off the ground than the previous stand. The new stand is about 8m from the existing hive location, as that location is a bit sunnier in the mornings and better wind protected by trees (for winter). I've heard that a hive can be moved up to around 1m per day.

Should I keep moving the hive on a daily basis, until I get it to its final location, i.e. over an 8-10 day period, or should I give the bees a break and only move the hive every now and then? When would be the best time to move the hive, early morning, during the day when most of them are out, or late evening, when they're all at home? I suppose the max.

1m hive move rule applies vertically, as well as laterally?

Suggestions from Sandy and Fay

You're on the right track in your approach to moving the hive (and who wouldn't like a sunnier more wind protected site to live in). There are some general principles to follow in this situation.

Moving a short distance daily is preferable to longer distances. (The old saying is "move them either 3 feet or 3 miles"). Apply a strap / emlock around the hive when moving it - you don't want it to accidentally fall apart. Consider moving it with a trolley or similar to save your back, and / or get someone strong to help you. Move it as one unit.

Fay suggests you can also use a make-shift track to slide the hive along on your own. Fay has used a ladder and simply pushed the hive along each night. Another option Fay has utilised in the past is a couple of planks of sturdy wood.



If there are bees hanging around the entrance when you're ready to move the hive, use a smoker to guide them inside and then seal the entrance. You don't want a mob of cranky bees coming out to investigate who's disturbing their peace. After you have shifted them a short distance, remove the entrance seal.

Most beekeepers are of the opinion to do this in the late evening or even night, when the

bees are all at home. That way, when the bees come out in the morning, and as you know they do start early, they'll go "Oh - this is different" and hopefully re-orientate. If you shift them during the day, the foragers will come back to where they used to live, and go "Where is everyone?", but would probably work it out as the hive shouldn't be too far away.

You can put a visual anchor point in place to help them navigate their way home. This could be a distinguishing mark at the hive entrance which they'll recognise (say a big blue/green/purple cross or circle - cardboard stuck on with tape is ok if you're not expecting rain). Alternatively, you could place a coloured landing board on the grass at the front entrance (paving tile or large bathroom tile - again blue, purple or green is best).

It wouldn't be an issue I would think if you moved them every evening or gave it a rest for a couple of days - it is up to you and your back. If you find bees appear disoriented all the time give it a day or 2 between moves if you have the time. The vertical distance would follow the same principle as the horizontal change in distance.

New Club Members

The club extends a warm welcome to new member Allen Crowe from Wolumla.

Club Apiary

I can report a pleasing outcome after recently conducting a pest and disease inspection of the brood in the club hives.

The two langstroth and flow brood boxes are strong with good brood patterns on the center frames. No signs of AFB, Sac Brood or Chalk Brood disease were found. A sugar shake carried out on hive 2 was all clear.

There is a light nectar flow happening. The bees are storing frames full of pollen and have capped honey surrounding the brood cluster.

A welcome change from early March when pollen was very low and they consumed the pollen sub fed to them. Now they are ignoring it.



Graham and Fay in former times at the apiary.

The top bar hive has a small brood cluster and some Chalk Brood disease. It has good stores of pollen, capped honey and bringing in fresh nectar.

The warre hive has no extra comb drawn in the bottom since the last inspection. The small amount drawn is mostly drone comb and there is no sign of the queen laying yet. Unable to check the brood in the top box because of cross combing and hoping for a good spring when the queen hopefully moves down into straight frames.

As pests go, the small hive beetle is ever present with numbers varying according to the strength of the hive.

The Rough Barked Apple late flowering has been a boost to winter stores for those hives having access to it, and a relief to beekeepers.

Overall the club apiary is ready for winter with the two langstroths on double boxes with the queen excluder removed, and the flow super very heavy and left on.

The top bar will need work in the spring to move out old black comb, and the warre is an ongoing project.

Graham Jones



Club Trading Post

Nothing this month, but please contact Sandy via begaValley.publicity@beekeepers.asn.au if you have any bee related equipment to sell or give away. If you don't sell it, let us know and we'll relist it for you.

DPI Sentinel Hives - Eden

Fay and I inspected the sentinel hives in April and completed sugar shake tests on both hives. Due to the windy conditions we only opened the top boxes. There appeared to be plenty of honey stored with some brood.

The committee decided that until social distancing is over that only committee members will undertake the inspections. However it would be great if anyone is interested in leading, or assisting later, could advise me of their details.

Next inspection will be in late May - weather permitting.

In case anyone doesn't have a sugar shake kit, here's a link on how to make one.

<https://www.beekeepers.asn.au/news/2018/3/14/how-to-make-a-sugar-shake-jar>

Alex Aitkenhead

Tips for the Month

Roger writes:

I recently had problems with ants invading my hive and believe I have found a solution to this problem and thought I would share it. It comes in the form of a set of four stainless steel feet that screw onto the bottom of a hive stand. The lower cup that rests on the ground is filled with any type of oil and the oil cup is covered with an adjustable stainless steel cover to prevent the bees drowning in the oil.



The set of four is available on ebay at a cost of \$30 plus postage listed as Stainless Steel Ant Proof Hive Feet. Hope this may be of some help to others experiencing similar problems.



Another tip from Roger, this time in the form of a book recommendation is as follows:

In response to your suggestion of recommending good books on beekeeping I am including the following.

I recently received a book via Booktopia called The Australian Beekeeping Manual by Robert Owen ISBN 978 1 921966 88 0. At under \$40 the 350 page hardcover includes 350 photos and illustrations is good value. With 19 chapters covering all bee related matters it would appeal to beginners and experienced beekeepers.

Thanks for both of these recommendations Roger.

If anyone else has some useful tips to share in the next edition please send to Sandy at BegaValley.publicity@beekeepers.asn.au

Future BVB Meetings

At our last BVB committee meeting, the possibility of conducting future member meetings by online means (e.g. through a platform like Zoom) was discussed.

Members would receive an “invitation to join” a meeting by a link sent out via email in advance of the date and time. A short educational presentation, demonstration and Q & A session are possible via this method.

The committee will continue to work on this project and keep you informed of its progress.

Club Library

A reminder to members - if you are in possession of any club books and magazines could you please contact Alex, and when convenient, drop them off to either Alex or Fay's place? An inventory of club educational resources is currently underway.

If you have recommendations for other books which may be of interest to members, please contact Alex Aitkenhead via begavalley.biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au

Fay's email address is:

begavalley.president@beekeepers.asn.au

From the Media

Bee Future: Precious honey bees in short supply

Follow the link to this ABC Landline excerpt investigating the impacts to the beekeeping industry following drought, bushfires and now Covid-19. Pip Courtney interviews commercial apiarists Rob Dewar and Murray Arkadieff, as well as Tim Heard (former CSIRO entomologist and Australian Native Bee advocate) amongst others, to find out about the future challenges of beekeeping and honey production in Australia.

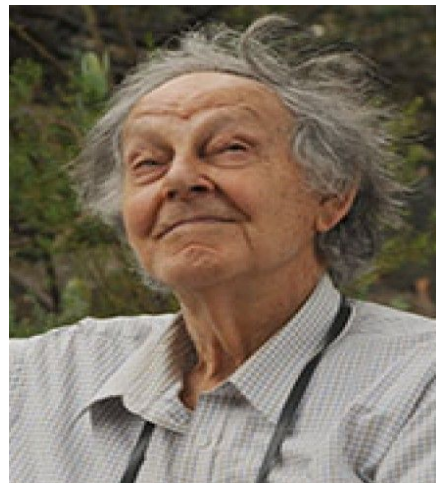
<https://www.abc.net.au/landline/bee-future:-precious-honey-bees-in-short-supply/12122388>



New ideas on how bees see

Our thoughts of how and what bees see have always been contentious. Do they see colour? Which colours? Do they see shapes?

In his book, *The Discovery of a Visual System – the honeybee*, ANU Emeritus Professor **Adrian Horridge**, a beekeeper himself, traces the history of our understanding of insect vision and proposes something new.



Professor Adrian Horridge

He says his experiments show that **honey bees see just one colour, blue**. But they **also see changes in contrast**. He also has ideas of **how bees communicate** and indicate where food can be found. He says **bees can be trained**. If introduced to a sugar

solution they can be trained like dogs. They will come to colours, odours, or shapes.

Follow the link to a 13minute interview with Prof Horridge by Robin Williams of the ABC Science Show:

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/scienceshow/new-ideas-on-how-bees-see/11878004>

Club Shop

Don't get caught out next spring! Winter is the best time to repair beekeeping equipment, or restock supplies in readiness for the next season of bee activity. The club keeps a range of basic beekeeping supplies to sell to club members.

We have all you will need for setting up 8 frame Langstroth hives either made up ready to use, or flat packed ready to build. We also have a range of feeders, beetle traps, emlock straps, queen excluders, honey buckets, honey jars, labels, hive tools, smokers and bee brushes. If what you need isn't on the list, ask Lyall to add it to the next stock order.

Click the **Club Shop** link in your browser for a full price list, contact details for orders and arrangements for pickup. **Please note that social distancing requirements must be observed during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

For any enquiries contact Lyall via begavalley.treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au

Fast Facts

An international queen-marking color code has been established to track the age of a given queen:

For years ending with	apply colour
1 or 6	White
2 or 7	Yellow
3 or 8	Red
4 or 9	Green
0 or 5	Blue

If you can remember the number sequence the colours follow the mnemonic

“Will You Raise Good Bees”

