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## Your Club News

### *From the President*

It has been a while since we have had an edition of The Pollinator. Firstly, I'd like to thank those committee members who have stood down this year for their service to the club. They include Robert, who has been our President since we became a club and who we have persuaded to become our Vice President; Sandra, who has done an awesome job as our Treasurer for just as long; and Paula who set up our library. I'd also like to welcome our new committee members.

The last several years have been very challenging for beekeepers. We have gone through drought, bushfires, floods and Covid restrictions. This year when things looked like getting back to normal, we ended up with a varroa outbreak. Our club has been affected by this outbreak with 3 members losing about 90 hives between them. It will take up to 3 years before we know if we have beaten the mite.

Let's hope this season and coming year will be better.

Scott

### FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

I would like to take this opportunity to thank club members for supporting and assisting me as club President over the last five years, a position that I have enjoyed doing very much. I wish Scott all the best as the new President, he is a mine of knowledge and information on all things bees.

I feel that it's going to be a good season even though it's been a slow start because of the rain and coolness. The eucalypts up our way are looking promising and hoping we will have a big flowering to make up for the fairly average last couple of years.

Managing the small beetle has been a challenge for us all this past season and now we have the varroa mite incursion which is another challenge that we have been preparing for for quite some time. Keeping up to date with the latest ABA information and updates and information at club meetings is of utmost importance. See you at the meetings.

Happy bee keeping

Robert Dibben



## 2022/2023 Committee

### PRESIDENT

Scott Fletcher

### VICE PRESIDENT

Robert Dibben

### SECRETARY

Vicki Grace 0413 264 124

### TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER

Julie Green

### EDUCATION OFFICER

Vacant

### LIBRARIAN

Pat Powell

### COMMITTEE

Michelle McLaren

Margarita Fang

## CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED!

Contributions for the next issue are welcome

Do you have a favourite honey recipe? Share it with the rest of us!

A funny story about your bees? We'd love to hear it!

Read a good book recently? Why not write a review so we can tell everyone about it?

Photos of your bees? Make them famous and send it in to us!

Anything to sell? Or want to buy? List it with us!

**WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Email to Vicki  
manningsvalley.secretary@beek  
eepers.asn.au

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### VARROA MITE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Check the NSW DPI website for all information on the current Varroa Mite situation:

Biosecurity (Varroa mite) Emergency Orders

The plain English guide to the current Emergency Order

See the interactive Varroa mite emergency zone map

Register as a beekeeper with NSW DPI

[dpi.nsw.gov.au](https://dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## Meet our Members

*This month we talk to Robert and Paula about their beekeeping journey.*



Paula and I live on a 20 hectare property at Moorall Creek, 25 kilometres north of Wingham. We got our first hive in about 2012. Within a few years we were running fourteen to sixteen hives, with the aim of getting up to perhaps 20 but never got there. Now we are looking at scaling down to eight or maybe ten hives max.

We started with traditional ten frame Langstroth hives with full depth supers with the brood boxes attached to the bottom boards. We now use mostly ideals which I think are great, much easier to manage than full frame, though the brood boxes are full frame.

I enjoy observing and manipulating brood development, and the boom-and-bust cycle of the colonies each season. No two colonies are ever quite the same, and of course second guessing the queen and her community is a fascinating and endless challenge.

I think perseverance and learning that culminates in knowledge is a great thing, and being able to share that experience with club members is very enjoyable.

My advice to new beekeepers is to have two hives if that's possible so that you can observe one against the other, and if you're an old codger like me, go for ideals, lighter and much easier to handle than full frames.

*Thanks for sharing your story with us Robert and Paula, all us newbies can learn a lot from your years of experience*

## HIVE TYPES

There are 3 main types of hives used these days – the Langstroth hive, the top-bar hive and the Warre hive. To that can be added the Flow Hive.

### Langstroth Hive

The most common of these is the Langstroth Hive. This type of hive was invented in 1851 by Lorenzo L Langstroth. The invention of this hive enabled there to be greater honey production. It also gave the beekeeper the means to inspect the hives, thus being able to keep a check on the health of the hive. It also made it easier to harvest the honey. Over 150 years later this hive is still the most common in use.

The design of the Langstroth is made up of 3 sections.

1. It has a bottom section which includes the bottom board and an entrance for the bees to come and go. This bottom board supports the whole hive. These days there are various versions of the bottom board. Some bottom boards are ventilated or screened.
2. It has boxes including the brood box and honey supers. The Langstroth hive allows the beekeeper to add boxes when necessary. The boxes come in various sizes including full depth, WSP and Ideal (about half depth) – all relating to height of the box. The boxes also come in different sizes pertaining to the number of frames the box can hold. The most common sizes are 8 frame and 10 frame boxes.
3. The top section includes the lid. This lid covers and protects the bees and boxes below. Under this lid can be an inner cover.



The frames within the hive are standard sizes and are dependent on the depth (size) of the hive. They generally have wax foundation embedded onto them, but some people choose plastic foundation or to just have a small starter strip of foundation.

Advantages of Langstroth hive:

- Boxes can be added easily when required.
- Easy to manipulate frames in the boxes to make more room for the queen/bees
- Can use different depth size boxes on hive to suit needs.
- Cheaper than a flow hive.
- Honey is easier to harvest.
- The spun frames can be put back into the hive, so the bees don't have to build more comb.

Disadvantages:

- Need an extractor to extract the honey.
- Supers can be heavy to lift.
- Empty boxes need to be stored in a way to prevent pests.

### Top-Bar Hive

A top-bar hive is a single-story frameless hive with straight sides. It is about waist high. The bees build their comb from removable bars. These bars form a barrier between the hive and the roof. This is unlike the Langstroth hives where the frames leave enough space for the bees to get above the frames and to move between the boxes. A divider board is used to enlarge the cavity as the bees need more space or to shrink the space when required at times such as in the cooler months.

A top-bar hive is one of the most basic methods of managing bees as they are simple to build and simple to manage. Basic management of a top-bar hives requires monitoring frequently to ensure that the bees have enough space in the hive. These hives are meant to mimic the bee's natural environment. While the Langstroth hive is vertical, the top-bar hive is horizontal. The bees work



## WEIRD BEE FACTS

- The honeybee is a highly sophisticated insect that has evolved over millions of years. The earliest recorded Bee was found in Myanmar, encased in amber and dated as 100 million years old.
- There are approximately 20,000 bee species world wide. These range from the giant leaf eating bee, which is over 3cm long to the tiny dwarf bee which is just 2mm long. The honeybee is just one of these species. Most other bees do not live in colonies preferring a more solitary existence.
- As well as crop pollination scientists believe that bees are responsible for the rich flower diversity we enjoy today. Most flowering plants cannot self-pollinate so flowers evolved with bright colours and markings to attract bees and to ensure that they were rewarded for the pollination service, provided them with a nutritious nectar too.
- Honey was the most important sweetener for food and alcoholic drinks in ancient times. So important were these activities that parents named their children after the bees. Both Deborah and Melissa mean "bee", in Hebrew and Greek respectively.
- It has been sought as an antiseptic and sweetener for at least 100,000 years. In Ancient Egypt and the Middle East, it was used to embalm the dead.
- It wasn't until Egyptian times that people started to keep bees at home. The Egyptian hive design was a simple upturned straw basket called a skep.
- Skeps were not designed for long term use. The honey couldn't be extracted without destroying the hive and therefore the colony. The system only worked if the colony produced enough bees to create a swarm, which would be caught and go on to provide the honey in the following year.

systematically from one end to the other building comb on each top bar as they go. The queen will lay brood in part of the box and the rest will be filled up with honey.

To harvest the honey you only need to cut the comb from the top bar and crush it and then strain it in a colander or something like cheesecloth.

A variation to the top-bar hive is the Kenyan top-bar hive. It has sloped sides.

Advantages of a top-bar hive:

- No frames.
- Size of hive is naturally limited.
- Comb is easy to harvest.
- No extractor is required.
- No heavy weight to lift.
- No extra boxes to store.
- No bending or lifting required.
- Not as many places for pests such as small hive beetle to hide.

Disadvantages:

- You can't add boxes on top to make more room.
- Extraction takes longer and you need to destroy the comb in the process.
- Not easy to move once in use.
- Not as many people are as familiar with this type of hive so can be harder to get help.

### The Warre Hive

A Warre hive is a vertical top-bar hive. Like the horizontal top-bar hive it uses bars, which the bees build comb on, instead of using frames. The boxes are smaller than a Langstroth hive. The Warre hive in Australia has been modified to local conditions and actually has larger boxes than the original Warre hive.

French monk, Abbe Emile Warre, designed this type of hive, focusing on simplicity, ease of management and trying to mimic the bee's ideal natural environment. They are a low cost and low maintenance hive. In a Warre hive extra boxes are added to the bottom, which leads to the comb being regularly replaced in the hive. Boxes are added to the hive in spring and the top boxes are removed for honey harvest late in the honey season. Honey is harvested the same way as the Top-Bar hive. The hive is meant to be managed by box rather than by frames of comb. The bees prepare for winter by moving their honey stores to the top of the hive.



The idea of the Warre hive is that there is no need to inspect the colony as frequently as the Langstroth hive. While this may be the case, in Australia the hive needs to be inspected in accordance with the beekeepers' Biosecurity Code of Practice.

Advantages of a Warre hive:

- No frames and foundation.
- No extractor required.
- More hands-off than Langstroth hive.
- More natural for bees.

Disadvantages:

- Boxes can be heavy to move.
- Can be more expensive than the Langstroth hive.
- Not as many people are as familiar with this type of hive so can be harder to get help.
- Lower honey yields.
- Empty boxes need to be stored in a way to prevent pests.



### Flow Hive

The Flow Hive has a brood box like the Langstroth hive and is also a vertical hive. The honey supers have what is termed Flow frames. These Flow frames consist of partly formed honeycomb cells which the bees close up and then fill with honey before capping the cells. When the frame is full it can be harvested without any need to open the hive or use an extractor. Instead, a small honey tube is inserted into the frame and a lever, called a Flow key, is turned until the artificial cells are broken open. This causes the honey to flow down and out through the honey tube and straight into a jar. The Flow Hive has an observation window in the side of the box and a clear end-frame view. Both allow you to see inside the hive without actually getting inside the box and disturbing the bees. Despite this, owners are still required to inspect brood boxes.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Queenspotting – Meet the Remarkable Queen Bee By Hilary Kearney



Do you have trouble spotting your queen bee? Then the book "Queenspotting – Meet the Remarkable Queen Bee" is the book for you. The book is written by Hilary Kearney of Girl Next Door Honey from San Diego, California. As well as rescuing swarms and managing about 90 hives, Hilary also teaches hundreds of new beekeepers each year as well as being an author. She also writes a blog "Beekeeping Like a Girl."

In this book, Hilary gives insights into the fascinating life of the queen bee along with lots of trivia. She also describes how to spot the queen. In addition to this she issues the reader with the Queenspotting Challenge. Throughout the book the reader will find 48 fold-out pages that resemble a frame of bees. The pictures start out with the queen relatively easy to find and then progress in difficulty as you go along. It is a great way to practice locating the queen bee on a frame of bees.

The book is easy to read and fascinating. Hilary has also interspersed the pages with well chosen photographs to illustrate what she is talking about.

You can borrow the book from the club's library, but it is well-worth purchasing your own copy from a beekeeping supply shop or from Booktopia.

Advantages of a Flow Hive:

- No extractor required
- Fewer frames and foundation required
- No need to disturb the bees

Disadvantages:

- Flow hives can be expensive
- No facility to manipulate frames (unless have hybrid super)
- More difficult to manage if hive gets AFB or slimed by small hive beetle.



## BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS.....AND A DVD!

Don't forget to check out our box of lovely books and magazines (and the abovementioned DVD). Most can be borrowed at one of our meetings and returned when you have finished with them.

And if you have any books out on loan and have finished reading them, please return them so others may enjoy them! Below is a page from the book "Queenspotting – Meet the Remarkable Queen Bee" by Hilary Kearney (see review on the left).



## SOFT HONEY COOKIES

Makes 16 cookies

### Ingredients

- |                               |                                           |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| ¼ cup sugar                   | 2 tablespoons oil                         |
| 1 large egg, room temperature | 3 tablespoons honey                       |
| ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract    | 1 cup and 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour |
| ¼ teaspoon baking powder      | ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon                |
| ½ teaspoon salt               |                                           |

### Method

- In a small bowl, beat sugar and oil until blended. Beat in egg; beat in honey and vanilla. Combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt; gradually add to sugar mixture and mix well (dough will be stiff). Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
- Preheat oven to 175°. Drop dough by tablespoonfuls 2 inches apart onto a greased baking sheet. Bake until bottoms are lightly browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Cool for 1 minute before removing from sheet to a wire rack. Store in an airtight container.

