

BEE BIZ October 2018

The Newsletter of the Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association Inc.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello bee keepers,

It was great to see quite a few new faces for our last Club day at Sandy and Michael's.

Although Michael and Sandy's hives suffered from a case of poisoning a month or so earlier they were building up very well considering. Michael's Warre hives were very popular as were the top bar hives. The inquisitiveness we had questions firing at Michael all wanting to know more, and Michael answered all with pride and expertise that was inspiring. On behalf of everyone I would like to thank our hosts for a very enjoyable day. Thank you Michael and Sandy .

Steven Fowler gave a demonstration on how to melt your wax, from simple inexpensive small-scale do it yourself, to a larger model for those looking to upsize. Thank you Steven.

Thank you all for our club days they wouldn't happen without you and your contributions. From a plate too share for lunch and raffle items, to helping, organising and setting up, and let's not forget the support and encouragement.

As you are all aware we will be holding a Special General Meeting at our next Club day. All positions on the committee will be open. Nomination forms went out with the last email and you should have all received one. If you have someone in mind for a position on the committee please contact them and ask to make sure they would like to become a committee member.

It saddens me to say Sally is resigning from her position as secretary and will be missed immensely. Thank you very much Sally for everything you have done for the club and its members over the past two years.

I would like to inform everyone I will be stepping aside as president. It has been a pleasure and a wonderful opportunity to help other beekeepers. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Happy Beekeeping and hope to see you all at our next Club day.

Robert



FROM THE HIVES OCTOBER

Swarms dominated the apiary during September, an experience shared by most beekeepers this Spring. Many of the swarms which settled on the low custard apple trees in front of the apiary were collected, but the ones on the higher trees at the rear were allowed to go their own way. The hives are now being reduced to two boxes ready to move, with the brood being checked for no AFB and the presence of eggs, to confirm that the ones that swarmed have managed to get a laying queen back from mating. So far, two hives with low bee numbers and no laying queen have been combined with two swarm hives. Any weak hive after swarming is in danger of being overcome by small hive beetle if there is a spell of hot weather.

An experiment was performed on some hives not in the main apiary concerning the drawing of plastic foundation. In recent times two lots of 100 sheets of plastic foundation were coated with beeswax using a frypan and a paint roller, and drawn in hives during a modest honey flow. The result in both cases was that about 85 of the 100 were drawn satisfactorily (and are still being used), and the other 15 were mucked up in some way, and were cleaned back to the plastic. Scrubbing with 70C hot water did a good job. Do not use hotter water.

The experiment performed was to see if the waxing was necessary, as a number of beekeepers said to just put the plastic foundation in the hives on a honey flow and the bees must draw it because that is the only option. Do not believe it!

Five hives with a strong brood box, an excluder, a box of various unwaxed but thoroughly scrubbed plastic foundation, and a migratory lid, were placed near the macadamia plantation while the trees were in full flower. Most later inspections of these hives showed the lid and the brood box absolutely full of bees, heaps of honey in the brood

box and the lid, and very few bees actually in the super full of unwaxed plastic foundation, which was barely touched. Nearby hives with supers of wax foundation had fully drawn all the frames and

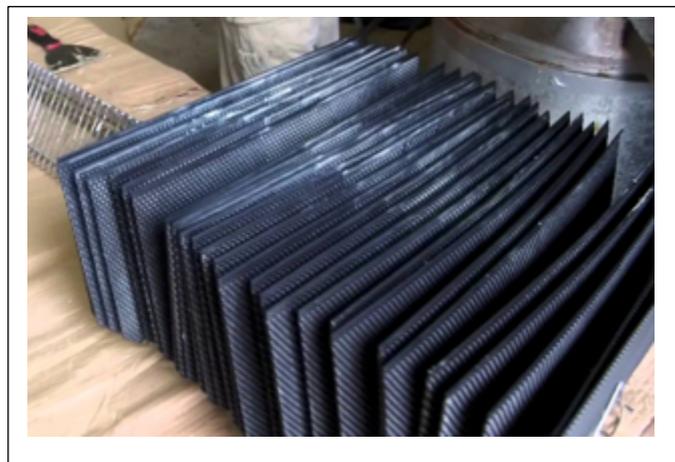
filled them with honey. Of course, the bees took the other option to drawing the plastic frames; they swarmed! So, the beekeeper lost all his bees, he did not collect any honey, and he obtained no satisfactorily drawn frames (not a good result!).

By the time the experiment was terminated, most of the hives had just started drawing the central frame, and the best hive showed much (but not all) of the central frame drawn and full of honey. Maybe under different conditions, the hives may not have swarmed and would have ultimately drawn the frames. Now all these frames have been scraped back and have had wax rolled on, and they are ready to put in again on a honey flow. All plastic foundation will be waxed in the future.

Brian



Custard Apple Tree



Black Plastic Foundation

OCTOBER FLOWERING

Red Gum is still going fairly strong, at least in places I have been lately. I don't think I have ever seen it flower for so long, keep in mind it started in May. Although not a particularly good budding, Grey Ironbark is yielding.

White Mahogany is just starting to show a few flowers today. It sometimes yields honey but in any case will provide useful pollen. Although not particularly widespread this season white clover will be yielding excellent pollen. Surprisingly the pollen is a khaki colour. It requires hot weather to yield nectar. It yields whilst it is burning off. Then a storm to freshen it, and then another burn off again, and so on. With the rain we are having as I write I suspect that the grass will beat it however. It is a light tasteless honey, but particularly on the coast, even if it is yielding, it is coloured and flavoured by all the other sources that contribute at this time of year.

There is a multitude of flowers showing now mostly in the urban areas. Bottlebrush and Illawarra Flame trees can produce both nectar and honey, but there are not normally enough of them in range to be of significance. Bees in urban areas normally do very well because of the multitude of floral sources, but it is very unusual to have enough of any one to give mono variety honey. For reasons that are unknown grevilleas are not worked properly by bees, including Silky Oak. There is often nectar in the flowers, enough in fact to shake out onto your hand. It tastes fine to me, but even in a dearth the bees seem unwilling to work it. There is some desultory attempt at pollen gathering.

There is nothing on the horizon that I have seen so far. Short budding possibilities are Bloodwood, Brush Box and Grey Box, and possibly Rough Barked Apple (Angophora). Keep looking.

Geoff Manning

IT'S SWARMING SEASON



Photo taken by Geoff Manning last Wednesday 10th October just before the storm hit. It was hived into 3 full depth supers and an Ideal.

It hasn't really stopped raining since, and is forecast to go on for another week. Meaning it would likely starve without a feed from him. Oh yes, it is not from one or several of Geoff's hives.

“The Bee is domesticated but not tamed”

-William Longgood

EPA INVESTIGATING BEE DEATHS

Northern Rivers Beekeepers Mark Fleming, Sandy Jeudwine and Michael Koenen live one kilometre away from each other in Alstonville, and almost at the same time discovered that large numbers of their bees were dying.

It was impossible to calculate just how many bees had been lost, however the numbers were in the thousands.

Neither were sure of the cause but after some research suspected chemical poisoning.

Honey bees can forage a long way from their hives, so trying to figure out where the poisoning happened would be practically impossible.

Testing the dead bees for cause of death is very expensive, and even so, it would be difficult to pinpoint the exact poison or chemical.

When something like this happens, one hopes that it's just a terrible mistake as it's devastating to face the possibility of losing whole hives that were healthy and doing well.

The NSW Environment Protection Authority received the reports of bee deaths last month, and are investigating.

EPA takes all reports of bee deaths very seriously and will look at pesticides as part of the investigation.

What we can do to prevent this happening to others is let farmers know if they are near your hives that you have bees and if they have to spray pesticides that it should be done at night.

They have a responsibility to use herbicides and pesticides safely and should contact others around their local area and let people know in advance that they will be spraying.

It is an offence under the EPA's legislation to use pesticides in a manner that harms non-target animals.

with penalties ranging from \$120,000 to \$250,000.

There is an EPA Environment Line 131555, which people can use if they suspect pesticide misuse .

They also have a website

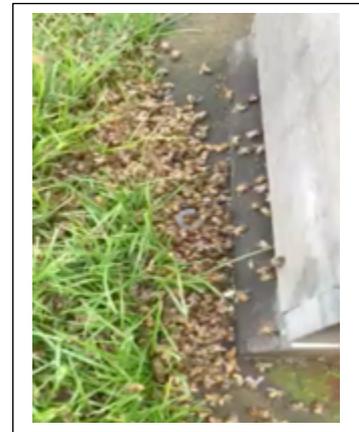
<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/pesticides/preventing-pesticide-misuse>.

Wishing a speedy recovery to the hives that were affected .

Good Luck.

Full article and interviews can be found in the Ballina Advocate

<https://www.ballinaadvocate.com.au/news/cause-of-mass-bee-death-a-mystery/3518535/>



NEWS FROM OZ

Food Fraud

[When oils ain't oils: Honey isn't the only premium product susceptible to food fraud](#)

TO TEST OR NOT TO TEST

[Want to accurately test the purity of your honey? You can't, scientists say](#)

Glyphosate linked to bee deaths

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/biology/glyphosate-linked-to-bee-deaths>

OCTOBER IS AFB AWARENESS MONTH

DID YOU KNOW?

AFB spores can survive in the environment for 50 years

It takes just five or six spores to infect a day-old larva.

One sealed brood cell can harbour 2.6 billion spores

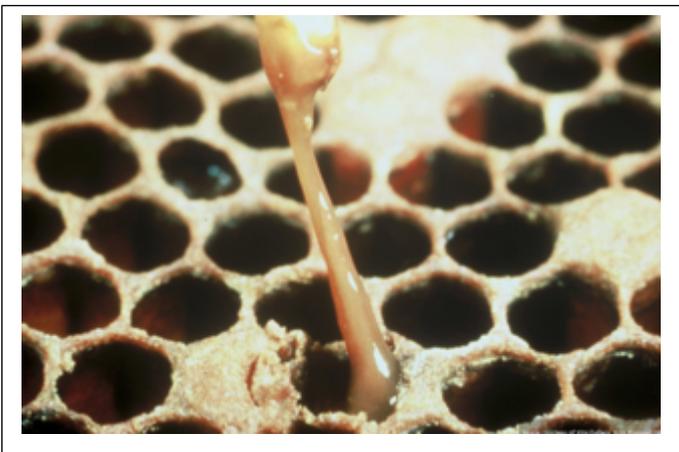
AFB spreads primarily through infected equipment, feeding infected honey or pollen to uninfected hives, and through infected adult bees drifting from one colony to another or by robbing another hive

Hive tools can easily transport AFB spores and cross contaminate hives. Sterilise hive tools between each hive inspection by holding over a hot flame.

Swarms are unlikely to be a source of AFB

Testing of suspect samples is free for registered beekeepers

Bee colonies with AFB must be killed immediately at night (so no bees are flying around) and all equipment burnt or sterilised by irradiation.



Slime roping out a sure sign of AFB

For a quick overview on the NSW situation, read the [Prime Fact on AFB PDF 3 page](#)

NEW EQUIPMENT

Stephen and Janet Fowler have fresh supplies of frames, supers and **foundation** available now and carry stocks of most common beekeeping equipment, as well as pots and jars for honey sales.

Pre ordering is appreciated, otherwise order and pick up from 5 Robb Street, Alstonville, in the Russellton Industrial Estate.

Wax is also needed to convert into foundation. So, if you have any good clean wax to sell we will pay the same price as Capilano. Contact Stephen on

(0418 412 621).

Steritech Trip

A trip to Steritech to irradiate bee equipment is planned for Saturday 17th November.

The pallets will be assembled starting at 9 am on that day at the home of our carrier, Andrew Ware, Springrove Road, Caniaba (subject to confirmation).

Participants are reminded that consignments are best arranged in stacks of 3 or 4 full depth boxes (8 or 10 frame) with a base and a lid, strapped with an emlok, and sealed to stop bees entering the stack.

Stacks can contain extra boxes, excluders, bases, lids, clearer boards, and frames with or without comb.

The comb can be well extracted stickies, and it is recommended that layers of newspaper be put on top of the base to catch any honey. No unextracted frames or live insects are permitted.

Hives other than Langstroth can be done with prior arrangement. Non-club members are welcome to participate. The cost per box works out around \$14, but depends on how much can be fitted on the pallets.

Contact **Stephen Fowler** 0418 412 621
fowlerstephen@y7mail.com or

Brian Window 0466 790 736
brianwindow@internode.on.net

to let them know roughly how many boxes you will be bringing.

NEXT MEETING - SUNDAY 28th October

Location: Agricultural Facilities of

Richmond River High School

Time: 9.30

Transport: Own Transport

Bee meeting signage will be in place.

Parking: There is parking

What to bring:

- Either a morning tea item or a salad.
- Raffle items are always appreciated
- \$5 per head for morning tea/lunch
- Beekeeping protective equipment
- Shade/sun protection
- Chair

Activities:

Special General Meeting to elect new committee
At 10.30.

Transfer of a Nuc to a Polystyrene Hive donated by
Stephen Fowler to the school.

Inspection of a Flow Hive.

Other hive inspections.

See you there !

Murwillumbah Show

The bees are coming to **Murwillumbah Show**, Nov.
2nd & 3rd.

Well, not the bees themselves but for the first time in
many decades, the Murwillumbah Show will host a
honey competition, open to all our regional
beekeepers.

Also, several members of Northern Rivers Amateur
Beekeeping Association and Gold Coast Amateur
Beekeepers Society will jointly share a stall displaying
hives, selling honey and other bee related products.

We'll also be giving talks on a range of bee topics.

**Come along. Bee a part of the
fun.** 🐝❤️😊

ALL MEMBERS

Looking ahead here is your chance to help your club support your interest in Bees

Dear members of the Northern Rivers Amateur
Beekeeping Association Inc,

The committee has been reviewing the club's
constitution with the view to update it to comply
with the NSW ABA recommendations.

In this process it has become apparent that for a
number of years the club has functioned outside of
its rules by not complying with the number of
elected committee members.

In order that we become compliant, we are calling a
Special General Meeting of the club to elect four
office bearers and three committee members at
10.30am, on the 28th October, 2018, to be held at the
agricultural facilities of Richmond River High School,
Lake Street, North Lismore, NSW 2480.

Nominations are called for the positions of president,
vice-president, treasurer, secretary and 3 committee
members. All nominations have to be made in
writing and signed by two club members (forms
attached). Nominations have to be received by the
secretary by the 21st October 2018 to be eligible.

The club's constitution and nomination forms are
attached for your perusal.

Sally McMahon

Secretary NRABA Inc

566 Ballina Road, Goonellabah, NSW
2480 northernrivers.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au

[NRABA Constitution](#)

[Nomination Form](#)

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE COUNTRY SHOWS:

NSW agricultural shows are listed at www.agshowsnsw.org.au/shows

QLD Agricultural shows are listed as QCAS (google)

Lismore show 18-20 October 2018

www.northcoastnational.com.au

Alstonville show 26-27 October 2018

www.agshowsnsw.org.au/shows

Mullumbimby show 10-11 November 2018

www.agshowsnsw.org.au/shows

Bangalow show 16-17 November 2018

www.bangalowshow@bigpond.com.au

Sydney Royal Easter Show 2019

Entries open 20th November, 2018
honey@rasnsw.com.au

BEE HIVES AVAIAABLE

Bee hives are now available from a number of suppliers in our local area, and should flourish as Spring advances. The instructors in the Bee Course run by the club offer a 5-frame nucleus with a new queen and full of bees installed in your gear for \$120. Contact the supplier of your choice to decide. These nuclei come with a promise to look after the new beekeeper and their hive during the early stages. Larger hives are also available, and the price needs to be negotiated. American Foul Brood is very common, and the help of an experienced beekeeper should be sought to go through any hive from other sources before payment.

Instructors were

Stephen Fowler 0418 412 621,

Tony Lamont 6663 1238,

Merv McDonald 0428 664 464,

G Muntelwit 0417 434 245,

Robert Stone 6683 2222, and

Brian Window 0466 790 736.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

If any members have any stories, photos or things that have happened to them in their beekeeping why not share it with other members .Just drop me a line on

northernrivers.editor@beekeepers.asn.au

Ruth Walker

FACEBOOK

The link to the NRABA Facebook group is below.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/371801436599763/>

The group is a place for sharing information about the activities of the NRABA and for information on beekeeping in general.

KEEP YOUR CONTACT DETAILS UP TO DATE

NRABA members are reminded to go to the ABA's website <http://www.beekeepers.asn.au> and check their contact details. Click on the drop-down menu at the top right of the homepage to sign in.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS are now printed each month, if you haven't got yours attend a club day and pick yours up.



Another Club Day Photo