

# BEEBIZ MAY 2021

The Newsletter of the Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association Inc.

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<u>President</u>	Kevin Virgen	<a href="tel:0266849213">02 6684 9213</a>	<a href="mailto:northernrivers.president@beekeepers.asn.au">northernrivers.president@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
<u>Vice President</u>	Ray Smith	<a href="tel:0427734954">0427 734 954</a>	<a href="mailto:northernrivers.biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au">northernrivers.biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
<u>Secretary</u>	Brian Window	<a href="tel:0466790736">0466 790 736</a>	<a href="mailto:northernrivers.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au">northernrivers.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
<u>Treasurer</u>	Paul Towner	<a href="tel:0418321305">0418 321 305</a>	<a href="mailto:northernrivers.treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au">northernrivers.treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
<u>Committee Member</u>	Geoff Manning	<a href="tel:0400221602">0400 221 602</a>	<a href="mailto:podargus@ycw.com.au">podargus@ycw.com.au</a>
<u>Membership Officer and Editor</u>	Brian Window		

Postal Address 54 Donnans Road, Lismore Heights, NSW 2480

## May Activity Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June

The next NRABA activity will be to attend the field day organised by the Queensland Beekeepers' Association at the Beenleigh State High School for Saturday 5th June. It follows the QBA annual conference on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June at Southport.

“We expect several hundred beekeepers to attend and they will be provided a variety of activities from speakers, presentations, displays and trade stands. Speakers and presentations will consist of the following at this point ---Queen bee rearing, Q&A Panel, Ladies in Beekeeping Panel, DAF and biosecurity research speaker”. They do not mention food and drink here, but it is in the following brochure (over page).

Many of the trade suppliers bring some stock to be sold on the day, but it is usually possible to get firms like Burnett Beekeeping and Quality Beekeeping to bring products for you, saving on freight. Just ask! Some also have specials available on the day.

Transport will be free for members and partners in a hired bus. The bus will start in Lismore, and will pick up at Alstonville, Ballina, Bangalow and Chinderah if there are customers. The pickup point in Lismore will be opposite Oakes Oval in Dawson Street, in front of the Council car park. The onus is on those who want to be picked up elsewhere to agree with Brian on a spot on the route where it is safe to stop. The bus will leave Lismore at 8.30 am, and we should arrive in Beenleigh soon after 11am. If we leave Beenleigh at 3pm, we should be back in Lismore by 6 pm.

Some may wish to go independently; could you let Brian know, as it may simplify travel arrangements if they could pick up someone.

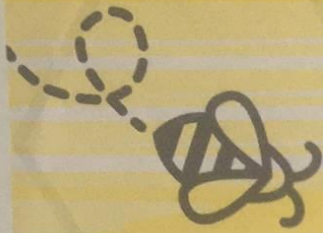
Those intending to come on the bus should contact Brian ([brianwindow@internode.on.net](mailto:brianwindow@internode.on.net)) giving numbers, phone number, and pickup point details.

**It is essential that you book beforehand.**



# Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc.

# OPEN DAY



**Saturday 5th  
June 2021**

**Beenleigh State  
High School**

40 Alamein St, Beenleigh QLD 4207

**9am til 3pm**

Expert Q&A  
Panels  
Pollination,  
Honey Producers,  
Hobby to  
Commercial.

Expert Q&A  
Panel  
Women in  
Beekeeping

Research  
Speaker  
Presentations

Trade  
Displays  
and  
Demonstrations

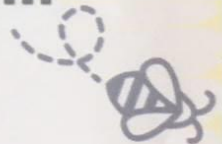
Beekeeping  
Equipment  
Sales

Check out our  
facebook page for  
more information.

**Entry \$5.00  
per person**

**Food & Drinks available for purchase at the event.**

For trade exhibit information contact [abainc@bigpond.com](mailto:abainc@bigpond.com)



## President Report

*To lie and listen- till o'er-drowsed sense  
Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence--  
To the soft murmur of the vagrant Bee.  
"William Wordsworth 1817"*

Hi folks,

A successful field day was held at Myocum at Bill and Susan Nicolls' property. A big thanks to Bill and Susan for their generous hospitality and especially Susan for the yummy Devonshire Tea.

Experienced apiarist Col Macmaster inspected Bill's two Flow Hives under the guidance of Flow Hive guru Stuart Anderson, All flow hive queries were addressed. All was well with the hives and some honey was taken off.

Geoff Manning brought some interesting vintage smokers along and had planned to talk about the historic development of this essential tool, but, unfortunately, he was delayed and we ran out of time for his address. Maybe next field day he will do it.

The next activity is a bus trip to the Queensland Beekeepers Assoc. Field Day at Beenleigh on the 5th of June. Bookings are essential to secure a seat on the bus. The details of this event are elsewhere in the newsletter. That is all from Byrangerry Creek this month.

Cheers and happy beekeeping

Kevin Virgen.

## Secretary Report

The last field day at Myocum was held at the home of Susan and Bill Nicholls, on top of a hill overlooking the coast north of Byron Bay- a beautiful spot. Thank you to Bill and Susan for allowing us to share it.

Bill had two flowhives which he had started up himself, and they were doing really well.

I noticed that he had used double 8 frame brood boxes under the flow frame box, something that I think is a good idea in our area.

We were pleased to have long time club member and flow hive co-inventor, Stu Anderson, along for the day, and his presence at the hive should have been useful to the members. They did have a very long question period.

After the field day, some of the Committee went to Flowhive headquarters in Newrybar to discuss getting a

demonstration flowhive for the club. The picture shows the view from their verandah, overlooking the array of working flowhives.

Brian

## From The Hives

There is not much happening at the hives near Coraki; the melaleuca quinquinervia has flowered only sparsely there this year. The ones in the carpark in Lismore have been outstanding in comparison; still beekeeping would be quite boring if every year was the same. Brian



## Flowering Report

This will be a rerun of the last effort. Paperbark, *Melaleuca quinquenervia* will continue flowering, but with the continued rain is of limited benefit. If my trees are anything to go by they are off the burst for the next week or so, the very time that the forecast is for some welcome dry weather.



Melaleuca quinquenervia



Flowering River or Creek Oak



Collected through slots in hive floor

There has been a major flowering on all the sheoaks. The tree looks brown and as if it is dying at flowering. I don't recall one as heavy on the Creek Oak *Casuarina cunningghamiana*. Forrest Oak, *Casuarina torulosa* has reasonable pollen but is not stimulative unless there is some nectar coming in at the same time. You may see what looks like sawdust on the bottom board or on the ground in front of the hive. This is a husk that the bees collect with the pollen and later chuck out when using the pollen. (see picture from Meg at Coraki)

Fireweed is flowering well where it has been able to get away. It likes well drained soil, i.e. the red soil or sandy soils. My place is chocolate basalt and is certainly not well drained. At the moment it is mud, mud everywhere and not a place to walk. So Fireweed is a rare plant here. Just about every other weed known to man find it is paradise though.

I mentioned Goldenrod last time. I found that it was heavily worked for pollen. I enquired on a American bee keeping list as to its requirement for growth as here it seems unable to put up with grazing, but competes well with other vegetation. It seemed that that was the case mostly growing in unused country. Also there are a large number of species and many are of no value to bees producing neither nectar or pollen.

On my way to town there are a few flowers showing on a Grey Ironbark, and a Red Gum Red Gum has been regularly starting to flower around May/June for a number of years. August/ September in my memory was more common in the past. My memory may be at fault, or perhaps it is responding to climate change. The tree, not my memory.

Geoff

## Report on lecture by Leoni Kojetin 23<sup>rd</sup> April

The North Coast Branch of the NSW Apiarist Association had a speaker from the Macadamia Society, Leoni Kojetin, to talk about the interface between the macadamia industry and the beekeeping industry. Her

presentation was very informal but interesting. Normally macadamias set fruit on less than 1% of the flowers. She pointed out that cross-pollination (as distinct from just pollination) was an important factor influencing nut size and quality and reducing early fruit drop, and honeybees were the best suited pollinators for that. She also said that honeybees prefer to work the macadamias over other flowering plants.

The problem of growers spraying flowering trees in the daytime came up towards the end of her talk. She said the society fully supports the best practice of spraying at night, but pointed out that they have little control over “rogue sprayers”. Large growers have no excuse, but small growers using spray contractors find it difficult to get some of them to spray at night. They may have a number of growers to cover in a short time interval.

If you would like to receive notifications of these talks (which are basically held bimonthly at the Casino RSM), contact David Fairhall on [df77@bigpond.com](mailto:df77@bigpond.com).

## **Feeding Bees**

There is a lot of information on the internet about feeding bees. Two good sources are the Agriculture Departments of NSW and Victoria. The information supplied here is from the Victorian source.

“Honey bees store honey in the hive for food:

- during winter
- when nectar-secreting flowers are scarce.

When nectar is in short supply or unavailable, bees draw on the honey stores in their hive. You need to frequently monitor the amount of stored honey during these times because when it has all gone the colony will starve.

Starvation can be prevented by:

- moving bees to an area where plants are yielding nectar
- feeding them white table sugar
- feeding them syrup made with white sugar.

Bee colonies can be kept alive for long periods by feeding white sugar.

### **Honey as feed for bees**

Do not feed bees honey unless it is from your own disease-free hives. Spores of American foulbrood disease can be present in honey.

Feeding honey from an unknown source, such as a supermarket or even another beekeeper, can cause infection in your hives.

If you feed suitable honey to your bees, place it inside the hive. Never place honey in the open outside the hive — this is illegal under the [Livestock Disease Control Act 1994](#).

### **How and when to feed bees**

Don't leave sugar syrup or dry sugar out in the open. You will end up feeding bees from nearby managed and feral colonies as well as your own. It is a waste of money. Feeding in the open can also cause robber bee activity in the apiary as well as the spread of bee diseases.

Place sugar syrup or dry sugar inside the hives towards evening — as this minimises the risk of bees robbing hives that have been fed.

### **Feeding dry sugar**

Medium to strong bee colonies can be fed dry white table sugar placed on hive mats or in-trays under the hive lid.

Bees need water to liquefy the sugar crystals. They will source water from outside the hive or use condensation from inside the hive.

Some beekeepers prefer to wet the sugar with water to prevent it from solidifying. This creates a partial syrup.

Don't feed dry sugar to weak colonies as they may be incapable of gathering sufficient water.

Regardless of colony size, feeding dry sugar works best during autumn and spring when humidity is relatively high. Hot, dry summers make it hard for bees to dissolve sugar crystals into liquid.

A colony at starvation level should be fed sugar syrup first before dry sugar is given. This will give the bees immediate food without the need to liquefy crystals.

Bees will generally not use dry sugar when they are able to collect sufficient nectar for the colony's needs. The sugar will remain in the hive or be deposited by the bees outside the hive entrance. A small amount of dry sugar may be converted to liquid and stored in the cells.

## **Making and feeding sugar syrup**

There are differing views about the correct amount of sugar to use in syrup.

Some beekeepers prefer a ratio of 1 part of sugar to 1 part of water — measured by weight (known as 1:1). The 1:1 syrup is generally used to:

- supplement honey stores
- stimulate colonies to rear brood
- encourage drawing of comb foundation, particularly in spring.

Other beekeepers prefer a dense syrup of 2 parts of sugar to 1 part of water (known as 2:1). The stronger syrup is used for food when honey stores in the hive are low. You can measure the sugar and water by either weight or volume as there is no need to be 100% exact about the sugar concentration.

Heat the water in a container large enough to hold the water and sugar. As soon as the water gently boils, remove the container from the heat source. Pour in the sugar and stir until the sugar crystals are dissolved.

Never boil the mixture after the sugar is added. The sugar can caramelize, becoming partially indigestible and toxic to the bees.

The syrup must be cooled to room temperature before it is fed to the bees. The cooled syrup can be placed in the hives using one of 4 methods.

### ***1. Container feeder with sealable lid***

Fill a clean container (such as a jar or a tin with a push-down lid) with sugar syrup. Drill or punch the lid with 6 to 8 very small holes. It is a good idea to remove the cardboard insert commonly found in jar lids.

Cut two 12mm high risers from a piece of wood and place them across the top bars of the frames that are in the top box of the hive. Invert the filled container and place it on the risers.

Place an empty super on the hive to enclose the feeder and replace the hive lid. The risers provide a bee space between the top bars and the holes in the container lid.

### ***2. Plastic bag feeder***

Partially fill a plastic freezer bag with sugar syrup until it's approximately half full. Gently squeeze the bag to expel all the air, then tie the neck of the bag using an elastic band.

Place the bag on the top bars of the frames in the top box of the hive, under the hive cover.



Use a brad or very small diameter nail to punch about 6 to 8 small holes in the upper surface of the bag. The bees will suck the syrup through the holes.

Never put the holes on the under surface of the bag as the syrup may leak out faster than the bees can gather it. This can lead to loss of syrup outside the hive and cause robbing by nearby bees.

It is important to have a bee space between the upper surface of the bag and the under surface of the hive lid so the bees can access the syrup. If needed, a wooden riser of the dimensions of the hive can be used to raise the lid.

### 3. Shallow tray feeder

Place sugar syrup in a shallow tray (such as aluminium foil tray) under the hive lid.

Bees need to be able to reach the syrup without falling into the liquid and drowning. Grass straw or wood straw (such as that used in cooling devices) can be placed in the syrup for this purpose. Do not use any straw or floating material that has been treated with (or been in contact with) chemicals as this may be hazardous to bees.

The hives should be on level ground to prevent loss of syrup and a riser may need to be used if the tray is not shallow.

### 4. Frame feeder

Place sugar syrup in a 'frame or division board feeder' which is a container, the size of a full-depth Langstroth frame. It has an open top which sits in the super as a normal frame does.

The feeder requires flotation material so bees can access the syrup without drowning.

### How often to feed

It is normal for bees to:

- remove syrup from a feeder
- reduce the water content
- store it in the combs as if it were honey.

A medium to strong colony usually empties the feeder in a matter of days regardless of the feeder type used.

For colonies with virtually no stored honey and no incoming nectar, the initial feed will be largely determined by:

- the amount of brood
- the size of the colony
- to some degree, the size of the syrup container.

It is safer to over-feed a colony than to skimp and potentially cause the death of the colony.

Try an initial feed of around 1 to 3 litres, then frequently check the combs to see how much syrup has been stored. Use this to guide to determine how often and how much syrup to feed your bees. Feeding can be stopped when nectar becomes available.

Properly ripened syrup should have a moisture content of around 18%. Syrup that is not ripened properly will ferment and adversely affect bees.

Bee colonies with insufficient stores for winter should be given enough syrup to boost their stores before the cold weather of autumn sets in. This will enable the bees to fully process the syrup.

### Sugar contaminates the honey

Sugar remaining in combs must not be extracted with the next honey crop. The sugar will contaminate the honey and the extracted product will not conform to the legal standards set out in the [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 2.8.2 – Honey](#).

It is ideal if the amount of sugar you give the hive is fully eaten by the bees at the time hives are placed on a honey flow. This is not always possible to achieve.

During expansion of the brood nest, sugar stored in brood nest combs may be moved by the bees to the honey super."

There is on the internet a video by Bruce White, the ABA Biosecurity Officer, on Feeding Bees. In this he covers another easy method, where syrup is sprayed from a height of about 45cm onto an empty drawn comb, filling the cells. The comb can be turned over gently, and the other side filled. Just Google it.

*(One of my earliest memories of field days in this club is of club founder, Talbot Kent, demonstrating using a plastic bag to make up a feeder---Ed)*

## **Volunteers**

The club requires more volunteers, not just for the Editor's job, but also to hold field days. The requirements to hold a field day are sufficient parking not requiring a four wheel drive, and some beehives. Most rural residential properties can manage this. We would like to fill the entire program for a year, so come on. Speak to Kevin or Brian.

## **List of Helpful Members**

Kevin Virgen	Federal	6684 9213	Brian Window	Lismore	0466 790 736
Ray Smith	McKees Hill	0427 734 954	Paul Towner	Rous Mill	0418 321 305
Geoff Manning	Bentley	0400 221 602	John Bull	North Casino	0414 842 903
David Fairhall	Richmond Hill	0444 513 771			

## **Services Directory**

Summary of available products and services

### **NRABA Members**

David Fairhall( queen cells, mated queens, nuclei) (Lismore) 0444 513 771

Brian Window (nuclei) (Lismore) 0466 790 736

Geoff Manning (hives) (Bentley) 0400 221 602

Ray Smith (nuclei) (Lismore) 0427 734 954

### **Not NRABA Members**

Stephen Fowler ( nuclei, hives, all sorts of bee equipment, buys wax) (Alstonville) 0418 412 621

Merv McDonald (nuclei, hives, hive care)(Alstonville) 0439 166 016

Rob Stone (mated queens, nuclei)(Casino) 0487 598 105

Ross Wood (mated queens, nuclei)(Grafton) 0421 817 710

Correction and additions welcome

## **Joining NRABA**

To join the NRABA, log on to the NSW Amateur Beekeepers website at [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au), select the NRABA as your club, and pay the required amount, made up of a payment to the ABA, and a supplement paid to the NRABA. The amount required by the ABA reduces quarterly.

Beekeepers are to join as full members of both the NRABA and the ABA, as many of the expenses of the NRABA are paid from the payment to the ABA. Associate membership is an honorary membership, intended for non-beekeepers (including family of members), and members of other ABA clubs. It does not carry voting rights in club affairs



## MINUTES NRABA COMMITTEE April 1st 2021

Time 3.00 pm Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Place 54 Donnans Road, Lismore Heights

- Members present GM (in chair), BW, PT
- Apologies KV, RS
- Minutes of Committee meeting March 4<sup>th</sup> 2021

Accepted m BW, s PT passed

- Matters Arising
  - Stu Anderson has volunteered that flowhive would donate a hive kit to the club
  - Secretary had contacted Col Rankin family to find that he was very ill in Ballina hospital. The family were adamant that his hives were in tip top shape; BW volunteered that the club would help sort them out if it was needed.. Later, BW visited him at Ballina Hospital, but he was in a coma and not expected to live.
  - Secretary presented copies of the club brochure, and the Spraying brochure, intended for Primex
- Correspondence
- Reports
  - Treasurer  
March field day income Meals \$110, raffle \$80  
Expenses sausages \$36, groceries \$26.45  
Report accepted ( m PT, s BW passed)

-Editor

To continue with flyer (m BW s PT passed)

Editor said that he had decided to put the meeting notice at the front of the newsletter rather than at the end.

-Membership

New member acceptance Julian de Saxe m BW s PT accepted

- Agenda Business Items
  - (1) Field Day March 28<sup>th</sup> went very well, thanks to the hospitality of the hosts, Meg Winterford and William Brener
  - (2) Field day May 2<sup>nd</sup> is at the home of Bill Nicholls, in Myocum. BW to organise
  - (3) Year program Field Days. There have been some volunteers coming forward.
- General Business
  - Trip to Flowhive Stu Anderson has invited a group to visit flowhive. It was thought that this could be done after the field day at Myocum, which is reasonably close to Newrybar. May 16<sup>th</sup> was also a possibility. BW to arrange after the field day if possible.

- Next Meeting

Time 3.00pm Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Place 54 Donnans Road Lismore Heights

Meeting finished at 4.01pm