


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/gcabs.net.au)



Time for Your Sugar Shake! - See page 7

DATE SAVERS

COVID regulations have eased, but our planned events may still need to change if restrictions are reinstated. If so, you will be notified via our Facebook pages & email.

- **Sun 18th April 2021 10am – noon: Members' Meeting.** Location: 229 South Pumpenbil Road, Tyalgum NSW. Host: John Quayle (Mariefields), assisted by Leonie Schwarzel. Activity: Homemade Foundation Milling Process. Inspect hives if time permits. Items to bring: PPE, Chair, Water, Sunscreen & Hat. Registration for Event is via gcabs.net.au at this page: <https://www.gcabs.net.au/events/member-meeting-687-102/>
- **Sun 16th May 2021 10am – 12 noon: Members' Meeting.** Location: Country Paradise Parklands, 231 Beaudesert-Nerang Rd, Nerang. Activities : Reviewing clubhouse progress, Native Bee Talk by GC Native Bee Services: Kara & John Froggatt. Gifting of Native Bee Hive Agistment to Nerang Community Garden. Registration: <https://www.gcabs.net.au/events/member-meeting-880>
- **Thursday 20 May - WORLD BEE DAY**
- **Sun 20 June 2021 10am - 12 noon: Members' Meeting.** Location: GCABS Clubhouse area, Country Paradise Parklands, 231 Beaudesert-Nerang Rd., Nerang. Activity: Presentation on Top Bar Hives by Willow Hankinson

From GCABS President



A warm welcome to all new members and salutations to our existing club members. Spirits were truly not dampened by the hand that Mother Nature had dealt for the March 2021 General Meeting. I'd like to say a big thank you to all who braved the wet weather, to attend the Guided Tours at the Gold Coast Regional Botanical Gardens. What a beautiful location steeped in history, being preserved by the passionate and knowledgeable members of the Friends of the GC Regional Botanical Gardens.

Rain, Rain, go away, come again, another day....when will Mother Nature hear our pleas, what a rough trot the bees have had for the last twelve months, bush fires, drought and now the endless deluge from the skies. These seasonal weather conditions are just not holding back any punches, hive beetle, chalk brood, pesticide poisoning, low pollen & nectar resources, just to name a few.

May April bring a positive upturn for the bees, I look forward to seeing everyone at the April General Meeting hosted at the spectacular location of Mariefields Tyalgum NSW.

Ross Krumbholz



A hearty welcome to our newbie members who joined GCABS in late February and early March:

*Bradley B, Steve E, Jason F, Colan G, Rudy H, Nathan J, Camile K, Stephen L,
Colin M, Daniel P, Marijana R, Sri Ketut S*

Jobs in Your Bee Yard this month

- Do your sugar shake. Kits available this month at the Members' Meeting (\$15 meeting special) or from V's Bees store (\$20)
- If you harvest honey, leave 5-6 frames as your bees will need plenty for winter feed & if we have more prolonged wet periods.
- **There have been a lot of reports of whole colonies starving to death during March.** Bees have been eating a lot of honey during the prolonged wet periods in Feb & March. Check that they have plenty of stored honey/nectar/pollen. Feed if these are low. Especially colonies that are only a few months old can be at risk of hunger as they haven't had as long to build stores
- Small hive beetle remains at high levels in hives in many areas as a result of the prolonged wet & humidity. Ensure you check traps often.

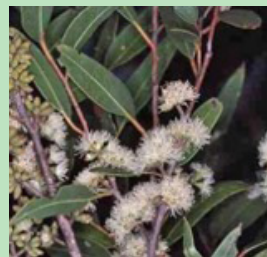
April Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

Submitted by Jim O'Reagan

Banksia. Blackbutt. Broad-leaved Banksia. Broad-leaved Ironbark. Brown Bloodwood. Flooded Gum. Glycine. Golden Candlesticks. Groundsel Bush. Gum-topped Box. Hickory Wattle. Honeysuckle Oak. Malley Box. Mountain Coolibah. Paper-barked Tea Tree. River Sheoak. Rose Sheoak. Tumble-down Ironbark. White Box. White Stringybark. Easter Cassia (Easter Senna)



Paper bark Tea-tree



White Stringybark



Easter Senna



Golden Candlesticks

March 2021 Wrap

Beginners' Course

Syd Richards

The weekend of the 13th/14th March, once again saw GCABS hosting another fun and informative beginners' course for amateur beekeeping. On the first day at the Southport Scout Hall, the 11 keen newbees were greeted by our presenters and handed a copy of the Australian Beekeeping Manual that is an invaluable reference book where they will undoubtedly find the answers to many questions about beekeeping they haven't even thought of yet.

The first presenter, Peter, covered legal & biosecurity issues of operating an apiary. I then covered beespace, hive components / construction and basic hive tools & how to use them.



Kathy, our course leader, then covered the life cycle of bees.

After a break for lunch we all took turns in practical hands on groups with topics including honey extraction... yummy, lighting the smoker outside on the grass...cough ,cough and flow hive components, and who doesn't want a flow hive?

The day ended with lots of new knowledge & a keenness to open a real beehive the very next day.

Day two was held at Oxenford at the home of a GCABS' member, John who kindly allowed us to open his hives for inspection, finding the queen, identifying honey, pollen, brood & eggs. This is truly a hands-on course with everyone being actively involved. The day ended after lunch with questions and answers.



As the Newbees are now members of the GCABS & the Amateur Beekeepers Assoc. (ABA), they will have access to all the resources they need to be informed in the keeping of honey bees (*Apis Mellifera*) & of course, are encouraged to attend monthly meetings where they will meet other beekeepers keen to share their knowledge of a rewarding new hobby. Also, if they request, a Mentor can be assigned to them who can guide them through the beginning of their new hobby until they have the confidence and knowledge to go it alone. Who knows, maybe one day they too will pass on the knowledge of beekeeping to future newbees.

March Meeting Review

Ann Allen

Who says apiarists aren't a hardy lot? The surprisingly sizeable group who showed up for March 21st meeting at the wonderful Gold Coast Regional Botanical Gardens in Ashmore amid a torrential downpour have truly proved their mettle!

Members of the Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanical Gardens very kindly donated their time and knowledge to tell us more about this unique park. Gareth Davis explained how the Gardens came about and how that area in the 19th century was used to produce cotton, sugar cane and then subdivided into smaller farms producing a variety of crops. John and Essie Rosser donated a parcel of their land (+2h) for environmental conservation in 1969 which was subsequently named Rosser Park. It was selected in 1999 as a suitable location to establish the Gold Coast's very own botanical gardens.



Neil Morley, braving the elements



Mary Woods told us how Friends is an incorporated association formed in 1998 by like-minded volunteers who wished to promote the Park's Vision: To provide a place of botanical discovery to encourage appreciation of our region's biodiversity, where everyone can escape, learn and be inspired.



Mary Woods

Since 2003 more than 20,000 local Australian natives have been planted by Friends, with community support. They hold many activities to provide education, fundraising, fun and friendship. For more information about these go to <https://friendsgcrbg.org.au/about-us/>



GCABS Vice President, Rachael

Neil Morley braved the elements and took a group of us to see the native plants, trees and birds. Thanks to his years of experience, he was a fund of information which helped us to ignore the very damp conditions!



Gareth Davis

An interesting link with our club is that John Rosser, an early apiarist on the Gold Coast, opened his house on the property to hold the very first GCABS meetings from 1979. Gene Rosser (daughter of John and Essie Rosser) at 92, still lives in the original house and was appointed Patron for the Gardens in 2004.

All in all it was a very successful morning and a return visit to the Gardens is a must.

April Raffle: Poetry - ENTER NOW to win!

Let your creativity run wild and submit a short Bee Themed Poem in your preferred poetry style such as Acrostic or Haiku. Here are some poetry samples provided by Dear Mr Google:

How I love your work,
Oh Dear Mr Google,
Now your assistance is vital!
Earnestly I need your help!
Your resources are truly bountiful.

All entries to be submitted by 30th April 2021. Email: gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au or GCABS Facebook Forum: Post on the Facebook Announcement for the Poetry Competition

Every person who submits a poem will receive a raffle ticket for a pollen feeder/500gm pollen supplement/ hive entry feeder.

Also available for sale at the April meeting, as April is Sugar Shake month, AG Guide Books & Sugar Shaker Jars.

A BEE STING

Enlighten me Oh little bee,
on why you aimed on stinging me?
I did not mean you any harm;
you chose to jab my throbbing arm.

Your stinging days have made an end,
my suicidal little friend.
Please tell me why Oh little bee,
what prompted you to puncture me?

(Sharon Hughes, 2009)



Look! Look! There's a bee!
There is a bee on the door!
It's so beautiful.

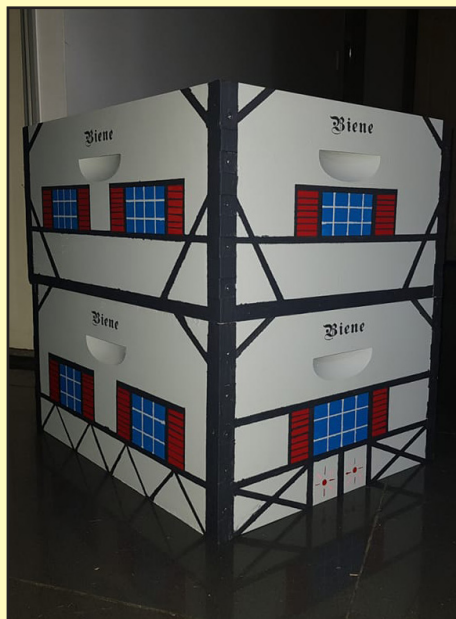


Hadeel Atiyah, 3rd grade

#PCPLhaikuchallenge

GCABS' March Raffle Result - Decorative Hives

Congratulations to **Elise Turner** whose name was drawn for the "DECORATIVE HIVES" raffle. What beautiful homes we have for our bees. Visit GCABS Forum on Facebook to see all the entries.



In the News

Bees will become 'disorientated and stressed' by bright lights and noise if mine given the go ahead

If a huge open cut mine development is approved for Blaney, NSW, the myriad lights at night will attract thousands of bees from the neighbouring commercial apiary site which runs up to 8000 hives. For more info [click here](#).

Australian aphrodisiac honey from Phoenix palm creates buzz in Middle East

Apiarist Gabrielle Morley has created a bee sanctuary among her phoenix palms near Byron Bay in northern NSW. Unknown to her until recently, phoenix palm pollen is considered a natural aphrodisiac. As a result, the honey from this plantation is now in high demand from the Middle East. For more info [click here](#).



Phoenix palm plantation near Byron Bay



***Happy Easter
Everyone!***

April – It's time to do your Sugar Shake

What is Sugar Shaking?

It's a D.I.Y. surveillance method to detect external parasites such as Varroa, Tropilaelaps mites and Braula fly. It is quick and simple – and does not kill the bees being sampled. The process of shaking bees in fine sugar dislodges the parasites' so they can be collected and examined.

When is a good time to perform a sugar Shake?

Start incorporating the test into your spring and winter preparation checks – or anytime you are concerned about your bees. Pick a warm day, as the test works better then.

What Equipment is required for a Sugar Shake?

- Sugar shaker jar (available from V's Bees, Spencer St Nerang.)
- dry pure icing sugar
- spoon
- bucket or bowl with some clean water
- newspaper and white coffee filter paper or kitchen towel
- a few hundred bees (about half a cup) FROM A BROOD FRAME

How do I conduct a Sugar Shake?

Read & watch the demonstration:

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

If you find SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS?

If you think you have found Varroa mites, Tropilaelaps mites or Braula fly, contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881 immediately. This line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



A Solar Wax Melter for under \$25

By the Editor

With an increasing number of hives to manage, I have had more & more beeswax to render this season. I'd used various methods to melt & clean it in past years but a solar wax melter had become high on my list of desirable equipment.

It is a well-known truth among beekeepers that a steady outlay of money is unavoidable for ongoing beekeeping supplies. Yet, alas, when a friend offered me a solar wax melter, albeit a large, beautifully crafted cabinet "for a mere \$200", I graciously declined. Yes, I wanted a solar wax melter but surely I could make one for considerably less! So, a "budget built solar melter" became my challenge.

Materials

My home territory provided suitable materials. From the shed: A **black plastic crate**, a **clear glass window pane** (that was replaced with a frosted one in our bathroom), an electric drill and a **couple of screws & washers**.



Wax ready to melt

From the kitchen: an **old metal colander** (It had been replaced by a colourful, shinier one so it was time to repurpose the oldie), **two chux wipes**, and an **aluminium disposable baking tray** (the sort you buy for holding all the snags at a big outdoor barbecue).

From the sewing cabinet: **four metal curtain hooks**.

Assembly

I placed the aluminium tray in the box. Thankfully, it was a near perfect fit. I then attached a curtain hook each side of the interior of the box using the screws & washers. The colander could now hang suspended on the hooks with plenty of clearance from the base of the box. I lined the colander with the chux, filled it with wax uncappings and a bit of burr comb.

Build & Process

I placed the box & bits on the ground where it would have full sun most of the day and positioned the glass pane on top. The weather was about 28 deg & mostly sunny. By the end of the day, the wax had melted, leaving the chux lined with slum gum and clean golden wax in the tray below, along with a bit of honey. I removed the wax & scraped out the honey to be used for cooking or making mead. A quick rinse and the melter was ready for the next batch & the wax no longer sticky. I later remelted the now clean wax in an old boiler on my gas camp stove in the garage & filtered it into a mould. I filter twice as I like the wax totally pristine but others wouldn't be so fussy.

Design Revision

It soon became clear that the colander would be too small for the increasing amount of wax I had to render. Also, I felt I could do better than chux. So, it was time to visit my local op-shop where I procured a large sheer curtain & a metal dish strainer; total outlay \$4.00. I added two more curtain hooks to the other end of the box so that the dish strainer can be suspended from 4 points. All that remained was to cut pieces of curtain to fit the strainer. I can fill it with loads of dirty wax & it melts & filters a treat!

Future design modification

I had also considered buying a deep baking tray from the op shop, then drilling lots of holes in one end. I would have concocted some type of frame to hold the tray at a slight angle with the hole end 'downhill' so that the melted wax could drain through the filter into a tub or mould below. This option will be added later to replace the need to melt & mould the 2nd time using my camp stove.

Summary

I was lucky enough to already have most of the materials needed for this project, so my total outlay was \$4.00. But what would it have cost if I'd bought the major components...on a budget challenge? I did the research & here's the results:

Black Plastic Box - \$6.50 , BBQ tray \$4.00 - The Reject Shop

Colander, curtain, deep baking tray - About \$2 each from your local op-shop or tip shop.

Glass pane from an old picture frame - About \$5 from the local op-shop or tip shop.

So, why not give it a go for yourself? It sure takes the mess out of rendering & your energy source is free Queensland sunshine.



Slum gum



Design revision



Clean wax and honey

Pollen Mites

A collaboration by Kathy Knox, Kevin Tracy & the Buzz editor

“Yikes , why are my honey bees doing that freaky, shaky dance????”

If you ever witness the pollen mite “jerky dance moves” at the entrance to your hives, you will be instantly alarmed. Several GCABS’ members have witnessed & reported this phenomenon during March- April. It looks as though the bees are having a type of fit: shaking, trembling, frenetically contorting their back legs over their abdomens. To make it worse, it is not just a few bees but hundreds engaged in the same bizarre activity on the landing board & hive face. Unlike the calm, mesmerising, meditative pace of washboarding behaviour, the weird, pollen mite dance appears frantic & upsetting for bees & their keeper alike. Watch the mite dance on the GCABS’ Forum facebook page.

Breathe & relax! Your bees are engaged in cleaning behaviour, trying to rid themselves of nuisance but harmless pollen mites that are taking an opportunistic ride on their host.

Pollen mites on honey bee.

What are Pollen Mites?

The Pollen mite (*Melittiphis alvearius*) is a harmless species that exists in hives & mostly feeds on spillover pollen or pollen discarded to the floorboard by bees. It is not parasitic & not attracted to bee brood or eggs (Gibbins and Vantoor, 1990). Pollen mites on honey bees are an irritant but of no danger to their health. Adult mites (usually females) are ‘phoretic’ on worker bees, meaning that they attach themselves to a host, the adult bee, for transportation to a new food source (Delfinado-Baker, 1994). It is the bee’s attempt to rid its body surface of the mites that causes the troubled behaviour at the hive face.

The mites were first reported in Italy in 1895 and have spread globally. Their presence was first observed in Australia in 1989 as a single specimen on a queen bee. There were no further reported findings until a survey conducted in 1994 (KNIHINICKI & HALLIDAY, 1995).



Download the full study <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1440-6055.1995.tb01349.x>
Information sheet here: <http://idtools.org/id/mites/beemitos/factsheet.php?name=15251>

Conclusion

The pollen mite can be an irritant to its host, the honey bee, but it is harmless. The behaviour will subside & disappear after a few weeks as the mites no longer attach themselves to the adult bee host.

Action

Many amateur beekeepers may never witness the ‘pollen mite shaky dance’. If however you do, record the incidence. If there are no significant bee deaths, you may take a ‘wait & watch’ approach. However, if unsure, contact your state biosecurity officers for advice or at minimum consult a GCABS’ mentor. Take a sugar shake sample if possible. As amateur beekeepers, we are not skilled to accurately diagnose a harmless mite from other severely harmful species. If therefore, you find mites as a result of your sugar shake, take a sample & report them.



Photos published with permission from Kevin Tracy

Library Corner

Articles in April 2021 issue of The Australasian Beekeeper:

- Give Your Bees a Shake-up during Sugar Shake Month
- Wintering Bees
- Backyard Beekeeping 101
- Native Australian Bees as Crop Pollinators
- The Value of Hedgerows for Pollination
- Hexagons in the world of bees
- Scientific study of the effect the insecticide, imidacloprid, has on ground-nesting bees
- World Bee Day

If you wish to borrow this or any past issues of ABK contact Ann Allen



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Available from V's Bee's



Sugar / Alcohol Shaker Kits

Available for sale at the April 18th Members' meeting
 Price: \$15 (Special Meeting price)
 Or purchased at the shop, \$20



www.vsbees.com.au



Monday - Friday [8am - 5pm]
 Saturday [8.30am - 12pm]

Beekeeping Supplies

Unit 3 / 90 Spencer Road
 Nerang
 Located Inside
 Allied Bearings & Seals



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