

# THE BUZZ



The official newsletter of the Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society Inc. Est. 1979  
 Website: [gcabs.net.au](http://gcabs.net.au)  [Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeping Society](https://www.facebook.com/GoldCoastAmateurBeekeepingSociety)



## Mite Alcohol Wash (see p.8)

## DATE SAVERS

*The Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeper's Society inc. welcomes new members, existing members and visitors to attend our meetings. Non-members attending will be asked to make a gold coin donation.*

### MEMBER MEETINGS – July & August

- **Sun 21 Aug 10am- 12:00pm Member Meeting.** Kevin Tracy will speak on “The - One/Two Punch” the relationship between SHB and Varroa destructor. Also swarming, management & pests, use of chemicals in hives. Plus Q&A. NOTE Unavoidably, the apiary farm Visit to Tyalgum NSW has been cancelled due to restrictions placed on movement of hives & equipment since the V. destructor incursion.
- **Sun 18th September** - Member meeting, details TBA.
- **Sun 16th October** GCABS Annual General Meeting (AGM) at GCABS clubhouse.

### OTHER EVENTS

- **Aug 6-7 – BOTANICAL BAZAAR Garden & Sustainability Festival** at the Nerang Country Paradise Parklands. GCABS will have an info stand there. For tickets & events info follow this link: <https://www.botanicalbazaargc.com.au/>

- **Aug 5th 11:59pm Deadline for Honey/Apiculture Competition** entry forms Gold Coast Show. Download the schedule & entry form here: <https://goldcoastshow.com.au/homecrafts/>
- **Aug 26th - 28th Gold Coast Show** – GCABS will have an info stand at the show. Come and visit us. Better still, volunteer to help on the stand by calling or texting Leonie on 0428177450 or email [gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au)
- **Sep 3rd/4th** - Introduction to Beekeeping Class. Click [HERE](#) to register!
- **5th Sep 6:30pm Committee meeting** All welcome to attend our online via this link: [meet.google.com/fyq-ujco-kth](https://meet.google.com/fyq-ujco-kth)

## From GCABS President



*The battle to stop Varroa Destructor overtaking Australia continues to rage, and whilst there has been some success, as well as set backs, there is no doubting the committment of hard waorking volunteers for the Varroa Emergency Response Team. Our GCABS members have been involved; Keith Barton gave a fascinating talk on what is happening on the ground at our last member meeting in August, and Jane Dunbar has contributed an article to The Buzz this month on her experiences as a volunteer.*

*For all of us, by now we should have commenced our preparation for Spring by inspecting our hives, checking for pests and diseases and managing swarm prevention. Kathy Knox and Kevin Tracy gave a great presentation at our member meeting last month and our review of the member meeting later in this issue reiterates some of the important points.*

*I really want to thank the members who have mentioned to me the enormous value they are getting from our monthly member meetings in terms of education and practical advice. A lot goes into preparing these and our committee is very heartened by the response, and numbers attending. This month's will be great too - "part 2" of the swarm prevention session run last month, and whether you attended last month or not, I think you will learn a lot from attending - I know I will!*

*Cheers... Colin Allen - President*

## 2022/23 Membership Renewal request soon to be issued

The Membership renewal process has been delayed due to diversion of all available resources to the varroa detection issue. 2022/23 membership renewal emails will arrive in your inbox soon. Meanwhile, insurance coverage will continue in the interim.

## July Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

*Submitted by Jim O'Regan*



Black Sheoak. Blue Gum. Brisbane Black Wattle. Brisbane Golden Wattle. Broad-leaved Banksia. Caley's Ironbark. Dogwood. Dusky leaved Ironbark. Flat Weed. Forest Boronia. Fuzzy Box. Glycine. Golden Candlesticks. Grey Ironbark. Hairy Bush-pea. Mountain Coolibah. Mugga. Narrow-leaved Ironbark. Orange Tree. Red Bottle-brush. River Sheoak. Scribbly Gum. Spotted Gum. Tallowwood. Tumble-down Ironbark. White Box.

*Spotted Gum*





# Volunteering for the Varroa Emergency Response – A GCABS Member’s Experience

by Jane Dunbar

In early July, I responded to an email from the ABA who were asking for volunteer beekeepers to be a part of the Varroa Emergency Response in Newcastle. I spent 7 days working with the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and Authorised Officers from the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, visiting apiaries throughout the Hunter Region to conduct alcohol washes and collect samples from hives in the yellow and purple zones.

The planning and coordination of the operation on the ground was massive, with logistics, food, accommodation, protocols, testing, equipment and transport all in place when and where it was needed. I had never been a part of an emergency response like this and I was in awe of the agencies and personnel involved, especially the hundreds of volunteers from the RFS and fellow beekeeper volunteers. Witnessing the way people worked together towards a common goal was heartening and inspiring and made me glad to be Australian.

A typical day involved being transported to the staging area where beekeepers were teamed up with RFS volunteers and Authorised Officers. We then travelled in teams to different locations, sometimes driving for over an hour to reach our destination, where we would suit up in paper bee suits and rubber gloves and conduct alcohol washes and collect samples from hives, before travelling again to our next destination. The decontamination protocols at every site were strict and time consuming, everything was either disposed of or decontaminated with ethanol; boots, veils and gloves were all frozen for 48 hours before being reused. The RFS volunteers were a big help, some of them even suited to help lift heavy supers, they were amazing.

It was hard work but a fantastic experience. I learned a lot, especially from the opportunity to work so many different types of hives. The rain and flooding in that week hampered our efforts a little, mainly because of the road closures and heavy traffic, but also because bees don’t like you to open their hives in the rain.

Most of the beekeepers who volunteered during the week I was there were there for 7 days. Some were commercial beekeepers and others were hobbyists like me who only had a few hives in their backyard, but everyone was extremely passionate and wanted to do what they could to help eradicate Varroa destructor in Australia. The mood was positive and determined, but there was also a sadness for those who were in the red zone; some people I worked with had already had their hives destroyed and others knew it was imminent. Support was provided on site for beekeepers. I don’t know if we’ll be successful at eradicating the mite, but I hope we can. If we don’t, it definitely won’t be for a lack of trying.

***The ABA is regularly sending you emails calling for volunteers. If you can spare a week in your schedule, how about registering your availability!***

GCABS is very thankful to Jane and all who have volunteered their time to work in response to this emergency.

## What's happening?

- Keep checking your hives
- If you find Varroa mite report it to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881
- More information at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)



*Emergency response headquarters, Maitland NSW*

## GCABS Sponsor the GC Show Apiary Product Competition

This year, GCABS are the official sponsors for the Gold Coast Apiculture competition. This is a grand opportunity to showcase both the excellence of our club and the range of products that we as members harvest from our industrious bees. Most members of the public think only of 'runny honey', but we can expand their experience & appreciation by displaying runny, creamed, candied, comb honeys and beeswax at its most pristine.



Competitions are both fun & challenging. Right NOW is the time to enter as forms must be received this week, Friday 5th August by 11:59 pm. Download the schedule & entry form: <https://goldcoast-show.com.au/homecrafts/>. You'll deliver your products on Mon Aug 22nd for judging is Aug 23rd then all entries & prizes will be displayed during the show Aug 26-28th .

Sections are NOVICE for those who haven't previously won a prize & OPEN for the more experienced, previous prize winners. Two show jars are available for free for members, extra jars are \$1.50 each. To arrange jar pick up from our clubhouse, contact Peter on 0409 111 763. Be in it! Let's make a grand display!

## Honey You've Changed: Modern Mead & Alternatives

*Thanks to Tony Nathan for providing info for this article*

Mead is widely considered to be the world's oldest fermented drink. Trace chemical signatures consistent with mead have turned up on Chinese pottery dating back to 7000BC. But from the 1800s it became less & less known.

For the past few decades, the only mead available in a local bottle shop was often cloyingly sweet & heavily spiced, not to the liking of everyone's palate. Now, however, Australian producers of mead and other honey supplemented alcoholic drinks are achieving a superior range of boutique beverages. Sparrow & Vine winemakers have released their 'Project B', a lightly sparkling mead reminiscent of a 'petillant naturel' (pet-nat) wine. Rosebury Distillery in Sydney uses honey as one of the flavourings in its 'Distiller's Strength Gin', while Archie Rose Distilling Company have produced 'Eau de Bee', a distilled spirit like an unaged brandy using blue gum honey. Its flavour is described as 'a lovely caramel toffee flavour with a dazzling display of delicate florals'. <https://archierose.com.au/> . Wildflower Brewery have produced a golden Australian wild ale called 'Hive: Post Brood'. They procure honeycomb obtained from Warre hives in the Blue Mountains and soak it in barrel aged beer. With the honeycomb's residual honey, bee bread (fermented pollen) and resin, it tastes of botanicals and earthiness.

Not all the new honey supplemented beverages are alcoholic. 'Beesbucha' is a non-alco mead type drink containing honey from Ku-ring-gai Nat. Park, Sydney fermented with organic Queensland bananas. Its flavour is described as light & delicate. As beekeepers, we have access to abundant honey with all its potential. Fresh honey, clean water, yeast & time are the main ingredients. Fancy a bit of brewing? Give it a go!

<https://www.goodfood.com.au/drinks/beer-cider/honey-youve-changed-sydney-gets-buzzed-on-modern-mead-alternatives-20220609-h24cmj>



*Brewing Davidson plum mead*

# Varroa Destructor Management

## Part 1: Options now and for the future

By Kevin McCleod

In many ways, the discovery of Varroa destructor in Australia, and the possibility of it being endemic (here to stay) puts all beekeepers and bee management on an equal “playing field”.

Being better trained, educated, disciplined in our apiculture practices have always been of value, now they are imperative. Remember – once a colony goes in a box, of any kind, it is NOT natural and needs good management.

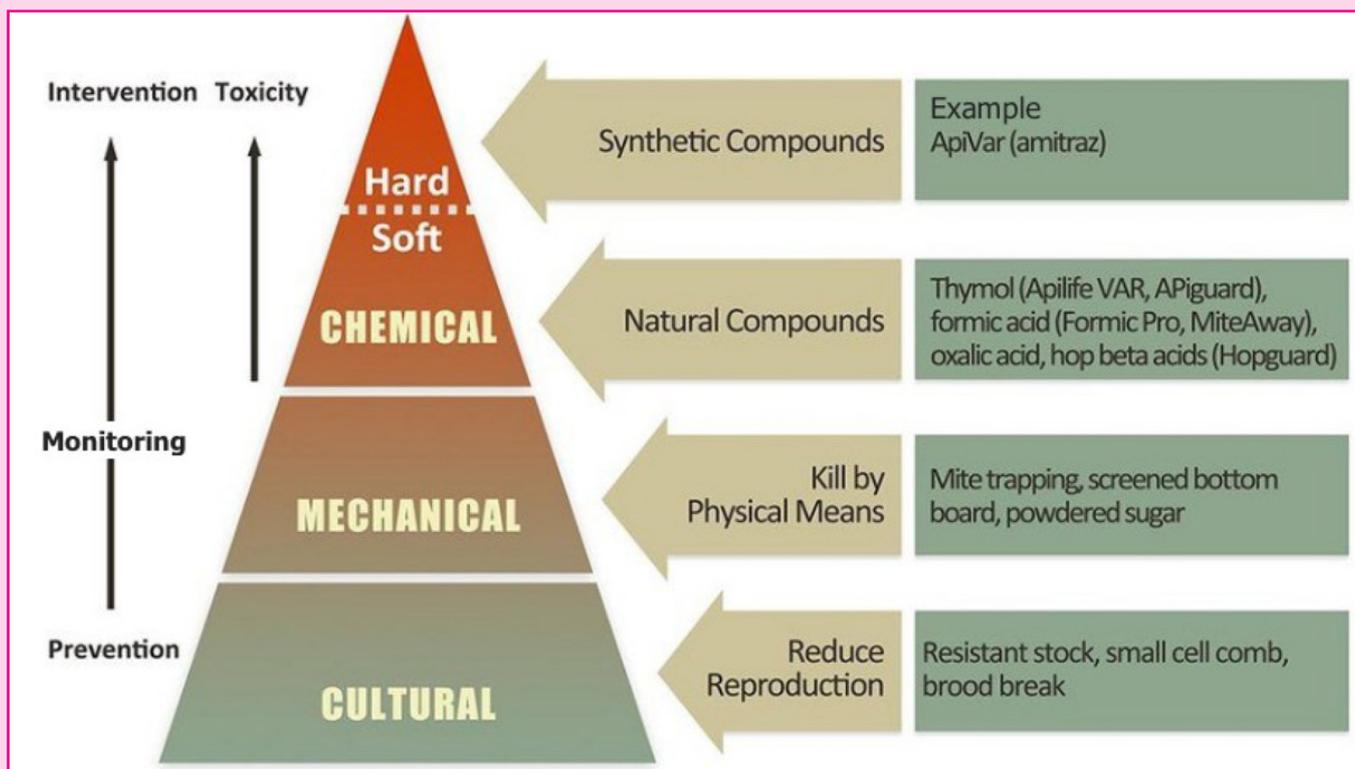
For over a decade Australia has been well aware of the luxury of not having the worldwide pest V. destructor, and the probability of its arrival. Were we indeed prepared? Seemingly not as well as we thought.

Australia has permits for Synthetic Chemical treatments - <https://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER90509.PDF> But sadly at the time that the incursion was first detected, there were no treatments in Australia available for use. If there had been, it may have been possible to “Blitz” Varroa before a possible Spring outbreak of mites occurs. Another problem here currently is getting permission for people, other than Biosecurity personnel, to use and install Chemical Miticide strips.

So if V. destructor is on the march toward our hives, what can we do now and into the future?

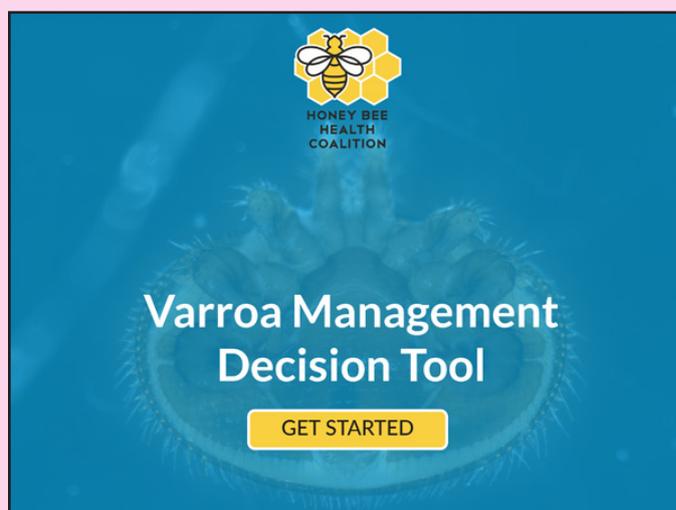
When considering your options remember that “Going in hard from the start” (ie using only synthetic chemicals on miticide strips placed in the hives) leaves fewer choices. Especially when it is known that V. destructor becomes tolerant to chemical miticides in a relatively short time.

Alternatively, you will consider an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan. The Pyramid diagram below for varroa management is a helpful reference.



Reading upward, it very clearly calls for monitoring before any type of compounds are used. This would involve assessing colonies for the presence of Varroa destructor then gauging the level of infestation (mite count/load), before moving to the “next level” of intervention (treatment). In this approach, Biopesticides are a step BEFORE Synthetic Chemical treatments. Biopesticides can involve treatments that use for example Oxalic Acid and Glycerine to make strips, Formic acid solutions, and others. I did share a “Recipe” for Oxalic Acid & Glycerine Strips on BeeZone Apiaries Facebook page.

Now to more resources. Honey bee Health Coalition is a comprehensive ‘go to’ resource for us. This Guide is available online at Honey Bee Health Coalition and describes a variety of methods for dealing with V. destructor.



<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroatool>

<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org>

### Summary of Controls Discussed in this Guide

#### Chemical Control Products

- » Synthetic Chemicals
  - Apivar® (amitraz) [see page 15](#)
  - Apistan® (fluvalinate) [see page 16](#)
  - CheckMite+® (coumaphos) [see page 16](#)
- » Essential Oils
  - Apiguard® or Thymovar® (Canada) (thymol) [see page 17](#)
  - ApiLife Var® (thymol + eucalyptol, menthol, and camphor) [see page 17](#)
- » Acids
  - Mite-Away Quick Strips® [MAQS®] (formic acid) [see page 18](#)
  - Formic Acid 65% [see page 19](#)
  - Oxalic Acid [see page 19](#)
  - HopGuard® II (hops beta acids) [see page 20](#)

#### Non-Chemical Controls

- » Screen Bottom Board [see page 20](#)
- » Sanitation (comb culling/biosecurity) [see page 21](#)
- » Drone Brood Removal [see page 21](#)
- » Brood Interruption [see page 22](#)
- » Requeening with Resistant Stock [see page 22](#)

*See details on each of these controls in the “Descriptions of Controls” section below.*

Control of Varroa - A Guide for New Zealand Beekeepers by Goodwin & Eaton (MAF, NZ, 2001). - <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org>

Life Cycle of Varroa by Dr. Jeff Harris - <https://youtu.be/CDFldVlxKNA>

*Part 2 of this article will appear in the September Buzz to discuss & consider ‘Non-Chemical’ controls.*

## JOBS in Your Bee Yard this August

This month we need to focus on swarm prevention/management, as well as educating ourselves about varroa d. - detection, effects & management options. Bee numbers are building rapidly in their hives in anticipation of the first major nectar flow of the new season and the opportunity to swarm and establish a new colony. So be prepared to manage this process.

### Swarm Prevention / Management

- Prepare clean spare hive boxes with sufficient frames and foundation, lid and base in readiness for splitting a hive or catching a swarm.
- Queen space & frame manipulation. Don't allow the queen to run out of laying space. Move brood frames up into the super and replace with empty frames for the bees to build comb, or give them empty honeycomb frames that the queen can begin to lay in immediately.
- If you find queen cells in the brood box, you can use the demaree method. For details see <https://www.theapiarist.org/demaree-swarm-control/> (discussed by Kevin & Kathy at the July Members Meeting). Alternatively, split the colony into two ensuring you either have purchased an additional queen, or that each the original & split have eggs present to grow a new queen.
- Monitor bee space. Add a honey super if the colony is 'bubbling over with bees'.

### Varroa Destructor Education & Action

- Become informed/educated. Consult some of the resources referenced in Kevin's article.
- Stay informed of official updates via your email updates from the ABA and/or visit the AHBIC Facebook page for the most up-to-date info & directives
- Learn to do an alcohol wash for varroa detection <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ieq1-rMCWfc>
- Do an alcohol wash or at the very least a sugar shake of your hives & report results via the Bee123 survey form (link on this page) if you suspect mites are present.



Volunteer to join the Emergency Response team by responding to an ABA call for volunteers.

*NOTE: Alcohol test kits available at V's Bees store  
Biggera Waters*

## COMMITTEE

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Vice-president	Alex Lang	0480 258 373	gcabs.vp@beekeepers.asn.au
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Editor	Leonie Schwarzel	0428 177 450	gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au
Asst Editor/Librarian	Ann Allen	0402 996 101	gcabs.librarian@beekeepers.asn.au
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## Come join the GCABS Committee for 2022-23

We need YOU. Help us share the load & decision making as we continue to create an inclusive, enjoyable club for all. Being part of the GCABS leadership team is rewarding and empowering.

*Elections will be held at the AGM October. 16th 2022.*

Print the nomination form below. Complete your nomination and return the form to any current committee member (see page 8). Or email your completed form to [gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au)

### GCABS AGM NOMINATION FORM

*Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members 2022 - 2023*

#### POSITION

*[please tick desired position]*

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Member of Committee (includes Buzz Editor, Librarian and other committee positions)

NOMINATED CANDIDATE'S NAME : \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF PEOPLE MAKING THE NOMINATION:

We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

[PRINT names here - must be current financial GCABS Inc members]

submit the named candidate for the above marked position in the management committee.

Signature of Proposer 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Proposer 2: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Consent of Candidate

I, (name of nominated candidate) \_\_\_\_\_ (please print your name)

am willing to take on this role if I am elected to this position at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

