


# 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)



## Are my bees preparing to swarm?



*It's swarm season! Learn more on pg 4*

### 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

- **Sun 20 Aug 10am** Field trip to 'Mariefields', Tyalgum - Dr John Quayle: Alcohol wash for Varroa defense, Spring checks, Splitting hives using divider boards. Bring: Morning tea to share, chair. Address: 229 South Pumpenbil Rd, Tyalgum NSW 2484. You will be advised by email about bringing your PPE. **NOTE You MUST REGISTER your intention to attend to ensure we comply with biosecurity directives. Register at [THIS LINK](#)**
- **Sun 17 Sept.** GCABS Clubhouse, 74 Billabirra Cres, Nerang. Topic - TBA
- **Sun 22 Oct.** GCABS Annual General Meeting (AGM). Annual changeover of GCABS committee & other activities TBA. Venue – GCABS Clubhouse

## UPCOMING SHOWS

- Sat/Sun 5-6 Aug – Botanical Bazaar, Nerang Country Paradise Parklands.
- Fri/Sat/Sun 1st - 3rd Sep – Gold Coast Show, Broadwater Parklands, Marine Parade , Southport . VOLUNTEERS needed please. Call or text Leonie on 0428177450 or send a quick email to [gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au).

## OTHER EVENTS

- Beginner Beekeeping class: 30-Sep/1st Oct Sign up [HERE](#)

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All welcome to attend our online Committee meetings. Email the secretary and ask for the link. [Gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:secretary@beekeepers.asn.au)

## From GCABS President



*Our latest crop of 10 beginner class participants had a productive weekend 22-23 July. If you have yet to attend a course, please consider coming along as a helper. You'll get to listen in and chat with the cohort, support the training team and enjoy a hands-on tour in the beehives at no cost. October class tickets are now on sale [HERE](#).*

*Bees don't read calendars, they respond to the environment. The climate, local temperatures, hours of daylight, and weather conditions in your local area will factor into the reproductive cycle of your colonies. You'll need to act accordingly to manage your colonies. Consider: are the bees bringing nectar and pollen? Does the brood chamber allow space for new brood to be laid? Are the hives heavy with stored honey that you could potentially remove? Have you got spare gear on hand?*

*Looking forward to seeing you in August at Mariefields. Look for the registration link in this newsletter, we will manage the biosecurity obligations to do with taking PPE across the border. Please follow our Biosecurity instructions and drive safely.*

*Kind regards... Kathy*

## August 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*

**Will you be attending the August 20th field visit at Mariefields Apiary, Tyalgum NSW?**

**Register to attend at [THIS LINK](#)**



## Flower of the Month for Your Home Garden

*Submitted by Ann Allen*

### Ornamental/Flowering Peach trees. Botanical name: *Prunus Persica*

A deciduous tree developed specifically for its ornamental attributes, namely its pretty spring blossoms. Clusters of faintly perfumed flowers can be white, pink or red and are produced from the end of July to the end of August. Even though bees are not usually attracted to the colour red, they seem to enjoy these blossoms (photo below is from our backyard). The tree grows to around 4mX4m. Thought to have originated in Persia (hence the name Persica) it has long been the subject of Chinese poetry, art and tradition and may have been first cultivated in China over 3000 years ago. They bring colour and cheerfulness when winter gardens look drab and bare. (ref. Burke's Backyard)



## Have you renewed your membership yet?

If yes, thank you. If no, then either follow the link in the email you received from the Amateur Beekeepers Australia (ABA) on June 26th OR log in to the ABA website and renew there. Further information in last months Buzz issue.



## This is our last BIG request for 2023 events!

We'd love your help on the GCABS stand at the Gold Coast Show, Sept 2nd -3rd. Please give a few hours to talk bees at the GCABS stand while enjoying the picturesque Southport Broadwater Parklands.

Call or text Leonie on 0428177450 or send a quick email to [gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au)

# July Meeting Review

## Part 1 Swarm Control, Spring Management

Keith Barton started by informing us that swarm season has begun. He caught his first swarm of the season, a huge one that filled a 10 frame box on July 5th. Yikes! That was VERY early. Thanks to Keith for the following notes.

### Swarm control

#### Why? Is it bad to let a colony swarm?

- We all have a responsibility to manage our livestock to minimise impact to others.
- Swarms can harbour disease, problem genetics (temperament), and generally be a nuisance to non-beekeepers.
- You lose half the colony and your queen!

#### What causes swarming?

- Swarming is natural reproduction of the super-organism. All honeybee colonies have an innate urge to reproduce. Some “races” of bees have stronger swarming impulses than others. Older queens are more likely to swarm; a 2nd season queen is 3 times more likely to swarm.
- There are 3 conditions for swarming that must generally be met:
  - Fertile laying queen – a colony cannot swarm without a queen (usually mated, but sometimes a virgin)
  - Strong population of bees in the hive (limited space in the hive)
  - Environmental cues (nectar, pollen, temperature, weather)
- **Absconding** can be confused with swarming, but it is completely different (non-reproductive). All bees desert the hive usually due to pest, disease.
- **Supercedure** – also non-reproductive but may cause secondary swarms if more than 1 replacement queen emerges.

#### How to manage colonies to minimise swarming

- Inspect regularly and consider swarming cues (population and environment), look for presence of swarm cells. Queens take 16 days to emerge (ie egg to queen in 16 days), so the inspection cycle needs to be more frequent than that.
- During buildup (July through December) I inspect each hive every 10 days, except for hives that have an emerging virgin queen or a newly introduced queen.
- 3 basic techniques
  - Add extra space to the hive to relieve the sense of congestion.
  - Lift brood, add foundation, add super, etc
  - Reduce the strength of the hive by removing brood, bees, and/or resources ie take one or more splits
  - Remove the queen either via split, cage, etc to create a brood break and stop potential swarm



There are many other methods of swarm control, but all generally make use of one or more of the basic techniques above.

### Spring preparation

Preparing for Spring really begins at the end of the previous season. Setting up your hives with sufficient food, the right amount of space, and in good health to get through winter and emerge strong.

During the spring preparation, the focus is assessing colonies and identifying work to be done to ensure the colonies are setup well to grow through spring as well as avoid swarms as much as possible.

Here's what I do (not a "HOW TO") – what I am doing right now. Some/all of these might be helpful in your spring preparations:

**Preparations now (July/August) should include:**

- Inspect every hive (look for health, brood build up, food stores, drone population, swarm cells, other issues)
- Check queen - does she need to be replaced (old, not performing, defensive...)
- Make some space immediately above brood (remove excess honey, add stickies)
- Rotate 2 old frames out of brood, replace with new foundation or fresh drawn comb
- Identify any repairs/maintenance to hive components
- August varroa check (alcohol wash) and report results to Bee123 (NSW members follow NSW DPI guidance)

**Additional steps**

- Identify weak hives and decide what to do with them (shake out, merge, boost, euthanise)
- Check for AFB, EFB and other brood diseases (sackbrood, chalkbrood)
- Clean up around hives (mow, remove litter, etc)
- Refresh SHB traps / baits
- Get new hardware ready (supers, frames, bases, lids, stands etc)
- Be prepared for swarms and splits - have a couple of spare nuc boxes and spare hardware ready

It helps to have a clear plan for what you want to achieve during the new season. If you do not want to increase your hives, think about what you might do with "excess" splits. Decide what hives need requeening.

**References:**

Swarm control

<https://www.honeyflow.com.au/blogs/beekeeping-basics/swarm-prevention>

<https://theapiarist.org/principles-of-swarm-control/>

<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/swarmcontrol.html>

Spring Prep

<https://www.beewise.com.au/news/index/view/id/8/spring-is-nigh>

## **Part 2: Native Plants Queensland (NPQ) Cultivation, Conservation, Education**

President Loretta Taylor & other members of NPQ gave a highly informative talk & walk session, as well as selling native seedlings. NPQ Gold Coast club share our clubhouse, holding their meetings & propagation sessions there. They also raise a wide variety of native plant seedlings in the greenhouse adjoining the clubhouse, which are regularly available for sale. Inside the clubhouse, NPQ has set up a large portable display wall for our shared use (See photo of the display behind Loretta). This is a generous donation and will allow us to display a changing variety of resources for all to enjoy and learn from.





An extensive walk around the clubhouse garden and sensory plant trail gave our members a view of native plants that thrive in our region to offer scent, texture & in some cases taste & that are favourites for both people & pollinators.

Cultivation - Conservation - Education



**Branch Activities**

- Propagation
- Plant ID
- Field trips
- Guest speakers
- Study groups
- Plant markets

E: [goldcoast@npq.org.au](mailto:goldcoast@npq.org.au)  
Where: Nerang Country Parklands

**Become a member today!**



Native Plants Queensland



[www.npq.org.au/gold-coast/](http://www.npq.org.au/gold-coast/)



Last month's Buzz newsletter featured Part 1 of Kevin Tracy's article on the importance of recycling comb from your hives. Here is Part 2 When and How to Rotate frames to Remove old brood comb

## PART 2: When & how to rotate frames to remove old brood comb

Kevin Tracy BeeZone Apiaries

### Work with Conditions:

During the Spring build-up and/or when there's a good Honey flow will help the bees to get the job of comb building done.



Wax production/comb construction activity in the colony are determined by following factors:

- Nectar flow: the greater the flow, the more combs are needed for storage Wax production and comb construction
- Brood rearing (egg laying): the more eggs being layed, the more comb cells needed.
- The presence of a queen: colonies with a queen build comb.
- Temperature: temperatures higher than 15° C favour comb building activity

**Wax glands at work:** Honey bees produce wax in specialised glands on the ventral side of the abdomen. A bee has four pairs of glands. The liquid wax is delivered by these glands and cools immediately to form fine, white wax scales. Wax scales are then taken by the hind legs and processed with the mouth parts. (1 wax scale weighs approx. 1 mg)



### Cull by age

- Date your frames in some manner eg: write month and year, mark/paint top bar

### Cull by Colour

- The brood comb might become dark sooner/later at some times than others so - If the comb is dark - ditch it

### How to Rotate comb for Removal

- Create a new box of frames above a Queen excluder or remove honey frames from the super already above an excluder
- Lift old brood comb to spaces above the excluder
- Keep brood together (Top and Bottom boxes) Do Push brood combs together
- Replace removed brood frames with foundation frames eg: second frame space from wall
- Taking brood frames to above the excluder allows nurse bees to continue to care for the brood
- Let Brood hatch from the frames of taken above the excluder (drones do not fit through excluder)
- Because Queen has no access to frames above the excluder, the bees fill the cells with honey
- Wait until honey capped, extract, and "Out with the Old" brood comb.

### Notes:

- It is recommended that ALL Brood COMB frames be rotated within every three (3) years
- Replace frames when conditions favour Honey bee activity
- Dispose of old comb in an Environment and



*Fresh wax being made by the bees, old wax gone. Easy!*



*End of the Line*

Biosecurity conscious method

- Dark brood comb is more attractive to Wax moth
- Gamma irradiation does not remove toxins from comb
- The extra space being created can help with swarm management too.

**Ask yourself:** Do I want to purchase a Nucleus colony with old brood comb frames in it? (see above article).

**I'll ask:** Why would you? Old brood comb disadvantages the colony health prospects (see above article)  
You don't have to buy the Nuc!

**Are you making Nucleus colonies for sale?** Do Not Dump Your Old comb on someone else, thanks.

This information is shared with the intent to raise more healthy bees, improve beekeeping practices, and give you time to prepare for Spring. I hope you found this of help.

(Written with respect to and for Dr Doug Somerville and his "Pillars of Beekeeping" on which this article is an elaboration of Remove Old Comb)

Kevin Tracy Teaches Beekeeping at Robina TAFE enrol through TAFE Qld. A few references -

<https://www.beeculture.com/a-closer-look-beeswax-wax-glands/>

"The Buzz about Bees" Tautz, J. [www.bee-hexagon.net](http://www.bee-hexagon.net)



## Since blue banded bees die off before winter, how can new adults appear in Spring?

Blue banded bees typically live about 40 days . Successive adults breed 3-4 generations over a Spring/Summer/Autumn season, then as the weather cools in late Autumn, breeding stops & the adults reach end of life. So with all the adults dead, how do new adults appear as the weather warms again after winter?

Over the course of the breeding season, females use their jaws to dig burrows in clay, dirt or soft mortar, in which they create a series of cells. Before depositing a single egg in each cell, a mixture of nectar and pollen is placed in the cell. Once the egg is deposited, each cell is capped and when all cells are filled and capped, the burrow is closed with a layer of soil & the adult leaves, never to return. In the warm months, the egg hatches, the larva consumes the food, pupates & emerges as an adult to continue the breeding cycle.



**However, when winter is approaching, the blue banded bee larva does NOT pupate. It enters a resting phase inside the cell and remains 'dormant' until the warm weather returns. At that time, the development process is again switched on and the new season young adult finally emerges in Spring.**



## **JOBS in Your Bee Yard this Month**

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