


# 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)



## DATE SAVERS

### Sun 16 Feb 2020 - 10am to 12 noon: General Meeting

- Venue: the home of Warrick Wood & Maryon Campbell, 41 Hughes Avenue, Main Beach
- We will have a presentation from Laurie Dewar the inventor of Bee Build Pollen Substitute. Please bring chair, plate to share, PPE (your bee suits)

### Sun 8 March - 9:00am to 1:45pm Ipswich and West Moreton Field Day - a Bi-annual event

- Venue: Peak Crossing School, Ipswich
- GCABs will be joining up with Ipswich club for this big event in place of our March general meeting.
- For more information, see further in the newsletter.

### Sun 19 April - 10:00am to 12:00pm: General meeting

- Venue: Alan Betts, 183 Tomewin Mountin Rd, Currumbin

### Sun 17 May - General Meeting

- Venue: the home of Leonie & Pete Schwarzel, Old Dum Dum School, 1020 Kyogle Rd, Dum Dum NSW
- There will be various activities to celebrate World Bee Day which is on 20 May.

### 26-28 June - Mudgeeraba Show - Mudgeeraba Showgrounds

- GCABS will have an education and honey sales stall.

### 28-30 Aug - Gold Coast Show - Broadwater Parklands

- This is a free event and GCABS will have an education and honey stall. There will also be a honey competition.

## President's Report



The past few months have brought much change to beekeepers in our part of the world. We've literally gone from droughts and fire to flooding rains, and it has certainly created some challenges.

While the impact is inconsequential when compared to those of our southern beekeepers, we unfortunately did bear the brunt of flooding rains and high winds at our club apiary a few weeks ago. Hives were knocked over and flooded; but what humbled me most was how our committee and members came together and moved quickly to give our bees a fighting chance. Experience and expertise was shared, actions were swift; and the end result is that many of our hives will live to fight another day. Most importantly it highlighted what great community spirit we have within our club and I hope it's something we never lose.

The silver lining of course, is that great growing (and flowering) conditions have returned for most of us and the honey is beginning to flow.

With honey in mind, remember that our Interclub Field Day with the Ipswich & West Moreton Beekeepers Association is coming up on March 8th at Peak Crossing. Event information is included in this edition, along with some advice on putting together a winning competition entry.

While our rivalry with Ipswich is very friendly, we'd love to see GCABS take out the title this year. Put your best entry forward and leave no category unchallenged!

**Travis Green**

*President*

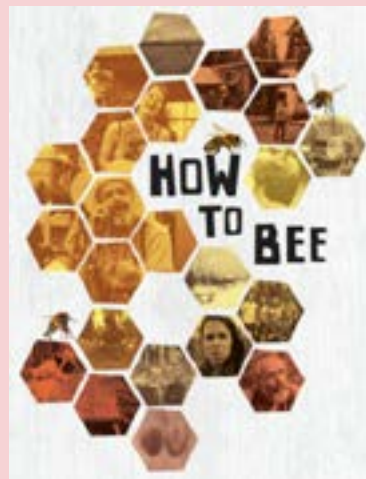
### Upcoming Movie - "How to Bee"

**Robina Event Cinemas, Wednesday 12th February, 6:30pm**

This is a delightful father-and-daughter story of love, compassion and Bees! Filmmaker Naomi Mark follows her father through 3 seasons of beekeeping learning everything whilst his health changes. Suffering from COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Naomi asks her father to begin a project with her.

For tickets:

[https://tickets.demand.film/event/9420?fbclid=IwAR0AkeKxZHafM3S7D3F\\_FJwXANMadvxnkZr8JOHQ1NiINsrAEOabWVYBD7g](https://tickets.demand.film/event/9420?fbclid=IwAR0AkeKxZHafM3S7D3F_FJwXANMadvxnkZr8JOHQ1NiINsrAEOabWVYBD7g)



### How about HOSTING A GCABS GENERAL MEETING?

We would love to visit your yard and/or apiary for one of our monthly meetings. You provide the space and we mostly provide the rest.

Please contact a committee member via the list on the final page, and we will make the arrangements!



# **IPSWICH FIELD DAY**

**Sunday 8 March**

**Peak Crossing State School, Ipswich.**

Held only every 2 years, this promises to be a great day. It's a perfect time to inform the general public about the vital role of bees as pollinators and food providers, to socialise and share ideas with fellow beekeepers. Here's the programme for the day (*February Ipswich Newsletter*):

9.00am - Welcome and Official Opening - Phil Geeves President, John Krause MP

9.20am - Dr Rebecca Laws, holds a Bachelor of Science in biology, an honours degree and PhD in zoology, and a Graduate Certificate in higher education. Since 2015, Rebecca has worked on several plant biosecurity projects in Biosecurity Queensland, within the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

9.50am - TBC

10.30am - Morning Tea

11.00am - Joint presentation. Dr Tran will be speaking on "Exploring the value of the Australian honey bee propolis". Dr Simon D Williams, School of Science and Engineering Faculty of Science, Health, Education and Engineering, University of the Sunshine Coast speaking on "Manuka Honey and the Trees It Comes From".

12.00pm - Lunch, Time to visit the stalls and catch up with friends.

1.00pm - Phil Geeves & George Pallot present the Honey Competition Results, Cent Auction, Prizes & Inter Club Trophy results.

1.45pm Close

## **INTER-CLUB HONEY SHOW SCHEDULE - 2020**

**Entries:** Submit entries in competition standard jars on arrival at the Field Day. One show entry per category per entrant. Judging will be on the 8th March between 9am and lunch. All judging is closed to general public. Entries may be collected at 1pm.

### **General Rules**

An entry must be from the exhibitor's own apiary.

Any entry should be no more than 3 months old.

Entrants may enter ONCE only in each class from the same apiary.

Family members entering the same category should enter products from different apiaries or different sources.

All entries to be presented in standard 500g glass bottles with removable lids.

Please do not present labels on the jars.

**Judging Criteria** - When judging extracted honey, the judges consider the following characteristics of each entry: Cleanliness of the jar and lid, Correct fill level, Cleanliness and clarity of the honey, Moisture content, Aroma and flavour.



## The following are the classes that members can enter:

1. Light Honey.
2. Golden Honey.
3. Dark Honey.
4. Comb Section in Honey.
5. Creamed Honey.
6. Block of wax yellow – min 500g.
7. Block of wax white – min 500g
8. Frame of Honey.
9. Biscuit Recipe.
10. Cake Recipe. (Biscuit and Cake recipes are below)



## Field Day Recipes

### HONEY BISCUITS - makes 30

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 60g Unsalted butter at room temperature
- 3/4 cup Caster sugar
- 1/2 cup Honey
- 1 Egg, lightly beaten
- 420g Plain flour
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch Ground cloves
- 1 Egg white, lightly whisked for glazing

1. Cream the butter and sugar in an electric mixer until pale and creamy. Warm the honey gently in a saucepan until lukewarm, then add to the butter mixture. Add the egg and mix well.

2. Sift together the flour, bicarbonate of soda, cinnamon and cloves. Beat into the butter mixture on a low speed until a soft dough forms. Shape the dough into a ball, cover with plastic wrap and rest in the freezer for one hour (or the fridge for 2 - 3 hours).

3. Preheat oven to 180 degrees C, and line two baking trays with greaseproof paper.

4. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to about 5mm thick, then cut out shapes with a biscuit cutter and place on the trays well spaced apart. Brush with the egg white and bake for 10-12mins until golden brown. Cool on the trays. Store in an airtight container.

### HONEY CAKE

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 250g Clear honey, plus tbsp to glaze
- 225g Unsalted butter
- 100g Dark muscovado sugar
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 300g self-raising flour

1. Preheat oven to 140 C fan force/160 C conventional/gas mark 3. Butter and line a 20cm round loose-bottomed cake tin. Cut the butter into pieces and put into a medium pan with the honey and sugar. Melt slowly over a low heat. When the mixture looks quite liquid, increase the heat under the pan and boil for one minute. Leave to cool for 15-20 minutes, to prevent the eggs cooking when they are mixed in.

2. Beat the eggs into the melted honey mixture using a wooden spoon. Sift the flour into a large bowl and pour in the egg and honey mixture, beating until you have a smooth, quite runny batter.

3. Pour the mixture into the tin and bake for 50 minutes - 1 hour until the cake is well-risen, golden brown and springs back when pressed. A skewer pushed into the centre of the cake should come out clean.

4. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool. Brush with warm honey to give sticky glaze.

## January Wrap - Sunday 19th January

Despite a hot and steamy Sunday morning, our General meeting at the home of Matt Hartley was well attended. Matt had attended our club's last Beginner Beekeeping workshop last year before getting set up with his own FlowHive. His new bees had been settling in well over the Christmas holidays and he invited the club to do a first inspection to make sure everything was working well and on track.

Kathy Knox gave attendees an introductory session on safety around a hive and what to look for in a healthy brood. Our thanks to Matt Hartley and his family for so generously opening their lovely home to us all.



*President Travis addressing the Club at the start of our GM*



*Delicious spread provided by attendees*

# Pest & Diseases of Honey Bees – Varroa

Paul Fullwood, Greenwood Farm, Springbrook



Living in Australia, we are surrounded by amazing countryside and beaches, an abundance of unique and cuddly creatures, and we enjoy a level of personal safety & freedom that is rare in today's world. As beekeepers, we have perhaps the healthiest environment to keep bees.

A contributing aspect to this is the fact that Australia is one of the only places in the world where the Varroa mite has not established itself. These exotic mites have made their way to bee populations in Asia, America, Europe, Africa and even our Pacific cousins in New Zealand where they have brought about massive changes to the way bees are kept. The dreaded “chemical treadmill” of treatments.

These small brownish-red coloured mites are easy to identify, with their sesame seed shape and eight legs. With a flat appearance they are roughly between 1-2mm in width. Occurring in two genotypes, *V. destructor* and *V. jacobsoni*, these external mites feed on drone and worker bee brood. This can cause malformation of the brood, weaken the brood and worst of all, transmit a multitude of crippling viruses. Needless to say, this can have catastrophic consequences for honey bee colonies if left unchecked and untreated.



These mites are parasites and are synonymous with Asian Honey Bees - AHB. Accordingly, our Biosecurity agencies across Australia have set up surveillance hives and monitoring at ports and surrounding suburbs to detect any incursions at the earliest possible time. However, infected bees can drift between colonies, thus providing an equally hazardous risk. And we all know how quickly small insects can multiply.

For this reason, all beekeepers across Australia are encouraged to perform some basic and simple tests to monitor their colonies. The simplest is the Sugar Shake Test. The link below is an excellent video produced by NSW Dept of Primary Industries and can be done by any beekeeper with no ill effects to the bees. April is Sugar Shake Month.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48vomY-If2Q>

Aside from an ever-increasing range of chemical treatments (Apistan, Bayvarol, Amitraz, Api-Life-Var, formic acid and oxalic acid) there are other treatment alternatives. Non-chemical treatment options include: Screened bottom boards and Sticky mats. These have a reasonable success rate in reducing Varroa populations, without harming the bees. The final method: removing all drone comb has mixed effectiveness, but most certainly disrupts the equilibrium of castes in the hive. However, the established benchmark for effectiveness is 95%, to maintain healthy colonies. This generally requires an integrated approach to treatment with a combination of treatments that suit the beekeeper's situation.

Bottom line is: *Be aware. Take action and report any suspicious findings.*

## References:

- AgGuide Healthy Bees: Managing pests, diseases and other disorders of the honey bee
- NSW DPI Primefacts 861 – Varroa mite
- Plant Health Australia Fact Sheet - Varroa mite



## News and Research

### Beekeeper Drought and Bushfire Relief

Our hearts go out to our fellow beekeepers whose bees have perished in Australia's horrendous bushfires. It is estimated at least 6000 beehives have been burnt in NSW, 2100 in S Australia, 1000 in Qld, 800 in Victoria and 300 in WA (Aus Honeybee Council).

And where hives were saved, in many areas their food sources have been scorched, so the surviving bees are facing starvation. Such a devastating summer.

Rural industries have been hit hardest by drought and bushfires. The effect on Australia's beekeepers will be felt for a long time to come, due not only to the immediate loss of floral resources, but because some floral species can take up to 75 years to mature and flower. Apiarists are asking to be allowed to put bees in national parks that have not been burnt.

Many are wondering what they can do to help. If you would like to donate to assist beekeepers to recover their vital industries, see links below.

[https://www.ruralaid.org.au/donate/?supporter\\_id=14254&mc\\_cid=3abb63b326&mc\\_eid=7d27ed549b](https://www.ruralaid.org.au/donate/?supporter_id=14254&mc_cid=3abb63b326&mc_eid=7d27ed549b)

<https://www.beekeepers.asn.au/news/bushfire-assistance>

Not surprisingly, honey prices are set to soar due to reduced supply.

<https://10daily.com.au/news/australia/a191108bgecp/honey-prices-to-skyrocket-as-bees-flowers-die-in-drought-20191110>



## February Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

*Submitted by Jim O'Reagan*

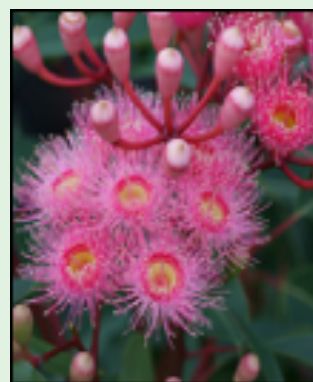
Blackbutt. Blue Heliotrope. Broad-leaved Banksia. Broad-leaved Ironbark. Brown Bloodwood. Brown Box. Coolibah. Grass tree. Grey Mangrove. Gum-topped Box. Hickory Wattle. Mallee box. Mexican Poppy. Moreton-bay Ash. Paper-barked Tea-tree. Pink Bloodwood. Red Stringy-bark. Silver-leaved Ironbark. Small-fruited Grey Gum. White Stringy-bark.



*Brown Bloodwood*



*Broad-leaved Banksia*



*Pink Bloodwood*

# BeeEducation

*adapted from NSW Dept of Primary Industries, Dec 2019*

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-17/social-media-myths-on-caring-for-fire-affected-koalas-and-bees/11874058>

With the intense heat, bushfires and droughts that we are experiencing this summer, here are some points to consider to help our bees to survive and thrive:

**Keeping cool:** Care needs to be taken to keep our colonies cool. Extreme heat can melt beeswax, kill brood and even whole colonies.

**Site location:** ideally your site will provide some shade during the hottest part of the day, but not early morning.

**Hive:** bees require less effort and energy to keep white hives cool than they do for any other colour. For those with only a small number of hives placing foam insulation on top of the lids will help keep them cool.

**Inspections:** do not open the hive during the hottest part of the day; consider postponing until the weather is cooler.

**Ventilation:** place colonies off the ground, ensure the air vents aren't blocked.

**Transportation:** Leave hives open or use perforated hive entrance closers or screened bottom boards to ensure airflow to the colony. Move your colonies at night, being sure to follow AHBIC best-management guidelines for transporting hives. Hosing the load down with water may also help to keep them cool.

**Space:** Ensure the hive is not overcrowded, an additional super may be needed. However, placing honey above an empty super can create more work for the bees to control hive temperature. Depending on seasonal conditions and the ability of the hive to draw out additional foundation, place some existing honey frames in the added super and move some of the new combs into the lower box interspersing honey and foundation frames. Another option is to harvest the box of honey, replacing it with a super of extracted drawn comb or new foundation.



**Water:** Some bees may be desperate for water and nutrients. They can use more than 1L of water a day to keep cool! We can best help them by putting clean water out for bees, ideally available within 200 metres. Use a clean, uncontaminated dish for water. If it's plastic add rocks, polystyrene, or even sand. The surface must be textured to prevent drowning.

**Feeding:** Do not open feed honey or sugar to bees as this can encourage bees to rob and could also cause disease. It is illegal to feed honey outside to bees and animals in Australia as it is a Biosecurity risk.

The best food for bees is flowers. Try to keep plants flowering for as long as possible by watering and pruning. Sometimes bees forage on nectar of fruit so some place watermelon out for them, however this needs to be carefully managed as it could attract animals and birds which can spread harmful bacteria. For longer-term planning, Ms Frost (NSW Dept of Primary Industries honey bee specialist) suggested planting eucalyptus trees, bottlebrushes and tea-trees for their appeal to bees and drought-hardiness. Bee-friendly flowering plants such as rosemary and sunflowers are good, quick-growing species. Eucalyptus Ficifolia Wildfire is especially attractive to honeybees. Use grey water to keep flowering plants alive for longer.



## Beekeeper Spotlight

## Milivoj Brnabic (Mili)

Mili has been a member of our club since 1998 and has enjoyed beekeeping as a hobby for many years. Immigrating from communist Croatia at the age of 29, he has always lived in SE Queensland and northern NSW. He grew up around bees as his parents were beekeepers and when his father passed away at an early age, his mother worked hard to maintain their hives as a source of income. He says she rebelled against the fashion conventions of the time, by wearing trousers rather than a skirt when tending to the bees as it was far more practical!

Mili's first job in Australia was at a Mullumbimby banana plantation and it was there that he and his brother-in-law came across a hive of bees living inside a split log. Using a box made out of banana crates, they were able to shift the colony, and thus began his life as an Australian beekeeper! He said they found 45kg of honey from that initial colony in the log. Eventually he moved the bees to Chinderah where he split them every 6 months, reaching a total of 8 hives.



Sadly, in 1974 while he was away for two weeks attending his mother's funeral in Croatia, there were serious floods back here and he returned to the devastating news that all his bees had been lost. However, as luck would have it, shortly thereafter, whilst helping someone move their bees in Tweed Heads, he found a swarm on a vineyard, and so revived his hobby. It became a busy life as at one point he looked after 120 hives in various locations!

Nowadays, at the age of 83, he keeps 25 hives at his home in Kirra, close to the beach. When asked what he enjoys about being an apiarist, he says he finds it relaxing and loves working with them. He now spends his time constructing bee boxes in his workshop and selling his honey to locals.

Something you may not know about Mili is that he can speak several languages: Croatian, Italian, German, French and Russian. He says his broken English is due to the fact that when he arrived here there were no English classes available so he picked up what he knows from local Aussies. He says although it was initially difficult to adapt to the new culture and new language, now after 54 years here, he feels quite at home!

## Bee Equipment

HIN Stencil - Due to Biosecurity Laws to display your HIN stencil on your hives' brood box, V's Bee's QLD is offering a galvanised 1.1mm metal stencil 25cmx15cm with 4cm lettering 4 or 5 digits \$20 each. Stencils are only fabricated once 10 orders have been received with payment.

Spinners - Rachael at V's Bees in Nerang has our 2 club spinners available for hire.

## Library corner

The following publications are available for members to borrow:

### **Honey and Pollen flora of SE Australia**

*Published 2019 by NSW Dept of Primary Industries*

This is a very comprehensive and well-organised book documenting all flora for bees available in SE Australia. Each plant is given a rating for its effectiveness as a source of pollen and/or nectar, and when it flowers.

Eg. ones that are especially liked by bees are: Mountain Rose, Swamp Turpentine/Paperbark Mahogany, Brushbox – yields much honey, White Clover, Canola, Patersons Curse.

### **Past and current copies of 'The Australasian Beekeeper'**

This is a good quality monthly magazine. It covers relevant and pertinent articles about a range

of topics of interest to beekeepers esp in Australia and New Zealand.

Here's a list of the articles in the most recent issue:

- How the drought affects bees and beekeeping
- Bee Stings
- A summary of an international Beekeeping congress held in September in Montreal Canada
- The biosecurity code of practice for Australian honey bee industry
- The pros and cons of supplementing feeding of bees.
- The art of drone rearing
- Digital Bees – applying modern technology to an ancient art
- Hygienic behaviour for bees
- Recent research here and overseas

If you wish to borrow copies please contact Ann Allen – [ann@mincherallen.com](mailto:ann@mincherallen.com) Out of consideration for others, the latest copies of this magazine are asked to be returned within 2 weeks.

## ABA Membership Update

*Submitted by Rachael Kubinski & Kathy Knox*

This is just a quick update with regards to the 2020 GCABS Membership. As previously mentioned in the Buzz Newsletters, GCABS has now joined the ABA (Amateur Beekeeping Association NSW). This provides our club with many positive attributes, such as personal access to your membership, an internet payment system, a swarm collection list, beekeeper insurance and the quarterly ABA newsletter in addition to the Buzz Newsletter. If you missed activating your existing account, no problem just head to the ABA website [Beekeepers@asn.au](mailto:Beekeepers@asn.au) and join the Gold Coast Club and you'll continue to receive all the added benefits of being part of a local Bee Club. A few extra points:

- If you renewed in December, you should have received an email to confirm receipt from ABA. You are on The Buzz mailing list.
- If you are a brand new member, you will get a welcome from our Membership Officer, Rachael. You are on The Buzz mailing list.
- If purchasing insurance, you will get a certificate of currency by email.
- ABA membership cards will be posted from ABA to all financial members. Look out for them soon.
- If you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact a committee member as we are all here to help. At our monthly general meeting there will be someone with a computer who will be happy to help set you up or amend your membership details on the records.
- If you have not renewed, we are sad to see you go but wish you the best. Please note: GCCC Animal laws require active beekeepers to be members of a club or society. If no longer keeping bees, you should let the DPI know that your HIN registration number is inactive.
- Non-financial records will not continue to be held on The Buzz mailing list.



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