


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/GoldCoastAmateurBeekeepingSociety)



The Ancient Art of Making Mead - p6

Extraction to Wax Cleaning demonstration - Uncapping full depth frame, tangential spinner, filtering honey, straining uncappings & wax cleaning option. What to bring: Chair, Water, Notepad & Pen. Please register to attend: <https://www.gcabs.net.au/events/member-meeting-880-657-333-653-916-439/>

- **Sun 16 Jan 2022 10am-12pm Member meeting** at Country Paradise Parklands, 231 Beaudesert-Nerang Rd. Our first get-together for the new year! Presentation by John Steytler, GCABS member, and successful local commercial beekeeper. Topic: The pros and cons of moving from a hobbyist to commercial beekeeper.
- For updates on our new club house construction please visit: <https://www.gcabs.net.au/clubhouse/>

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

- **Fri/Sat 5-6 Nov. Introduction to Beekeeping.** To register [CLICK HERE](#).
- **Sat 6th Nov. 9am - 12pm. Intermediate Beekeeping Course.** 16 Nexus Way, Southport. Presented by Kevin Tracy. Details and registration here: <https://www.gcabs.net.au/events/intermediate-skills-nov21/?occurrence=2021-11-06>
- **Tue 16th Nov 7pm-9pm Pest and disease evening** presented by Paul Fulwood, 16 Nexus Way, Southport. Details and registration [CLICK HERE](#).
- **Sun. 21 Nov. 10am-12 noon Member Meeting.** Location: Nerang Country Paradise Parklands, 231 Nerang-Beaudesert Road, Nerang. Content: Start to Finish: Honey

Farewell from the Editor & Thank You



This will be the last edition of the Buzz for 2021 and alas, the last ever for me in the editor's seat. It is time to move away from my committee role, although I will of course maintain my GCABS membership. There are two main reasons behind my decision. Firstly, as I reside in NSW, the COVID enforced border closures have made my attendance at member meetings & other GCABS events nearly impossible. I've therefore been unable to give the level of active service I desire for our association. The second reason is more complex & for that reason, I've decided to let a review of the book *Honeybee Democracy* by Thomas D. Seeley speak for me:

Honeybees make decisions collectively—and democratically. Every year, faced with the life-or-death problem of choosing and traveling to a new home, honeybees stake everything on a process that includes collective fact-finding, vigorous debate, and consensus building. In fact, as world-renowned animal behaviourist Thomas Seeley reveals, these incredible insects have much to teach us when it comes to collective wisdom and effective decision making. Seeley considers similarities between the ways bee & primate brains process information. He concludes that [like bees] any decision-making group should consist of individuals with shared interests and mutual respect, a leader's influence should be minimised, debate should be relied upon, diverse solutions should be sought, and the majority should be counted on for a dependable resolution.

Honeybee Democracy shows that decision-making groups, whether honeybee or human, can be smarter than even the smartest individuals in them.

Ref: *Honeybee Democracy*, Thomas D. Seeley, 2010.

I take this opportunity to thank all of the Buzz collaborators during my years as editor . You have given generously of your time, knowledge & skills. This includes all of you who have contributed articles & photos, as well as my stalwart editorial team, Ann & Colin Allen. Thanks also to Sheila Stokes, president & IT manager of the ABA for publishing to our members promptly each month. A heartfelt thanks to my fellow GCABS members for your interest in our newsletter & lovely feedback. To my fellow committee members, past & present, thank you for your commitment & support both to me & to our association.

Let's always bee our best.

**Leonie Schwarzel,
GCABS Editor 2018-2021**

Farewell from us too



Along with Leonie's farewell as Buzz editor, after 3 years we have also decided it's time to put down our pens/keyboards as Assistant editor and Typesetter. We have enjoyed working with the lovely Leonie and doing our best to produce club newsletters to be proud of. Thanks indeed for the support and appreciation from you members who have helped us do our job. We feel it is time for fresh ideas and a fresh approach and we trust we will be passing the task on to good hands. Of course we will continue as enthusiastic GCABS members!

Ann (Assistant Editor) and Colin Allen (Typesetter)

November Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

Supplied by Jim O'Regan



Blue Gum, Blue Heilotrope, Broad-leaved Banksia, Flat Weed, Flax-leaved, Paperbark, Glycine, Golden Candlesticks, Grass-tree, Grey Ironbark, Maize, Mexican, Poppy, Mintweed, Moreton Bay Ash, Narrowleaved, Grey Gum, Narrow-leaved, Ironbark, Red Stringybark, River

Mangrove, River Red Gum, Swamp, Mahogany, Tumble-down Gum, Tumble-down Ironbark, Turnip Weed, White Clover, White, Mahogany, Wild May (Baeckea), Wild May (Leptospermum), Yellow Box, Yellow Box- Eucalyptus Melliodor Broad-leaved Banksia Wild May (Leptospermum), Red Stringy bark Mexican Poppy.

Photos: Red stringy bark and Broad-leaved Banksia

JOBs in Your Bee Yard this month

- **Ensure your bees have a reliable water source. Summer heat is upon us.** Survival depends on your bees having access to a water source that can't dry out.
- **Check for Pests & Diseases. Do your AFB test if you haven't already this season.** Not sure you could diagnose a problem? Take photos & share to the GCABS Forum page on Facebook or ask your mentor to inspect with you.
- **Protect against small hive beetle infestation & slime-out.** SHB thrive in hot, moist weather. Have traps & controls in your hives to manage their numbers. Keep your hive crowded. Remove extra supers if necessary so that the population is strong for the space they need to protect.
- **Harvest Honey or add an extra super** if needed. But don't take it all. Leave a few frames for the colony in case of a dearth of wet weather.
- **Brood manipulation** – Continue to raise brood frames to the honey super to give your queen plenty of space to lay. See Aug. Buzz page 8 for "how to".
- **Have spare hive ware ready to catch a swarm or split** a highly populated hive to prevent swarming. Ensure you have ready a spare hive box or two with sufficient frames & foundation, lid & base in preparation.



A warm welcome to all our newest members:

Vince B, Glenn B, Andrew B, Adrian B, Cara B, Madeleine C, Allan F, Jess F, Nick G, Matthew H, Andrew L, Kitty L, Louisa P, Bruce S, Mark S, Tamara S, Victor S, Deb W, Greg A, Matthew B, Amanda B, Esther B, Shane B, Jo B, Damien C, Jeff C, John C, Naomi C, Amanda E, Veronika G, Crystal G, Taya G, Melissa H, Kim K, Mick K, Fernando L, Vanessa M, Sandra M, Sue P, Justin R, Daniel S, Kelly-Anne T, Stephen W, Christopher W



September Member Meeting Review

Photos by Alex Lang

Vern Kubinski has kindly summarised his excellent presentation entitled:

Choosing A Beekeeping Style: Proactive or Reactive

Bees are truly amazing creatures, with the ability to create much chaos for the Beekeeper, surrounding homeowners, the general community, local council, parklands and so many more locations.



Identifying the desired hive production purpose will determine the required beekeeping maintenance: Honey, Pollination, Queen Rearing, Drone Colony or Nuc Production.

No matter the intended hive style a beekeeper will be dependent on the seasonal conditions and a multitude of factors to achieve success: Nectar / Pollen availability, Day / Night temperatures, Rainfall, Sea Level, Wind factors or Bee Genetics.

Reactive Beekeeping will lead to dealing with swarm retrieval, splitting due to sighted Queen cells or an overwhelmed

Beekeeper due to bee numbers. The effect of this style will lead to the continual apiary expansion, sourcing homes for unwanted nucs / hives, early queen burnout or competing feral hives within your apiary's foraging radius.

Being a proactive beekeeper means adopting a manipulation strategy to assist keeping your apiary at the desired size. Investigating the brood box frames during regular hive inspections, will allow you to identify any frames that need to be rotated to an alternative location within or out of the hive. The brood box can suffer from pollen, honey or brood glutting due to the over production of these particular frames, which will restrict the productivity of the hive. The prime directive of a hive whilst there is a bountiful nectar flow is to forage, resulting in a dramatic increase in bee numbers, so continual space for the Queen to lay, is a priority for the Beekeeper during this seasonal phase.

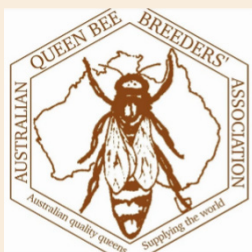


Many beekeepers practice frame manipulation consistently, though unfortunately you've chosen to work with unpredictable factors - Animals and Mother Nature. However, adaptability is a Beekeeper's asset, so don't dishearten if chaos still descends, by these majestic creatures.

Did Somebody Say AQBBA?

Submitted by Kevin Tracy.

Thanks also to Richard Sims, president AQBBA & owner of Murwillumbah Queen Bees



You are more likely to hear AQBBA, than you are Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association, and that's for sure. However, The AQBBA is for any and all beekeepers. If you are still reading then, yes, this means you.

We are not an exclusive “secret society” sharing magical arts around the making of Honey bee Queens. (In truth, I myself think that everyone can and would do well to learn how to raise their own Queen bees)

Read on ...

AQBBA is a member of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) with a specific focus on issues that affect Honey bee health such as advancements in bee breeding, biosecurity, market access, education & training, and innovation.

You may have read our article “For the Love of Queens” in the October issue of The Australasian Beekeeper. Perhaps you saw ABC Landline about the work being carried out at the Quarantine facility in Victoria to bring in genetic material to help produce Australian Queens with Varroa Sensitive Hygiene. That is an initiative of AQBBA. And queen bees are now being produced, inseminated with local stock and research continuing into VHS queen stock in Australia. Did someone say AQBBA?

One of our latest projects is to monitor the shipping of Queen bees from point to point to beekeepers around Australia. The delays, duration & many temperature variations experienced by the queen bees during shipping, by Australia Post for example, directly affect the queen bees' health & have at times proved fatal.

So, tracking devices will be used to find where there may be issues in the conditions Queen bees go through to get to their destination & to know by what route/s and how long it takes for them to arrive! These issues are critical to Colony health and well-being. Read the details [HERE](#).

This project is about to commence. Your input, as a member of AQBBA, would be/is valued. Keep in touch.

Projects and research such as mentioned above as well as working towards standards for queen bees and nucleus colony sales, along with National representation makes your involvement and awareness imperative.

Membership demonstrates a commitment to best biosecurity beekeeping practices and supports our efforts in maintaining healthy honey bee populations. Additionally, members are able to share ideas and express concerns that play a hand in shaping our industry's future.

Membership is open to all. You don't have to be a Queen Breeder or Producer. Join us now and have access to the resources and opportunities available.

Make time to look at the AQBBA website - <https://aqbba.org.au/>

Did somebody say AQBBA? – Yes, it was me. It could be you.

Become a member of the AQBBA and share in what matters to your beekeeping.

The Ancient Art of Making Mead

Compiled by Leonie, the editor.

In its purest form, mead is a tasty, alcoholic beverage made by fermenting honey & water with yeast.

In the long history of alcohol production, the craft of mead making is almost certainly the oldest. It predates the invention of the wheel, with cave paintings depicting the collection of honey from wild bee colonies. 'Legend' has it that the ancients drank the liquid from an upturned beehive in a tree cavity filled with rain water. While discovery of this delightful alcoholic beverage was probably by chance, it became understood that when water was added to honey, it initiated fermentation by wild yeasts. From this discovery, the importance of honey & its 'offshoot' mead became woven into cultures, folk-lore, myths & religions worldwide. In its purest form, it has been called the drink of the Gods, the property of the monks, the choice of royalty, a medicine, an aphrodisiac; while in its rougher form, a drink of the masses.



In Norman, Anglo-saxon & Celtic cultures, mead making in its purest form was mostly confined to the monasteries & abbeys. They owned most of the beehives, from which they extracted the honey and also valued the beeswax for making their candles.

In the 18th century, when the popularity of honey gave way to sugar as the major form of sweetener, so the production & popularity of mead declined. Nowadays, with the world-wide surge of beekeeping, mead making is again gaining attention & momentum. It can be a simple, try at home craft. Note: The editor has several batches 'aging' in the pantry, dating back two years.



Mead ingredients

Mead with honey alone, or additional herbs & spices, can vary in flavour & strength from sweet, dry or even ale like. Although usually included under the general name of mead, other honey based alcohols are also gaining popularity. Melomels for example, are made by fermenting honey with fruit juices, or cyser from fermenting honey with apple juice alone.

As beekeepers, we have ready access to the main ingredient, honey. With the addition of a few basic tools & other ingredients, you could start now & brew up your first batch of mead to herald in the new year. A hint though, like most alcohol, the flavour improves with age. Fancy a bit of brewing? Why not give it a go!

Here is a link to a great starter recipe with fun instructions: <https://www.homebrewtalk.com/threads/joes-ancient-orange-mead.49106/>

Ref: *Making Mead*, Acton & Duncan 1968.

The National Honey Levy



The National Honey Levy is a compulsory levy established in 1962 at the request of the Australian honey bee industry. Honey that is produced in Australia and sold, exported or used in the production of other goods attracts a levy and export charge.

The government collects the levy on behalf of the industry and invests the funds on the recommendations of the Australian Honeybee Industry Council (AHBIC).

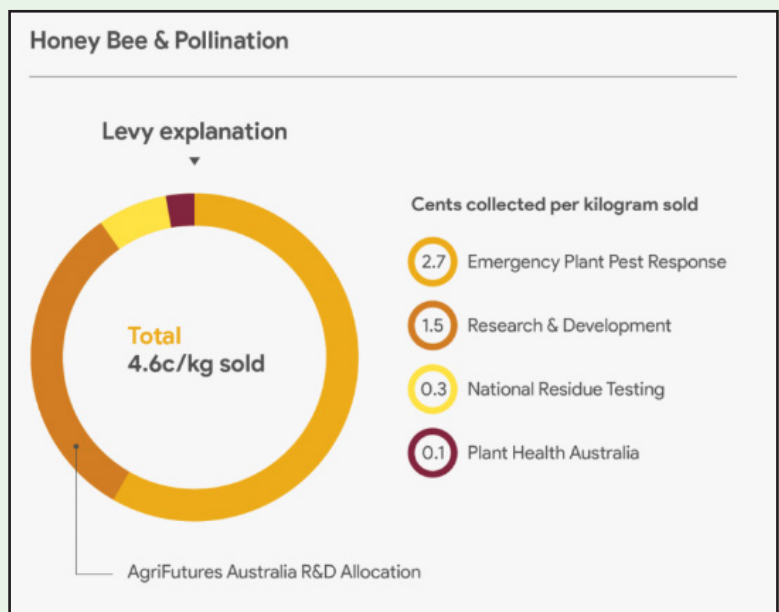
Who pays the national honey levy?

If an individual beekeeper produces more than 1,500 kilograms of honey in a calendar year and sells their honey by designated sale or uses their honey in the production of other goods, the individual must lodge a return and make a payment to the Federal Department of Agriculture.

How much is the levy & how is it used?

The levy is currently 4.6 cents per kilogram of honey. The levy funds research and development (R&D), essential biosecurity programs, and national honey residue surveying with AgriFutures Australia, Plant Health Australia and the National Residue Survey.

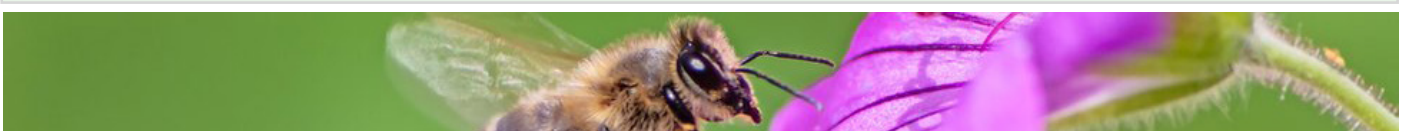
From the diagram it can be seen that of every 4.6 cents collected 2.7 cents is put into a fund for emergency pest responses (eg. fighting Varroa incursions), 1.5 cents is allocated to R&D investment via AgriFutures Honey Bee and Pollination Program, 0.3 cents is used for National residue testing and 0.1 cents goes to Plant Health Australia.



Why is the National Honey Levy important?

The funds are used to assist & support our industry. Non-payment of levies would mean the industry would currently miss out on crucial funding (approximately \$460,000 in levies per annum this includes \$150,000 in RD&E levies, and \$150,000 in matched Australian government funding per annum) for investment in RD&E.

95% of Australia's beekeeping sector is 'amateur' (considered non-commercial). The majority of non-commercial beekeepers do not pay the National Honey Levy although they all benefit from levy-funded biosecurity and some levy-funded R&D projects. Therefore, a voluntary contribution from non-commercial beekeepers may be established and would make a significant impact on RD&E investment.



National Pollinator Week

Compiled by Leonie, with photos by Leonie, the editor.

Every week, all around our nation, pollinators are busy offering up their essential services. It's not only the bees we have to thank but all the 'B's that make up the pollinator community: bees, birds, butterflies, bats, beetles & other bugs too numerous to mention.

In recognition, gratitude & celebration of our pollinators, November 13-21, 2021 is designated National Pollination Week with a range of events available. Check them here: <https://www.australianpollinatorweek.org.au/>

Flies like yellow, bees like blue

Some research has shown that while flies have a preference for flowers of yellow hues, bees prefer those in the blue colour range. This seems surprising to us humans since blue pigmented flower species are scarcer in comparison to the many yellow species.

The mystery of the blue flower

Basically, although blue is often difficult for plants to produce, some have evolved to do so to bring a real benefit: specifically, attracting bees for pollination. Yet blue flower species are somewhat scarce, right?



Let's bust that myth! It depends on your point of view; or more correctly, your point of vision. The 'scarcity' of blue flowers is actually only due to the limits of our human eyes.



From a bee's perspective, attractive bluish flowers are much more common, as they see light along a different part of the colour spectrum than that available to the human eye. So what you may notice, is bees visit flowers of most colours but you are likely to see less of other pollinators targeting the 'blue' flowers.

However, it's not just about what they see. Bees and other pollinator insects use a wide variety of cues when foraging for floral resources. As well as visual, they rely heavily on olfactory (odour) cues, as well as tactile, heat & electric signals. In this way, plants create their unique floral signature to attract their most effective pollinators.

<https://theconversation.com/flies-like-yellow-bees-like-blue-how-flower-colours-cater-to-the-taste-of-pollinating-insects-167111>

<https://theconversation.com/the-mystery-of-the-blue-flower-natures-rare-colour-owes-its-existence-to-bee-vision-153646>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpls.2020.558684/full>

BEEZONE APIARIES Training Opportunities



Each course will be trained to at least a Cert3 level and include elements from Unit of Competency requirements. However - these courses are NOT formally accredited. This is how they can be comparatively inexpensive. Kevin will be providing a "Certificate of Achievement" with a transcript of elements covered as in formal qualification.

BeeZone Training Courses

Pests & Diseases

Seasonal Management

Native Bees

Make Your Own



WITH KEVIN TRACY
CERT 3 BEEKEEPING, CERT 4 TAE

All courses include:

- Copy of DPI Ag Guide on topic
- Handouts
- PDF version of PowerPoint presentation
- Certificate of Achievement

Course Details and enrolment:

kntracy@gmail.com

5% DISCOUNT
For CURRENT BEE ASSOCIATION/
CLUB MEMBERS

Make Your Own Queen

Also includes:

- Queen bee breeding Theory & Practical work in setting up queen cell builders
- grafting from pedigree queen stock in a professional Queen production apiary
- Return and collect your cells for own use
- Grafting Tool

* **As soon as you produce 20 queens for yourself/ others you have paid for the course!!!**

Dates for this Year with course topic.

Courses will recommence early 2022 depending on interest/demand.

November

- 7 (1 day only) Beyond Beginner
- 13/14 Pests and Diseases
- 20/21 Seasonal Management
- 27/28 Make your own Queens

December

- 4 (1 day only) Native bees
- 5 (1 day only) Beyond Beginner
- 11/12 Make your own Queens

CONTENT Information

"Beyond Beginner" assumes a prerequisite of beginning in bees and ownership of at least one colony. No requirement for how long a beekeeper. This course is to further develop skills & knowledge to re-enforce previous learning &/or modify/correct practices before they become habits.

Hands on focus with demonstrations, observation & answering of questions in the realm of not just What, but Why. (This is a valuable "next step" learning experience and at a very reduced price)

"Pests & Diseases" deals with Identification & best practice management of endemic and exotic diseases. Knowledge & skills will include collection of samples of material required with reference to locating bees/ larvae of appropriate age, filling in diagnostic forms/reporting notifiable pests/diseases. Practical work includes collection and labelling of samples and carrying out a "Sugar Shake"

"Seasonal Management" concentrates primarily on colony and brood manipulations carried out in Autumn and Spring to optimise colony health, numbers, overwintering, Spring flow, and swarm prevention/management/collection. Plenty of hands-on.

"Make Your Own Queens" - theoretical and practical training in the production and methods for rearing Queen bees. Whether for a few or large numbers, participants will learn of different ways to raise queens, how to set-up an apiary and colony for raising queens, carry out actual grafting, and more. (While seemingly expensive, this course can pay for itself with dividends in no time at all.) NB: I believe

everyone can and should produce their own Queen bees and deliver with this passion. Contact Kevin for cost & bookings. kntracy@gmail.com

RAFFLE - Win a free Beyond Beginner Training Course

One lucky GCABS' member will win free attendance to the Beyond Beginner training course valued at \$95.00, date of your choice Dec. 2021 or early 2022.

To enter, email editor@gcabs.net.au with your name & the words Raffle entry for bee course by November 14th. Winner announced at the Nov 21st Members meeting.

New Course:
"Beyond Beginner" **WIN THIS COURSE**
1 day - only \$95 - 7 Nov or 5 Dec
Presented by:
BeeZone Apiaries and Rescue Bees
Kevin Tracy & Michael Howcroft



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