


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)



Mead Making! See page 2

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.

- **Sun 16th Oct 10am – noon Annual General Meeting and pot luck lunch.** Change-over of committee for the 2022-23 year. Then a demonstration of mead making by Keith Barton & Leonie Schwarzel. Venue: GCABS Clubhouse
- **Sat 29 & Sun 30 Oct – Intro to Beekeeping course.** To enrol, [CLICK HERE](#).
- **Fri 4th & Sat 5th Nov – Murwillumbah Show** 37 Queensland Road, Murwillumbah NSW. Apiculture comp schedule, [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Sun 20th Nov 10am – noon Member meeting** Topic: Native bee split and road test of box designs, pot luck lunch. Venue: GCABS Clubhouse
- **Sat 26 & Sun 27 Nov – Intro to Beekeeping Course**

Please note that the Nov mtg will be our final members mtg for the year. There will be NO December Member Meeting.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



GET INVOLVED!

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

Join the GCABS Committee for 2022-23. We need you!

Be part of a good cause! Join our committee and make a difference to our club by participating in club decisions so we can make it work for all. It's not too late to nominate yourself or someone else to our GCABS Committee in time for the October AGM. The nomination form is on page 9. Please complete and return to any current committee member, email to gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au, or bring it on the day.

Committee Meetings

All members are welcome to attend our online Committee meetings. They are held at 6:30pm on the first Monday of every month. Email the secretary and ask for the link. gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au.

From GCABS President



This will be my last article as President of GCABS, with our AGM and elections being held in two weeks on 16th October. Both my wife Ann and I have been on the committee virtually ever since we took up beekeeping and joined GCABS, and being part of the committee over the years has without doubt been one of the most enjoyable aspects of beekeeping for me.

I have been on the general committee, and served as Secretary and President and whilst the faces on the committee have changed over the years, there have been two stalwarts who were there before I came and are still there today, in Kathy Knox and Leonie Schwarzel, both of whom have shouldered heavy loads in different positions. Today I take my hat off to them for all their hard work and massive contribution to the club over the years. We would not be the great club we are today without what those two have given to us through their love of bees and beekeeping, time, skills and boundless energy. Leonie is featured in our “member spotlight” this month on page 7.

If re-elected, both are staying on the committee next year, as am I, although we all intend to be in different roles. I hope over the last year I have been able to contribute to building a real team environment that sees us all have a lot of fun in building the club further and taking us into the next era, particularly with the completion of our new clubhouse.

I encourage other members to join us on the committee, participate in that fun, and bring your own unique energy and contribution to the great team we have. See you at the AGM on the 16th, where we will also get to learn about mead making! A part of beekeeping I have never tried, but now intend to!

Cheers (for the last time as President!)... Colin Allen

Mead is making a comeback!

Sometimes called “the drink of the gods”, mead is one of the oldest alcoholic beverages dating back thousands of years. Made from fermented honey mixed with water and sometimes other ingredients such as fruit, spices or herbs, it can be brewed in your home and to your own taste.

At our next meeting, Leonie and Keith will be demonstrating how to make this delicious beverage. Don't worry....we'll make sure you can all drive home safely.... See you there!



The POT LUCK Lunch is back!!

Last month's member meeting saw the post covid return of the pot luck lunch as a permanent fixture in our member meetings. It was great to bring back that very social aspect of GCABS, share some great food, and chat with old and new friends. Please bring a plate next meeting!



Some current words of advice from John Vallance our busy Biosecurity Officer

Swarm season is in full swing! Even with taking measures to ensure your hive doesn't swarm, it still can. Make sure you are keeping up with your inspections and ensuring there is plenty of room for your queen to lay. DPI regulations state that hives must be inspected twice a year. This is not enough and hives should be inspected much more often. I personally inspect everything every 3 weeks sometimes even more frequently depending on what I see in the hive

Proper inspections will help ensure your hives aren't causing drama in your neighbourhood. This includes swarming, angry hives and bees turning up at neighbours' houses attracted to their lights or in their walls. As per Gold Coast Regulations - Hives are to have a 10m radius around them from neighbouring residences. Best practice to minimise nuisance bees is to have the bees' flight path across your property first. There are other ways such as hedging and fencing to make your bees fly up high and not cause any issues for your neighbours. Try not to have hives facing lights at night as the bees will go straight to it.

If we manage our bees correctly we will keep on the good side of council and our neighbours!

Native flower of the Month

Submitted by Esther Bligh

Philotheca myoporoides 'Winter Rouge' (wax flower).

This hardy, compact and easy to grow native shrub, best in part shade, flowers for a long time throughout spring. It is always buzzing with bees, European and native. Grows to 80cm.



In the News

A couple of heartwarming bee stories

A Brisbane woman was helped to deal with her grief by discovering bees

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-25/qld-whats-your-story-alyson-shepherd-beekeeping/101413932>

Looking after rooftop hives in Adelaide

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-25/city-bee-keeping-on-the-adelaide-showground-roof/101442592>

How does a real 'hive mind' work? The secret life of bees explained...

<https://www.theage.com.au/environment/conservation/how-does-a-real-hive-mind-work-the-secret-life-of-bees-explained-20220407-p5aboo.html?btis>

September Member Meeting Review

Thanks to Sue and Barry Purchase for contributing this wrap-up of the day

To all our members who came to our 3rd Sunday of the month get-together on a beautiful spring day, what an incredible time we had finding out several ways to deal with the pesky Small Hive Beetle. To all our members who didn't make it, you missed a DELICIOUS potluck lunch and GREAT people (ourselves included)!

Leonie demonstrated two methods: Firstly, the use of normal cooking oil and water in base plates (quote: if the oil doesn't get them they will drown in the water). Secondly, soft Chux kitchen cloths which are placed across a portion of the internal frames. As the beetles have hooks on their legs, they get caught in the soft cloth and cannot escape.

Keith explained the use of cider vinegar and extra strong peppermints (nobody tried one). The cider vinegar attracts the beetles in plastic traps and could also be used on your hands to repel the bees (gloves are better). One peppermint was laid across the top of the frame to also deter.

Travis uses a light sprinkling of diatomaceous earth in the bottom tray below the brood box. Beetles get caught but also some bees unfortunately.

Jim makes his own modified beetle trays, cutting a large hole in the base tray and substituting a leaf guard grill to trap the beetles that fall through the grill onto diatomaceous earth, lime powder or oil in the sliding trays.

Kathy explained the Apithors traps (usually black plastic) and the bait to insert.

Last but not least, Kevin, our gift man, demonstrated how to make our own beetle trap with Coreflute and gel. The coreflute is measured into rectangular sections roughly 10 x 7 cms. It is cut halfway down so that it opens up and a gel beetle bait is inserted. Then it is closed up and taped (plastic tape is best as it is waterproof). This was our gift to take home. Thank you Kevin.

After these demos, we were ready for our delicious feast, just like the good times pre-covid! See you next month.



October is AFB Awareness Month

By Paul Fullwood - reprinted and updated from Oct 2019

This October is American Foulbrood (AFB) awareness month, so be part of the movement against the spread of this fatal and incurable bee disease, which is a threat to all beekeepers and will continue to be so unless we do something about it. October is the perfect time to 'Inspect, Test, Notify and Act' to minimise the occurrence of AFB in our bees.

AFB American Foulbrood is an infectious disease that affects brood of honey bees in the pre-pupal (uncapped) and pupal (capped) stage of development. Having first emerged in Australia in 1976, this disease has been confirmed in all states in Australia and is present in persistent low levels in many commercial apiaries. Sadly, our gorgeous Gold Coast region every year has confirmed reports of AFB.

Upon doing your hive inspections, you may notice a decline in the number of bees, or a reduction in the honey output. However, the unmistakable calling signs of AFB are in the brood box.

- Perforated cappings (just one can be enough)
- Sunken cappings
- Larvae become liquified and turn from white to yellow, then dirty brown
- Larvae will "rope" when a match stick is inserted through the capping.
- Foul odour (hence the name) is detectable in heavily infected hives.



AFB requires euthanising the bees and burning hive components

In the Biosecurity Manual for Beekeepers, this notifiable disease has only one course of treatment. Euthanise the bees, then burn the hive components (frames, wax, honey, brood). Hive boxes, bases and lids can be irradiated with Gamma radiation to kill the disease. Steritech link below. However, for the amateur beekeeper, with one or two hives, this may not be cost effective.

Why such a radical treatment you may well ask? AFB's causative agent is the Paenibacillus larvae, which produces bacterium spores that have extremely hard outer casings. Resistant to chemicals, digestive juices, weather conditions and low-level heating, these spores can remain dormant for up to 50 years. They are highly contagious, infecting brood less than 24 hours old, germinating in their gut. As few as 6-10 spores can infect. They multiply up to an over 2 billion in just once cell. With AFB, you won't see it coming.

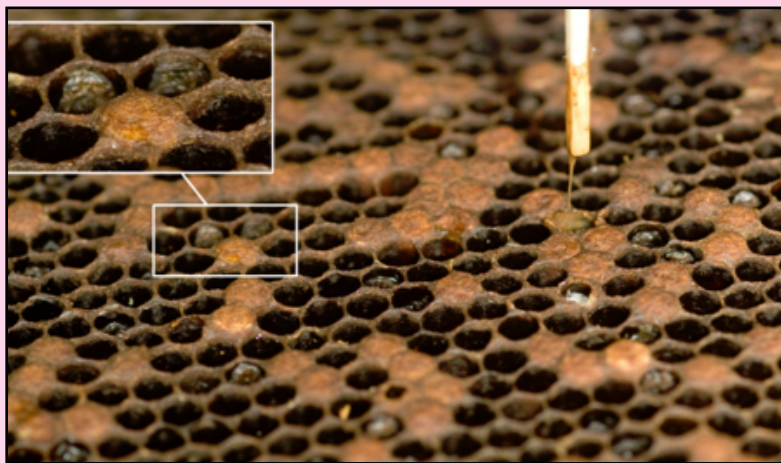
Brood become infected when fed contaminated food, and/or when housed in old, blackened and infected combs. Given the manner in which bees feed (trophallaxis), drifting or robbing bees can easily infect neighbouring colonies. While dark and blackened brood combs are a haven for bacterium.

Two simple controls to manage this: 1. Don't feed bees honey (you won't know if spores are present in honey without testing) and 2. Replace combs when they become dark or blackened (every 2-3 years is a good guide). A simple process to follow is once you identify a darkened comb in your brood box, lift it to the honey super. The bees will hatch and refill the comb with honey. Once the honey is capped, remove the frame, extract the honey, then dispose of the comb. Your queen will appreciate fresh drawn comb to lay in, as well your builder bees will appreciate a fresh frame of foundation to draw out.

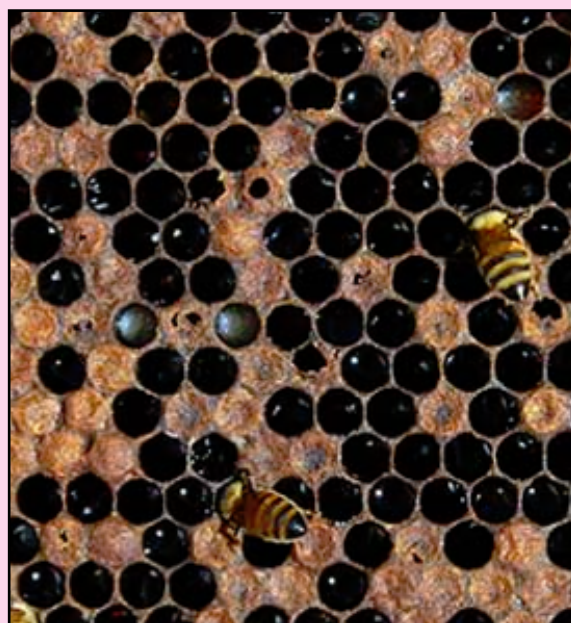
Note: AFB infected honey is not harmful to humans.

Other AFB High Risk Actions in beekeeping include: Interchanging equipment between hives or apiaries, use of 2nd hand equipment (that has not been irradiated) and 5. Robbing behaviour.

Implementing a barrier system in your apiary and general beekeeping practices to avoid interchanging will provide good protection. This requires keeping components, tools and materials unique to each hive or apiary. Some beekeepers do this by colour-coding, while others use a numbering system to keep their components matched. Clothing and protective equipment, can transmit spores, but are a very low level risk. Beekeepers need to be diligent when obtaining 2nd hand equipment, whether it be hive components, or complete hives with bees. Do your own inspection, ask the right questions or perhaps have components irradiated regardless. With some great suppliers within the club, its often best to simply buy new equipment.



Robbing, while bees are instinctively kleptoparasitic, we can minimise and control this behaviour with good beekeeping. Maintaining our hives boxes, minimising entrances, cleaning up any spills, maintaining queen-right hives and managing external/ entrance feeders will all help. Typically, it's at the end of a nectar flow or during a period of dearth that bees are most likely to rob. Be mindful that you leave enough honey for your bees when YOU are doing the robbing.



You can and MUST test for AFB in your hives; it's a Biosecurity Obligation. A simple field test, **The Rope Test**, should be done twice yearly by all beekeepers. Once in Autumn and again in early Spring, test 3-4 cells on each frame of brood.

The Rope Test for AFB Procedure is to pierce the suspected cappings with a stick. Stir it around in the cell, then slowly lift. If you observe a dark brownish liquid, adhering to the stick, you are almost certain to have AFB. Leave the infected stick in the hive. You may choose to take a smear sample of the larvae and send it to the Qld DAF lab at Coopers Plains for testing (hyperlink below). If you have no ropiness, then the worst you have done is kill 20-30 larvae. A small price to pay for protecting your colony and the bees in our environment.

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/land-management/health-pests-weeds-diseases/sample-testing/submitting>

At the end of the day, AFB can strike even if all your practices are spot on. Like our own health, our bees can become vulnerable when things out of our control take hold. If you are affected, don't let it be the end of your beekeeping. Continue to Monitor, Manage and Maintain.

AFB Awareness month details:

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/pests-diseases/afb-awareness-month>

Beekeeper Spotlight: Leonie Schwarzel



Most of you would be used to seeing this lady around the traps – a hardworking and active member of our committee - Leonie Schwarzel. She joined GCABS in 2017, becoming the Buzz Editor shortly afterwards, a role she says she has loved as it has pushed her to grow her own bee knowledge and enjoy sharing it with other beekeepers.

Born in southern Sydney, her parents who were orchardists, moved to the Hawkesbury district then the Blue Mountains while she was young, providing her with ‘an idyllic childhood’ - riding her horse to school! A local beekeeper kept his hives on their property so young Leonie came to observe the apiarist world at an early age, watching her father help him extract the honey which was sold from their roadside fruit barn.

Sometimes they had as many as 20 varieties, her favourites being Green Mallee and Paterson’s Curse. She says she used to line up all the honey jars by colour from lightest to darkest, naming the predominant floral source of each one by taste and colour.

This early fascination led to her deciding to do the GCABS introductory beekeeping course in 2017, and she expresses gratitude for the mentorship of Kathy Knox, Olive and Jim Cavanagh and Richard Sims (Murwillumbah Queen Bees) who helped develop her passion.

Leonie and her husband Pete now live on a beautiful property at the base of Mt Warning, northern NSW, where they currently have several hives. Sadly, many of her hives were lost during the devastating floods in February this year, but this number is quickly growing due to her being on the swarm register, frequently called out to collect swarms.

For the past three years, she has managed a boutique apiary of 35-50 hives on a 100-acre property in Tyalgum. It has been hard work but satisfying, she says, as the bushland is pristine and productive for the bees. She also has worked as a queen catcher for Murwillumbah Queen Bees which has taught her how to spot queens easily. She wonders if she has become the local ‘go to’ person in the mid Tweed valley for diagnosing bee diseases! She regularly gets calls from worried beekeepers and sadly sometimes has to euthanise colonies with AFB.

When asked what she enjoys about working with bees, she said she finds the work calming and meditative, constantly learning from them. She loves the advice from a great book “The Honey Bee” by David Cramp: “You will never ‘tame’ the honey bee. You can have a pet dog, cat, lamb but bees won’t recognise you as their owner - ever - or care whether you visit your hives daily, monthly or never. Whatever you do for them; however ‘nice’ you are to them, [you] will never be [their] friend; only an irrelevance, or even an enemy- and that’s if they take notice of you at all. And if circumstances dictate, they will have no hesitation in stinging you. When you look at a colony of bees in a hive, you are opening a window into the wild”.



Sadly, I lost all my old photos in the flood except the one attached which I found among mum’s collection. It is me aged 10 driving the tractor in an orange orchard. I wasn’t quick enough as a picker so my job was to drive the tractor towing the trailer with all the boxes full of fruit to the packing shed. My dog, Rusty, often used to ride up front on the motor cover. You can see her as a blur jumping off.

So her closing advice to new beekeepers is rather than diminish their wild status with titles like “my girls”, respect, admire, be humbled & amazed that you are lucky enough to work & learn from these astounding creatures.

Thanks to Leonie for all her generous and invaluable contributions to our club. Members like her who are willing to not only participate but volunteer regularly to assist others to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the world of beekeeping, are hugely appreciated and we hope she will be part of our club for many more years to come.

JOBS in Your Bee Yard this October

- Insect your hives closely for symptoms of AFB and any other pests and diseases.
 - Replace old dark combs with fresh frames and foundation for your bees to draw fresh comb
 - Ensure your queen doesn't run out of laying space. Bring frames of honey and one or two frames of capped brood up into the honey super and replace with fresh built comb or stickies.
 - Watch for signs of swarm preparation and act. However, if your bees DO swarm, Kathy Knox, our club Education officer suggests some time-sensitive management steps to take:
1. Reduce space according to colony size. This may involve removing supers of honey.
 2. Keep beetle controls in place. Several low-cost effective methods were demonstrated at the September members' meeting. See member meeting review.
 3. Confirm the colony is raising or has raised a queen. Remember, bees are capable of doing this themselves, though the quality of a self-raised queen is another matter.
 4. Re-queen the colony. Bees can make queens, but beekeepers re-queen colonies to keep gentle, docile, productive bees. Local training for Queen Rearing is available, and many reputable suppliers exist.
 5. Learn from the experience. Note the date, weather, and other relevant details pertaining to the swarm event. Mark next year's calendar now: Swarm prevention starting in July is better than post-swarm management in September.

October Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

Supplied by Jim O'Regan

Black Sheoak, Blue Gum, Broad-leaved Banksia, Caley's Ironbark, Dogwood Flat Weed, Fuzzy Box, Glycine, Golden Candlesticks, Grass-tree, Grey Ironbark, Mexican Poppy, Mugga Narrow-leaved Grey Gum, Prickly-leaved Paperbark, Red Bottlebrush, River Mangrove River Sheoak, Scribbly Gum, Swamp Sheoak, Tallowwood, Tumble-down Ironbark, Turnip Weed, White Bottlebrush, White Clover, White Mahogany, Wild May (Baeckea), Wild May (Leptospermum)



Dense white and pink flowers of the native Tea Tree (Leptospermum) attract native bees amongst other pollinators



Purple lavender

White Bottlebrush

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, Membership, Librarian and other 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.

COMMITTEE

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|--|
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