


# 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)



**Mariefields Field Day! - see page 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 17 Sept 10am.** GCABS Clubhouse, 74 Billabirra Cres, Nerang. Topic - GCABS clubhouse Answers to all your questions about splitting colonies and good record-keeping
- **Sun 15th Oct 10am.** GCABS Annual General Meeting (AGM). Annual changeover of GCABS committee - see next page. Also presentation on using bees wax, including making wax cloth wraps. Venue – GCABS Clubhouse.
- Please bring a plate to share at our member meetings.

### OTHER EVENTS

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

## From GCABS President



*A busy month to say the least.*

*After an enjoyable weekend with the late July beginners course, I headed off to an international event. We experienced earthquake, flooding rain, heatwave, plagues of insects, then a typhoon. Back to the Gold Coast for the field trip at Mariefields we had a magnificent day without wind or cloud in the sky. We checked all but two hives for varroa, finding nothing to report, and learned about the double screened divider board. Thanks all for the fun, the great photos and videos, and for being respectful of Dr John's apiary. Apologies to anyone who was stung in the hair.*

*I would hesitate to call those colonies aggressive; they were highly active and there were some bees following after closing up ... but that's not the same as an aggressive & attacking colony !!*

*I hear there are some queens being raised locally on the coast so if you feel your bees are hard to manage, options for new genes are about.*

*In the news we have further varroa detections around the almond pollination events.*

*Kind regards... Kathy*



## Join the GCABS Committee for 2023-24. We need you!

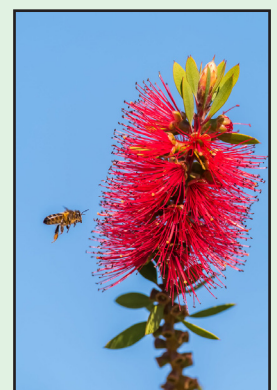
Help us share the load & decision making as we continue to create an inclusive, enjoyable club for all. Being part of the GCABS leadership team is rewarding and empowering.

Print the nomination form on page 8. Complete your nomination and return the form to any current committee member (also see page 9) **by 2nd October**. Or email your completed form to [gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au)

**Elections will be held at the  
AGM October 15th 2023**

## September Honey Flora – SE Queensland

*Submitted by Jim O'Regan*



*Bee & bottlebrush*

*Mexican Poppy* 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, Grass Tree, Grey Ironbark, Hairy Bush-pea, Mexican Poppy, Mountain Coolibah, Mugga, Narrow-leaved Grey Gum, Narrow-leaved Ironbark, Orange Tree, Prickly-leaved Paperbark, Red Bottlebrush, River She-oak, Scribbly Gum, Spotted Gum, Swamp She-oak, Tallowwood, Tumble-down Ironbark, Turnip Weed, White Bottle-brush, White Clover.

# SHOWTIME!

Our club has been busily involved in several shows recently. Thanks to all volunteers for your invaluable help and especially to those who co-ordinated the stalls. Here are the most recent ones:

## Botanical Bazaar

The Bazaar went over two days - 5th & 6th August - at Nerang Parklands and was a happy weekend event. The weather was clear and sunny until Sunday afternoon when it became overcast but thankfully little rain. We were able to meet and chat to lots of attendees who wanted to know more about beekeeping and about our Club. It was good to be able to point out our clubhouse up on the hill and let them know about our monthly meetings. All volunteers were great and said they enjoyed participating and working alongside other club members, getting to know them better. A special thanks to Barry and Sue Purchase who once again helped dismantle the stall equipment and transport it back to the clubhouse at the end of the weekend. However, a big thank you to all of you who have helped at not only this event but at our other shows too.



## Gold Coast Show

The Gold Coast show was held Sept 1-3 and that completed the trifecta of BIG public events for GCABS for 2023. In just over two months we ran stalls at the Mudgeeraba show, Botanical Bazaar & the GC Show as well as sponsoring & organising the Apiculture competition at each show. This is all only possible by the ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTION made by GCABS committee members working with a fleet of WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS. Thank you, thank you, thank you to each and everyone who contributed.



## Gold Coast Show highlights

Congratulations to all who entered the competition. Special congratulations to GCABS' member Angus Turner who achieved numerous awards for honey, mead, wax & framed honeycomb. That makes Angus champion at both Mudgeeraba & GC Shows this year. A very commendable effort!



*Angus' Wax Model*

The GCABS stand at the GC show not only attracted great interest from the public but also attracted a large number of local honeybees! They were lured by the frames of honey, honey tasting station and beeswax that we had on our display, with the result that we had to hide it all away to clear the air. Thankfully, members of the public were mostly amused rather than alarmed and there was no hint of a sting. Mischief managed.

GCABS bottled & sold about 100kg of honey which we had purchased from club members. This offsets the cost of our sponsorship for the competitions and helps with a bit of fundraising.



# Field day at Mariefields – 20th Aug

Summary by Chris Lockhardt

A great day was had by all who attended our most recent field trip day to Mariefields in Pumpenbil. After the gusty day prior to the event, we were blessed with perfect weather to visit the farm of our gracious host, John Quayle. Having a group of about thirty people we were split into teams and assigned team leaders, some willing, some less so and each group was given three hives to inspect and carry out an alcohol wash to check for Varroa mite.

All the teams carried out their duties with relative efficiency, some getting stung more than others. Everyone was pleased to report that no varroa was observed. The highlight of the day came while watching a large number of beekeepers unsuit, directly after over a dozen hives had been poked and prodded leading to scores of simultaneous “bee-dances”.



The group was then given a bit of the site’s history from the early cedar logging days to the original and world’s first Permaculture farm, being previously owned by Bill Mollison, the co-founder of the Permaculture movement. Thanks to everyone for registering and following government-mandated protocol when crossing back into Qld. Big thanks to Kathy for organising suits and taking care of all the quarantine requirements for so many people to be able to attend. Also of course thank you to John Quayle for hosting what was a marvellous day.



Quarantine for used bee equipment, including secured ute for transport.



## Daisies are loved by native bees



*Daisies*

The shallow flowers of daisies provide readily accessible nectar and pollen to all native bee species. Flowering for long periods, these compact low-growing shrubs could find a place in even the smallest garden. Both native species (e.g. the Cut Leaf Daisy *Brachyscome* and the Everlasting Daisy *Bracteantha*) and exotic species (e.g. the African Daisy *Osteospermum* and the Seaside Daisy *Erigeron*) are popular with native bees.

Daisies of many types produce abundant flowers over a long period -- and their nectar can be easily reached by both short tongued and long tongued native bees.

## Urgent Varroa update - 29 August 2023

*From Keith Barton, GCABS bio-security officer*

Several new IPs (Infected Premises) were detected in Kempsey around mid-August. As of Following those detections, further IPs were detected in the Sunrasia and Riverina regions of NSW in Almond pollination stands. NSW DPI declared new red and purple biosecurity zones for these recent detections and has been focussing on additional surveillance and testing around all of these new IPs.



To date (29th Aug) no detections have occurred in Victoria, although control zones for some of these detections span the NSW/VIC border. AgVic will be providing updated guidance for the state soon.

The technical advisory committee (CCEPP) is meeting to review the current incursion status and these recent developments.

The latest update (dated 28th Aug) from AHBIC is linked below and AHBIC is providing very regular updates. This is a good source for the latest information. <https://honeybee.org.au/ahbic-industry-update-42-432-days-of-response/>

I cannot stress strongly enough that it is essential that everyone perform mite testing and report results every 16 weeks (or as guided by your state authority). Even negative results are important data points for the varroa control program. If you are unable to perform the testing for any reason, please reach out to friends, colleagues, and mentors for help. Alcohol wash is the best and most humane way to test for varroa.

I would also encourage everyone with an interest in keeping honey bees to learn as much about varroa mite as you possibly can. The old adage holds true here, "Hope for the best, prepare for the worst". If varroa mite becomes established in Australia our old ways of beekeeping will have to change radically. Vast numbers of feral hives will die out within a very short time period and managed hives will face significantly increased pressure. It is every beekeeper's responsibility to keep our colonies healthy and thriving.

**BE INFORMED! BE ACCOUNTABLE! BE A RESPONSIBLE BEEKEEPER!**

## Checking for Varroa Mite - Drone uncapping

*Esther Bligh- membership officer for GCABS*

With the DPI again allowing hives to be moved from the varroa response blue zone to Queensland (albeit only with permits), regular varroa checks are more important than ever in our corner of the world. Checks for varroa mite should be conducted at least three times a year (August, December and April), better every two months. It is highly recommended to check for varroa mite doing an alcohol wash as well as drone uncapping, as it targets mites at two different life stages: reproducing in larvae and attached to adult bees. Drone uncapping reveals infestation at its earliest stage. Please keep in mind that while drone uncapping is a very sensitive check for varroa mite, it requires plenty of drone brood. While this certainly occurs in spring, the more the season progresses the less drone brood there is, rendering drone uncapping as a surveillance tool useless in autumn.

With the winter pack down of hives completed, now is the time to prepare for spring by educating yourself about varroa mite testing methods. In August, every beekeeper should use drone uncapping as a varroa check; it is very easy and fast, requires no specialised equipment and only costs the life of about 100 drones. All you need is an uncapping fork which most beekeepers have available (and which was included in last year's ABA's welcome pack). Push the uncapping fork's teeth underneath the cappings of drone brood - get as many as possible (at least 100). Then lift up the uncapping fork carefully. The drone pupae will hang off the uncapping tool. On the white pupae the reddish-brown varroa mites would be clearly visible, even to the naked eye. If your eyesight isn't perfect please use a magnifying glass to look for mites. If you see a mite on brood drop it in methylated spirit to kill - mites can move fast and might be up your arm before you know it! Once the mites are dead, strain the liquid through a paper towel and take a photo for reporting, then put dead mites in the freezer in a sealed plastic bag.

After your mite check, report your results to the QLD Department of Agriculture and Fisheries [HERE](#).

You can also report varroa mite to the DAF call centre on 132523. Please also report if you find nothing!

The main drawback of the drone uncapping approach is that you cannot determine the age of your drone brood. I'd suggest uncapping a small number of drone cells in a certain area to assess pupae age. Uncapping drone cells that are capped, but under-developed, is very messy and not really a viable test for mites as the drone pupae are too delicate and fall apart on removal.

So please everyone: Check for varroa mite using drone uncapping this upcoming spring! It's easy and quick to do - we need everyone to at least do this simple check to keep varroa out of Queensland. And don't forget to report your results.

These are useful videos to watch:

Alcohol wash: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ3wa8ISjXQ>.

Drone uncapping: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bSgyUSj-CQ>



# Obtaining a successful Nuc

John Vallance – ex-biosecurity officer for GCABS

Spring is here! And with that there are so many things happening in the bee yard. For some who have bees this would mean splitting hives or managing hives in a way where they don't have to split to best ensure that swarming is kept to a minimum. For others it means the start of their beekeeping journey and looking for Nucs to start their hobby.

This can be challenging for a new beekeeper. I always recommend reading as much as you can and doing a hands-on course if possible. This will help when you bring your nuc home.

## Building up Nucs

The way I do this is as follows: 3-4 frames of all stages of brood. Solid brood pattern is very important. A spotty brood can mean an old or a not very well-mated queen. This includes 1 frame that has some good pollen in there. 1 frame of solid honey (5 frame Nuc). You don't want a Nuc full of honey as that's less bee power for expanding. You may ask well how will I know until I open it? Depending on who you buy from, you can ask if you can inspect or go through it with them. Another way would be to get photos sent through of the specific Nuc you are getting.

You also want a young queen. Again this can be hard and would have to go more on trust. Things you could ask is how old is the queen? Where did the queen come from? (breeder / walk away split). Your best queens will come from breeders.

The Nuc needs to be full of bees. Overflowing almost as this will expand your full size hive much quicker. The best way to determine this straight away is when you open the lid you shouldn't see much of your frames. You should have bees completely covering the frames from top to bottom. Hopefully with a few tips on what to look for you will be able to find yourself a nice Nuc to start your journey or if you are looking at expanding you can give yourself the best chance with a nice split.



## JOBs in Your Bee Yard this Month

Manage expansion of bee colony populations to prevent swarming. Swarm season is in full swing. If you are not managing your hives, your strong colonies will have swarmed or are likely to soon. So...

- 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/](https://www.theapiarist.org/demaree-swarm-control/)
- Alternatively, split the colony into two ensuring you either have purchased an additional queen, or that both the original & split have eggs present to grow

## Pest and diseases

Apart from the vital continued and careful monitoring for Varroa as discussed in the article in this newsletter, don't neglect keeping an eye out for signs of American Foul Brood and Small Hive Beetle. The overall message is check your bees. Don't be responsible for spreading disease.

# GCABS AGM NOMINATION FORM

*Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members 2023 - 2024*

## 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

President	Kathy Knox	0403 155 591	<a href="mailto:gcabs.president@beekeepers.asn.au">gcabs.president@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Secretary	Catherine Longworh	0438 607 848	<a href="mailto:gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au">gcabs.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Treasurer	Colin Allen	0414 596 096	<a href="mailto:gcabs.treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au">gcabs.treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Editor (Interim)	Leonie Schwarzel	0428 177 450	<a href="mailto:gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au">gcabs.editor@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Asst Editor/Librarian	Ann Allen	0402 996 101	<a href="mailto:gcabs.librarian@beekeepers.asn.au">gcabs.librarian@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Biosecurity Officer	Keith Barton	0419 668 685	<a href="mailto:gcabs.biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au">gcabs.biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Membership	Esther Bligh	0490 400 125	<a href="mailto:gcabs.membership@beekeepers.asn.au">gcabs.membership@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Committee	Rod Luke	0467 777 674	<a href="mailto:rod.luke@outlook.com.au">rod.luke@outlook.com.au</a>
Extrator Hire	Michael Wilson	0419 745 665	<a href="mailto:mwcons@hotmail.com">mwcons@hotmail.com</a>

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