


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)



Straw Skep Hives - See page 6



DATE SAVERS

- **Sat/Sun Aug 8th & 9th** Beginning in Beekeeping Course (booked out).
- **Sun Aug 16th Sun. 10am-12pm** Annual General Meeting (AGM) at The Barn, Nerang Country Paradise Parklands (see map p9 for directions). This is when we vote in our GCABS committee for the next year. There will be a Fun Quiz and a Lucky Door Raffle with prizes provided by V's Bees and Native Plants QLD. NB. Due to Covid-19 regulations, please be sure to REGISTER your attendance on [THIS LINK](#) beforehand. **Do not** bring any food or drink to share. There will be tea, coffee and biscuits provided by GCABS. **Do bring** your own chair please. If you would like to view a copy of the audited financial reports prior to the AGM please email the Secretary (see back page). Copies will also be on hand on the day to read.
- **Sat/Sun Sep 19th & 20th** Beginning in Beekeeping Course. For details & registration see page 10.
- **Sun Sep 20th 10am-12pm** - Monthly Meeting at Jim and Olive Cavanaugh's property. This will include a Wax Cleaning workshop. Address: 16a Country Cres., Nerang. Please bring a chair.
- **Sun 4th October** - Botanical Bazaar at Nerang Country Paradise Parklands. The largest Garden Show on the GC, it will feature talks, workshops, entertainment, plants, music, food, etc. Find out more on <https://botanicalbazaar.com.au/>. **We need volunteers for our stall on the day. 2 shifts: 9-11am and 11-1pm. Please contact Ann Allen on 0402 996 101 if you can help.**
- **Sat 17th Oct** - Total Beekeepers Field Day, NSW. This will be live streamed through FB and You-tube. Find out more at <https://www.tocal.nsw.edu.au/news-and-media/events/2020-total-beekeepers-field-day>
- **Sun 18th Oct 10am-12pm** - Monthly Meeting at Alan Betts's property in Currumbin Valley. There will be a presentation by Rebecca Laws - Queensland Bee Biosecurity Officer. Please bring a chair.

Bee Biosecurity Talks - FREE!

From 4 August to 15 September, there will be a series of FREE online Bee Biosecurity talks to provide the latest updates and advice on best beekeeping practices. There is no need to register, just click on the links below at 7pm on the days below:

4 August (7pm) – [Management of ants, wax moth and hive beetles](#)

18 August (7pm) – [Note taking and record keeping for beekeepers](#)

1 September (7pm) – [Good hive husbandry practices](#)

15 September (7pm) – [Getting your hive ready for spring](#)

If you missed any of the first season or would like a refresher, please see the links below. They are a fantastic FREE resource!

[Bee biosecurity basics](#)

[Brood diseases](#)

[Varroa mites](#)

[Sending samples to the lab](#)

[How to comply with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice](#)

They are also hoping to get some feedback about the first talk series and would appreciate it if you could take the time to answer a few quick questions ([online feedback form](#)).

President's Report



With the club AGM just around the corner and the end of a club year drawing to a close, it's a great opportunity to reflect on the year that has been.

While I doubt many of us will want to repeat this year anytime soon, for the club it's been a time of growth. Great things happen when life slows down a little and this year's committee have really done a wonderful job of working together to improve and grow our club. We've rebuilt our training, polished The Buzz, joined the ABA, streamlined our administration processes, tweaked our financial management; BUT most importantly we have a new home on the horizon!

In the past few weeks we have been able to submit a building application to Council for a GCABS shed at Nerang Country Paradise Parklands and Ross & Rachael have been working hard on cementing our relationship with the committee that oversee the Parklands. We still have a few minor hurdles to leap on our way to a GCABS shed, but after 40 years it is finally in sight. This has taken years of work by many different people along the way, but special thanks goes to Kathy, Ross & Rachael for their commitment to pursuing this dream. Lastly I want to thank you all for your ongoing support of the club. I intend to take a step down this year to focus on some personal goals and adventures; but I am excited to see what a fresh committee will bring to the table next year. Farewell!

Travis

Report on QBA GM/AGM – 24 July 2020

Management Committee Members, Ross Krumbholz and Rachael Kubinski, represented GCABS at the Queensland Beekeeping Association - Brisbane Branch, combined General and Annual General Meeting. The venue was Downunder Honey. It was well attended by QBA members and other fellow affiliated clubs (Bayside Beekeepers and Ipswich Beekeepers). Standard meeting protocol provided the floor for discussing general club-related business. The evening was concluded with a wonderful chin wag and a tootsie-warming cuppa.

August Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

Jim O'Reagan

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.



Broad-leaved Banksia



Spotted Gum



Hairy Bush-Pea



Narrow-leaved Ironbark



Dogwood

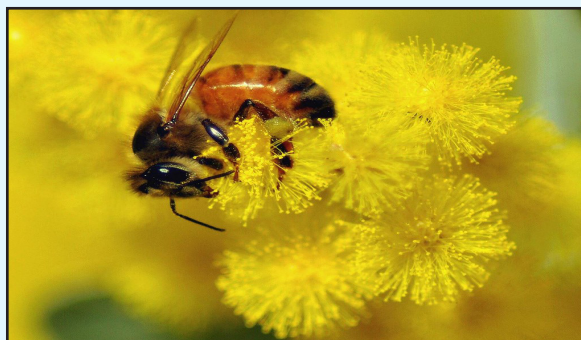


Golden Wattle

POLLEN QUALITY—Wattle (*Acacia* species)

Doug Somerville

Acacias vary greatly in the value of the pollen produced. They vary from average quality to reasonably good for crude protein. Unfortunately, bees do not always find Acacia blossom attractive and thus it is not unusual to view Acacias in full bloom with very little bee activity apparent. On the other hand, when Acacia pollen is worked by bees, it imparts great benefit, increasing brood rearing.



*A warm welcome to our newbee members
who joined GCABS in July:*

Keith Barton, Helen Bisbas, Yu Chen, Joanne Ellings, Alex Lang, Ricardo Torbidoni, Angela Yong, Jimmg Xie, Paul Hawkins, Ronald Workman

Research & In the News

Purple Hive Project - Technology to save Australia's bees from the Varroa mite

This project has recently been launched with the main aim of protecting Australian bees from the Varroa mite and any other destructive or invasive pests, thus helping to ensure the viability of our honey industry and all honeybee pollination dependent industries. A solar-powered 3D printed hive/device containing cameras and AI algorithm is placed on existing hives and each bee is scanned as it enters its hive. If a parasite is detected, an alert can be sent to eg. a mobile phone so the offending hive can be quarantined immediately.



Use these links to find out more about this and the two young Australian aerospace engineers working on the technology.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-26/purple-hive-project-aims-to-save-bees/12485018>

<https://purplehiveproject.com.au>



What flower colours do bees prefer?

Bees need flowers and with Spring almost here, our thoughts may be turning to what the most suitable bee-attracting flowers are to plant? According to Assoc Prof Adrian Dyer of RMIT University, the compound eyes of bees create poor visual acuity and from a distance, they use scent rather than sight to find flowers. However, planting flowers in groups can assist their sight. They cannot see red, but seem to prefer blue, purple, white and yellow flowers. For more on this and a guide on selecting the best flowers, herbs and plants to benefit bees, refer to these links:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2016-11-16/birds-and-bees-prefer-have-flower-colours-preferences/7959382?nw=0>

<https://blog.flowersacrossmelbourne.com.au/flowers-for-bees/>

<https://amazingbees.com.au/bee-friendly-backyard.html>

Breathalysers for bees?

Yes indeed, a breathalyser to easily detect AFB early is currently being developed at Uni of WA

http://www.crchoneybeeproducts.com/bee-hive-breathalyser-sniffs-out-deadly-disease/?fbclid=IwAR0B2G6hPY_Xh4wTnkPNI-jkJRVRMYf0q-Tnjqn0dlCry5QrKnEabKj5iJQ

A national honey library

Scientists are collecting thousands of honey samples from across Australia for a new national 'honey library' in order to develop the industry's first hive-to-shelf traceability system.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2020-07-31/hopes-new-honey-library-will-fast-track-industry-research/12502684>

DID YOU KNOW?

As an ABA member, you can register as a swarm collector for your area. Log in, add your details & nominate the postcodes that you are prepared to travel to if called to collect a swarm.

<https://www.beekeepers.asn.au/swarms>

Beekeeper Spotlight - Colin Payne

By Ann Allen

Col holds a unique spot in our club – he is the last active founding member of GCABS, which started in 1979 with 9 people, most of whom had just completed a TAFE beekeeping course run by John (Jack) Rosser, a local beekeeper. Jack was the son of Pop (John) and Essie Rosser, well-known apiarists who, in the 1960s, donated over two hectares of their Benowa property in perpetuity to the GC city council as an environmental park. This is now known as the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens on Ashmore Road.

Reference: <http://www.canungraansweredthecall.org.au/portfolio-posts/john-jack-hall-rosser/>
<https://www.tweedailynews.com.au/news/apn-council-digs-deep-for-botanic/150029/>

See also Col's slice of history "The Straw Skep at Rossers" below this article.



Col says their monthly meetings were held in members' homes, in particular the Rosser home. Without a financial base, each member contributed 50c to buy a minute book and a ledger. Tim Smith (a founder of Capelano Honey) was their early patron. Col fulfilled several roles on the committee, including editor of the original Buzz newsletter which then consisted of 1-2 pages. A roneo machine was used to print off copies to mail to members.

Col was born and attended school in Brisbane and lived and married in Dalby, Queensland, before being transferred to the Gold Coast for his job. He has two children and four grandchildren who all live nearby. He started working at the age of 17, training as a technician for the PMG (Postmaster General, now Telstra). He worked for them for a total of 37 years, retiring as Principal Technical Officer here on the Gold Coast. He says the type of skills he developed through his work have helped him to be a useful home handyman and a resourceful apiarist. His first extractor was a hand-powered one he bought secondhand and then mechanised by using the motor from a 2-speed washing machine. This extractor was then able to operate at two gear speeds.

His interest in bees first began through helping his father-in-law who used to catch swarms from trees just outside Dalby. He admits that as he had no protective gear, he would often sit in the car waiting till he was needed, to avoid being stung! Some time later, whilst visiting his father in Brisbane, he got chatting to the neighbour Jack Parker, who was an apiarist and used to import queens from the U.S. Jack showed him some brood and talked to him about his bees. This led to Col purchasing his first beehive through the Trading Post. His main source of information as to how to look after his bees was from a 900-page book called 'The Hive and the Beekeeper' which he read from cover to cover.

At the height of his beekeeping, he owned about 16 beehives at several locations on the Gold Coast, keeping 4 at his home. The main type of disease he had to deal with in earlier times was European Foulbrood. He said he used to collect swarms and remembers a few risky ventures, including spending over 2 days trying to access a swarm on top of a garage and another within the walls of a house, necessitating the removal of the house's weatherboards! He recalls often being asked to present talks on bees at schools.

When asked what he considers the pros and cons of beekeeping to be, Col mused that although it was

hard work at times, it was certainly well worth it at many levels. He advises budding apiarists to learn as much as they can about the lifecycle of bees, and there is much one can learn from simply looking at a hive. He warned not to buy bees or equipment from others without fully inspecting them first, citing an occasion when a local beekeeper he knew opened a hive he had just purchased, only to find it was riddled with disease and had to be destroyed.

Now at 81, Col no longer keeps bees, but has many good memories of the years he did. He has several albums of photos of his beekeeping days and many interesting stories to relate. He is indeed a valuable member of our club!

The Straw Skep at Rossers

By Colin Payne

John (Pop) & Essie Rosser kept Bees and sold honey at Benowa (pictured to the right in his garden at Benowa) from the time of the First World War. Their property of around 30 acres of land was eyed off by many developers in the boom of the 1970s. Mr Rosser told me that it wasn't for sale at any price but later he gifted the land to the Gold Coast People to be kept as an Environmental Park.



This has now become the Gold Coast Botanic Gardens. If it wasn't for the foresight of John & Essie Rosser there would have been a housing development where the Botanic Gardens now exist. The photo to left shows the straw skep that housed native bees and it was at the Rosser's door where people rang the old cow bell when they called to purchase honey. The Skep contained a hive of stingless native bees and was the inspiration that led our second treasurer Bob Harrison to design a logo on our first Membership Card. We had a rubber stamp made to print on cardboard and cut them to cardholder size.



John Rosser Jnr with an open hive at a Bee Meeting. John ran the TAFE course which started GCABS.

When I became Secretary and we purchased our first computer, I used the 'paint program' to generate a skep that was an image of the one designed by Bob Harrison. It was updated in subsequent computers and used on 'The BUZZ', Letterheads and at the Top of Field Day Trophies.

Our first BUZZ was typed onto a Wax Sheet and duplicated using a hand-turned 'Gestetner'. I then graduated to the family 'Commodore 64' computer and a little 'Brother' printer. President Steve Boyle photocopied The BUZZ when he was on night shift at Jupiter's Casino. The records were kept on Commodore floppy disks.

Our first personal computer was purchased as an 'Opening Special' at the first OfficeWorks store. It had a 500 Megabyte Hard Drive and the Word Processor Program was 'Windows 3'. We were now in the 'Electronic Age'!



Col's Typewriter used to type the first 'The Buzz'

The Season Ahead

Key Points from Corinne Jordan's presentation, GCABS General Meeting July 2020

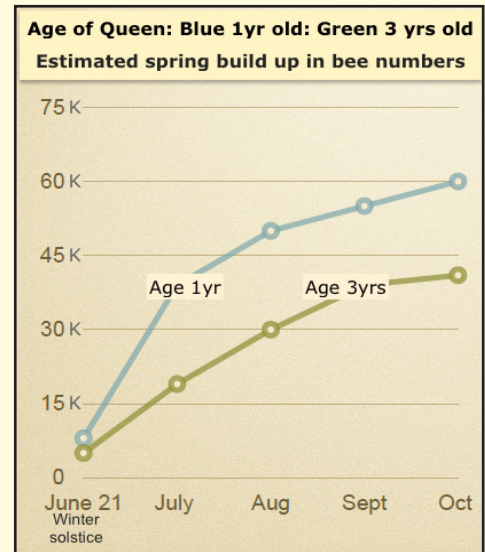
By Leonie Schwarzel

Emerging From Winter: Population Growth towards spring

Our bees have survived the worst season on record, Spring to Autumn 2019/20. The dearth of pollen & nectar from prolonged drought, severe bushfires, smoke haze & flooding rains, have given way to a mild winter, warm sunny days & regular light rain. A number of floral sources eg blue gum flowered early & more species are setting bud & flowering well. As a result the bees are showing good signs of recovery with the spring build up of colony population well underway across most of the Coast.

A young well-mated Queen makes a significant increase to spring build up.

The age & fecundity of the queen makes an enormous difference to how quickly the colony population will increase as spring approaches. The graph compares population increase from the winter solstice to October, for two types of colony: the first with a one year old queen & the second with a 3 year old queen. From a similar starting population of less than 10,000, the colony with the young queen shows considerably stronger population growth each month.



Colony size matters

A large colony with strong population has significant advantage ie “strength in numbers”. They have a much greater foraging range (5 km) than a smaller colony (2km) & cope with changes in the environment better; for example if there is a prolonged wet when pollen & nectar are washed out, the smaller colony may have less stores which would be quickly consumed.

Does your growing colony have enough stores to survive weather changes?

Many bee colonies can face the threat of starvation in spring & even summer. Why? As colonies become densely populated, a large amount of honey is necessary to sustain them & ample pollen is needed to raise strong, healthy brood. An El Nino system is forecast for the coming summer with predicted increased rain events. Rainy weather can wash out nectar and pollen from flowers. When nectar is in short supply or unavailable, bees draw on the honey stores in their hive. If it runs out, they will starve. So, check your hives have sufficient stores.

What constitutes sufficient stores? Ensure 1 frame of honey (or sugar syrup if feeding) for every 2 frames of brood. This is a minimum store that will last 4-6 weeks if nothing is coming in. If you are feeding sugar syrup, also consider feeding pollen supplement. The syrup will often stimulate the queen to lay more as it simulates a nectar flow. The additional brood will need additional protein so if pollen is not coming in, a pollen supplement is beneficial.

Signs my bees need feeding (Help)

1. External signs - Heft check weight, check entrance activity
2. What's flowering , due to flower
3. Age of queen, size of colony, number of colonies in apiary, 2 km radius.
4. Internal signs - Nectar stores - empty cells in brood frames where arc of honey should be
5. Eating outside wall frames first

Swarm Season: Avoid getting caught out

Swarm season starts early in our region, as early as the last week of July. Reading the early signs in the hive will help you gauge when swarming behaviour will initiate.

Signs include lots of brood soon to hatch, good stores of nectar & pollen with no empty cells left for the queen to lay or to store additional food, crowding in the lid & on frames, warm foraging weather with abundant pollen & nectar available. When there is no room for further laying or storing, swarm behaviour will initiate.

Apply some Bee Maths to your hive inspections

The population is **STABLE** when there is 1 frame of eggs to every 4 frames of sealed brood.

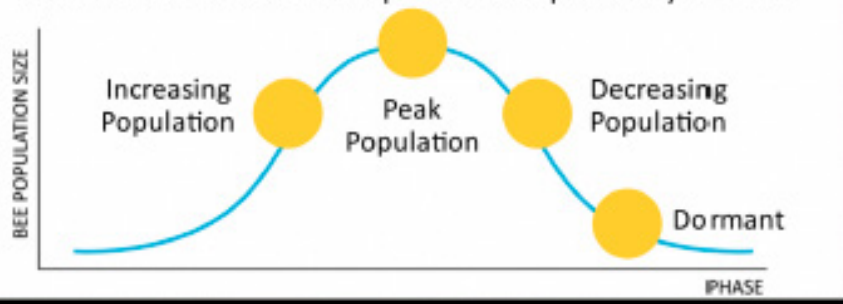
The population is **IN BUILD UP** when the ratio is more eggs to capped brood eg 2:4. If you observe this ratio, you will know that your colony population will expand rapidly over the immediate future, crowding will ensue & subsequent swarming behaviour will initiate, unless you act to give your colony more space. What to do?

Swarm prevention options include adding extra boxes to make space for more honey & brood, splitting the colony, lifting the excluder to give the queen more space and donating sealed brood to a weaker colony as long as you are sure both hives are disease free.

Bee Maths

Is your colony's population increasing, at peak, decreasing or dormant?

Select the circle that corresponds to the phase of your hive.



- Worker Bee: 3 days egg, 6 days larva, 12 days sealed. 21 Days
- If the brood pattern is stable, 1:2:4. (Late spring, summer)
- If the colony is in build up more eggs 2:4 (late winter early spring)
- If the colony is in decline (late summer, autumn) less eggs

Sincere thanks to GCABS member Corinne Jordan, the Bee Lady Apiary for the information above and more information to be shared in future editions.

Nerang Country Paradise Map

The Barn is the venue for GCABS August Annual General Meeting.



Library Corner

The August edition of The Australasian Beekeeper includes the following articles and is available for loan. It looks a great issue! Please contact librarian, Ann Allen to borrow (contact details on back page).

- The last 5 years of the honey industry
- The R. Stevens honey story
- Oldest cure that never spoils: honey
- Are there too many pollinators in urban areas?
- Bee venom, propolis or an antibiotic could be powerful treatments for COVID-19
- A beekeeping project in the kingdom of Tonga
- Recent research here and overseas

Hive-Branding Stencils

Pre-orders:

1.1mm Galvanised Steel

Characters are 4cm in height and surrounded by a 5cm border.

4 or 5 Characters - \$20 each

Pre payment needed and stencils will be available for collection from Nerang. This special price is only available once 10 orders have been received. If interested please contact Rachael via vsbeesqld@yahoo.com, 0415 192 662 or ask in store Unit 3/90 Spencer Rd Nerang.



www.vsbees.com.au



Monday - Friday [8am - 5pm]
Saturday [8.30am - 12pm]

Beekeeping Supplies

**Unit 3 / 90 Spencer Road
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Located Inside
Allied Bearings & Seals**



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Beekeeping for Beginners Course

Sat 19th Sep 9am - 1pm, Sun 20th Sep, 11:30am - 3:30pm

\$155.00 Course + GCABS membership

\$110.00 Existing GCABS member

A course over two half days: theory & practical. Suited to the 'curious', the absolute novice, or the beekeeper in their first season with active colonies of bees. Suitable for traditional or alternative honey bee hive designs & Flow hive enthusiasts.

Venue: Saturday: Labrador Scout Group Den
224 Turpin Rd, Labrador.

[Click here for further info and to REGISTER.](#)



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