

# BEE INFORMED

**BAYSIDE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INC.**  
REDLANDS RESEARCH FACILITY, DELANCEY STREET, CLEVELAND

MARCH 2021 • ISSUE 74



## MONTHLY DATES:

### FIELD DAY:

Second Sunday of the month  
North gates open 8:00 - 8:30 am



14 March 2021

### CLUB MEETING:

Third Thursday of the month  
Main gates open 7:00pm  
for a 7:30pm start



18 March 2021

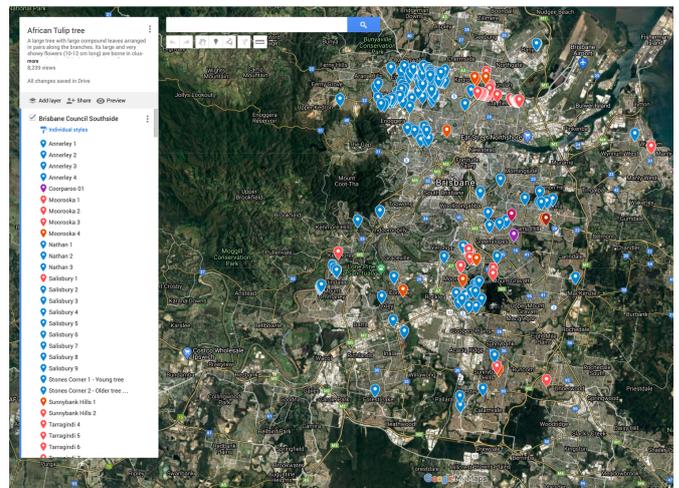
This months club meeting will be presented by Rebecca Laws from QLD Biosecurity and is about diseases and treatments

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Marked queen from February's field day.



## AFRICAN TULIP TRACKING

Phil Baskerville, a Brisbane beekeeper, has created an incredibly valuable tool for native beekeepers, using Google Maps. The map is called *African Tulip Tree* and it plots invasive species location.

Clicking on the map above should open it and even allow you to list your own sighting.

Read more about it [here](#).

Thanks to David & Rosie Harvest for suggesting this inclusion!

# PRESIDENTS REPORT

## FROM ROD BAXTER

Dear Members,

As I write this report it is almost six in the evening and the temperature still starts with a 3 – thank goodness bees like it hot!! I hope you are all keeping yourselves and the furry family well hydrated. That means drinking plenty of fluids for the keepers and ensuring a nearby water supply for the bees.

As we come into Autumn though, there are still plenty of rain predictions in the coming months, so while the temperature may start to wind back a bit, the humidity is likely to remain high. As we discussed at our recent meeting, the bees can only do so much in the way of evaporating when there is no capacity left in the atmosphere. So ensure if you are taking frames, they are well capped. Even then, the honey may be quite high in moisture content – approaching 19 or 20% instead of being down closer to 16 or 17%.

Our meeting in February was “maxed out” under COVID restrictions, with 35 attendees enjoying a relaxed but informative insight into the world of the wholesale honey business with David Baldwin (ABs Honey at Capalaba) sharing a few photos and stories amongst the “day in the life” details.

This month we have Dr Rebecca Laws, Queensland Bee BioSecurity Officer from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Rebecca will be providing an update on what’s happening in QLD beekeeping and also discussing and demonstrating techniques for checking your hives for diseases – a must see so please book early (last month we had five keen members on a waiting list but unfortunately missed out).

Also, don’t forget to take the opportunity to tell your stories – our new Newsletter Editor, Caitlyn, is looking for a range of material to publish – whether it is a small anecdote, a pictorial collection or an event in your own apiary, we love to share in those as beekeepers. The submitted product doesn’t need to be perfectly formatted or grammatically correct. I am sure Caitlyn can turn any humble story into a masterpiece – give it a go!!

Many of us are receiving new queens this month, so please ensure you keep an eye on the emails for any updates. The Club is also looking to do a bit of its own queen rearing to consolidate a couple of apiary hives and also to strengthen our nuc supply. Please see elsewhere in this edition for details.

Unfortunately, with the drought last year and the lack of consistency in field day numbers etc., our nuc program has had some difficulties. However, if you have previously put your name on the nuc list and haven’t yet received your hive, please let me know as soon as possible as we are looking to determine a way forward.

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Finally, a good news story - many of you will have seen the news report this last week on the “re-discovery” of a native bee species thought to have disappeared 100 years ago - click on the bee to take you to the story.

See you at the Field Day.  
Regards,  
Rod



## QUEEN RAISING OPPORTUNITY

— ROD BAXTER

### SUNDAY 14TH MARCH

Setting up of cell raising hives

### MONDAY 15TH MARCH

Graft larvae into cell cups

### WEDNESDAY 24TH MARCH

Make up nucleus hives ready to accept cells

### THURSDAY 25TH MARCH

Place cells into nucleus hives



It is about 18 months since we had a master class in queen rearing – the photo shows some of our wiser members attempting to locate and then transfer a newly hatched larvae of the right age into an artificial queen “cup” – very challenging but lots of fun?!

Due to some problems with a couple of our Club's hives, Justin has asked if we can raise a few queens. This will allow the requeening of some hives and give insight into this fascinating aspect of beekeeping.

Due to COVID restrictions, we can't run the program to its full extent due to limited numbers in the extracting room at the same time. However, members are invited to observe the work, which will happen over a few dates (seen on the left).

Times for each of these days will be decided on the Field Day, so if you want to attend, please let Ray know then, or we will send an email confirmation out as soon as known.

## FIELD DAY REPORT FROM SHONA MCKENZIE

The February field day was held on the 14th, Valentine's Day. The weather was looking dodgy in the morning, but luckily it cleared into a pleasant day.

Sixteen members attended the day; in total, we took 12 frames and extracted 27kg of honey. The day went very smoothly, and I want to take this opportunity to thank those members who helped with the mowing, hive tool cleaning, and all those other cleaning jobs that pop up. Rest assured, if you missed out last month, I'll have more jobs for you on Sunday.

Disappointingly some teams reported a high incidence of small hive beetle, so it will be interesting to see how the beetle population is this month.

I look forward to seeing you all on Sunday the 14th. The gates will open from 8 to 8.30 am. Don't forget to bring all the necessary protective equipment.



Photos from February's field day



### FLOWERS

- cornflower
- poppy
- swan river daisy
- lavender



### HERBS

- oregano\*
- thyme\*
- sage\*



### VEGETABLES

- carrots\*
- cabbage\*
- lettuce\*
- spinach\*
- silverbeet\*
- spring onion

## DISCOVERY GARDEN

You may have noticed discovery garden is back in the shops, and this year the big focus is bee-friendly plants.

Most of the seeds will grow bee-attracting flowers at some point in their life. For the herbs and vegetables, that means they'll need to be let go to seed.

In case you've got some laying around, I've included a table of the bee-attracting seeds that are ready to plant now.

We've already planted some at home, and considering the lack of success we had last time, they're doing quite well.



Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc

*2021 State Conference and  
117th Annual General Meeting*

When: 3rd & 4th June 2021  
Where: Mantra Sharks, Southport, Queensland.

QBA Members 'Early Bird' tickets on sale Monday 1st March 2021.  
Non-Members tickets on sale Thursday 1st April 2021.

For more information visit [www.members.qbabees.org.au](http://www.members.qbabees.org.au)

## **117TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & 2021 STATE CONFERENCE**

When: 3rd & 4th June 2021

Where: Mantra Sharks Event Centre, Southport, Queensland.

The Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc is excited to announce our 2021 AGM and State Conference.

In 2020, we had no choice but to cancel our Annual Conference and postpone our AGM. It's an event popular on most beekeeper's calendars for informative presentations from guest speakers and a chance to mingle and catch up with mates and industry colleagues. We will provide the details for the agenda in further communication.

On the Friday evening, QBA will again host its annual conference dinner. Tickets for our Annual Conference, AGM and Conference Dinner will be limited due to restrictions in place to manage the transmission of COVID-19. Dinner tickets must be included in your registration for the conference.

QBA Members can register for early bird tickets from the 1st of March 2021. Non-members will be able to register from the 1st of April until the 14th of May. The QBA will not accept any registrations after the 14th of May 2021, nor will we be able to accept any 'walk up' registrations on the day of the event. To avoid any disappointment, we encourage anyone considering attending our Annual Conference to register early.

For anyone interested in staying at the resort before, during and/or after the conference, please use the link below to access the 'special code' for your discount on accommodation.

[QBA Mantra Sharks Discount.pdf](#)

For any questions relating to registrations or trade show exhibits, please contact QBA State Secretary Jo Martin via email at [qbainc@bigpond.com](mailto:qbainc@bigpond.com) or via phone on 0498 000 496.

## BLOODWOOD BLOOMS

BY CAITLYN ARIEL

Barry kindly brought these bloodwood gum nuts to February's club meeting and discussed their role in the runny honey many members have been seeing.

Unfortunately, I wasn't at the meeting, so I decided to look into it further and found some interesting research on Bloodwoods and other Australian honey-producing trees. I ended up focussing on two ways Bloodwood nectar could result in thin honey, the high humidity at the time they flower and the sugar ratios of the nectar itself.

It was easy to find why Bloodwoods get the blame for thin honey. They tend to flower in the warm, humid and rainy weather of late Summer to early Autumn. Each tree only blooms every 2 to 4 years, but the large crop of flowers they produce makes them very popular among bees when they do.

A study by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) on the Flowering Ecology of Honey-Producing Flora in South-East Australia found an increase in humidity can result in the dilution of nectar in flora flowering at this time. Ultimately this dilution could lead to bees making honey with high moisture and low sugar content, or in other words, runny honey.

At this point, the main concern for beekeepers is nectar fermentation in the flowers themselves. Without a high sugar concentration helping to preserve it, nectar cannot inhibit microbial growth, including the growth of yeasts. If you've ever made mead before, you'll know that when yeast metabolises sugar, the result is ethanol. Bees aren't quite fans of this accidental mead, and within a flowering episode, bloodwoods can transform from valuable honey producers to savage killers.



In this particular study, much of the findings came from highly experienced commercial beekeepers in Australia, including south-east Queensland. Many of them shared that the first significant autumn rainfall triggers catastrophic bee mortality, with several of them losing up to 90% of hive populations. At this time, the apiarists reported similar behaviour in their honeybees, including "visible 'streaking' (smears of faecal matter) in and on hives, dysentery, drunkenness", and ultimately death.

Of course, it's not only Bloodwoods that are susceptible to this. The nectar of an Australian honey-producing flora with large flowering events in these weather conditions can ferment. The RIRDC study found both Wandoo and Red Ironbark nectar contained significantly more ethanol than Red Bloodwood, which only had trace amounts.

And I can attest to that as the thin honey collected from our hive has not fermented. While it would be interesting to use a refractometer and see if the moisture content is far too high, it is entirely possible bloodwood nectar simply produces thinner honey.

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A study on the crystallisation of honey found that as well as moisture content and season, the ratios between Glucose and Fructose are vital in determining the thickness of honey. The levels of these sugars in Australian honey hugely differ. However, most varieties fall somewhere in these ranges:

Fructose: between **36-50%**,

Glucose: between **28-36%**.

It is also worth noting that Australian honey's moisture content is usually between **16-18%**.

Honey with higher glucose levels and lower fructose levels tend to be thicker and crystallise rapidly, such as rapeseed and sunflower honey. Honey with higher fructose ratios will often be relatively thin and crystallise slowly, like eucalyptus and acacia honey.

In a study that measured honey's sugar composition from various eucalyptus species, Bloodwood had the group's highest fructose levels at **44%**.

### References

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It is also on the lower end of the glucose range mentioned above at **30.9%**. Surprisingly the Bloodwood honey tested is also in the lower end of the moisture content range at **16.3%**. I can't find whether the honey tested was collected early or late in the Bloodwood flowering season, which would affect moisture levels.

In conclusion, it's safe to say that bloodwood nectar will always produce relatively thin honey due to its high fructose levels. The current high humidity levels may cause the honey to become even runnier, but not to the level where fermentation is a risk. But of course, it is always good practice to avoid pulling your honey too early, or it may ferment anyway.

## NOTICES

*A message from Ray Goldsworthy (QBA Brisbane Branch Secretary) on the passing of Harold Sanders, who was a member of Bayside Beekeepers Association.*

It is with deep regret I inform you of the passing of Harold Sanders. I realise a lot of newer members won't have known Harold, those that did will have a story or two.

Harold had been a QBA member for many years always eager to assist in any way. He was aged 101 and had always spoken of reaching the magic number of 100.

Arrangements are being organised so I will keep you all posted.

*(further advice will be sent via email to Bayseed Beekeepers Association members when available)*

### QUEENS

Thank you to Barry for organising the purchase and delivery of the queens. It makes acquiring quality queens so much easier, and cheaper, for Members.

### HIVES FOR SALE

Former member Keith Harris is needing to sell his hives and equipment due to illness. He is sadly parting with his 2 current hives. (best offer) and a starter box (2 levels) and an empty 3 box hive. He also has an electric 4 frame extractor. If interested phone him on **0434211332**.

### DISCLAIMER:

Please note that the Club cannot guarantee the health or wellbeing of any hives advertised for sale or removal.

Members should satisfy themselves and always practice basic quarantining (don't immediately drop a new hive next to other established ones and separate equipment) and regularly inspect for diseases and general health before introducing into an existing apiary.

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Please feel free to contact me with anything you'd like to see in future issues :)

**CLUB EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE  
FOR HIRE:**

- 2 Frame Honey Extractor
- Wax Melter
- Frame Display Unit hire
- Electric DeCapping Knife
- Ten Frame Jig
  - (holds frames in place for faster nailing)



**ALSO FOR SALE:**

- Honey containers