

BEE INFORMED

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

NOVEMBER 2022 • ISSUE 93



MONTHLY DATES

FIELD DAY:

Gates open from **8:00am**
for a **8:30am** start.



13 NOVEMBER 2022

CLUB MEETING:

Main gates open **7:00pm**
for a **7:30pm** start.



17 NOVEMBER 2022

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Extra! Extra!

In this edition:

Ron De Groot brings to the attention some of the things you may have to consider when selling your honey from home.

Col Parkes tells us about his catching a swarm adventure

and Marcel Smit has a story about making mead. Wait, no, it is about crystallising honey

plus, read up on the Varroa Report from Ron,

& don't forget the XMAS Lunch on the 27th November!





HOUSE INSURANCE

FROM RON DE GROOT

Are you putting your home and contents insurance cover at risk by selling honey from home?

There has been a deal of media coverage of a recent case where a house and contents insurance claim was denied because of a 'hobby' egg business. In this case it was a stall at the end of the driveway selling free-range eggs using an honesty box. The Insurance company says it would not have approved the policy if it had known about the egg business. It was deemed a business because they had a registered ABN, signage, and a Facebook page for the activity.

There are two issues here - whether the activity of producing and selling produce from the same address as the insured home can be called a business and whether the insurer was informed of the activity.

Selling honey or other bee related products from home via a sign out front, maybe using an honesty box or online website could fall under the same criteria. This applies even if the honey extraction, storage and or selling is conducted separate to, but at the same address as the insured house.

So what's the definition of a business?

The ATO has detailed information on its website that can help determine whether an activity is a hobby or business. Selling some excess produce at the front gate via signage and an honesty box is unlikely to qualify as a business because under ATO guidelines it probably wouldn't need to be declared as taxable income. Features of a business usually involves commercial sales of products or services, is of a reasonable size and scale and usually an intention to make a profit. However, be careful as an insurer could take a narrower view of what constitutes a business. Having a registered ABN would almost certainly indicate an intention to operate as a business.

Declaration to insurer

When taking out or renewing home and contents insurance, there is usually a standard set of questions that need to be answered. One question is whether a business type activity no matter the size or type, will be conducted at the insured address. If there is and it is not disclosed, then it could void your policy.

So, whether you determine your particular activity is just a hobby or a business, it would be wise to declare it to your home and contents insurer so as to avoid potential claim issues at a later stage.



Col Parkes catching the swarm

CATCHING A SWARM FROM COL PARKES

One morning while having coffee on my patio, I heard a loud hum which for a beekeeper is a tell-tale-sign. I looked up to see a swarm of bees which I assumed was from my own hive. It had happened last year about this time but they returned to the hive. I watched them for a while, concerned about any possible neighbour reaction and not knowing what to do. They didn't return to the hive but they started to settle into my lime tree. There were a few large bunches of bees on the ends of small branches a few metres up. I was going to ring the swarm group but couldn't find the number so I rang Ray for advice. He reassured me and convinced me I should try to capture them so I decided to try by myself, with my wife's help.

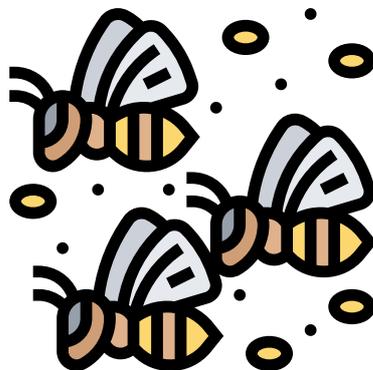
I cleaned up my old nucleus hive, set it up near the tree but without frames at this stage. I put on my bee suit and climbed up into the tree using my step-ladder. I cut a branch with bees on and carried it down to my hive losing many bees on the way. Then I carefully shook the remainder into the brood box of the hive. I put the excluder on the top of the brood box and climbed back up to get another branch and bees. After lifting the excluder, I shook them into the hive, again losing many bees in the transfer process.

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I did this a few times to get as many branches with bees as I could. I left the hive closed at the entrance and with just the excluder on top but still without frames. Bees which were still swarming around everywhere, starting to gather around the hive and settle on the top of the excluder. Perhaps I had caught the queen because the swarm had quietened down and the hive was full of bees with many on the top of the excluder. Later I shook all the remaining bees from the excluder into the hive, carefully put some frames with foundation into the hive and put the excluder back on top, hoping queen was already so the remaining bees would go inside. That evening I put the top on the box and left it closed at the entrance so no bees or queen could go in or out. The next day I opened the entrance gate and left it alone and bees started to come and go.

I left the hive for several days then opened it up to have a look and it was full of bees. I checked the frames and they had already been built up extensively with some brood activity and one frame almost filled with honey. Unfortunately I still didn't see the queen but assumed there was one there as the hive looked very active and healthy. Perhaps I had caught a swarm after all!

But there was more to the story. About ten days later (was this too short or too long??) I tried to relocate the bees to a new flow hive (brood box only). Unfortunately I may have let the queen get away in the process as the bees started to swarm again collecting in large numbers in various places in my garden and lawn. I tried to recover as many bees as possible hoping to get the queen again (which I still couldn't find) by using a long Tupperware box and lid. Not easy to capture bees on the ground or in the garden. I then left it all to quieten down which took a few days. Eventually there was no more swarm activity and the bees all went somewhere, hopefully into the hive? It may have worked out as the new flow hive is working and active with many bees going in and out but I haven't looked inside yet to find the queen or check on brood activity. I will wait until I put the full flow box and frames on top and use this opportunity to look in the brood box. I now have two flow hives to look after not just one and perhaps more swarms to catch next time?



Honey bees and squirrels have about the same number of hairs on their bodies: about 3 million! For those with hair on their heads, the human average number is about 100,000.

CRYSTALLISED HONEY

FROM MARCEL SMIT

Honey is amazing.

It amazes me, an amateur beekeeper, that almost every extraction and every frame is different. I combine, just like most other beekeepers, the honey from several hives and frames, but I also have flow frames that I can specifically capture and keep in separate containers. Lately though I have had my honey almost instantly crystallising. I mean, within a fortnight it goes from viscous golden to whipped honey consistency. So what is that all about? And why don't they have the crystallization in the supermarkets? There is a stigma too around crystallised honey, and consumers simple are less keen on it.



Stages of crystallisation

Before I continue it is important to stress that crystallised honey is all natural and fine. It actually helps preserve the honey, both the quality and flavour. I prefer my honey to be coarse grained crystallised, but think I am in the minority here.

Differences between commercial honey and our honey

Commercial honey is heat treated. It is heat treated to pasteurize it. This may not so much be about the food safety, but more to do with the slowdown of the crystallization processes, for the consumers like honey flowing. If you want to pasteurize your honey, it needs to be kept at 65° Celsius for 8 hours or 70° Celsius for 2 hours, or 80° Celsius for 30 minutes -so that's all quite high and precise. The heat process kills bacteria, yeasts, minerals and it breaks apart the molecules that form proteins and hence it kills enzymes such as amylase that break down the larger sugars that then form more glucose (a simple sugar) molecules.

Commercial honey will be more finely filtered. This filtering takes out pollen too, and pollen (proteins) is the great substrate to start crystallisation. And once crystals form, more will follow.

The honey we extract though is raw. We normally don't heat it or filter it (apart from running this through a relatively large strainer). So we have honey that has bacteria, yeast, minerals and that contains enzymes that break up larger sugar molecules into smaller ones like glucose. The pollen and proteins present in our honey will help the crystallisation processes to kick start.

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Causes of crystallisation.

As you know, Honey is composed of several different sugar types: roughly Fructose 33-45%, Glucose 24-40%, plus some more complex sugars and normally from 15 -20% water content.

Of these sugars, Fructose is the most water soluble, but Glucose is much less so. That's why it is mostly glucose that affects crystallisation. Crystals will naturally form when there is saturation of glucose in the water, so there are more sugars than that can be held in the water, and there are still more glucose molecules in the honey. The glucose separates from the water, and the glucose molecules then clump together around a pollen or other particle, and this then forms crystals.

A complex combination of variables is at play: it's the make-up of Honey, in particular the fructose, glucose and water content levels, temperature and how 'organic' or unprocessed the Honey is. Of course, the ratio of fructose and glucose depends upon what the bees forage on, even when and where.

Honey with more glucose, so a high glucose to fructose ratio, crystallises quicker, and the water content and the saturation of that plays a big part in honey, it is a fine balance between fermenting or crystallisation. When much crystallisation has occurred, the irony is that the remaining water content (with less glucose saturation) is now more prone for fermentation processes, and so yeasts get a chance too.

The bees do it right, we beekeepers just struggle.



A bain-marie used to heat treat honey for 8 hours at 65 Celcius (lid off for the picture)



Crystallisation of honey leading to fermentation example

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Possible prevention of crystallisation?

- Select a favourable extraction method. After all, the way that you Flow extract, Uncap and Spin or the way you use a honey press, will affect the levels of various crystallisation substrates.
- You could filter it more finely. E.g.: using a 200 micron nylon tapered strainer.
- You could heat treat it.
- You could store it at temperatures above 18 degrees. Keeping honey at temperatures lower than that, or in the fridge, just encourages crystallization.
- Use honey warmers to undo the crystals. If you like, you could undo the crystallisation by heating your honey jars in a warm water bath of 35c to max 40c, for several hours, even up to a few days, until it is golden and easily flowing. Don't overheat as this may affect hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content. In just extracted honey there is practically no HMF (it is deadly to bees) but it increases upon heating, length of storage, and temperature. Note that HMF could potentially be carcinogenic in humans.
- Adjust moisture content? In theory, as honey is hygroscopic (so attracts moisture, something that makes baking with honey so good) you could also uncover your honey. However, I think this may be a good first step to fermentation and mead making!

Your experiences and ideas are invited to this topic!



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

We are always looking to fill **our** newsletter with useful information. Please do not hesitate to contribute. Your beekeeping experiences, photos, bee health, bee info, funnies, cooking, your flora experiences are all welcome.

And any suggestions are more than welcome too. Just not bee stuffed ones :)_

BEE JOKES

What has no father but only a grandfather?

a drone

What would bears be without bees?

ears

FIELD DAY REPORT

OCTOBER 9 2022

The weather did not look good, quite dark clouds to start with, but it actually ended up a nice morning and day. You know, we need members to attend regularly to help out with the various chores to ensure a healthy club apiary. Sunday the 9th October saw a total of 17 members and 1 visitor attend the field day. 24 frames were extracted, resulting in 47 kg of honey. Please note, we need extracting crews too! See Raewyn Chamberlin if you are interested working within the extraction room. Our next field day will be November the 13th.



Prepare a 2:1 honey and cinnamon paste, and use this for breakfast instead of jam or marmalade. It helps decrease cholesterol levels!

VARROA REPORT

BY RON DE GROOT

During the October web seminar on Varroa, Biosecurity Qld highlighted that they are confident that there is no Varroa destructor in the state. To keep Varroa destructor out of the State (and other parts of the country) the industry is relying on effective surveillance by commercial and recreational beekeepers.

Effective surveillance involves three steps:

1. Being registered as a biosecurity entity and marking hives with the Hive Identification Number (HIN). The ability of authorities to adequately respond and directly communicate with beekeepers would be seriously limited by those not registered as a biosecurity entity.

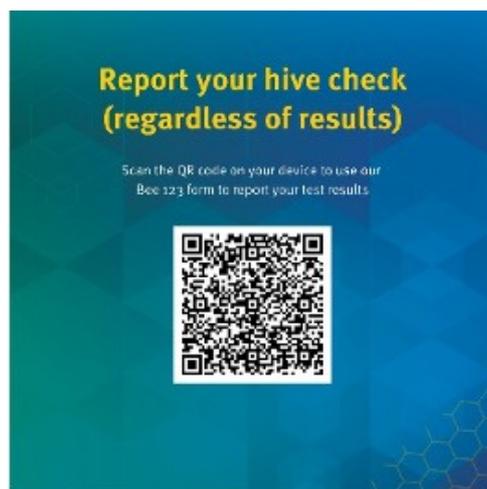
2. Testing for the presence of mites using one of the following methods

- drone uncapping
- alcohol wash
- sugar shake,

The Biosecurity Code of Practice requires beekeepers to conduct a least 2 inspections per year.

3. Report the results using Bee 123 online form.

Beekeepers are strongly encouraged to report any results even if no suspect mites are found as this helps Authorities monitor the number and health of beehives in the state.



During the seminar some statistics were shared on the low percentage of hives that have been tested and results reported: Of the 145,000 hives in Queensland only 5% of commercial and 2% of recreational have been tested and results reported. **Industry surveillance efforts must increase to reach closer to 10% of hives tested for Varroa. Destructor in Queensland.**

BEE NEWS



Beekeeper calls on NSW government to stop destroying hives to control varroa mite

By Keelie Johnson, ABC Rural

A beekeeper's petition to stop the New South Wales government eradicating hives in response to the varroa mite outbreak has amassed nearly 25,000 signatures.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-19/beekeeper-petitions-to-stop-varroa-mite-eradication/101550600>

Call to back Manuka honey

By Sam McManus, ABC Midwest & Wheatbelt

WA honey producer calls on farmers to back Manuka honey industry and plant native tree Leptospermum

Read the full article here:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-28/manuka-honey-wheatbelt-trees-leptospermum/101589092>

Finding the Queen Bee

Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association

This is accumulated by the Bee Informed Editor into a PDF, taken from a number of issues of the Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association, and they acknowledge that much of the info comes from South Gippsland Beekeepers.

Read the full article here:

<https://baysidebeekeepers.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Finding-the-queen.pdf>



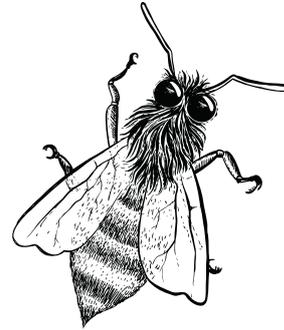
Bees can see a colour that humans can't. Known as "Bee's purple", it is a combination of Yellow and Ultra Violet light.

NOTICES

Varroa Mite

For any questions or concerns please refer to:

- The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (ARBIC) website
<https://honeybee.org.au/news-landing/>
- Bee Aware <https://beeaware.org.au/>
- QBA online portal
<https://members.qbabees.org.au/QBA-Varroa-Mite-Portal>.



NATIVE BEE HIVE SPLITTING WORKSHOP

TO BE HELD ON THE 13TH OF NOVEMBER AND THE 11TH OF DECEMBER.

ADDRESS: 11 WISBECH PLACE THORNLANDS

FOR A 3PM START. LASTS FOR ABOUT 1.5 HRS. IT'S HELD IN THE OPEN,
SUITABLE CLOTHING IS ADVISED.

MEMBERS WISHING TO COME ALONG CAN EITHER EMAIL IAN AT ITPMBEIERS@GMAIL.COM
OR MOB: 0411 704 642 TO BOOK A SPOT

PLEASE NOTE OUR CLUB CHRISTMAS LUNCH

WHERE: CAPALABA SPORTS CLUB

WHEN: SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 12:00 MID-DAY.

COST: \$30 PER HEAD. THE COST WILL BE SUBSIDISED BY THE CLUB AT \$5.00 PER MEMBER PLUS ONE.

NOTE: NUMBERS NEED TO BE FINALISED AND PAID FOR BY SUNDAY 13TH NOVEMBER AT THE ABSOLUTE LATEST.

HOW: PLEASE MAKE YOUR PAYMENT (\$30.00 PER HEAD) TO THE CLUB ACCOUNT BY 13TH NOVEMBER AT THE ABSOLUTE LATEST. ENSURE THAT YOU ADD YOUR FULL NAME - CHRISTMAS LUNCH X QUANTITY AS THE REFERENCE, PLUS EMAIL BRIDGET BARBER

E