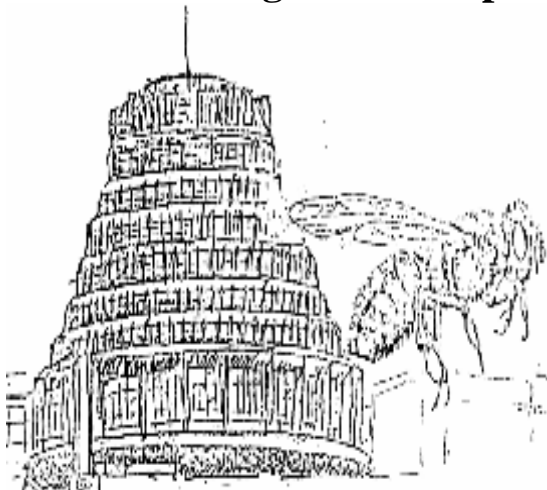


Wellington Beekeepers Association Inc.



Our Next General Meeting is:
Monday 8 NOVEMBER 2004,
at 7.30 p.m.

Where:
**Terrace Centre,
Union Church,
Dr Taylor Terrace.
Johnsonville**

**November Meeting Theme:
Powerpoint display on the
KARORI WILDLIFE CENTRE**

**Wellington Beekeepers Association Inc.
Monthly Newsletter – NOVEMBER 2004**

This newsletter is available to members via e-mail using Adobe Acrobat v3 format. The reader software is available from Adobe free of charge. Contact editor@beehive.org.nz for additional details.

Return Address: PO Box 11-089, Manners St., Wellington (Ph 565 0164)

MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INC SPECIAL MEETING HELD IN THE JOHNSONVILLE UNION CHURCH HALL JOHNSONVILLE ON MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 2004, 7.30 PM

Because of space limitations, the Minutes of this Meeting will be read at the November Meeting of the Wellington Association, before being Moved for acceptance.

MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INC MONTHLY MEETING HELD IN THE JOHNSONVILLE UNION CHURCH HALL JOHNSONVILLE ON MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 2004, 8.00 PM

Present: Andrew Beach (Pres), James Scott (Vice Pres), John Burnet (Treas), Richard Wickens (Sec) and 33 others

Apologies: Andrew Young, Mary-Ann Lindsay, Ernst Segessenmann, Chris Christoffel, Hamish McDonald, John Robson, Bill Allan

Andrew Beach moved that the apologies be accepted. James Scott seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

New Members: None.

Minutes of Last Meeting: Confirmed subject to amendment of Vaughan's advice that there was no varroa on the Wainuiomata Coast and the spread of the pest was confined to the township.

Ken Braden moved the minutes be accepted. Vaughan seconded the motion. Passed Unanimously.

Fogging Cords: John Burnet had acquired 500 metres of cord. Some had been cut into 1 metre lengths, available to members at \$4.00 for 10 cords. Food grade mineral oil was also available to members at \$6.00 per 1 litre bottle.

Members need to make their own arrangements to acquire beeswax.

Thymol: There was still no news from MAF about the pending approval for the use of liquid Thymol.

Supply of Foggers: James apologised for not further investigating sources of foggers. John Burnet had made his own enquiries of the California Garden Centre. They were not being imported as there was no local demand for them. John had also browsed the web and established that none of the American suppliers exported foggers but concentrated on servicing the local market.

Field Day: A reminder was given of the upcoming field day to be held at Haywards Hill Road on Saturday, 30 October, commencing at 1.30 pm. Directions were given to members to assemble at the water reservoir which comprised a single tower.

(NOTE: Postponed to Saturday 13 November 2004, details as above.)

Next Month's Meeting: John Burnet is to make a presentation on the Karori Wildlife Reserve.

December Meeting: The topic for this meeting is "Cooking with honey." Members are encouraged to bring samples of their concoctions, and submit recipes for possible inclusion in a honey recipe leaflet.

Try to secure Kelly Ann Morton as a guest speaker and, failing her, Kent Morrell.

Pohutakawa Seedlings: These turn out to be Karo (a variety of Pittosporum) Seedlings. Cliff Hulston has given some to Frank Lindsay who has already planted them at McKay's Crossing Regional Park.

Free Postage: Andrew Beach's application to NZ Post has been successful and 100 prepaid envelopes have been received.

Swarms: These are already being reported at Otaki. Ken Breden had sighted a swarm which had unfortunately disappeared by the following morning.

Changes to the NBA Rules: John Burnet reported advice had been received of changes to the rules of the National Association of which the Wellington Association is a member. There is no need for our Association to make a submission as it would not be materially affected by the changes.

Contributions to Newsletter: Ivan and Vicky's contributions to the newsletter were commended. These had helped to make the newsletter more interesting and informative.

Association Lapel Badges: Cliff suggested the Association should acquire another supply of badges for members' use. John Burnet said he still had a stock of badges and he would unearth them.

Southern North Island Branch Field Day: Frank showed photographs of the Tweeddale Family's plant and equipment at Taihape and gave an account of the business operations. The family runs over 7,000 hives. The honey house comprises two large steelframed buildings that have been joined together. One is used for storage of honey supers (around 20,000 stacked in this building at the time of the field-day) and the other is used for processing honey. The Tweeddales place great emphasis on hygiene and safety in their operations. (For more information about the Tweeddales business read Frank Lindsay's excellent feature in the October 2004 edition of The New Zealand Beekeeper.)

Stainless Steel Mesh for Bottom Boards: John Burnet said that all the mesh that had been bought by the

Association had now been sold. Members could, however, buy their supplies from Ceracell Beekeeping Supplies in Auckland. These were retailing at \$9.00 a square.

Gizmos: **Vaughan Kearns** demonstrated a leaf blower he had bought from a Mitre Ten outlet for \$144. Lightweight, battery powered and easily portable, it could be used to clear bees from frames. The batteries were rechargeable and two plus a recharger are supplied. Batteries last 40 - 60 minutes before needing recharging. Frank Lindsay suggested the nozzle might need narrowing to gain maximum airflow.

Andrew Beach demonstrated a bottom board he had made using synthetic windbreak mesh. Comment made that the mesh might be chewed by bees.

Formic Acid/Oxalic Acid: Ivan Pederson described spring treatment of hives with formic acid pads. Queen excluders were removed and hives fed sugar syrup. None of the treated hives died. Cost of treatment was \$3-4. Oxalic acid was best used around 10 - 20 February. A queen excluder was necessary to control the queen in the hive. Emphasis on the importance of treating with oxalic acid once the honey is off. Hives should be down to 2 boxes.

General Business: Richard Wickens reported on the prospective purchase of a data-show projector for use by the club for presentations to members. With a 1700 ansi lumens projector, a screen and DVD/Video tape machine, there would be little change out of \$3,000. Some members questioned the merits of spending so much money on equipment for relatively little use. Frank asked that any equipment purchased be digital camera compatible.

It was decided to approach the Church who owned the premises to determine whether it was prepared to join with the Association in purchasing data-show equipment. It was also suggested that a Community Grant be sought to assist with any potential purchase. Hiring a machine whenever needed was another option.

John Burnet will give a data-show projector at the next monthly meeting so that members who were not familiar with this type of technology could learn about its advantages.

Video tapes and DVDs for showing beekeeping skills and of general interest were also discussed. Richard's research had turned up few good films. Further research to be done.

Close of Meeting: 9.20 pm

FOGGING, CORDS And Cord Solution:

Latest advice: the use of FGMO & thymol is still not legal in NZ but the OK is expected to be announced in the November Beekeeper.

Thanks to Laura Burnett for cutting up the cords purchased by the Club, and to John Burnett for financing the cutting up, as we understand it was a strictly commercial arrangement between Laura and her Dad!

If anyone is experiencing difficulty in getting the cord solution to adhere to cords purchased at the October Club Meeting; Cordells, the suppliers, suggest that this might be because of a small amount of wax incorporated in them for knitting purposes. They suggest a WARM wash with a little bit of detergent, then a cold rinse to remove the wax.

If you are planning to use FMGO and cords as your method of varroa control, we

recommend that you protect your hives with strips until ferals and leave-them-alone beekeepers are gone, and the acute phase of varroa invasion is over.

Frank

For Sale

New Black Plastic Full Depth frames, one carton containing 54 frames but will sell in part quantities if necessary - cost \$127.57 or \$2.36 each
Contact John Burnet on (04) 232-7863

N Z Herald Monday 27-9-04

"A Taste of Honey
Fancy a hint of whisky or bourbon in your honey sandwich? How about milk chocolate or marshmallow?
Part-time Raglan Beekeeper beekeeper Lance Reid reckons his experiment in adding such unexpected flavours to honey could be a winner. He said he used a blender to make more than 40 mixtures including strawberry liqueur, milo, prunes, pawpaw, caramel, coffee, port, passionfruit and milk or dark chocolate."

(could be a worthy entry for our Honey Recipes? Ed)

VARROA TREATMENT, Thymol & Oxalic Acid Spray, by Ian Fergusson *(courtesy of The Scottish Beekeeper, August 2004)*

I have used Thymol in the autumn feed for the last 20 or so years simply because I am always at the "coos tail" with this feed. The thymol simply prevents fermentation in any syrup the bees don't manage to seal.

Over these years I have never found any trace of *Braula coeca* or their tracks under the cappings of the stored honey. I have

also been checking for varroa for the last 5 years.

In August 2002 I received a phone call from a beekeeper who told me he had moved hives two weeks earlier from Blairgowrie to a site less than a mile from my garden. When I came back out of orbit, I explained (as politely as possible) that Blairgowrie was a varroa infected area and that he should not have moved his bees to the Glasgow area, which as far as we knew was still clean. The gentleman removed his bees within three days but on checking my hives with thymol in a feed, found the dreaded varroa.

The fact that the spread of varroa in the Glasgow area is radiating from Milngavie suggests this was the original infestation. As we learned at the excellent SBA varroa training day, varroa, unlike most other bee diseases, tends to hit the strong hives harder than the weaker neighbouring hives due to the larger amount of brood in the stronger hives, and of course the brood is the varroa's breeding ground.

This certainly was my experience in July 03 (my 2nd year with varroa), when a very strong garden hive suddenly stopped working and the bees seemed to be hanging about the hive with no sense of purpose. On the 1st of August '03 I placed the hive on a varroa screen with a white board below. This board is marked off with black lines three inches apart to aid counting and is withdrawn from the rear of the hive without disturbing the bees. For the next three days I counted a mite fall of 40 per day. On the 4th August I fed the bees with a thymol mix from a jar with a perforated lid. This mixture is made up by taking a glass bottle and adding thymol crystals to a depth of 1/3 inch then filling the bottle with surgical spirit and shaken to a solution. A dessert spoonful of this solution is then

added to 2 litres of sugar syrup. Remember to shake the solution just before you pour it into the feeding jar as it does not mix very well with the sugar syrup.

For the next three months I took daily mite fall readings and the following are my results:-On the 5th day the mite fall rose to 110, on day 6 the fall was 212 on day 7 it fell to 174 and so on down to 4 on day 17.

Although the thymol dropped a good number of mites, the count was back up to 58 per day by the 23rd August. So the thymol was struggling in this severely infected hive.

However, I applied the thymol again on the 2nd September and the daily mite fall for the next few days was 175, 78, 191, 178, 89, and back to 27 on 8th September. I again applied thymol and the mite fall peaked at 277 and back to 92 on the 15th September but by the 19th September the mite fall level was up to 144.

We were now on the slippery slope with this hive and more drastic measures were required. So on the 27th September I removed each brood frame in turn and sprayed the bees with the Oxalic Acid spray mix until the bees were just showing a slight "misting", due to the moisture on their backs, and closed the hive. The spray solution is 30g oxalic acid crystals in 1 litre of sugar syrup (20% sugar solution).

The next day things began to happen, the mite fall shot up to 3500 and over the next few days the results were 1450, 475, 371, 265, 117, 66 and on the 11th October the count was down to 9. I again applied the oxalic acid spray and the mite fall jumped to 807 then 479, 116, 61 and by the 18th October was down to 39 but we had a sudden sharp two day frost and the count

jumped to 198 and then down to 11 by the 23rd October. I once more sprayed with oxalic acid and the count was 450, 152, 36 and down to 5 by the 29th October and 1 by the 18th November where it remained till the end of December.

Over the January/February period, I fed the hive with the thymol mix and the mite fall averaged half a mite per day.

To date I have never used any of the Pyrethroids in my hives and I have not replaced the queen or reinforced this severely infected hive in any way. At the 20th May '04 this hive had 6 frames of nice brood and no natural mite fall for 6 weeks. Bearing in mind that all my hives are Modified Dadant, 6 frames is a lot of brood.

It will be interesting to see how this hive progresses over the summer. Conclusions:- Thymol is good for detecting varroa and for treating mild infections but of course it only knocks down the mites on the adult bees and cannot affect the mites in the sealed cells. It also cannot be used when supers are on a hive as it would taint the honey. As can be seen from the tests, when the infection becomes too severe the thymol cannot compete with the exponential increase in mite numbers. Oxalic Acid also only knocks down the mites on the adult bees and does not affect the mites in the sealed brood.

The spray method is ideal to use if you find a hive is developing a very high natural mite fall rate in spring, summer or autumn season. Simply clear and remove the supers and apply the spray replacing the supers the next day. The advantage of having a screen board fitted to each hive would let you see the mite fall increasing to a dangerous level, allowing you to spray earlier, thus preventing the hive grinding to a

halt as mine did, but screen boards are expensive.

As Thymol and Oxalic Acid do not kill the varroa in the sealed cells, I am using Les Webster's "Drone Brood Removal" system over the honey season. To carry out this procedure simply place a shallow frame with worker comb on one side of the brood nest. 7 days later, (week 2), place a second shallow on the other side of the brood nest. Week 3, cut the sealed drone brood from below the first shallow frame and discard it, returning the shallow to the edge of the brood nest (if you check this sealed brood you will probably find it has varroa in it and it will give you an indication of infection level).

Week 4, cut the sealed drone brood from the second shallow frame.

Week 5, again remove the drone comb from the first shallow and so on. If you find there is a lot of unsealed drone brood, leave it for a few more days as the varroa lays its eggs in the cell just before it is sealed over. This procedure is combined with your swarm control checks every 7 days, so is not a lot of extra work.

I will again treat all my hives with the oxalic acid Trickle Method in mid December when there will be little or no brood in the hives.

Safety: It is advisable to wear a mask when using a spray. I only spray on days when there is little or no wind and spray down wind. I also hold the frame near the ground.

Notes to the above from Frank Lindsay: I know that Lorimer's had good success spraying their bees but it takes a lot of time. I prefer fumigating with oxalic acid but the most important thing this article demonstrates is to monitor the results - something I didn't do to the hives around Otaki. I assumed the treatments would be like those in my other varroa area and fell on my

face. Very heavy losses of hives within 2 km of the township due to reinvasion from ferals and uncoordinated treating by hobby beekeepers.

Has anyone checked the Nutrition info on commercial containers of Honey? A bit of an eye-opener. And to think I thought that Honey was just Honey!

While we are aware that Pitcairn Island has been in the news, surely it is a little late to be broadcasting the following:?

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

We have been asked by the Pitcairn Police & Customs Officer to make this announcement. Friends of Pitcairn and visitors to the island are asked NOT to send or bring honey, other bee products, or used hive equipment or clothing to Pitcairn. As many of you know, the Pitcairners have begun to expand their beekeeping efforts, and the island hives have recently been declared 100% free of disease. In order to keep the hives pristine, it is very important that the island not be accidentally exposed to products of bees from other areas that could contaminate the Pitcairn bee population. The Pitcairners and the bees thank you very much!

VARROA MITE TREATMENTS:

Drone Cell Founding:

Did you know Varroa mites are attracted to developing drone brood much more than they are attracted to worker brood? By using a few frames of drone comb, you can lure Varroa mites to the developing drone brood, and the mites become trapped within the drone cell when the bees cap the cells. Remove the frame of capped drone cells. Put it in a plastic bag in your freezer overnight to kill the mites. Remove from the freezer and let warm. With the cappings scratcher, break open the drone cells, then

put the frame back into the colony and allow the worker bees to clean out the cells, getting rid of the dead varroa mites and drones. After the queen lays drone eggs in these cells again, this Varroa trapping cycle is repeated, thus capturing and killing more mites. By utilizing this process, a large percentage of Varroa mites are naturally eliminated without chemicals.

(both the above from unnamed sources, courtesy I Pedersen)

BELIEVE IT OR NOT FROM IVAN: *(contributions from I Pedersen)*

FOR FRAMES WHICH CAN'T BE REMOVED: Lie hive down backwards, remove floor and separate brood boxes.

With hammer, tap either end of the bottom of the frames until they become loose. Then set the boxes upright and they will readily be removed.

NOW is the time to be replacing all old, black and damaged frames.

It is very important that the two brood boxes are in perfect order in the fight against varroa. There is no room for plastic feeders in the brood boxes, and there should be 10 frames in each brood box to limit drone brood room.

We have only two choices in the fight against varroa, and either you win or the mite does. Despite traditional methods of beekeeping having stood the test of time, now that we have varroa some of these have to be forgotten. We never had the mite before, so now we have to use new methods of beekeeping.

HONEY COMB

For many years the theories as to wax-production were far from the truth. Somewhere between 1744 and 1768 it was discovered that wax is produced between the plates on the lower side of the worker bee's abdomen. Wax is produced at the will of the bee, and when called for by the

necessities of the hive. The wax-producing bees obtain a somewhat high temperature, usually be close clustering, although they sometimes hang in slender festoons and chains.

"Wax is not chemically a fat or glyceride, and those who have called it 'the fat of bees' have grossly erred" (*Chester*)

On the inner side of the 8 plates lining the lower side of the abdomen are about 140,000 glands, from which the wax is secreted as a white liquid, which hardens on exposure to the air. When first formed it is white and very brittle, and is pulled out from between the plates by the pincers on the hind legs. The pieces of wax are then passed to the front legs, and thence to the mouth, where they are made plastic by the addition of various materials in the saliva and by thorough mastication. *Original from A I Root, 1877 Ohio, USA; these notes from 1908 edition courtesy I Pedersen.*

To be continued:

NOTE: When using honey as a sugar substitute in cooking it is important to remember that it contains 18-20% water. When using in recipes, use about 20% less liquid.

STOP PRESS

You may be aware that FGMO has been approved. Use of the product is conditional on a code of practice being approved under the Animal Products Act 1999. See New Zealand Gazette notice No 6983 published 21 2004. Approval notice for thymol was published 7 October under notice No. 1364, pages 3185-3186. *Frank Lindsay*

CANDLES: The most convenient method of salvaging wax from cappings and old combs is by means of a solar wax extractor and filter wax through old nylon tights.

Another method is to melt the wax in a saucepan of soft water (rain water) or use a burco boiler with tap for the wax to run off into a bucket. The natural alkalinity of hard water affects the wax by producing a surface film of grey mush - so use rainwater or hard water plus one teaspoon of vinegar per pint. Again filter the wax through old tights. Wax melts at 64°C approximately.

When made, pure beeswax candles are most useful - they burn brightly with a smokeless flame and are long lasting. They can be made by pouring, dipping and moulding, or by simply rolling foundation.

Wick-'The soul of the candle'

The wick carries the molten wax upwards by capillary action to where, in contact with air, it vaporises and is burned.

1. Always prime the wick in hot wax.
2. Wick should be correct size (thickness) for the diameter of the candle.

e.g. For 2" diameter use number 6 wick, for 1 1/2" diameter use number 4 wick. For 1" diameter use a number 2 wick and for 1/2" diameter use a number 1 wick.

If wick is too big it will burn black and leave an ash. If it is too small, guttering will occur.

Foundation Candles

1. Prime the wick.
2. Heat the unwired sheet of wax foundation with a hairdryer.
3. Fold the wax over the wick and roll while warm on a glass sheet. Ensure it is tight to achieve a round shape.
4. Seal wax finish by using a flame of match.
5. Trim the wick. (You could taper by cutting the sheet diagonally at the start)

END.