



All meetings have been cancelled until further notice

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Contents

- 2 Note from the President- James Withington
- 4 Bee Advised!
- 5 From MPI - Rules for hobby beekeepers producing honey for sale
- 6 Advice and tips on over-wintering your hives
- 8 In My Apiary – Jane Harding
- 13 Book Review – Queen Rearing Essentials by L J Connor
- 14 Book Review – The Urban Beekeeper by Steven Benbow
- 16 Keeping Bees in Porirua
- 17 Shopping During Lockdown
- 18 APINZ Monthly newsletter
- 19 Interesting Websites
- 21 Who can I speak to?
- 22 Meeting location



Note from the President – James Withington

Well welcome to the new world. The last week has certainly put the country on its head but the good news is beekeeping can go on as normal.



As you will be aware the WBA committee made the decision several weeks ago to postpone the monthly meetings. Not a decision made lightly as we know it affects a lot of people. At this stage we can't tell you how long these meetings will be suspended but if you look at the current nationwide lockdown I would be confident to say it will be for a minimum of 6 weeks with it being close to a maximum of 12 weeks. This being the case we are won't be able to hold the April and May meetings with June being questionable, but we will keep you all posted.

Beek



Note from the President ..cont

As everyone is going to be at home, we intend to boost the content of the monthly newsletter with additional material, articles and other interesting information to help pass the time.

I have noted today an increase in the number of pesky wasps appearing at the entrances of my hives, so it is time to reduce your entrances down to enable the bees to have a chance to defend their hives. Better yet if you can identify the wasps nest a good time to poison them. It is also time to ensure your mites levels are right down before you winter down your hives. Without having them under control there are increased chances of your hive dying out in the winter months and no one likes discovering that in the spring. And while in the hives just check the winter store levels and provide additional frames of honey or a syrup feed just to top them up.

With the cold snap we have had over the weekend, it is probably about time to wrap your hives for the winter months. I know there are various materials that people have been using and experimenting with from builder's paper, to bubble wrap and polystyrene. Whatever you choose this may just provide the extra warmth or waterproofing the bees might need for the upcoming winter.

Some of you still have honey for sale and I have attached an article from MPI around the sale of honey.

Stay safe everyone and we will try and restore normal service as soon as possible.

James



Bee advised

- Avoid crowded spaces = Beekeeping!
- Do not use public transport = Beekeeping!
- Well ventilated spaces are virus free = spend more time in the apiary
- Protect your nose and mouth = Beekeeping!
- Recommended use of gloves = Beekeeping!
- Don't touch contaminated surfaces = Beekeeping!
- Avoid shaking hands = too busy holding frames!
- Keep a safe distance from people who sneeze or cough = Beekeeping!
- Maintain a positive and prudent attitude = Bees can smell fear!





From MPI: Rules for hobby beekeepers producing honey for sale

There are a few key legal requirements that hobbyist beekeepers, who offer honey for sale, need to follow. The rules are in place because there are important food safety risks associated with honey that need to be managed, such as the risk of tutin poisoning.

The food rules in the Food Act 2014 apply to anyone trading food in New Zealand, including any person selling honey, irrespective of the amount of product sold. Trading covers a wide range of activities, including selling food for cash, bartering food, and giving food away to promote a business.

Most food businesses need to register and be verified (checked) by their local council if offering food for sale. However, a hobby beekeeper does not need to be registered or verified if they only sell direct to consumers (e.g. at a local market) **and** the honey they sell was pre-packed in a facility registered with the council or MPI.

Other beekeepers, who extract and/or pack honey for sale, need to register their operations under the Food Act as a **National Programme level 1 (NP1)** with their local council, and have their activities checked by an approved verifier. NP1 registration is valid for two years.

People packing honey for sale must follow rules designed to reduce the risk that consumers will be poisoned by tutin. A beekeeper will need to keep a record to show how they manage tutin in their honey, and provide this information to anyone extracting and packing their honey.

Packaged honey needs to be accurately labelled. If you want to export your honey, you may need to operate your honey business under the Animal Products Act 1999.

For more information, New Zealand Food Safety has produced:

A guide to New Zealand Honey Labelling
Guidance for managing risks of tutin poisoning

New Zealand Food Safety is always here to help, contactable via email foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz or call 0800 00 83 33.



Advice and tips on overwintering your hives

By Claire Hart

Now is the time to check varroa treatment applied in February. Check mite drop - do a sugar shake, and if necessary, treat hives again.

Conduct full brood check. Check frames for AFB.

Watch out for robbing. Close up entrances to about '2 bee width'. Make/buy a robbing screen. Use this link to see how to make one:

<https://www.kiwimana.co.nz/robbing-screen-wasp-and-robbing-honey-bees-afb/>

Check there is enough feed for winter, 10 frames of honey, and 5 frames of pollen. The bees will cluster in the middle frames, so pack the honey around them, so they don't have to go far to get stores.

Feed if the bees need more stores. A good trick is to tip white sugar into a feeding tray and dribble a little amount of water on the sugar bringing the dribble to the bees. They will soon bring the sugar down.

Put insulation under the roof, but make sure there is ventilation under the lid.

Tilt hive forward so any condensation drips forward and not straight down onto the cluster.

Look up some creative ideas to keep your hives protected over winter:

- Wind breaks
- Insulation wraps, e.g. Polystyrene
- Control the weeds around your apiary



Check out this information from 2015 by Frank Lindsay, 'Advice for overwintering hives' – still valuable information today!

<http://lindsaysapiaries.co.nz/publications.apr2015.html>

Here is a snippet from the article:

Things to do this month from Frank Lindsay

Winter down hives. Check feed and the effectiveness of mite treatments. Make sure top-bar hives have 10 frames with honey in them.

Carry out an AFB check. Slope bottom boards to the front so rain runs out of the hive. Fit mouse guards or reduce entrances to 400 mm x 7 mm. Replace rotten or damaged supers and bottom boards. Attend to fences, check for wasps and control grass.

During extraction, go through the honey supers and reject any old, dark frames you cannot see light through. Store frames with foundation or light frames on the outside with darker ones towards the middle. Freeze stored supers to kill wax moth eggs and larvae or store in a shed that is open, well lit and provides a good airflow through the supers. (Fit queen excluders top and bottom to prevent mouse damage.)

Those in the North Island (and perhaps top of the South) will have to watch more closely for wax moth infestation. Those in the southern parts of the South Island can smile, as they do not have wax moth problems.





In My Apiary

This month we introduce a new feature – In My Apiary – where we ask a club member to provide some photos and say a little bit about their apiary. First off is Jane Harding, our Secretary, who has been keeping bees in her backyard for about 11 years.

I guess we've got a pretty good backyard for bees, its quite big and on a few levels, so the bees are away from the house. We've got neighbours, but not too close, and lots of trees, so the bees are pretty well invisible to them. They're all keen on the honey too, so that keeps them sweet. My honey house also doubles as a garden shed, workshop and escape room during Covid-19 lockdown....



Inside the honey house - space is at a premium



At the moment we've got 6 hives, 2 are splits that we took back in February and one hive is rather over-run with waxmoth so I don't think it will survive the winter. Ideally we'd have 4 hives, but its hard to keep to that magic number. The bees share the backyard with 3 chickens and fruit trees and vegetable garden. The two splits and two of the hives are by the glass house:



Chickens make a good job of keeping the ground clear



This hive is by the shed – a good place to sit and observe the bees.



Tray feeder for cappings on this hive

This hive was an excellent producer this year, I took 35 frames off this hive.

The hive in the picture below was also a good producer, I took 40 frames of honey from here. The black box is my nuc box where I put one of the splits I



made in February, I've just transferred the split into a hive, the nuc box is collecting the remaining stray foraging bees.



Bee water in the tray on top



And the glasshouse has its uses too, I'm storing my frames in it.



Dry and airy and light to keep the wax moth at bay.

All in all we have a nice setup, my partner Glenn is my apprentice (and very useful at making things for the apiary...) And there's always something to do, even during lockdown.

We'd love to hear about your apiary in one of the following newsletters - the next best thing to going to see them in person. Send some photos and a few words to Eva (edurrant@xtra.co.nz). Thank you!



Queen Rearing Essentials

Lawrence John Connor – published 2009

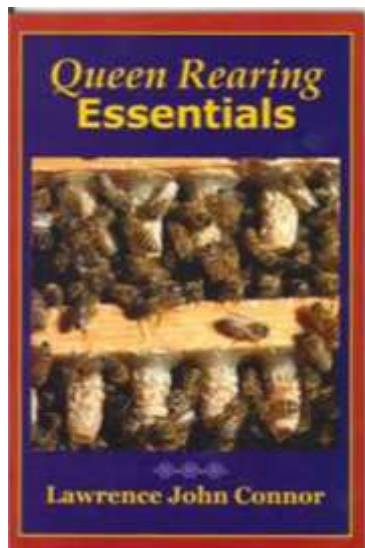
Book Review – by Judith de Wilde

A very detailed, concise and clear practical manual for raising queens on either a small to large scale.

This is a must have book for any beekeeper with a number of hives, wishing to start raising their own queens by the tried and true method of grafting, starter and finishing colonies. There is a spectacular array of photos accompanying the text, giving clear visual context to all that is written. Lawrence also covers the topics of queen rearing, grafted solo cell building units and how to actively improve beekeeping stock.

Absolutely think it is the best grafted queen rearing book I have read and would like to get hold of one to add to my personal library.

Five Stings





The Urban Beekeeper

A Year of Bees in the City

Steven Benbow – published 2012

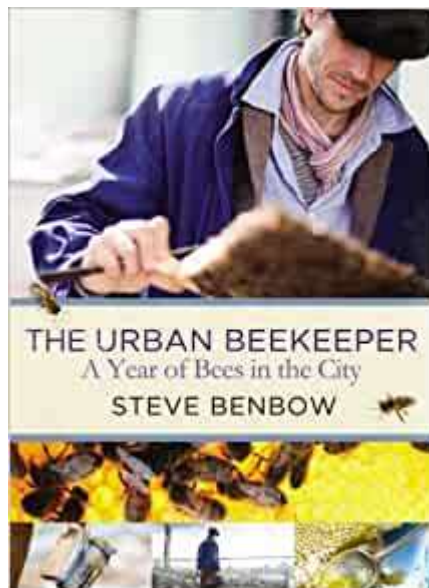
Book Review – by Judith de Wilde

Steve Benbow started his first hobbyist beehive fifteen years earlier on the roof of his residential tower block in Bermondsey, London. So, inspired he attended a beekeeping course, read literature, and working alongside his mentor and commercial beekeeper friend, David. In those early years he lived a very nomadic life from the back of his truck.

He broke away from David to start his own crusade/vision of running a commercial urban beekeeping business. When writing this book Steven was running successfully 30 sites across the city. His bees live atop the Museums, commercial factories and shops. He supplies honey to the Savoy tearooms, Harvey Nichols, Harrods and delis across London.

This book is more an easy read manual with month by month tips for beginner beekeepers. It's however very entertainingly written, interwoven with numerous anecdotes. It describes Steven's adventures, mishaps and business initiatives throughout the year and takes a look back at how he got into beekeeping in the first place.

I can highly recommend it. It's well written, entertaining and for those who are new to beekeeping very educational. Even if you know nothing about bees or beekeeping then you'll find it interesting just from the entrepreneurial aspect of





Steve Benbow's crusade and the lengths he goes to keep his bees happy and healthy on the streets of London.

Those with a little more beekeeping experience will also find it interesting as he writes not only about his philosophies as far as bees and beekeeping in the UK are concerned but also about the difference between hobbyist beekeeping and commercial beekeeping and the importance of developing a strong brand identity and a consistent quality product and of course relates some stories that all beekeepers will identify with all too easily.

All of this is interspersed with amusing anecdotes; driving across the country through the night, sleeping under the stars on London rooftops and of course the obligatory stories about stings in uncomfortable places. There are tips at the end of each chapter about what you should be doing in any given month of the year, you just need to adjust from the northern to the southern hemisphere, and best of all there are some delicious recipes dotted throughout the book. I recommend the spiced chocolate and honey harvest cake

Five Stings





Keeping bees in Porirua

You don't need a permit to keep bees in Porirua if you live in an urban area, but you do need your neighbour's permission before setting up hives. To avoid issues with your neighbour don't stack hives on your boundary. Your hives may be removed if we get complaints about your bees causing a nuisance or danger.

See an example of what you could use to get [neighbours' permission in writing](#).

All apiary sites must be registered withASUREQuality, under clause 17 of the [Biosecurity \(National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan\) Order 1998](#).

All keepers of bees in Porirua must be members of [Apiculture New Zealand](#).





Shopping during Lockdown:

1. Capital Beekeeping Supplies is still operating during lockdown.

John advises that he is still taking phone or email orders for beekeeping supplies, beekeeping is an essential service after all. You will need to collect from John's place in Tawa, he will leave your order at the bottom of his drive.

2. Rotorua shoppers wear beekeeping suits to supermarket



A couple wearing beekeeping suits decided to do some last minute shopping in Rotorua. A Rotorua woman got a proper surprise yesterday as she did her last shopping trip before the national lockdown.

Naomi Brake was doing her shopping at Countdown Fairy Springs when she bumped into a couple of shoppers who were also preparing for lockdown.

The difference was these shoppers were wearing full beekeeping suits - masks and all. Brake said she was "quite surprised" to see them.



From the CE Karin Kos

It's day two of the lock-down, with a State of Emergency now in force. As a result, we've had to radically and quickly change how we do things, at home and at work. For the small team at ApiNZ that means working from home, embracing technology to stay in contact. I've also given the technology a run with a video update from me (see below).

The apiculture industry is in a fortunate position in that we are seen as essential services. That includes beekeepers and those packing and supplying honey and honey-related products. This is a privilege and one that we don't take lightly, nor take it for granted.

To help our industry operate in the new environment we've emailed out our [protocols](#) for operating during COVID-19 Level 4 and we have developed a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to the most common enquiries we are receiving. We are in constant contact with the relevant government agencies and will update the FAQs as more detail is released. Apiculture New Zealand is here to support our members in any way and will continue to provide regular updates on the COVID-19 situation, through our [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and via email updates.

Just a couple of quick updates on COVID-19. We have worked with MPI to provide a [travel note](#) for beekeepers who need to travel and work as part of essential business. You can find it on our website and it can be presented as evidence of being an essential service over this time.



Interesting websites

Thanks to James Withington who provided the following six sites.

Flatbed truck hauling 40,000 live honey bees crashes on I-20 in Newton County

https://www.wlbt.com/2020/03/15/flatbed-truck-hauling-live-honey-bees-crashes-i-newton-county/?fbclid=IwAR0Ebzk3aif31CbDu-EBJH57gBAZp6-zDYBf47Vd-V40Z_ZW97-4T1X_hp0

Telling a single bee's story in a creative new way

<https://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/m/features/telling-a-single-bees-story-in-a-creative-new-way?fbclid=IwAR2tXrNlglbXpQSp8Dt07WiDiBwTCAkv6wXYMn62l8nvDdJZJukoBLjVOC0>

Baby Bee Brain Development Impaired by Pesticides – “Permanent and Irreversible”

https://scitechdaily.com/baby-bee-brain-development-impaired-by-pesticides-permanent-and-irreversible/?fbclid=IwAR3ac03lrwNRHf28qinNrTH_pzmNgD-RwYbh3vo0wXIR-sHtdS3l9gT0PhA

Coronavirus stings world's top honey makers with China beekeepers locked down

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-health-beekeeping-idUSKCN20K14Q?fbclid=IwAR0dOqUh2V-zyid0dW1h5BH5f9OicwWoK4oBubNAGy-Sw6_epfZkyGQL6sY

The bee buzz is growing nationally and commercially

https://www.thefifthestate.com.au/articles/the-bee-buzz-is-growing-nationally-and-commercially/?fbclid=IwAR0H_bs_0YjoD6opZLMQx6XZHw4LPaV-sP7uUy7di9usJKnEe2jXa1oklVo



Honeybees Go "Whoop!" When They Bump Into Each Other

https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/92331/honeybees-go-whoop-when-they-bump-each-other?a_aid=45706&fbclid=IwAR2uLqmGPDRO_SJ0he3sKUZ-F1ENOyqW8Ibw936EvAKWz8LVKwtvt7i2pJg

Thanks to John Burnet who provided the following 3 sites.

The Bumblebee – in search of a better bee

<https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/in-search-of-a-better-bee/>

This is why I have stopped storing my spare honey supers in large plastic rubbish sacks!

<https://www.ecowatch.com/plastic-eating-caterpillar-2645437623.html?rebelltitem=2#rebelltitem2>

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/environment/scientists-found-a-caterpillar-that-eats-plastic-could-it-help-solve-our>

from Martin Toland, another interesting article

Bee brains and human brains – we knew there was a link!

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/university-otago-study-reveals-links-between-bee-brains-and-human>



Who can I speak to?

President - James Withington 0272 851206 jwithington2016@gmail.com

Vice-President – John Randall (04) 4769959 john@gingerwillow.com

Treasurer - John Burnet (04) 232 7863 johnburnet@xtra.co.nz

Secretary - Jane Harding 0274212417 janeh@xtra.co.nz

Committee Members

James Scott - Membership and website (04) 565 0164 james@scott.gen.nz

Frank Lindsay – (04) 478 3376

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Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville.

WBA Meetings are not being held during the Covid-19 Lockdown.

