



February meeting | 3 February 2021

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

Editor | Jane Harding janeh@xtra.co.nz

Topics for the November meeting

Beginners session Upstairs meeting room 6.45pm

Topic:

Extracting Honey, doing an AFB check

Main Meeting In the main hall at 7.30pm

Topics:

tbc (we're hoping for a speaker, otherwise it will be a meet and greet and catch up and an opportunity to ask any questions of the wise old heads in the club)

Please check the member register at the door!

As part of COVID-19 tracing and also to get an idea of how many members and non-members come to our meetings, we're doing a name check at the door for the next few meetings.

We're asking everyone to check the member register and add your name to a list if you're not on the member register.

Many thanks!



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From the Chair

Well, another year is upon us and I trust you are all well rested after the Christmas period. On reflection the Christmas function appears to have again been a success with plenty of prizes being handed out, a really good food truck in attendance and the annual mead competition occurring. Thank you to all of you who helped set up and disassemble the hall, and to those who brought along some of their home baking for us to enjoy.

It certainly has been a challenging honey season to say the least. The mixed weather has not helped the honey flow with some members reporting some patchy yields and other full crops for the season. As the infamous Frank Lindsay has pointed out, Wellington is one of the hardest regions to keep bees in. No better example was this week when I was called about a swarm in Whitby, which seems somewhat late in the season, so it may have abandoned its hive due to another causes such as varroa.

Next month should be the time to start thinking about getting your varroa treatments into your hive once you have removed your honey. This is the critical time to get the mites under control as we start thinking about wintering down, and the mite population overtakes the new bee numbers, causing colony losses over winter.



Speaking of honey extraction don't forget that the club does have honey extractors available for hire, for a cost of about \$20 for the weekend. Enquiries and bookings for these will be through John Burnet. Please treat them with respect as they are a resource for all club members to use.

Remember there is a requirement for honey extracted after 31 December to be tested for the presence of Tutin. Normally the club provides small specimen containers that members can fill and submit for testing. The cost is about \$20-\$25 for each test and we coordinate a mass testing again through John Burnet. John will have specimen containers available at the meeting.

I am waiting to hear if Dr Phil Lester will be attending the February meeting to talk about his latest publication 'Healthy Bee, Sick Bee: The Influence of Parasites, Pathogens, Predators and Pesticides on Honey Bees'. Phil is a member of the club and continues to look at the pathogens of the honeybee.

Looking forward to seeing you all on 3 February to hear the summer stories of your bee keeping enterprises.





Mead Competition Winner

At the December meeting we held our annual mead competition, which was won again this year by Alwyn Courtenay. Tony Walsworth was the judge. Here is a photo of Tony presenting Alwyn with the Mead Cup





Tutin Testing

As usual the Club is providing a composite tutin testing service over the next three months. Your sample will be sent (with nine others) to Analytica Lab in Hamilton with results normally available within a few days. The Club has never received a tutin positive result in the 5+ years we have been offering tutin testing.

Cost is \$20 per sample and free 100gm jars (same as medical specimen jars) will be available from the Treasurer at each meeting. Beekeepers name and Hive Registration Number is required for each sample. There is no advantage in providing separate samples from each hive or apiary as all samples are mixed before composite testing.

All honey for sale or export must comply with the testing requirement. Donating and bartering are forms of trade that also comply. MPI recommends that hobbyist beekeepers who only produce honey for their own use follow the standard as well. For more details go to <https://tinyurl.com/tutinhoney>.

APINZ are doing a big push on tutin testing this year also, and have produced a bit of publicity about testing for tutin:

What am I? I'm a native NZ plant and my sap contains a neurotoxin. When passion vine hoppers (tiny insects) feed on my sap they excrete a substance called honeydew. When bees feed on this honeydew it can end up in honey. When people eat this honey, they can get very sick.

My name is the tutu bush and the toxin I contain is tutin. All beekeepers should know who I am and follow the rules to make sure they are producing safe honey. For more on the rules check here: <https://bit.ly/36vU2Aw>

Share this pic with all the beekeepers you know and remind them to #testfortutin





Using the Club Honey extractor

Manual Extractor instructions

John Burnet has produced some useful instructions for operating and looking after the club extractors. Even if you've used the extractor before, refresh your memory with a quick scan of the following guide:

- Place extractor on opened wooden frame with hinge on opposite side to honey gate
- Each carriage bolt should be screwed through the foot of each extractor leg
- This stand then provides 100mm extra height enables a 20 litre bucket and double strainer to fit underneath the honey gate
- Stand also enables operator to put a foot on the extractor foot to reduce extractor movement when spinning.
- When raised to vertical position the prop at rear of the stand allows all honey to be drained after final extraction.
- Uncapped and scratched frames should be placed in extractor baskets so that bottom bars lead when turning handle (this ensures maximum honey is extracted as bees build cells with slight uphill slant and frame placement in this manner takes advantage of this)
- Place frames of equal weight opposite each other to reduce extractor vibration and movement during spinning. Ensure honey gate is closed with wing nut tightened.
- Extract roughly half of first side of each frame before turning them over (end over end) and then extract all of second side. Then turn frames over again and extract remainder of first side. This process helps reduce risk of foundation breaking.
- Spin until you can't see droplets being flung against inside of drum.



- Depending on thickness of frames, honey will need to be drained from extractor after about two loads otherwise spinning baskets will be dragging through the honey.
- Sieve or strain honey as it pours from honey gate into the bucket to remove bee parts and wax particles.
- Clean extractor thoroughly with high pressure COLD water as hot or warm water will emulsify any wax particles. It's easiest to do this outside where all water and honey residues can drain away. No dismantling of the extractor is necessary.
- Cappings should also be strained after extraction is finished to recover maximum amount of honey.
- Extracted frames ('wets') should be returned to the hive after dusk when bees have stopped flying otherwise excited bees for miles around will become a nuisance for neighbours and robbing is likely.
- Place a bee escape board with an open escape (or hive mat with large hole) under the 'wets' to encourage bees to take honey residues down to supers below.
- Cleaned out 'wets' can be removed from the hive after 2-3 weeks for storage over winter (store in large rubbish bags to prevent wax moth infestation).
- After draining cappings can be returned to the hive (in a top feeder or in small container inside an empty super). Bees will remove all honey residues and transfer into supers below. Cappings should be turned over regularly to facilitate this.
- After 3 – 4 weeks wax cappings can be removed from the hive and melted down into blocks (preferably outside for safety reasons) for use for candle making or painting on plastic frames.



Interesting Article

The great honey fraud

When is honey not honey? When it's laced with sugar syrup – produced at scale, saturating the market, crashing global honey prices and deceiving millions of customers. [But beekeepers are starting to fight back](#), hoping to expose fraudsters with the help of scientists developing a test that uses nuclear magnetic resonance and a vast database of honey samples.



But is it honey????



Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on March 3rd.

The beginners meeting will cover the final honey harvest and preparing for winter.

For the main meeting we hope to have a visit from a beekeeper from out of Wellington who can give us a view on beekeeping in their area.

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

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Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville.

