



**Next meeting** | Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Where** | Johnsonville Community Centre

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## WBA Christmas party

From 6.30 onwards at the Johnsonville Community Centre

Folks, it's time to celebrate the year that has been.

We will have the **Hungry Monkey food truck** back again.

Get ready for the regular **Christmas Quiz** with bragging rights up for grabs again.

There are some **great prizes** this year, so don't miss out.

We are also playing **Buzzy Bee Bingo** so bring along a dobber to mark your bingo cards.

India, Paris and Olivia from **Kiwi Colour Kits** will be selling their colouring in books.

Members are welcome to set up **stalls to sell** their beekeeping products.

Wives, husbands, partners are welcome to attend.

**Please bring a plate for supper**

**Don't miss the fun. See you there.**



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## Note from the President – Tricia Laing

Swarming bees is on everyone's minds since the cabbage trees began flowering. James Withington noted in a email to WBA committee members that the WhatsApp platform had received 73 swarm notifications by mid November which is about equal to the reporting rate for the whole of last season's swarm notifications. A big thank you to all the beekeepers that picked up swarms recently; and, to the beekeepers who took appropriate measures to prevent swarming.

Why do we have such a high rate of swarming this year? It might be because the weather is confusing the bees; and, because the amount of rain is stopping beekeepers from doing the usual number of checks on their hives. Related topics of concern are the effective collection of swarms, and the circumstances that should result in swarms being destroyed. We can all learn from sharing our experiences of swarming bees.

My apiary usually comprises of a combination of Langstroth and Golden Mean Top Bar hives. After my apiary was decimated by wasps last year, I was able to replace the colonies in the Langstroth hives, but I wanted swarms for the colonies in my top bar hives. I deliberately didn't remove swarm cells from the Langstroth hives expecting them to swarm. On 10 November, despite intermittent rain and sunny periods and a temperature below 20 degrees, a very large swarm emerged containing three queens. Luckily, they swarmed onto a fence post near my apiary so they were easy to manage. We caught one of the queens and put her in a queen cage and split the swarm into two colonies. I removed all remaining swarm cells from the hive that had swarmed. On 11 November two good sized swarms emerged from the other Langstroth hive. One swarm took up residence in an empty top bar hive without any assistance. The second swarm escaped to the



wild. The location of my apiary near my house on a lifestyle block meant that the swarms have repopulated my apiary and were not a nuisance to neighbours.

Viv Harris, a WBA committee member shared her theory about swarm prevention that we can think about. She wrote: “[S]tart giving Queenie more room starting in late July/August. A very quick check on a warmish day, add an empty frame with a bit of honey around the edges by brood. Add a new box as needed especially if she’s starting to crank up and once early/mid Sept comes, go through brood frames weekly/10days checking for queen cells. Secret is giving her heaps of room early on, once queen cells start it’s a month too late I reckon. Beekeeping is a lot of work! Haven’t had swarm cells for a few years now since I started doing this.”

Take care over the holiday break - Merry Christmas!

*P.S. Are any members requeening hives in December where I could possibly help out for my SIT course?*

**Tricia**

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## Wax dipping



The club's wax dipper has recently been re-sited from Wainuiomata to South Karori to John Randall's apiary site.

Wax dipping sessions during the summer season will be advised.

Cost: \$5 per box (cash only)



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# Queen rearing for hobbyists: myths and methods

By Tim Goddard

When first opening a guide or article to raising queen bees, it's easy to be baffled, confused, and put off. It's easy to believe that the whole process is complicated, experts-only, and be put off trying.

In my view, this is all a question of scale. If you need to raise hundreds of queens for a commercial operation, complicated preparations and manipulations are worthwhile. On a small scale though, a lot of the complication isn't needed. These preparations are mostly about success rates and persuading the bees to raise more cells than they otherwise would or could.

I'm by no means an expert - I'm a hobbyist with a lot less experience than many of you. What I've found, however, is that raising queens doesn't need to be scary. I wanted here to share the things I've learned, answer a few questions that hobbyists may have, bust a few myths, and hopefully encourage more people to give it a go.

## When can we raise queens?

Raising queens requires that hives in the area have mature drones, and enough fine (and not-too-windy) days for mating flights. We can start raising queens in Spring, from when we're seeing emerging drones in our own hives, through to when the weather packs it in and the Wellington wind picks up in late Autumn. We would usually introduce queens to a hive in Spring or Autumn, so timing it to when you need queens is also important!

## What's the easiest way to get another queen?

The easiest, and most common method used by hobbyists is to simply split hives. Each side of that split needs to have brood, including eggs, a good number of



nurse bees, and some food resources. If you have two brood boxes, the brood nest will often be in the middle, and you can often split the boxes. You need to check these resources are present, but no need to find the queen - whichever side doesn't have one will raise another.

## What happens if they fail?

About a third of the time, a hive will fail to raise a new queen. By the time this happens, they won't have the eggs or resources to try again, so careful monitoring is required four to five weeks after splitting. Rescue queenless splits with a queen cell (best), eggs (good but takes longer), or merge them with a hive.

We can increase our odds somewhat here by starting multiple nucs, each with the minimum required (eggs, bees, food). Each will have a chance of raising a queen, and we can just reunite those that fail. It doesn't take that many bees to raise a queen successfully, but smaller nucs definitely need more care and attention, so it's a balance.

## Aren't emergency queens weaker or less fertile?

Emergency queens being weaker or less fertile seems to be largely a myth. As long as the hive is healthy, and starts with eggs, they will be perfectly capable of raising healthy queens from them, even if some comb re-engineering is required. I've generally found that the bees aren't foolish, and while they don't always share our priorities, raising a healthy queen is an absolute priority.

I've come to believe bees will only raise a sub-par queen under desperate circumstances, for example where all the larvae they have are too old, they've been tricked into raising more queens than they're capable of tending to, or they have another health issue.

## So why try grafting?

Grafting is helpful when we want to:

1. Raise more queens at once (even at hobbyist scale).
2. Carefully control the source of genetics (well, half of them).



3. Reduce the time mating hives remain queenless (starting from queen cells saves nearly two weeks).
4. Use a single nuc multiple times to raise a series of queens.

While not all of these apply to hobbyists, particularly for those with fewer than five hives, it's helpful enough to be worth a go. Grafting isn't nearly as hard as it's made out to be at hobbyist scale.

## Don't I need a lot of equipment?

The minimum equipment required for grafting is cheap and easy to obtain. You will need:

1. A grafting tool. I prefer a Chinese reed tool. These usually come in 10-packs as some will be duds and they eventually break.
2. A set of plastic queen cups. Nicot-type cups work for me (these can be used without grafting using a special cage, but I graft into them). I gather JZ/BZ cups also work well - it's a matter of preference.
3. An empty frame with no foundation to mount the cells on.
4. A regular production hive, with a queen excluder and one super above the excluder.
5. As many nucs for mating as you want to raise queens at once. Each can raise a queen every three weeks, so don't go overboard!

You should be able to get the specialist queen rearing items you need from local suppliers, for under a hundred dollars.



*Left: Parts of a Nicot-type cup; Centre: Assembled cup; Right: Assembled cup with cage.*



*Chinese grafting tools on the left.*

*A metal grafting tool (one of many variations) on the right.*

## Where do the funny plastic cups go?

You need to have a frame that you'll graft into. Worker larvae will be moved from a donor frame in to plastic queen cups.

You could just take an empty frame and attach cells the top bar. JZ/BZ cups can clip in to a grooved top bar directly. Nicot cups come with a more complicated 3-part assembly, but again have a part which can be attached to the top bar with glue or a nail through each.

Another option, which I prefer, is to mount the cells on a swivelling bar. I simply tap small nails through the wiring holes of the frame, which hold an extra bar with the ends cut off. Take the extra time to line everything up, which the wiring holes help with. The point is for the bar to be able to swivel, but it will only turn if well aligned.



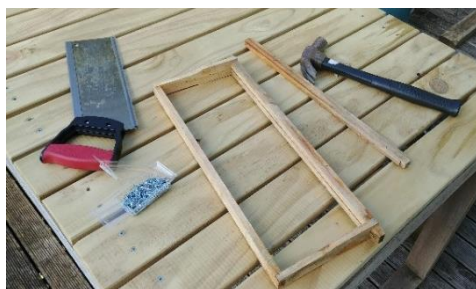


However you mount the cells, you have to be able to pull them out again. The Nicot cups separate from their base to do this, whereas JZ/BZ can be pulled out of the groove in the bar. Either is fine, but you will need to be able to remove cells gently.



*A frame for holding queen cells can easily be constructed at home.*

*Cup mounting bases can be attached to a swivelling bar with glue or nails.*



*The same frame being assembled above, after use.*



## What about those special mating hives?

In my opinion, specialised mating hives are completely unnecessary for hobbyists. Yes, this will let you raise as many queens as possible with the bees you have. However, these don't typically take standard frames, and are more difficult to work with.



For the novice queen rearer, nucleus hives that take the same size of frames as your other hives will be perfect for mating. You only need 3-4 frames to start each nuc, and the ability to feed them if required, so feel free to go small or add frame feeders.

## Okay, so how do you graft?

Grafting is nothing more than moving day-old worker larvae from worker cells into your queen cups, which will hang down vertically. This causes them to be fed royal jelly and develop into queens.

The process is difficult to describe in words, and depends on the grafting tool you chose, so I suggest you also watch a few YouTube videos. It's hard to see what's going on in the cell past the tool, but it gives an overview.

A summary of the process is that you take the tool of your choice, slide it along the bottom of a cell to pick up a day-old larva from its cell in a pool of royal jelly, and put it down in your plastic cup without breaking or flipping it. Chinese reed tools have a plunger to slide the larva off the reed.

Day-old larvae are your target. They form a tiny half-circle C shape and should be floating in milky liquid. Don't graft larvae which form more than a 180-degree half-circle, as they're too old.

I want to encourage you to give this a go. It may look fiddly, but do you really need a 90% success rate? No! Good enough is good enough, and you'll get better over time.

Once grafted into the cups in your frame, turn the bar if it's a swivelling one so they face the downwards direction, and place the frame back in the hive, above the excluder where it came from. The bees will take it from there!

## The top tips I've learned for this process are:

- Always put the cells into the hive a day before you graft into them, empty. This gives the bees a chance to clean them of strange smells.



- Always graft from old, dark frames. The wax in new frames is too soft and gets damaged by the grafting tool.
- Brush bees off the frame you want to graft from, don't shake frames you want to graft from (it displaces the larvae from the centre).
- Graft with the sun or a strong light source behind you, so you can see!
- Approach larvae from the back of the C shape, so you don't catch the head or tail tips.
- Run the tool along the bottom of the cell, rather than hovering. As long as you have old wax, it can take a reed scraping across it.
- If you think you may have harmed a larva, or it looks wrong, it probably isn't viable. Brush it off the tool and start again.
- Try not to flip the larvae over. Slide on, slide off in the plastic cup, same way up.
- You can always try again. Just keep trying.

## Don't hives have to be queenless to start cells? Don't people shake in extra nurse bees? What about putting pollen next to the cells?

If you want to start 100 queen cells at once, you need a hive which is willing to do so (being queenless makes them desperate), has the nurses to do so, and has the food and resources to do so. This requires preparation.

On the other hand, if you want to raise 12 or 20 queen cells, any hive will do. Just put the frame of cells in a super immediately over the brood nest, with an excluder as the queen will kill any cells she gets to! The nurse bees will care more than adequately for these queen cells, and they'll soon be swimming in jelly, as there aren't too many.



## What about those complicated schedules and charts?

My schedule is pretty simple. As a working person, I want as much as possible to fall on a weekend. Here's what I came up with:

*My preferred schedule for raising queens - most activity on weekends!*

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1			Prepare	Graft			Remove capped cells
2		Do not disturb cells				Move to nucs (Saturday best)	
3							
4							
5						Remove laying queens	

1. Put queen cells empty into the hive on a Wednesday evening. Find a frame with eggs in the hive I want to graft from, and mark it.
2. Graft into the queen cells on Thursday evening.
3. Sunday or Monday, remove or cage any cells which are already capped. These are at risk of emerging early, and killing the rest.
4. Don't disturb during the rest of the second week.



5. In the weekend of the second week, prepare mating nucs and move queen cells in to nucs.
6. Wait three more weeks (two is possible, but less reliable), then check for eggs - if you have eggs, you have a mated queen!

This can, of course, be adjusted with a queen rearing chart. I just found this pattern is simple for a hobbyist with a day job. If you want to run this repeatedly, you'll want to start cells every three weeks. Removing any existing (hopefully mated) queen from a mating nuc, topping up resources, and adding a new cell can then all be done at once.

## Any final tips?

- Start quite a few more cells than you need. You'll lose some.
- Don't count your queens until they're mated.
- If cup assemblies fall apart, put a little clean foundation wax or propolis in the join. It'll make them stick.
- Put the cups close enough together that the bees don't build comb between them.
- Pull cells out a couple of days before they emerge.
- Any emerging queen will kill any cells she can reach.

Tim Goddard





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## Honey extraction service available for members

Local commercial beekeeper Chris Howard has offered to extract members' honey this season using his brand-new extraction plant at 10C Buller Grove, Naenae.

- Cost will be \$20 per box. There will be no minimum quantity of boxes (at this stage)
- You will need to bring your own food grade buckets (20 litre or 10 litre).
- Incubator room available to bring honey up to optimum extraction temperature
- Members are invited to watch and assist with the process on extraction date – normal hygiene and health regulations will apply e.g. hairnets to be worn
- 500kg bottling tank and filling system available if required (additional cost).

Chris will organise a booking system shortly.

I am willing to purchase any surplus honey for local company Bee Fresh Farms at appropriate wholesale rates subject to lab and tutin testing (after 31 Dec).

**Any enquiries to John Burnet 0274-379-062**

**or direct to Chris 027-311-0439**



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## Poly nucs

For those members who have ordered poly nucs and poly hives from the November meeting these will be available for payment and collection at the December meeting. \$45 for the poly nuc and \$45 for the poly hive each. If you missed out or wish to order additional boxes/nucs this can be done at the meeting or

**Contact James Withington 0272851206**

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## Bee equipment for sale

Maria Serfontein in Whitby is giving up beekeeping and has the following equipment for sale.

- 1 x Two frame manual extractor
- 3 x 20 litre buckets one with honey gate
- 1 x sieve, uncapping knife and cappings scratcher
- 3 x hive roofs and mats
- 3 x wooden nuc boxes (5 frame) with metal roofs
- 2 x top feeders
- 2 x  $\frac{3}{4}$  boxes with 20 x  $\frac{3}{4}$  wooden frames – cleaned with all comb removed.
- 1 x frame holder
- 1 x smoker
- 1 x hive-tool
- 2 x half suits (jacket style) - 1 x Size M and 1 x Size L

Ideally, Maria would like to sell all items together in one transaction. To make an offer, or for more information:

**Contact Maria direct on phone 0211-678-103**



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## Beehive for sale

if members or new starters are looking for hives I would be happy to sell one of mine.

2 x 3/4 boxes with plenty of stores. New season queen from Lion Apiaries installed into a split at the start of October. Hive has built up well and is in good condition. Comes with ventilated "John Burnett" wooden base, hive mat, and galvanised roof. \$400. Pick up from Raumati Beach.

**Contact Jack Mace 021 845 195**

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## Coffee sacks for your smoker

With all the wet weather are you looking for an alternative smoker fuel to pine needles? The club is being offered a number of used hessian coffee sacks, which can be used in your smoker. These will be available at the December meeting for collection, free of charge. Normally beekeeping supply outlets are charging \$6-10 for them.





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# Apiarist's Advocate

## Patrick Dawkins. Editor – Apiarist's Advocate eMagazine & website

In December we are putting together our second printed bi-annual for 2022 "Print Reads Summer '22" and it will no doubt be of interest to your members. We are taking orders now and will print soon and have delivery in time for Christmas.

A few clubs have ordered collectively to take advantage of cheaper pricing for orders of 4+ issues (\$29 per versus \$25 per issue). If you wanted to circulate this

information to club members it would be much appreciated, and ideally any group order in by Wednesday 7 December.

More info can be found in this

story: <https://www.apiaristsadvocate.com/post/printed-magazine-back-in-time-for-christmas-order-now>

And orders can be placed online or via return

email: <https://www.apiaristsadvocate.com/pr>

Patrick Dawkins - Ph: 027 383 7278

*News, Views & Promotions – for Beekeepers, by Beekeepers*

APIARIST'S ADVOCATE  
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## Capital Beekeeping Supplies has been sold to Hive World

John Burnet advises his hive-ware and beekeeping equipment supply business and stock has been purchased by Hive World.

Please direct all your future beekeeping supply enquiries to Rod & Jill Williams at Hive World on phone 0800 000 770 or to [sales@hiveworld.co.nz](mailto:sales@hiveworld.co.nz). Website [www.hiveworld.co.nz](http://www.hiveworld.co.nz)

You can visit Hive World's shop at 16 Wall Place, Kenepuru, Porirua between 7:30am and 5pm Mon-Fri but if items are required urgently Rod may be able to assist outside these hours.

Pre-paid hive-ware and equipment orders will continue to be delivered to the Club's monthly meetings at the Johnsonville Community Centre if required.

John will continue his current involvement and support of the Club and thanks all his customers for their business over the past seven years.



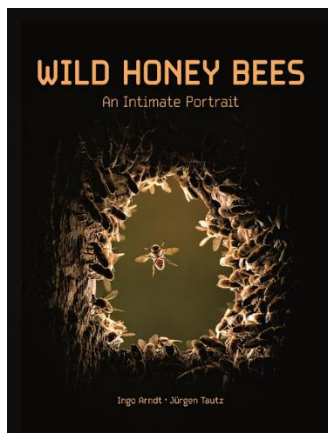


## Book review by Judith de Wilde

### Wild Honey Bees: An Intimate Portrait

Ingo Arndt – Jürgen Tautz

*English Edition First Published, Natural History Museum, London, UK 2021*



Arndt, a world leading nature photographer, and Tautz, a behavioural scientist, sociobiologist and bee expert, spent two long summers photographing and studying the behaviour of their subjects, *Apis Mellifera*-honey bees, in the forests of Central Europe. Their objective was to discover any hidden insights about how these wild honey bees live in contrast to the well documented, 'kept' honey bees. Arndt went to extraordinary lengths to capture images; hanging from ropes-20 metres off the ground, cooking in the heat of a viewing platform for hours on end, and not to mention enduring the odd sting. The resulting photos are so staggeringly gorgeous and detailed that it takes several minutes to turn each page! They are some of the best images of bee form and functions, I have ever seen. The accompanying text by Tautz, is engaging and in sync with the images.



I fall into the group of people that picture *honey* bees, in the context of colonies in manmade wooden boxes, managed by beekeepers in white suits and those in the wild as escapees, spreaders of disease and doomed to die. In this book Arndt showed me that the honey bee is in fact an integral part of healthy Central European forests. *(It does need to be remembered throughout this book that it is focused on Central Europe, namely Germany and Poland, but it is still makes for fascinating viewing and reading, even for us southern hemisphere folk.)*

In the hollow of trees, these European wild honey bees co-exist successfully with multiple organisms. Some are helpful, like the tiny book scorpion, for which the tracheal and varroa mite are on its menu. Book scorpion is found neither here in New Zealand or in artificial hives, but the images are fascinating. Are book scorpion's helping to keep varroa numbers in check for these wild honey bees? And are they a possible new varroa bio control?? What potentially beneficial microorganisms could be found in the sediment at the base of these wild colonies. That could be an interesting study. In the wild even the wax moth has its place, devouring abandoned comb and freeing the cavity for new inhabitants.

Another example of a beneficial relationship photographed and detailed was the one between forest, aphids and bees. Aphids tap into trees seeking amino acids and nitrogen-rich compounds and excrete a sticky residue full of sugars known as honeydew. If left unchecked, this sticky residue can lead to black fungus and mildew. Bees, collect this honeydew to process it into honey, benefiting both the forest and the bees. The images are great, such as those of pollen gathering, flight, landing with legs spread, water collection, nectar distributing and food storage - to mention a few. Each image is crisp and detailed, a wonder to look at and study.

I enjoyed the imagery and text around the colony defences against foes. Let's just say I am happy the we only have wasps to deal with and no hornets or death head hawk moths. The image series of a hornet being cooked alive in a ball of bees was amazing.



There were some very interesting theories in this book like:

*Apis Mellifera* – honeybee is originally a tree cavity dwelling bee from central Europe and evolved to swarm to new dwellings 6 meters or higher to escape bears. (Pg88.)

Honey bees evolved to gorge themselves on honey when sensing smoke to increase their tolerance to heat in a forest fire. A bee body filled with honey has a higher heat capacity, allowing it to absorb more heat with a lower increase in body temperature. In a rapid forest fire, the surface of the tree is charred but in the internal cavity, honey gorged bees will survive. (Pg100.)

Arndt and Trautz question the current honey bee navigation theories. They theorize that bees use the waggle dance to draw attention to themselves and convey an approximate location of interest. Any intrigued followers will then take off in the indicated direction where subsequent stimuli such as geraniol pheromones, ostentatious flying patterns and with continued communication will lead the intrigued followers to the target. (Page 106.) They support this theory with well written text and some persuasive and stunning imagery.

There is a chapter dedicated to a wild honeybee swarm moving into an abandoned woodpecker tree cavity and setting up home. The photography is phenomenal following the first flight in, from a small cluster to a fully-fledged colony capable of surviving a winter. I especially loved the images of a worker bee excreting wax, wax manipulation and the formation of comb wings. Truly extraordinary.

The book finishes with a look at traditional beekeeping in Eastern Europe and the role this may have in adapting some of the modern commercial beekeeping practices, into a more sustainable manner.

The cautionary words at the end of the book are worthy of note:

“The Fact that there are still resilient honey bee colonies in our forests, harbouring the potential to someday help us out of dead-end situations resulting from well-intended, but poorly executed developments, should give us cause to take a greater



interest in these bees and make efforts to conserve both them and their environments”

This truly remarkable large format book would suit any bee enthusiast coffee table or beekeeping club. It will entertain and inspire conversation from non-beekeepers to beekeepers alike with its visual feast of phenomenally superb imagery and interwoven informative text.

**Judith de Wilde**

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## Things to do in December

- Remove any varroa treatment products applied in early October
  - Feed
  - Manipulate hives
  - Introduce nucleus hives
  - Check supers for wax moth
  - Super up
  - Prepare honey house equipment
  - Harvest and extract early crops, especially if in the city.
- **Taken from Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand by Andrew Matheson & Murray Reid**





## Swarm collecting 2022

By Jim Hepburn

"Yes! I could co-ordinate the Swarm Collectors list/app for this season", I said earlier this year.

The club offers a service of attending to swarms for Kapiti, Porirua, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt and Wellington council areas.

We had trialled a WhatsApp group late the previous year and it seemed to work well. Prior to the trial swarm calls would come from all over the place and a few members would then ring around trying to find a beekeeper to attend the call. This was very time consuming and messy when messages/calls were not answered and created confusion.

This season we are using the WhatsApp group function and members who are willing to attend a swarm call are the participants of the group. There are currently 57 members on the list. 3 or 4 members get calls from the public and councils when there is a swarm sighted and they post it on the group page with the details of the location, contact, size etc. This triggers an alert to all 57 members and one of them will respond that they are going to attend the swarm. Any of the participants can also post to the group.



What I did not anticipate when I said yes was just how crazy the season was going to be. It started off with the first call on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept with a bit of a lull until the end of Sept. Then it went "Manic" as the fine weather arrived and the well wintered bees decided it was time to leave and find new homes.



To date (23<sup>rd</sup> Nov) the WhatsApp group has had a massive 94 separate calls that had input from the group of collectors. That is more than the total recorded for the whole of last season. Things have quietened down with the current weather but who knows what might be coming.

## Highlights / observations

- Should you wear your bee suit when attending a swarm at the Nudist Camp in Upper Hutt. Philip did but I noticed he did go back for a second visit (stragglers he said).
- Quite a lot of Bumbles and most callers were happy to co-exist with them until the Autumn when they depart for hibernation.
- Highest area for swarms is the Hutt Valley.
- Most successful extraction was from a disused chimney at a builder's house in Paremata by PK. So tidy were his repairs to the chimney that he was offered a job by the grateful builder.
- Highest Swarm – jury is out on this but there have been some very high ones. One home owner was advised to squirt them with his hose and he did this diligently for 3 days until they moved on.
- Most courageous effort goes to Marion who attended a call to some malicious damage to commercial hives on the roadside in Birchville by a vehicle. Marion's comments – "I've put as many boxes together as I could but several were smashed. The bees were not at all happy, quite a vicious lot compared to my girls." Police and owner notified.
- Most bizarre situation – Call came in with the caller being mobile and chasing a swarm down the road. I tried to get a location but it was like one of those 'Storm chasers in the US, totally fixated on the chase and trying to drive into the middle of the storm/swarm.
- Then there was the Hippy caller who had a swarm in a tree in his backyard and he wanted to get them into a box he had found so he could keep bees like on the 'good life' TV series. He would not give his address as he did not want anyone to steal his bees.





There have been a couple of instances where ownership of swarmed bees has raised its head. One where one of our collectors attended a swarm, and talking with the resident when a man in a bee suit (not a WhatsApp collector) turned up, announced they were his bees, dropped the swarm in a box and was gone. The other was where one of our collectors turned up only to be told by the resident that a man had just recently arrived onsite, strode up to the swarm put his hand

into the swarm, announced that he had the queen and the rest of the bees would disperse in time. Clearly this was not the case. On ownership of swarms – James has done some interesting research and has posted this on the Facebook page. Enough of all this – time to post another call.

Huge thank you to all the Swarm Catchers for 2022 – 2023 for the work done so far and let's hope it does not keep up this pace as we narrow in on Xmas.

***Ten metre high ladder to this swarm***

**Jim Hepburn**



*Editor's Note: Jim's hive swarmed too, but with all his experience he was able to recover them!*



## Bee ownership?

By James Withington

During the swarming season there is often conjecture as ownership of bees and how long do they remain the property of a beekeeper. I have done a little research into the topic to hopefully clarify the understanding of bee ownership.

While beekeepers don't technically 'own' bees, they remain the property of a beekeeper while they are hosted in their equipment, i.e. in your beehive. You must remember that bees are one of nature's insects and are free to move on when they like.

However, as bees do swarm we have to rely upon some very old legal case law to get a better understanding of ownership of bees. The following article dated 19 December 1919 from the Otago Daily Times and details a court case around this phenomenon.

*'The vexed question as to the rightful owner of bees which quit their hive, and are found by another man some distance away, was before Judge Gwynne James in the County Court at Bath.*

*James Batstone, of Fairfield Park, Bath, claimed £9 from Herbert Rumming, a neighbour, the value of a swarm of bees, which the defendant, it was claimed, had seized. Counsel for the plaintiff claimed that the ownership of the bees remained with the original owner as long as he kept them in sight.*

*The case for the defense was that they were not kept in sight, and so ownership was lost. The judge said it had been clear for hundreds of years, under the law laid down by the Emperor Justinian, that a swarm of bees belonged to a man as long as they were in his sight, and could easily be pursued.*

*Otherwise, they became the property of the first person who saw them. This swarm had not been in the owner's sight when it went from the hive, or when it was on its way to the hedge, 100 yards away, where it was found.*



*The law today was just as it was hundreds of years ago. If a man did not keep the bees in sight, they became the property of anyone who found them. Judgement would be for the defendant’.*

So, applying this case to a swarm which settles/clusters within the confines of the beekeeper’s property it can be argued they remain in beekeepers’ possession. If, however, the bees settle/cluster in a neighboring property then permission should be obtained to enter the neighbor’s property (legal requirement under the Trespass Act) to retrieve them. This is a good reason to keep your neighbors on side when beekeeping and the best way is providing an annual supply of free honey, so that you get provided early notification of swarmed bees.

If the bees move beyond your property, then they become fair game for any beekeeper to retrieve. Often, we hear of people claiming that the swarm is their bees, and they wish to have them returned. Unless the beekeeper watched the swarm leave and settle, then there is no way of proving ownership. Wellington has a number of hives in the region and not every beekeeper is a club member nor are all hives registered, so in this case the bees have to be deemed as originating from sources unknown. Lastly there is an old myth associated with the practice of ‘tanging a swarm’. For those who don’t know what tanging is, it is the making of a loud continuous noise to stop the swarm and have it return to the originating hive.



Beekeepers often used to bang pots and pans to generate this noise. Another side of this practice is that it acted as an audible warning to others that the beekeeper knew of the swarm and was tracking it, thus providing a warning alarm to other potential collectors. If you are looking to purchase official swarm tanging pots or pans, I am sure John Burnet can accommodate this purchase through his beekeeping store. Happy swarm collecting everyone and remember always provide a jar of honey to the informant of a swarm.

***Woman tanging a swarm***



**from the CE, Karin Kos**

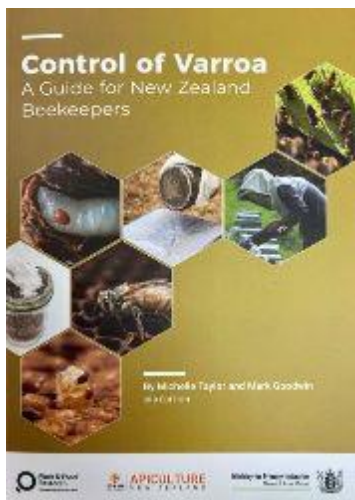
MPI released its Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries at Mystery Creek Field Days this week. The report's section on honey notes that export revenue from honey of all types was \$455 million in the year to 30 June 2022, down 6 percent on the previous year. Key points from the report include:

- export volumes for the same period decreased 11 percent to 11,320 tonnes.
- the honey harvest for the 2021/22 season is estimated at 22,000 tonnes, up 7 percent on the previous year and a fifth successive season of production above 20,000 tonnes.
- mānuka stocks have built up due to these strong harvests and a fall in export volumes from a peak in December 2020.
- the US became the largest importer of New Zealand honey in 2021/22, following a 27 percent increase in revenue to \$95 million and an 18 percent increase in volume to 2,292 tonnes. Growth into the US is forecast to continue with the falling NZD against the USD.

The report goes on to say that a combination of high honey stocks, labour shortages, increased input costs and the uncertainty of future demand has led to a reduction in the number of commercial and semi-commercial beekeepers and a reduction in the number of hives. Honey production is therefore forecast to decrease over the next couple of seasons with any gaps being filled by the surplus inventory.

We look forward to getting your feedback via the ApiNZ member survey (see below). Remember to fill it out before it closes next Wednesday.

You can find the full SOPI report [here](#).



## ApiNZ member survey

How are we doing? ApiNZ would like your feedback on our work and membership benefits. We are running a quick online survey and would really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts. Everyone who completes the survey can choose to **go into the draw to win a copy of 'Control of Varroa' 3<sup>rd</sup> edition** by Michelle Taylor and Mark Goodwin.

You can access the survey [here](#). The survey will be open until 5pm, Wednesday 7 December 2022.

## ApiNZ Clubs update from Paul Martin

For those of you who don't know me, I am the Non-Commercial Board member of ApiNZ. I hope your bees are going well, certainly in my part of the world (Northland) we are onto the start of a honey flow now, which is always fun. Below are a few notices from ApiNZ we'd love you to share with your clubs:

### BEE AWARE MONTH

A big THANK YOU to all the groups that participated in this year's Bee Aware Month Campaign. It was so great to hear about all the different educational events that were happening around the article. You can check out the Oct/Nov Beekeeper Journal p. 31 for a report on this year's campaign. There are also photos of some of the events on the BAM Events webpage: <https://apinz.org.nz/bee-aware-month/bee-aware-month-events-2022-2/> If you have any feedback or suggestions for next year's campaign, or would like some ideas on how to get involved, please get in touch with Karen: [info@apinz.org.nz](mailto:info@apinz.org.nz)





## TUTIN CAMPAIGN

ApiNZ is continuing to raise awareness of the risks of tutin and beekeepers' responsibilities to comply with the tutin food safety standard. If your club would like more tutin education brochures please email [info@apinz.org.nz](mailto:info@apinz.org.nz) with approx. numbers required and a postal address.

We will be running some Social Media posts on our Apiculture NZ Facebook and Instagram pages. If you spot them, please like and share them so we can get the message of the dangers of Tutin out to a wider audience.

Beekeepers can also be referred to the MPI website for more information:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business/honey-bee-products-processing-requirements/managing-tutin-contamination-in-honey/>

## SWARM COLLECTION VIDEO COMPETITION

For non-beekeepers it is interesting to discover how a beekeeper goes about collecting a swarm of bees. We are running a Swarm Collection Video Competition so we can show this skill off to the public and raise some awareness about swarming.

We are looking for short (3-5min max), informative and interesting videos.

The best videos will be posted on our social media pages. The winning video will also be posted on our website and **the winner will receive their choice of one of the following books:**

*Elimination of American Foulbrood Disease Without the Use of Drugs*, by Mark Goodwin, **or** *Control of Varroa: A Guide for New Zealand Beekeepers*, By Michelle Taylor and Mark Goodwin.

The deadline for entries is **Wednesday 1 February 2023**.

For more information, please visit: <https://apinz.org.nz/swarm-collection-video-comp/>



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## Who can I speak to?

President - Patricia Laing [tricialaing48@gmail.com](mailto:tricialaing48@gmail.com)

Vice President position vacant

Treasurer – John Burnet (04) 232 7863 [johnburnet@xtra.co.nz](mailto:johnburnet@xtra.co.nz)

Secretary – Jane Harding 027 421 2417 [janeh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:janeh@xtra.co.nz)

### Committee Members

Membership - James Scott - (04) 565 0164 [james@scott.gen.nz](mailto:james@scott.gen.nz)

Web Master - Jason Bragg - (021 527 244) [email@jasonbragg.me](mailto:email@jasonbragg.me),

Librarian - Ellen Millar - (021 709 793) [msoon.email@gmail.com](mailto:msoon.email@gmail.com)

Supper co-ordinator - Barbara Parkinson – (04) 2379624 [parkinson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:parkinson@xtra.co.nz)

Swarm WhatsApp Administrator - Jim Hepburn ( 021 926823)  
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Jane Harding - 027 421 2417 [janeh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:janeh@xtra.co.nz)



## Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre,  
Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville

