



Next meeting | Wednesday 1st November 2023

Where | Johnsonville Community Centre

Editor | Jane Harding janeh@xtra.co.nz

Beginners Class 6:45pm: Supering Up, preparing for the honey flow and what to do with your new nuc. Graeme

Main Meeting: 7.30pm

Pike Stahlman-Brown, Director of the Colony NZ Loss Survey at Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research will talk to us about the results of the 2021 and 2022 Colony Loss surveys, and a timely reminder for us to complete the 2023 survey which is due on 15 November

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President's Note

November 2023

At the October meeting we enjoyed an informative presentation by Marco Gonzalez, National Operations Manager, responsible for managing outbreaks and reducing the incidents of American Foul Brood (AFB). He described what it meant to be a responsible beekeeper particularly in relation to being a DECA holder and registering our apiaries. It was disappointing to hear that abandoned apiaries are sometimes the source of AFB outbreaks. He also indicated that unregistered beekeepers hinder his work finding the sources of AFB.

I choose not to hold a DECA and last week Martin Toland, a member of the Wellington Beekeepers' Association with whom I shared an apiary when we both lived in Karori, completed a Certificate of Inspection for my two colonies. I was delighted that all is well: that there is no American Foul Brood or varroa mites. I put the lack of varroa mites down to the fact the commercial beekeeper who had hives nearby has pulled out of the Valley. This has reduced the population of bees around me significantly. To avoid reintroducing varroa mites I will be doing splits of my hives rather than collecting swarms this year.

Whether or not you are a DECA holder, please remember to submit your Certificate of Inspection as soon as possible if you have not done so.

I understand that swarming has already begun in our area. Marco emphasised the importance of putting swarms in quarantine before including them in our apiaries as one way to reduce transmitting diseases such as AFB. Also a number of our members indicated that they had not seen AFB and so we



plan to invite Marco back to present a more hands on presentation of what AFB looks like in a hive.

WBA has been working closely with the Wellington City Council and Apiculture NZ to develop new bylaws to regulate beekeeping in Wellington. This has come to a very positive conclusion thanks to the ongoing hard work of John Burnet in particular. Please check out the WCC website to view these new bylaws.

Aotearoa New Zealand is experiencing wild swings in the weather caught as it is currently between snow in the South and a tropical cyclone bearing down from the North. Despite being caught between these extremes at present, NIWA is forecasting pretty normal weather for the summer which will hopefully be good for our bees.



Inspecting a Topbar frame (image courtesy of Beebuilt)



Key Dates for AFB Compliance

Further to the very interesting meeting last month, Marco has provide dthis quick reminder of key dates in the AFB calendar. We'll keep putting these dates into the newsletter to remind you.

Report all AFB to the Management Agency within 7 days

All AFB infected hives must be burnt within 7 days of finding AFB

- 31st of March each year. All beekeepers must update their colony numbers so that levy invoices are correctly generated.
- Between 1 April and 1 June each year. All beekeepers must complete an ADR for their hives.
- Between 1 April and 1 June each year. All beekeepers must pay their AFB levy invoice.
- Between 1 August and 31 November each year. All non DECA holders must have their hives inspected by a DECA holder and complete a COI.



AFB roping out (Photo AFB.org.nz)



Swarm Season is Underway

As you will have seen from the club email last week, swarming is underway. The swarm collectors WhatsApp group is getting a steady stream of reports from all over the greater Wellington area.

No-one is immune, one of the hives at the club apiary in Chartwell swarmed before Labour Weekend and Frank has taken the opportunity to make some nucs from the remaining swarm cells.

To reduce the risk of swarming, make sure your queen has room to lay and the bees have room for the nectar they will (hopefully) be bringing in. Add a super to the hive as necessary. Rotate your brood boxes (bring the bottom box above the 2nd box, if you have a two-box brood chamber) as the queen will usually move up to lay, not down.

And, do the 10 second swarm check on your hives every 7-10 days.

- smoke the hive and crack the two brood boxes
- slide the upper box forward a little and tilt it back
- smoke the bees back from the bottom bars
- look up at the underside of the top box
- if you can't see any swarm cells all is well
- if you can, strip the hive down and shake the bees of every frame and remove all the swarm cells.

Instead of destroying the swarm cells you can take a split off the hive using the swarm cell. This can be re-united with the parent hive later in the season to make a really string hive or taken away and used for increase or replacement.



Pollen and Nectar Sources in Wellington

This article is reproduced from an earlier newsletter, for the benefit of new beekeepers.

Wellington has a huge range of plants that are good for bees, from the bush to the beach and all the weeds in-between. Below is a list of some of the better known and best pollen and nectar plants that flower in Wellington over late winter and spring to early summer.

Note the range of weed plants at the bottom of the list – these are all common in the garden and on road verges, so let a few of them flower in your garden for the bees. You're sure to have some of these in your garden, even if you don't know their names.

Winter - Spring Sources

Barberry – excellent very early source of nectar and pollen

Tree Lucerne – good early source of pollen and nectar

Ti Kouka (Cabbage Tree) produces a surplus every third year when it flowers profusely

Five Finger – prolific nectar producer from July to September

Lemonwood/Tarata – excellent for nectar and pollen

Rangiora – nectar and honey dew from August to October

Arum Lilly – early source of white waxy pollen from August onwards

Willow sp. – valuable source of nectar and pollen. Pussy willow are the earliest and produce more than weeping willow. Crack willow also produces good pollen and nectar

Hawthorn – produces an abundance of early blossom containing both nectar and pollen

Camelia – good early source of early nectar and pollen



Koromiko – good winter source of nectar

Gorse – good source of pollen as it can flower throughout the year

Olearia sp. (e.g *Olearia furfuracea*) - Good pollen source from August to October

Hange Hange – good nectar in spring and a greenish-yellow pollen

Kotukutuku – NZ fuchsia – nectar and pollen, which is deep blue in colour

Coprosma sp. Grows everywhere but coprosmas produce a very fine pollen that the bees will harvest when there is nothing else

Laurel – excellent source of nectar from September to November

Brassica sp. Including rape, wild radish, turnip, etc. All produce good nectar

Flax – good source of pollen

Mahoe – good source of pollen over summer from October to January

Pohutukawa – excellent nectar source, and pollen.

Ground weeds such as Speedwell, Shepherds Purse, Buttercup, Trailing St Johns wort, Wood sorrel, Dandelion, Scarlet pimpernel, foxglove, clover, chickweed, oxalis, onion weed, yarrow, chicory.

It is really hard to know where your bees have been feeding, next year we are hoping to get someone from GNS who does pollen analysis to come and talk to us about recognising pollen as the bees bring it in.

Keep an eye on the newsletter for details.



Where on earth has she been?



And here's a quick test of how well you know your weeds:

What's this weed?



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9. Answers on Page



Interesting Links

(courtesy of the Waikato Beekeepers Newsletter)

Beekeepers Riding Out the Storm:

<https://www.waikatotimes.co.nz/a/rural/350085198/beekeepers-riding-out-storm?fbclid=IwAR3hbpFQTTvKU36kgeqmvAi5fMLKo5nhytclDzh4X0TvDtldIqrkr4O8jF0>

Displaced Brazilian women forge a new life keeping bees:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/oct/04/women-behind-lens-female-beekeepers-who-hold-the-keys-to-a-better-world>

And a couple of other topical stories

Australia has abandoned attempts to eradicate varroa mite:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/sep/20/varroa-bee-killing-mite-australia-eradication-abandoned-why#:~:text=Australia%20abandons%20effort%20to%20eradicate%20varroa%20mite%20after%2014%2C000%20bee%20hives%20destroyed,-This%20article%20is&text=Beekeepers%20will%20have%20to%20learn,South%20Wales%20in%20June%202022.>

And a topical local story about swarming in Auckland:

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2023/10/bees-swarming-in-auckland-suburbia-are-completely-natural-says-beekeeper.html>



Hive for Sale

One of our members has a very active hive for quick sale, pick up in Newtown

Very active colony but with a fairly average laying queen, 1 year old. Brood on three frames.

COI completed and signed this month by Eva Durrant, so up to date with AFB checks. Sale includes hive box, hive mat, roof, queen excluder and feeder. Everything in decent condition.

Requeening this hive is suggested by the owner.

Price negotiable, around \$200-\$250.

Contact Gabe Rose at gaberose0@gmail.com



Queen laying egg



Mead Competition in December

Our annual mead competition is coming up in December. The winner of the competition gets the

There are four classes of competition:

- Traditional dry mead
- Traditional sweet mead
- Traditional sparkling meadpen – Nontraditional meads using Fruit (Melomels) or Spices (Metheglins) or a combination of these.

The rules for the competition can be found here:

<https://www.beehive.org.nz/mead-competition-rules/>

There are as many ways of making mead as there are mead-makers... so have a go and experiment if you've never done it before. From my experience, its all in the water you use.....

And a confession from the committee... we can't remember who won the competition last year, can anyone recall??





Tech support for the monthly meetings

James Scott is still looking for someone to do the occasional stint as tech support at the monthly meetings. The work is not difficult and it would be very helpful to have someone to relieve James from time to time.

Talk to one of the committee on Wednesday if you're interested.

Situations Vacant: Job Share Newsletter Editor

We're still looking for someone to assist with the compilation of the newsletter. The newsletter takes a couple of hours to put together, depending on how much is in it and its pretty straightforward to find content and interesting things to include. Great way to learn more about bees too!

If you're interested, give me a ring or send me an email, or talk to me at the meeting.

Jane Harding

Secretary (and half-share newsletter editor)

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What's that Weed answers

1. Yarrow
2. Foxglove
3. Shepherd's Purse
4. Oxalis
5. Onion Weed
6. Fumitory
7. Trailing St Johns Wort
8. Speedwell
9. Wild Turnip

What's coming up

December – no newbies session, end of year function (including a quiz) and the mead competition. Bring a plate of food to have with your cuppa, or with your mead tasting.... and your best brain for the quiz!

January – no meeting in January, first meeting of 2024 will be on 7 February.

2024. We're still looking at the programme for 2024. If you've got any ideas for speakers or topics, please get in touch with Tricia or I.

We hope to have someone come to talk about pollen recognition, we'll get Marco back to give us an AFB demonstration as we know there are some club members who have never seen AFB in a hive.

Tessa and Rose from Victoria University will also return to update us on their research and we'll have the photo, honey and mead competitions throughout the year.



Who can I speak to?

President - Patricia Laing tricialaing48@gmail.com>

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