



Next meeting | Wednesday 4th October 2023

Where | Johnsonville Community Centre

Editor | Jane Harding janeh@xtra.co.nz

Beginners Class 6:45pm: Janine Davie will cover off varroa treatments and when to apply them.

Main Meeting: 7.30pm

Marco Gonzalez and Niharika Long from the National Agency for the Management of AFB will be presenting on AFB management with a particular focus on what is happening in Wellington and how we can support efforts to eliminate this disease.

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President's Note

October 2023

Unstable weather has characterised the first month of spring - hot and cold, light and torrential rain, and wind. The minute the rain has reduced to drizzle and the wind to a light breeze my bees are out gathering nectar from kamahi trees laden with flowers, not to mention the korimako, kowhai, tree lucern and camellia which are also flowering profusely in the Akatarawa Valley at present.

Thank you to Frank Lindsay for sharing information and insights which he gathered from attending Conference. Among other topics this led to full conversation about alternative designs for guards to protect hives against robbing and wasp attacks.

As we all know, September was bee awareness month and in this regard I want to congratulate Marion Saunders for her educational efforts at the Botanical Gardens which pulled in the crowds. Thank you to all the other beekeepers who assisted her too. I noted that the material, that Apiculture New Zealand provided on their website to support events and activities, seems to have been well received.

When I was checking out Apiculture New Zealand's website for materials at the beginning of September I noticed a section on recipes. With all the flu-like viruses going around a recipe for honey and ginger syrup caught my eye. The recipe is as follows:

INGREDIENTS

75g fresh root ginger
300ml water
250g kāmahi honey

Thinly slice the ginger. Boil water and ginger together for three minutes. Add honey and stir well to combine. Cover and cool. Strain and then bottle in a clean, sterilised container.



Dilute to taste with hot, cold or soda water. Store the syrup in refrigerator until required.

At our place we have a surplus of lemons and limes so I make a tea of root ginger and citrus which I freeze. When I am making the tea I cut up the citrus including some of the rind and put it in a muslin bag so the tea does not need to be sieved. I have also at times added camomile and echinacea flowers to the tea. I bring the tea to the boil and then let it stand for 10 to 15 minutes before putting servings into food grade plastic containers for freezing. To serve I unfreeze the tea and heat it, add a spoonful of honey to a cup, and pour the heated tea over it. This lemon, honey and ginger drink is a family favourite.

We are still looking for someone to come forward with a nomination for vice-president please. I will be stepping down as President at the next Annual General Meeting to make room in my life for community activities closer to home. I reiterate what I said this time last year: in this post-covid world impacted by climate change uncertainty is pervasive and therefore I think it is a wise move for the club to have people ready to step into these positions quickly and easily.

Also at this time last year I expressed the hope that more local groups could be formed that would meet regularly. I am still keen to have a slot at club meetings when a person from each of these groups can share something that is happening in their local beekeeping world so that we can get a stronger sense of the diversity of beekeeping experience in the Wellington Region.

Best wishes

Tricia



AFB in Wellington

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Marco Gonzales from the AFB Pest Management Agency will be talking to us this month. Marco will be joined by Niharika (Niha) Long, who is the newly appointed National Compliance Manager for the agency.

Marco has provided some maps of AFB incidences in the Wellington region comparing the 2021-22 period with the 2022-23 period. Marco and Niha will talk about this at the meeting.

There is more information about AFB and what it is, in this newsletter.



AFB incidences in Wellington 2021-2022



AFB incidences in Wellington 2022-23

What is AFB and why is it so important to get rid of it?

American foulbrood (AFB) is a fatal bacterial disease of honey bee brood caused by the spore forming bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae*. It is not a stress related disease and can infect the strongest to the weakest colony in an apiary. Infected brood usually die at the pre-pupal or pupal stage. Heavy



infections can affect most of the brood, severely weakening the colony and eventually killing it. The disease is not able to be cured, meaning that destruction of infected colonies and hives or irradiation of infected material is the only way to manage AFB.

Although AFB is not highly contagious, bacterial spores can easily be spread between hives and apiaries through beekeeping practices such as through the exchange of equipment and movement of infected combs. Adult bees are not affected by AFB but can spread spores within and between infected and clean hives through robbing and drifting.

AFB spores can remain viable for over 50 years and are very resistant to freezing and high temperatures. Therefore, the only way to manage the disease is to stop infections from occurring through adopting beekeeping best management practices, and if an AFB outbreak does occur, quickly dealing with it before additional colonies become infected.

AFB is the most serious honeybee disease in New Zealand. Because the spores can last for such a long time, and the disease is so devastating for hives, New Zealand has an elimination policy for AFB. There is no cure for AFB and the use of antibiotics to treat AFB infected hives in New Zealand is prohibited.



The pupal tongue - a definitive AFB sign (photo Murray Rixon)



AFB Recognition Course and Training for a DECA

The elimination of AFB requires the identification and destruction of all hives with AFB. The AFB management agency requires all beekeepers to have a hive inspection once a year by a qualified person and to submit a COI (Certificate of Inspection) as a result. However, beekeepers who have completed an AFB recognition course and fulfilled the obligations of the AFB Pest Management Rules can apply for a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement which means you can do your own inspections and are exempt from submitting a COI.

There is a course coming up in Lower Hutt in November, for new beekeepers, or those that need a refresher.

[AFB Recognition Courses being held in Lower Hutt on 11 November.](#)

By attending the course, passing the assessment and [being fully compliant](#) with the American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan rules for a minimum of 12 months, you will be eligible to apply for a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement (DECA). Once approved you will be exempt from submitting a Certificate of Inspection.

Register yourself via <https://afb.org.nz/recognition-course-registration/> or email Janette with any queries on training@afb.org.nz

DECA holders are encouraged to attend a refresher every two years, you can use this full course as a refresher. You can leave when the test begins.

Location of the course will be: The Dowse Centre - Laings Road – Lower Hutt - 10:30am through to 4:30pm approx.



Queens and Nucs

Hopefully everyone has seen the following message from John Burnet about queen and nuc orders this year:

We have received orders from members for over 13 new-seasons mated and laying queens plus orders for 30 x full depth and 3/4 nucs - requiring 43 queens in total (too many members to email individually!) Unfortunately our West Coast queen breeder has had a disastrous spring due to the weather and is now unable to supply any queens.

We have made arrangements for an alternative commercial queen breeder (Alan Richards in Whanganui) to supply the Club and hopefully these will be available from mid-Oct - cost \$40 each.

Because we can't meet all of the large number of nuc orders (30) from our own Club apiary sources, we are arranging for a local queen breeder to supply some of our 3/4 nuc orders and also purchasing hives from a Manawatu commercial beekeeper to make up full depth nucs. Again these will not be available to members until the queens are delivered (mid-Oct at the earliest).

I know many of you were keen to obtain a West Coast queen because of their unique genetic traits - if you wish to change or cancel your queen or nuc order please let me know as soon as possible.

*Thanks
John Burnet*



WCC Animal Bylaw, Dog Policy and Domestic Animal Policy Review

Wellington City Council is undertaking a review of the above policies and has put forward the following amendment proposals that affect beekeepers and beekeeping. These policies were last reviewed in 2016. WCC is now in the formal consultation phase, having received initial feedback and ideas during the pre-engagement phase. The club has been engaged during this initial phase and has had input into the drafting of these amendments.

If you'd like to make a submission on any of the proposals, you can do so here: https://www.letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/animal-policies-bylaw/survey_tools/other-animals Feedback has to be received by 5pm, Wednesday 18 October 2023 to be considered.

Keeping bees

Bees play a critical role in our ecosystem, and beekeeping offers numerous benefits and rewarding experiences.

Within the Wellington City area, there are several hundred beekeepers, with the majority being "hobbyists" engaged in non-commercial beekeeping activities. While bees are essential for pollinating crops and gardens, they can present challenges in residential areas, highlighting the importance of proper hive management. For the first time, this Bylaw introduces a dedicated section to address beekeeping practices.

This section strengthens the Council's existing position and recommended best practices regarding beekeeping into a formal bylaw framework.



The purpose of this section is to provide greater transparency to the public and support the Council's Authorised Officers in effectively addressing complaints related to beekeeping activities.

While bees are essential for pollinating crops and gardens, they can present challenges in residential areas, highlighting the importance of proper hive management.

Proposed change 19: Introduce a cap of four beehives in residential areas without the need for written permission from the Council

What are we proposing and why?

There are currently no bylaw requirements for keeping bees. The amended bylaw proposes to introduce new conditions for keeping bees in a residential area, including the following requirement:

“An owner or occupier of any property in a residential area may keep four hives without prior written permission from the Council.”

These proposed changes align with the guidelines outlined in the Council's "Caring for Bees" factsheet (published in 2016 after formal consultation), which currently recommends a limit of four hives. The formal establishment of this maximum limit of four hives is intended to prevent overcrowding in urban settings and reduce any potential disputes with neighbouring properties.

Setting a definitive limit of four hives helps to simplify regulations and improve compliance. By doing so it helps mitigate the risk of bee-related incidents without unreasonably hindering beekeepers from pursuing their activities. The set limit aims to strike a balance between supporting



beekeeping practices and ensuring a harmonious coexistence with the surrounding community.

What if I want to keep more bees?

If you live in a residential area and want to keep additional hives, you can submit a request to the Council. The assessment conditions were drafted by the principles of promoting responsible beekeeping practices, safeguarding public safety, reducing nuisances, and enhancing environmental conservation, and include the following considerations:

“The Council may consider the following conditions when assessing permission for beekeeping:

- Beekeepers must ensure that hives are positioned to avoid the flight path impinging on any neighbouring dwellings or living areas.
- A suitable water source must be provided for the bees.
- Management techniques employed to reduce the likelihood of causing a nuisance to any person will be taken into consideration.
- The positive effects of bees on the pollination process will be acknowledged.

The Council believe this approach strikes a balance between providing a clear framework for beekeeping in residential areas while also allowing flexibility for beekeepers in specific circumstances. The approval process involves an Authorised Officer assessing requests on a case-by-case basis. It is included in the bylaw to acknowledge that one person’s dwelling inside the residential area may be more suitable for beekeeping than another. It also provides an opportunity for the Council to support and educate prospective owners on responsible ownership of bees.

There are currently no plans to introduce fees related to the proposed bylaw change to require written permission for having more than four hives in a residential area. If this change is implemented, the approval process will be designed to be straightforward and hassle-free.



Proposed change 20: Introduce a provision that allows the Council to require the removal or relocation of hives if they cause a nuisance

What are we proposing and why?

The amended Bylaw proposes to clarify the Council's ability to require the removal or relocation of hives under the following conditions:

“The Council may require the removal or relocation of a hive(s) if the conditions for which the permission was originally given are not being met, if the Authorised Officer deems it to be an issue, and/or if nuisance complaints from two or more different adjoining property owners have been received. This applies to both residential and rural zoned areas.”

This clause has been introduced to promote responsible beekeeping practices and ensures compliance with agreed- upon terms. It also enables the Council to address nuisance complaints effectively by considering input from multiple neighbouring parties. Having the presence of a bylaw will also support the Authorised Officer to intervene when necessary as it helps to facilitate a more timely resolution of emerging issues related to beekeeping.

Proposed change 21: Introduce a requirement that beekeeping on Council land must occur within licensed community garden areas

What are we proposing and why?

The amended bylaw proposes to clarify the Council's ability to require the removal or relocation of hives under the following conditions:



“Beekeeping on any Council land, including parks and reserves is a managed activity and is prohibited unless you have obtained a licence or prior written permission from the Council is obtained. Applications will be assessed by an Authorised Officer and may be granted with specific conditions. No new hives will be permitted on Parks and Reserves land unless they are located within a community garden licensed area”. This requirement helps to facilitate responsible and well-managed community beekeeping on Council land. It is consistent with current practice as outlined on the Council’s website.

Proposed change 22: Reference legal requirements under the Biosecurity Act in the bylaw

What are we proposing and why?

This following clause serves to prevent the oversight of other important and relevant legal requirements while reviewing the Council's bylaw.

All beekeepers have a legal requirement under the Biosecurity Act 1993 to register any apiary within 30 days of placing beehives on that site. All hives must prominently show the Beekeeper’s Apiary Registration Number.

Honey Extractor for Sale

For Sale –

Honey Extractor ... 2 frame extractor that takes $\frac{3}{4}$ or full-depth frames - hardly used

\$150.00

Please contact Linda Button

04 3883872



Images of Linda's extractor



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

As Tricia mentioned in her President's report, our longtime newsletter editor, Eva Durrant, has stepped down from this position. Eva and I have been sharing this role, taking month about to put the newsletter together. It is really helpful to have two people on this role, it's not so onerous when you do once every two months and we can cover each other if one of us is away. So, we're looking for someone to assist me with this.

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 coming up

November newbies session is about supering up for the honey flow and our main meeting will be a talk from Pike Stahlmann-Brown talking about the Colony Loss Survey results.

December – no newbies session, end of year function and the mead competition.

Who can I speak to?

President - Patricia Laing tricialaing48@gmail.com>

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