



Next meeting | Wednesday 6th September 2023

Where | Johnsonville Community Centre

Editor | Jane Harding janeh@xtra.co.nz

Beginners Class 6:45pm: Janine Davie will talk about splitting hives, the spring buildup and how to prepare for it, and looking out for and managing swarms.

Main Meeting: 7.30pm

Frank will update us on the ApiNZ conference back in June, and share some more wisdom on what's happening in the world of bees.

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President's Note

September 2023

Spring is here heralded by some beautiful, relatively warm and sunny days. The constant rain has given way to frosty mornings. My bees have been out in force. On the first of September I received the Colony Loss Survey to complete and of the five hives I had in Autumn and then Winter I could report that two survived. Two colonies in langstroth hives were destroyed in Autumn by wasps despite having robbing guards on my hives all the time. A number of large wasp nests near me have been destroyed so I am hoping my bees will have an easier time of it this year. My strongest colony in a Golden Mean top bar hive in winter was overtaken by varroa probably from robbing someone else's hives. One commercial beekeeper has withdrawn from the Akatarawa Valley and it will be interesting to see how this impacts on my bees. My two remaining colonies are in Golden Mean top bar hives and have been treated for varroa once in autumn and once in winter. These colonies also initiated brood breaks around mid-winter. I was very sad to hear about one new beekeeper whose bees froze to death because of the level of condensation in the hive combined with freezing outside temperatures.

The success of Wellington Beekeepers' Association depends on people with commitment and experience and we have quite a few people like this but we need more. It would be very good if some younger people could volunteer for the positions we particularly need to fill:

- a vice-president who could look forward to becoming president next year;
- an editor to help Jane Harding (our current editor) with the Newsletter;
- speakers who can talk about bees and beekeeping in schools, community groups and public venues. We have a small group of people with teaching or similar qualifications who also have qualifications in



beekeeping or considerable experience as beekeepers. If you think you fill this bill please let me or Jane Harding know.

A recurring issue for urban beekeepers is their relationship with neighbours. You may have done all the right things such as: keeping the number of hives appropriate to the size of your property; letting your neighbours know you are keeping bees; making sure you have water for your bees near their hives; siting your hives so that the bees' flightpath does not impact on your neighbour property; and, gifting honey to show your good will. Sometimes this is not enough and your relationship with your neighbours deteriorates because of their lack of knowledge about bee behaviour or your bees are used as a basis for unneighbourly behaviour. Local Councils in the Wellington region have regulations for keeping bees. The bottom line is good beekeeping practices. If you think your beekeeping may be impacting negatively on your neighbours please let someone on the Executive Committee know as soon as possible so we can problem solve this issue together.

Tricia Laing



Nothing says spring as much as a bee in blossom...



BAM

BAM kicked off this week with a launch at Te Aro school. Our very own Eva Durrant helps look after the hives at Te Aro school and she was on hand with from left to right: Emme Oo (Te Aro School), Associate Minister of Agriculture Hon. Jo Luxton, Eva Durrant (Wellington Beekeepers Association), Kala Banas (Te Aro School) and Nathan Guy (ApiNZ Board Chair). Photo: Simon Edwards.



ApiNZ have prepared a bunch of resources for school kids, including quizzes and posters and other information on the theme of Love Our Bees and the importance of pollination, which are the themes for BAM 2023. You can download the resources <https://apinz.org.nz/bee-aware-month-resources/>



AFB in Wellington

Next month (October) we will have a talk from Marco Gonzales, the National Operations Manager for the AFB Pest Management Agency. Marco notes that there is good progress being made towards the elimination of AFB in the Wellington area, and there are things that we all can do to get us to this goal. Marco would like to talk about this when he comes in October.

Marco says “In the last two years we have identified and dealt with a high risk commercial beekeeper in your area that was an ongoing source of AFB for the region. We are pleased that he is no longer beekeeping in this region. Many of the AFB reports on the map are still cases that we can trace back to robbed out AFB apiaries from this particular high risk beekeeper.

The cluster of AFB in Upper Hutt urban area was caused by an unregistered beekeeper, we have destroyed the infected apiary this Autumn and the expectation is that AFB will disappear from the Upper Hutt urban area by the end of this Spring.

Club members can help completing Certificate of Inspections (COIs)

A very important part of the AFB PMP is that every beekeepers must inspect their hives for AFB at least once in the Spring.

Your Club could help members ensuring that all the required Certificate of Inspections in the region are completed and that if AFB is found that these are destroyed safely.

Help us find unregistered/ abandoned apiaries

Everyone should be aware that unregistered and abandoned apiaries are a real risk for AFB spread. We encourage all beekeepers to report any potential unregistered or abandoned apiaries to us using the “report non-compliance” feature of HiveHub.



We investigate every single report we receive and provide feedback to the person who submitted the report. It was a report like this that solved the mystery AFB outbreak in Upper Hutt.”

Queens and Nucs

The club is again this year sourcing queens and nucleus hives for members. Regular re-queening is important to retain the productivity of the hive and to keep the hive healthy. If you're looking to requeen, or need a nuc to get started (or re-started!) in beekeeping, place your order using the form on the website: <https://www.beehive.org.nz/nuc-or-queen-order-form/>





Colony Loss Survey

As Tricia mentioned above, now is the time to fill in your colony loss survey. This annual survey is undertaken by Manaaki Whenua on behalf of Biosecurity New Zealand. The survey has been going since 2015 and Aotearoa New Zealand is one of more than 35 countries that complete similar surveys annually. The survey results are compared with international results and contribute to work to improve bee health.

In November, Pike Stahlmann-Brown, who is the Director of the NZ Colony Loss Survey will come and talk to the meeting about the results of the 2021 and 2022 surveys. He'll also remind everyone to complete their survey, which are due on 15 November.



Not a pretty picture and one you don't want to see in your hive....



Michael Hight exhibition

On a happier note, some of you may be familiar with the evocative and slightly surreal paintings by Michael Hight of landscapes with beehives. Michael has been painting his beautiful landscapes for many years and Wellington is fortunate to have an exhibition of his paintings (which are for sale) at the Page Gallery in Victoria St, Wellington. Michael spent some time in the Central North Island and has managed to capture the majesty and permanence of the central North Island mountains along with his signature hives. So get along to the Page Gallery before 16 September for a real visual treat. (And if you have a few spare thousands, you might be able to acquire a stunning piece of art for your wall). I particularly liked his painting “Ruapehu” the snowclad maunga majestically and silently dominates the painting while at the same time being ethereal and distant.

(Sorry, no sneak previews...you'll just have to go and have a look)

Thanks James Withington for the information.

Is Beekeeping Wrong?

And here's a very interesting read from the New Yorker magazine (thanks Eva for the link). Everything you thought about beekeeping might just be wrong? Good food for thought anyway:

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/08/28/is-beekeeping-wrong>



Gardening for Bees

It's Spring, time to think about what to plant in your garden for your bees. Here's a few ideas for quick wins for summer.

What do Bees Need?

- Single flowers, not doubles or triples as bees can more easily get the nectar from single flowers
- Traditional flowers are usually higher in nectar and pollen than modified varieties
- Lots of the same flower all together and a good range of flowers
- Flowering plants throughout spring, summer, autumn
- High pollen count flowers in spring – e.g gorse
- A water supply – better if its not the kids paddling pool

Vegetables

- Plants from the following plant families:
- Brassicaceae - brassicas - all the cabbage family. Again, lots of varieties and a good excuse to not mind if a few of your broccoli plants get away on you and flower before you find them ready...
- Cucurbits - cucumber, pumpkin, zucchini, etc. Nectar is only produced on the first day of flowering.
- Also sweet corn and all plants from the onion family - chives, onions (and even onion weed)



Annuals and Herbs

- Lamiaceae – rosemary, lavender, sage and other salvias, thyme, mint, bee balm, basil, catmint - so, all the basil, sage, mint and thyme varieties that you find in the herb garden. Bee balm is better known as bergamot and there are heaps of varieties. Lots of these plants are annuals or perennial, and don't take up a lot of space or can be grown in pots.
- Asteraceae – dandelion, sunflower, dahlias, heleniums, cosmos, echinacea, zinnia. Lots of late summer flowering plants, which give continuity of nectar supply over the summer when the main nectar flow is finished
- Other good flowering plants are marigolds, penstemons, hollyhock and cornflowers
- and for your lawn, don't forget clover species and penny royal (*Mentha pulegium*)



Bees in penny royal



Using honey on your plants

And while we're thinking about gardening, did you know honey is not only good to eat, but good in your garden too? James has found this great article about why you should be using honey in your garden. Liquid fertiliser, utilising honey's antimicrobial and antibacterial properties to keep your plants healthy and instead of a rooting hormone, try honey.

<https://www.housedigest.com/1358637/use-honey-in-garden-fertilizer-propagating-pest-hacks/>

Hive for Sale

For Sale –

1 x hive with active healthy colony with good laying queen (checked for AFB last week by DECA qualified beekeeper).

Also included : 4 x full depth boxes and frames, 2 x queen excluders, 2 x Hive Doc bases, 2 x hive mats and 2 x metal roofs.

Owner moving from Brooklyn to Auckland and can't take hive with her.

Cost - \$400

Contact Tania Thornton – Phone 0-27-483-8565



Figure 1 Not this hive....



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)

janeh@xtra.co.nz

0274212417



What's coming up

October newbies session is looking at varroa treatments with Janine.

For the main meeting, we will have Marco Gonzales, National Operations Manager for AFB PMP.

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 – more on that in the next newsletter.

Who can I speak to?

President - Patricia Laing tricialaing48@gmail.com

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

Secretary – Jane Harding 027 421 2417 janeh@xtra.co.nz

Committee Members

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

Web Master - Jason Bragg - (021 527 244) email@jasonbragg.me

Librarian - Ellen Millar - (021 709 793) msoon.email@gmail.com

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

Swarm WhatsApp Administrator - Jim Hepburn (021 926823)

jimh.jilld@gmail.com

PK Tan - 021 109 3388 pk.propserv@gmail.com

Graeme Chisnall - 021-246-8662 canzel@gmx.com

Janine Davie - j.davie@orcon.net.nz

Millie Baker – milliebaker242@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor - Jane Harding - 027 421 2417 janeh@xtra.co.nz