



Next meeting | Wednesday 3rd June 2026

Where | Johnsonville Community Centre

Editor | Jane Harding, Michelle C

Beginners Session: 6.45pm Upstairs

Wintering down continued with Mark Wendelken.

Cleaning & Preparing Hardware for winter storage.

Now is the time to set up your hives and store hardware for the winter. Healthy bees, warm with plenty of food will reward you with a colony ready for spring growth.

Main Meeting: 7.30pm

Guest Speaker Kat Holt from Polynase Services will be talking to us about pollen in honey and the stories it can tell you.

Gadgets and Gizmos competition. Bring along your tricks and tools and great hacks for making beekeeping easier or more fun. Best contribution of the night wins the Andrew Beach Memorial Trophy.



Contents

3. From the President
4. Yellow-legged Hornets Update
10. Honey Competition in July
11. AGM
12. New Secretary Required
12. WhatsApp group for Advice and Information
13. Flow hive for Sale
14. Extractor for Sale
14. What's coming up?
15. Who can I talk to?



From the President

I have been feeling rather sad because I have lost one of my two hives so I was interested to read an article by John Berry in the *Apiarist's Advocate* dealing with a condition of the same name John Berry on 'SAD', Sudden Autumn Decline and wondering if this is what happened to my hive. Though it is a very interesting article detailing the sudden onset of "patchy brood, parasitic mite syndrome, deformed wing virus and bee numbers down by about two thirds", I don't think this is what happened to my hive. I think it was more correctly PPB to borrow another of his terms (Piss Poor Beekeeping). I thought the hive was doing well, lots of bees, normal activity but signs of high varroa load. They still had honey supers on quite late in the season so after I had removed them it was a bit cold to open the hive and put in synthetic strips, so I decided to try the new Nassenheider Evaporator system which uses formic acid. I think I may have overdosed them, and they may have abandoned the hive because when I opened the hive up there were no bees (dead or alive) but lots of brood (dead) and not much honey. I think the honey had been robbed out by my other hive and any recent bee activity was the robber bees however it is possible I had starved my hive which is ironic because I have lots of honey in frames, it just wasn't on that hive. I'm not sure what the lesson is, we've had such warm weather lately that perhaps the bees are as confused as everyone and the brood numbers are much higher than usual for this time of year. I've noticed spring flowers thinking it is spring already and beginning to flower and there is a duck at the Aotea Lagoon who recently appeared with 10 ducklings. My advice – check your honey



reserves, make sure you treat effectively for varroa and be careful how you use formic acid.

On a happier note, my other hive is going great. They have had varroa treatment of various kinds (not formic), they have lots of honey on board and are taking full advantage of this wonderful autumn weather we've been having.

Janine

Yellow-Legged Hornets

Read an interesting story on hornet hunting in the latest digital edition of NZ Geographic written by [Catherine Woulfe](#).

The fight to eradicate the yellow-legged hornet

Young arborists Aaron Douglas and Luke Hew are about to kick their first hornet nest.

“We were volunteered,” says Douglas.

“Voluntold,” says Hew.

“You were given the *opportunity*,” says Chelsea Robertson, their team leader.

The nest is smallish, maybe the size of my head, and it is some 15 metres above the ground, in a spindly kākūka that teeters over a steep slope, its lower branches roped in moth plant. This will not be an easy kill. “As soon as we found it, I was, like, ‘Oh, shit,’” says Dan Etheridge, a hornet expert



who has been fighting repeated incursions in the UK for almost 10 years, and flew in to help get the New Zealanders up to speed.

Hew will be stationed at the base of the tree. Douglas will have to climb it in the “close-combat suit” he’s now stepping into for the first time — imagine a full-body duvet, sealed at every juncture, in 30 degrees Celsius — while holding a four-metre pole with which he will stab the nest and deliver a lethal puff of permethrin powder. His usual arborist ropes and gear are belted over the top of the suit. Under the veil he wears a respirator, so he doesn’t suck in any of the permethrin, and sunglasses, for the late-January glare.

“Who!” he says, as Robertson finishes taping him in. He does a clumsy star jump. Andrew Blakie hands him a can of Slay. “They start swarming you, you can spray that,” says Blakie. It’s enough to kill the hornets — don’t bother with regular fly spray — and it disrupts their attack pheromone. “If anything gets into the suit and you want it dead in a hurry, that’d be an option,” Blakie says. He’s a biosecurity expert with SPS Biota, and is helping organise the hornet operation. He has the manner of a dad staying deliberately calm while teaching a teen to drive. Douglas tucks the Slay into a chest pocket.

Now Blakie hands him the pole, and runs through the instructions again. Don’t disturb the nest until you’re ready to stab it. Push the sharp end in nice and gentle. Don’t let it pop out the other side. Pull the trigger and listen for the *pffft*; the “noise of death”, as Blakie puts it. Don’t pull the pole back down straight away because the hornets will be hammering it.

Douglas strides off to the tree. Soon he is high in the branches, roped up, moving slow and smooth like a great white ape. He can see hornets above him, but not the nest; he leans back horizontal in the ropes, holding the pole like a spear, swinging slightly to peer up into different bits of tree. Robertson guides him to the nest with a laser pointer.

A flock of rosellas flies over. Douglas fiddles with his veil, his glasses. “It’s making me nervous,” Robertson says quietly. Douglas takes aim, pushes



softly up; there is a *pffft* like a Bunsen burner, and a small cloud of white drifts into the sky. That's too much powder. Etheridge suspects the pole went right through the nest. Douglas has more immediate concerns. "They're everywhere," he calls down, between blasts of Slay. "F*cking tons of them."

Three black shapes rocket low over my head and into the bush.

Is Douglas okay to stay up there and have another crack?

He's not thrilled about it, but sure. *Pffft*.

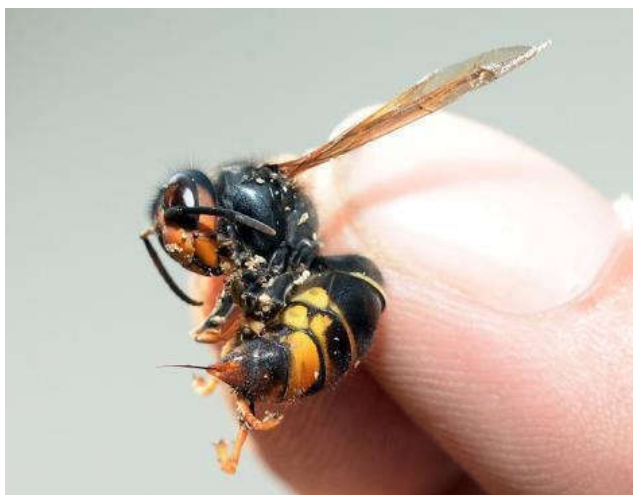
"That was better," Etheridge says. "That was good. He should notice a difference in behaviour as well. They'll be less pissed off."

The permethrin we use here is triple the strength of what they have available in the UK. Any suggestion of mist will take a hornet down fast, including those returning to the nest.

On the ground, Douglas unzips his veil, grins, wipes his face. "That was fine, actually," he says. "I wasn't, like, *scared* scared."

"You've done your first one now," says Etheridge proudly. "You've felt that crunch. That'll stick with you."

[Keep reading...](#)



Close-up of a Yellow-Legged Hornet

And here again are the links to the MPI information sheets on Yellow-Legged Hornets:

[MPI Hornet Detection updates and general information](#)

[Beekeepers Surveillance Guide](#)

[Beekeepers Action Guide to Trapping](#)

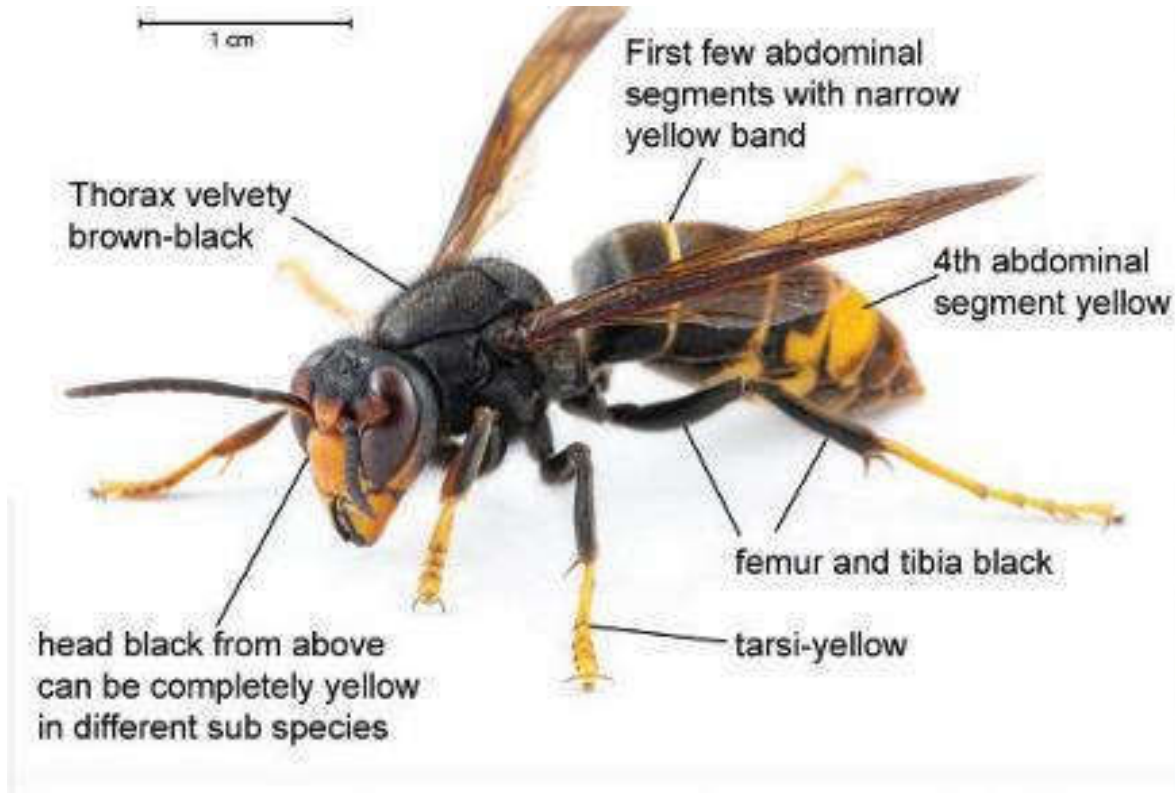
[Beekeepers yellow legged hornet FAQs](#)

There is a lot of very useful information in these links, including how to make a hornet trap, how to recognise a hornet and what to do if you suspect a hornet or a hornet's nest.

If you see a suspected hornet or nest, photograph and report it immediately to report.mpi.govt.nz or call Biosecurity New Zealand's exotic pest and disease hotline on 0800 80 99 66.



Picture of Yellow-legged Hornet with distinguishing features:



These hornets (1) are larger than the German wasps (2) we usually deal with and also larger than the Asian(3) or Australian (4) paper wasps that you might also be familiar with.





Also look out for hornet's nests:



Photo: John de Carteret – Jersey

Yellow legged hornet primary nest (September to January). At this time of year these small (primary) nests, are up to 21cm across but may be as small as a tennis ball. They contain one queen and brood (egg, larva and pupa stages) or one queen and workers plus brood.

Look under/check:

eaves, decks, soffits

garages, sheds

boats, trailers

low to ground, near water

sunny locations.



Honey Competition in July

In conjunction with the AGM, we will hold our honey competition. To be sure that your entry is eligible, please familiarise yourself with the rules of the competition. The club rules can be found [here](#)

Key things to remember are that liquid or creamed honey must be presented in a glass jar (not plastic) holding around 350ml of honey (standard peanut butter jar size). Comb honey must be presented in a full frame (full size, $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ size frame).

One entry per class per member

And from the “tips and advice” section:

The secret in this competition is to take great care in filtering your honey to remove impurities and to get rid of air bubbles.

The cleanliness and clarity of the container is also important.

Start only with the best honey that has low moisture content (so that it will keep).

Judges’ comments from previous years have indicated a high standard of entries, but there have been some recurring problems with impurities such as bee’s legs, air bubbles and high levels of moisture. Pay particular attention to these things to come up with a winning standard of entry. Prepare more than one entry and select the best for the competition.



AGM

And July is of course our AGM. No beginner's session, straight into the AGM at 7.30. This is usually a short affair, so we're looking for a movie to screen while the honey is being judged. If you've any ideas for a good movie, let Janine or Jane know!

The agenda for the AGM is as follows:

2026 Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Beekeepers Association 1 JULY 2023

To be held at the Johnsonville Community Centre, Frankmoore Avenue, Johnsonville at 7.30pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. Matters arising
4. President's Report
5. Treasurers Report
6. Election of Officers –
 - President
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Additional roles of -
 - webmaster
 - librarian
 - general committee members
7. Membership Fee
8. AFB Fee and infected hive reimbursement
9. General Business



New Secretary Required

Your club secretary has been doing the role for 15 years and is due to retire this year. Our new constitution requires someone to stand down after 15 years in the role.

The Secretary role involves:

- organising and recording the minutes or the occasional committee meetings (usually 3 or 4 per year)
- supporting the President with correspondence
- helping to plan the meeting programme for the club
- keeping a record of who has won which awards
- taking minutes at the AGM

The role is not onerous and only takes up 2-3 hours per month. Please contact Jane Harding

janeh@xtra.co.nz 0274212417

WBA WhatsApp Group for advice and Information

This WBA WhatsApp forum is for members to ask questions of experienced members, share general beekeeping information and seek advice from older club members. The group is up and running and Sarah is keen for more members to join.

If you would like to join up and get some of your curly questions answered, please get in touch with Sarah Dye. sarah.c.dye@gmail.com



Flow hive for Sale – Open to offers

One of our members has given up beekeeping. He has a barely used Flow Hive for sale (purchased in 2019). Flow Hives are Australian designed and manufactured and cost about 10% more than a standard NZ Langstroth hive (over \$600). They look a bit different but take eight standard Langstroth frames in each box. This Flow Hive comes with three boxes – one of which has the unique comb crushing mechanism - refer to the Flow Hive website. <https://www.honeyflow.com/> and attached photo. The boxes are not compatible with a standard Langstroth box (full depth or $\frac{3}{4}$) due to the reduced number of frames held.



While easy to use, Flow Hives are a novelty really. While it allows you to harvest honey without opening the hive and with minimal disturbance to bees, the Aussie website does not tell you that NZ beekeepers are still required to check their hives for disease prior to harvesting therefore you should still dismantle this hive and check the brood before turning on the



tap! If AFB is found, you will need to burn everything despite the fancy architecture and interior workings.

Basic beekeeping knowledge is still required and remember some NZ honeys e.g. Pohutukawa is so thixotropic it will not readily pour from the hive as shown on the website – you will still need to extract in the conventional way. If interested contact John Burnet – Phone 0274-379-062

Manual 3 - Frame Honey Extractor for Sale

Lega (Italy) three frame manual extractor for sale. Used once only.

Comes with clear plastic covers, 2 x 20 litre buckets and double stainless-steel strainers which fit in the buckets.

Original cost about \$600. Currently available for \$400

If interested contact, John Burnet – Phone 0274-379-062

What's Coming Up?

July – AGM and honey competition

August – TBC guest speaker and hive app reviews



Who can I speak to?

President – Janine Davie president@beehive.org.nz

Treasurer – Eva Durrant treasurer@beehive.org.nz

Secretary – Jane Harding 027 421 2417 secretary@beehive.org.nz

Membership – John Burnet – 0274-379-062

Supper co-ordinator - Barbara Parkinson – (04) 2379624

Swarm WhatsApp Administrator - Jim Hepburn (021 926823)

Newsletter Editor - Jane Harding - 027 421 2417