



Next meeting | Wednesday 5th May 2021

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

WBA Annual Honey competition

Judged by Maureen Conquer

Beginners' session

Final honey harvest and preparing for winter.

Main Meeting

Speaker: *Dr Elodie Urlacher is a senior adviser for the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI.) see page 4*

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Note from the President – James Withington

It seems funny that as soon as we place our clocks back, we are now greeted with heavy dews and plummeting temperatures in the mornings. And to make matters worse our bees don't want to come out and play, meaning we just have to get them ready for the pending winter months. If you have not already done so, check the winter stores within the hive and if required get a feed into the hive during the warmer parts of the day. Hopefully by now the varroa mites are under control to get your hives through the winter months but if not, you can still have treatments in the hive. Some of you will be looking to protect the hives from those chilly winter southerly blasts, so now is the time for you to wrap or insulate your hives for added protection.

Last month's meeting saw several interesting videos on how you can monitor your hive using remote devices inside your hives that can be monitored via Bluetooth and your mobile phone. Frank's video on how worker bees heat the hive and regulate each cell was fascinating and very insightful. It will be a remarkably interesting PhD thesis once it is written to read.

At our next meeting we are holding the honey competition with a special judge coming along to adjudicate this year's entries. I always find it amusing when members of the club cast their own views on the honeys involved and conclude that the winning honey should be on taste alone, not the moisture contents or the fact it contains a wing or a leg in it.

Looking forward to seeing everyone there for this month's meeting and make sure you wrap up warmly.

James

Annual Honey Competition

Please bring your honey in an unmarked jar to the Registration Table in the hall. Make sure you enter the honey in the right category: liquid, creamed or still in a frame. The honey competition rules can be found [here](#)



photo: David Henderson

The Judge -Maureen Conquer

The judge of this year's honey competition will be Maureen Conquer who is an international apiculturalist — or bee expert. Maureen is the regional representative for the Oceania section of Apimondia, the “United Nations of beekeepers’ federations,” which has over 100 member countries and arbitrates for market access, honey standards, bee health, and apitherapy.

We look forward to her comments about our honey, and any advice that may improve our entries next year.

Elodie Urlacher

Our speaker at the May meeting is Dr Elodie Urlacher.

Elodie studied in France and did her PhD there, studying how pheromones modify learning abilities in honeybees, then moved to NZ nearly 10 years ago to continue her research in Dunedin. Elodie left academia 5 years ago and now works as an adviser in government (MPI).

"By making possible communication among all the honeybee castes - queens, workers and drones - pheromones play a pivotal role in organising the social structure of hives, enabling bees to live together cooperatively and successfully in large, well-organised colonies.

May Checklist

- ✓ Test for varroa mite levels and treat if necessary
- ✓ Remove any varroa treatment products applied in March
- ✓ Feed sugar syrup if needed
- ✓ Winter hives down
- ✓ Bring in honey supers stored on hives
- ✓ Sort combs before storage
- ✓ Freeze combs for wax moth control



Taken from Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand by Andrew Matheson & Murray Reid



The 2nd NZ Honey Bee Research Symposium

Hi All,

We are pleased to announce that the 2nd NZ Honeybee Research Symposium will be held on **Wednesday June 23rd at the ApiNZ conference venue in Rotorua**. What research is the New Zealand science community doing on honeybees and bee products? What are the science challenges in apiculture and how does research in New Zealand align with these industry needs? This research symposium is designed to present, inform and understand the honeybee research landscape in New Zealand. The intention is to facilitate the flow of ideas and the development of productive collaborations. We will incorporate Mātauranga Māori and industry voices and have panel discussions.

To submit an abstract or just attend and listen:

<https://vuw.eventsair.com/2nd-nz-honey-bee-research-symposium/nzhbrs>

All welcome— just \$30 to register, lunch and teas included. Many thanks to MPI and ApiNZ for sponsorship. Please spread the word!

Best, Phil

Phil Lester

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This old bee house:

Study deems hive boxes drafty and inefficient



◀ This
OR
This ▶



There is some very interesting research being done about the advantages of polystyrene beehives.

[This Old Bee House: Study Deems Hive Boxes Drafty, Inefficient \(entomologytoday.org\)](http://entomologytoday.org) and

[Thermal Impacts of Apicultural Practice and Products on the Honey Bee Colony | Journal of Economic Entomology | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](http://oup.com)

(contributed by John Burnet)

Understanding the role of the queen bee in a colony



The queen bee is at the heart of the hive. She is the mother of all the other members and the glue that holds the colony together. Without a queen, the hive will fail, and the bees will disperse. But what makes the queen so special? Like human royalty, she is selected before birth and treated with a distinctive egg cell and special diet in her larval stage. When she matures, the queen mates several times, then spends the rest of her life laying eggs, never leaving the hive again.

Here's a look at the most fascinating member of your colony:

<https://www.ecrotek.co.nz/learn/articles/detail/understanding-the-role-of-the-queen-bee-in-a-colony>

Wingate Apiary

About 20 people attended the open day at Wingate Apiary on Saturday 24th April. A perfect day of sunshine and no wind at all. After a round of introductions and a chat on how our bees were faring, we moved into three groups to inspect the seven hives. Two hives were merged as both colonies were weak in numbers. Richard Braczek provided BBQ sausages and Barry Durrant brought along a couple of primuses to boil the billy for tea and coffee. At the end of the visit, Richard brought out a questionnaire about the apiary which the participants did well to correctly answer all the questions. Answers are on page 16.





Wingate Quiz (answers on page 16)

1.	The site of the Wingate apiary was formerly a what?
2.	Who do we share the site with?
3.	How many hives are on site?
4.	Who found the site?
5.	Who organised permission from the council, the purchase of the container and the signage?
6.	What happened to the native plants that we planted bordering the apiary?
7.	What is a key challenge when trying to retrieve swarms nearby?
8.	Why do bees have sticky hair?

Newlands Intermediate School

Newlands Intermediate School is the owner of the first apiscope in NZ, installed with the assistance of John Randall about five years ago.

The school also has two Langstroth hives under the care of the students (Taikiaki Pī.) The hives are located by the back door to the kitchen and this site is sunny and sheltered and the bees are thriving.

The students, after three sessions, can open the hive, take out frames and identify eggs, larvae and capped brood. Wasps are a constant worry at the school, and to help the bees defend their hives, we have closed the entrances to about two bee widths and hope that the site of the wasp nest can be found over the school holidays.



How to wrap your hive

Reprinted from 2020

Eva Durrant

With winter approaching it may be appropriate to include this article which appeared in the May 2019 Newsletter.

I wrapped my hives in building paper lined with corflute panels. This worked really well by protecting the hives from rain, providing insulation from cold winds but allowing airflow between the wrap and hive walls. The wrappings were easily stored after winter and are in good condition to use again this year.



Fig 1. Ready for a cold winter



Fig 2. Building paper and corflute wrap

This wrap is for a three box hive – I also made wraps for a two box and four box hives only the height changes, otherwise the steps are the same.

Measurements for building paper wrap:

- Circumference: 2000mm including a securing overlap
- Height: 2 boxes 370mm, 3 boxes 550mm, 4 boxes 740mm

Cut the corflute, then glue to the building paper, leaving about 20mm gaps for the corners. Tape some spacers as shown in the middle so that there is an airspace between the corflute and hive when wrapped.



Fig 3. corflute glued to the building paper



Fig 4. with spacers added.

Wrap around the hive and use tape to stick it down while working. Screw a piece of timber to secure the wrap to the front, and make sure the entrance is not covered!



Fig 5. Securing the front



Fig 6. Check the entrance

Make sure the wrap fits snugly then secure the back. Add a long timber piece over the overlapping building paper so that the wind can't pull it apart.



Fig 7. back view



Fig 8. Looking down the sides - there should be airflow between the wrap and the hive body.

I also cut the building paper just below the crown board, so that a hive tool can be inserted for a quick winter inspection of the honey super.

Coming events

June

Beginners' Session

Training and education opportunities/legal requirements/setting up a hive

Main Meeting

Varroa treatment stands - various techniques will be demonstrated

Phil Lester to speak on his latest book *Healthy Bee, Sick Bee*.



July

Annual General Meeting

Midwinter speaker



APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND

from CE Karin Kos

Last year's [New Zealand Colony Loss survey](#) shows that overall winter loss rates of bee colonies in New Zealand has continued to rise since the survey began in 2015. Over the 2020 winter, 11.3% of bee colonies were lost compared to 10.4% in 2019 and 8.4% in 2015. The survey shows that in 2020 an estimated 99,150 bee colonies were lost. While this is lower than loss rates experienced overseas, it shows that we cannot be complacent when it comes to bee health.

The average loss rate across countries participating in the international survey, from the most recently available period (2018/2019), was 16.7%. Findings from a similar survey in the US found the winter loss rate over the 2019/2020 period was 22.2%.

As in past years, New Zealand beekeepers reported that the primary reasons for overwintering losses in 2020 were queen bee problems, suspected varroa infestation, suspected starvation and wasp attacks. While there are promising advances in both the area of varroa management and in the use of biocontrols to deal with wasps, dealing with queen problems is more complex. The June [ApiNZ National Conference](#) will be a good opportunity to hear about international developments on varroa management from our international speakers, Dennis vanEngelsdorp and Randy Oliver.

The 2020 survey also asked questions on beekeepers' views on aspects of their work, their overall experience and how they accessed beekeeping information. The findings showed that the economics of beekeeping was the biggest challenge for many and that most beekeepers learnt their skills through a beginner's course or from a mentor. These findings certainly support what we hear from members.

This survey continues to be a really valuable tool in measuring how we are doing, and where more efforts are needed.

...continued

Two announcements were made this week that will be of interest to members.

The first is the news that New Zealand Food Safety (MPI) is consulting on [a review](#) of the 2 kilogram small parcel limit for honey, which was implemented last year. You may recall ApiNZ approached MPI last year on behalf of members who were having difficulty sending small parcels of honey and bee products through postal retail networks. MPI amended the GREX accordingly, but the inflexibility of the 2 kilogram limit has been evident.

We are pleased that MPI is reviewing this (as it signalled it would at the time of the amendment). We will be calling for greater flexibility around parcel limits on the basis that it needs to be easy for members to send products overseas in an affordable way, especially at a time when we do not have tourists and overseas visitors able to purchase honey onsite. To support our submission it would be helpful to get members' input into what is a more realistic kg level, based on commercial realities. Please email us at info@apinz.org.nz with any comments.

This week's news that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has called for [information on the use of glyphosate](#) in New Zealand was welcomed by Apiculture New Zealand. This will lead to a better understanding of how glyphosate is being used in New Zealand and help inform next steps. The ApiNZ Science and Research focus group will be meeting next month and will consider how we participate in the EPA's call for information.

Wingate Quiz Answers (quiz on page 9)

1	A tip
2	Capital Model Racers
3	five
4	Kevin Westerby
5	John Burnet
6	eaten by goats
7	precipitous section
8	honey comb



Who can I speak to?

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