



June meeting | 2 June 2021

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

Editor | Jane Harding janeh@xtra.co.nz

Topics for the June meeting

Beginners session Upstairs meeting room 6.45pm

Topic:

Training and Education Opportunities, Legal Requirements for setting up a hive site – John Burnet

Main Meeting In the main hall at 7.30pm

Topics:

Varroa Treatments. Display tables and demonstrations of various Varroa treatments.

Guest Speaker – Don MacLeod from the ApiNZ Science Focus Group will talk about varroa control - where we are now and the future. Don will also talk briefly about Myrtle Rust - you may be surprised to learn that it overlaps future varroa control.

Please remember to scan the COVID-19 barcode at the door or put your name on the register.

Many thanks!



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This Month

Bees are quietening down a bit, cold and wet keeps them in the hives. Hopefully they've got enough honey in their hives to keep them going until spring time but if we get a long wet winter supplementary feeding might be required. If we get a calm sunny day in winter, take a quick peek in your hives to see how the stores are doing. A good time to check that ventilation is adequate too, moisture buildup through condensation is not good for the bees, the hives are harder to keep warm and mould and rot will occur in the frames. Siting your hives in a place that gets some winter sun is key, allowing a small air gap at the top of the hive for the air to flow through the hive is also really important.

June is a good time to make new boxes and frames, clean old wax off your frames and rewire them and get your gear ready for a new season. Enjoy your honey harvest and indulge in some fireside bee-related reading. Judith has a great selection of new books in our library, have a chat with her at the meeting.

This month's beginner session is about training and education opportunities for beekeeping. John Burnet will also cover off the legal requirements for



setting up a hive site, so you don't fall foul of your neighbours or the Pest Management Authority.

And the main meeting is all about varroa. This newsletter has links and information about varroa you can refer to in the future.

June Guest Speaker – Don MacLeod

Don is an amateur beekeeper. Since 2011 he is an active member of the Apiculture NZ Science and Research Focus Group and before that the NBA Technical Committee. His role has been writing and presenting submissions to the EPA and MPI on pesticides and how they can be used safely alongside responsible beekeeping. Don MacLeod's working background was in the chemical industry, with the old DuPont Company where he worked in Agrichemicals and then Specialty Chemicals throughout the Asia Pacific region. He has a lifelong interest and participation in New Zealand Agriculture.

Don will join us by Zoom, from Franklin where he lives, to talk about varroa control, where we are now and what the future holds.

Varroa Treatment display

As well as Don's talk, there will be a number of display tables set up with demonstrations and information about the various varroa treatments available, both synthetic and organic and the different methods for applying these treatments. Come along and learn about what you should be doing and when.



What is Varroa?

For those new to beekeeping, here is the summary and a bit of information from Wikipedia:

***Varroa destructor* (Varroa mite)** is an [external parasitic mite](#) that attacks and feeds on the [honey bees *Apis cerana*](#) and [Apis mellifera](#). The disease caused by the mites is called **varroosis**.

The *Varroa* mite can reproduce only in a honey bee colony. It attaches to the body of the bee and weakens the bee by sucking [fat bodies](#).^[1] The species is a vector for at least five debilitating bee viruses,^[1] including [RNA viruses](#) such as the [deformed wing virus](#) (DWV). A significant mite infestation leads to the death of a honey bee colony, usually in the late autumn through early spring. The *Varroa* mite is the parasite with possibly the most pronounced economic impact on the [beekeeping](#) industry. *Varroa* is considered to be one of multiple stress factors^[2] contributing to the higher levels of bee losses around the world.



Varroa Destructor mite

The adult female mite is reddish-brown in color, while the male is white. *Varroa* mites are flat, having a button shape. They are 1–1.8 mm long and 1.5–2 mm wide, and have eight legs.^[3]



Treating for Varroa

There are a lot of varroa treatments available, not all have been certified for use in New Zealand, and the efficacy of some of them is not confirmed, so it pays to talk to experienced beekeepers and know a bit about the options.

Control of Varroa by Dr Mark Goodwin is a guide for New Zealand beekeepers on how to control Varroa in your hives. John Burnet has copies of this book for sale.

[Honey Bee Health Coalition Tools for Varroa Management](#) is a guide to some of the many ways you can manage varroa in your hives. The Honey Bee Health Coalition is a US organisation and there is a lot of really good information in here that is relevant to NZ beekeepers also.

There is also a lot of information about new and experimental treatments for varroa on some of the beekeeping research sites :

From Randy Oliver on Scientific Beekeeping:

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/varroa-management/>

The University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre in Canada has some interesting research going on into natural compounds to control varroa, in response to the increasing synthetic-compound resistance of the varroa mites.

<https://honeybee.uoguelph.ca/use-of-oregano-to-control-parasitic-mites-in-honey-bees/>

Or this from Science News, about the development of a common ground fungi to attack the varroa:

<http://www.sci-news.com/biology/metarhizium-brunneum-strain-varroa-mites->



09705.html?fbclid=IwAR12cNzhN0uA6hWqJDLg0MDDJhlm4GWTZb4lib9hO1mJluNRELoBlyVL2Hk

And if you've got rhubarb growing in your garden, perhaps try this. Oxalic acid occurs naturally in rhubarb, especially the leaves.

http://www.beespace.me/rhubarb-bees-and-varroa?fbclid=IwAR0U38d0iw0VMCiYGWzac4wrKuvM6pv3wb1Se_kd1uxR9IwFnK5Relwtyf8



Varroa Mite Research

Varroa mite research is ongoing and Dr Phil Lester from Victoria University is still on the lookout for hives he can use for research:

Dr Phil Lester from Vic University and his PhD student are looking for hives with high varroa mite numbers to collect the mites for research.

If any member has untreated hives, please call Frank and he will come and collect the bees with mites on them.

Frank Lindsay
Phone 4783367



Honey Competition Results

The honey competition was held at the May meeting, and we were fortunate to have Maureen Conquer as our judge. Maureen applied the same diligence and care to our honey competition as she does to her role at the APiNZ Honey competition, albeit on a smaller scale. Maureen gave comments on all entries, including tips on improvements and was very encouraging of all members.

There were 8 entries in the liquid honey section, 7 in the creamed honey section, and for the first time in many years, an entry in the comb honey section – well done Ben Scott for entering his beautiful comb honey. Maureen commented on the great example of honey comb presented.



Maureen and Frank with the winning honeys



The results are:

Liquid Honey

1st – James Scott

2nd equal – John Randall and Christine Gregory

3rd – Eva Durrant

Creamed Honey:

1st – Jim and Jill

2nd – Peter Dewes

3rd – Jane Harding



The lovely liquid honey entries for the 2021 competition



Library

Judith has been purchasing some lovely new books for our library. Judith selects informative reference books, books of general interest for beekeepers and the occasional novel. There is a great selection of classics, new research and beautiful illustrations, so if you haven't done so before, come along and browse what is in our library. If you have an idea for a new title that you think would be useful, let Judith know.

A couple of new titles in the library this month:

The Honey Bee, Understanding the Ultimate Engineer, David Cramp 2020

Manuka, The biography of an extraordinary Honey, Cliff van Eaton 2014

Judith also has a book review for us:

The Beekeeper of Aleppo

by Christy Lefteri – published 2019

This novel isn't so much about beekeeper in Syria, it is story around the plight of refugees fleeing the devastations of war.

This novel's main characters, husband and wife, Nuri and Afra, are fleeing the current devastating civil war in Syria. The opening chapters take the reader through the harrowing destruction of the two closely linked families, Nuri's and his cousin Mustafa, their apiaries, business, homes and children. Politics are barely mentioned in the book, though when war has destroyed so much, the reasons for that war lose their meaning as the reader follows Nuri and Afra escape from Aleppo and make the perilous journey to Britain via Turkey and Greece. Nuri narrates the book; its chapters alternate gracefully between the golden years prior to the civil unrest, the struggle to gain legal refugee



status in England in the present, and the journey in between with its long nightmare of chaotically crowded refugee camps, life-threatening sea crossings, and smugglers eager to exploit them. The last word of the previous chapter is the first word of the following chapter, and this style works well to switch the reader from one narrative to another. In Aleppo, Afra was an artist; Nuri was the beekeeper, a job he loved, in business with his cousin and dearest friend, Mustafa. The emotion trauma of war and heart-breaking loss leaves Afra blind, Nuri becomes her caretaker, with the promise of being reunited Mustafa in England, embarks on a journey of survival. Nuri comes across as being the strong one in the pair, but Lefteri subtly, slowly shows the reader how deep his wounds are as well. They are a broken pair but by the end of the story we can see hope for them both. As the reader you see not just the unthinkable of war but resilience of the human spirit, kindness, love and hope.

Bees/beekeeping are an integral part of the story. There's not a lot of technical content related to beekeeping but Nuri does repeatedly come back to his memories of beekeeping, the sounds of the bees, how he learned to do different things with/for the bees, etc. And the bee/beekeeping content never disappears; there is talk of bees and beekeeping to the very end of the story. Bees are associated with his memories of harmony, of the happy times, of Aleppo before the war. Bees and beekeeping are associated with peace.

This is a well-crafted, engaging, moving story of Syrian refugees, with the joys of beekeeping interwoven into its text.

Four Stings





Hives for Sale

John has had two offers of beehives recently:

1. Upper Hutt – 3 x active f/d hives but sufficient near-new gear for 5 x 5 box hives (200+ plastic full depth frames, frame feeders, bases, mats and roofs). No honey extracted this last season. No price mentioned by owner who is giving up beekeeping. Recommend full inspection prior to purchase.
2. Titahi Bay – 2 x active hives with addit. $\frac{3}{4}$ boxes – varying condition. No honey extracted this season. Owner relocating to a city apartment and willing to donate!

If you are interested, or you know of someone who might be, get in touch with John Burnet.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on July 1st, with our AGM.

We are hoping to have a guest chef to come and talk to us about cooking with honey.

There won't be a beginners session in July, the AGM will start at 6.45 and our regular meeting will commence at 7.30, or earlier if possible.



Who can I speak to?

President - James Withington 0272 851206 jwithington2016@gmail.com

Vice-President – John Randall (04) 4769959 john@gingerwillow.com

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Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville.

