



Beekeepers Association of the ACT

**Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the
Australian Capital Territory Incorporated**

Meetings of our Association are conducted on the third Thursday of every month
(except December) at the
Yarralumla Primary School Hall, 24 Loftus Street, YARRALUMLA, ACT 2600

Vice-president's Report

Biosecurity update- European Foul Brood

Bee Buzz box - Demo Day

ABC organic gardener magazine project

Native bee news

Media round up

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Links to our websites

Classifieds

Contact: President – Cormac Farrell (0422) 441 358

Email: enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au

www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

<https://www.facebook.com/BeekeepersAssociationoftheACT>

November 2017

**Monthly meeting: 16 November 2017, Yarralumla Primary
School at 7:30pm**

AGENDA

- 1930 Introduction & Welcome: Vice-president (Dermot Asis Sha'Non)
- 1935 Beeginners Corner
- 1945 Presentation - Ian Wallis from the ANU Research School of
Biology to speak about bee nutrition
- 2030 Networking (light supper)
- 2100 Meeting close

Phil Andrews Secretary (0408 539 579)

President's Report

Dear Members,

**“The worst thing that can happen to a man is to win at his first trip
to the racecourse”**

I'm writing to you this month in place of Cormac, who has decided to galivant around Africa to avoid his presidential duties. I feel a little blessed to be writing about a Spring that has sprung so bountifully, and although Cormac would probably argue that correlation equals causation, I'm sure my acting President gig has nothing to do with this season producing so much more honey than during the reign of Cormac or our previous President John Grubb.

It's the day after Melbourne Cup as I write, and the quote above is from Mark Twain during his trip to Australia (including the Cup) in 1895. It has me thinking of beekeepers beginning this year and I would say, please don't expect conditions to be this kind to you and your bees every year. For many of us the last couple of seasons have been very lean, with little or no honey and this year is a great relief. For some of the original Flow hivers, this year will be their first harvest. I had begun to believe that difficult beekeeping was to be the new normal with intensifying climate change.

There's honey, honey everywhere and lots of drops for my drinks. Some of the removals we've done this spring of established colonies have been more challenging

than normal due to the speed of honey being produced, even by very young colonies. Sarah and I removed a hive from a ceiling in Kambah that had swarmed in 10 days earlier and had already built around 12 decent sized combs holding somewhere between 10 and 15 kgs of fresh, light honey. The combination of super soft new comb and bulk honey makes for very messy work! Regular inspections are a must at the moment to keep ahead of both swarming and honey comb build up in unwanted places. We're seeing a lot of secondary swarming as the bees try and make the most of bumper conditions.

The Association now represents over 500 members, so that's a lot of opportunity for our beekeeping to result in problems for our neighbours. Probably our 2 greatest responsibilities as good beekeepers and neighbours, are to keep non aggressive colonies and as far as possible limit the opportunities for our hives to swarm. The bountiful spring conditions make the second more difficult but the first a bit easier as the bees seem to be very happy- perhaps loved up on honey? My own efforts at reducing swarming haven't been a total success with one hive in particular swarming more than once despite regular attention. I'm not sure we can stop all swarming, but we can make an effort to limit our losses and our neighbours inconvenience. It's a great loss for any beekeeper to lose half of their livestock in an afternoon.

Our Apiary manager, **Alan Wade**, has been warning for a few weeks now that we may need a concerted effort to deal with a bumper honey crop in our Association hives. We'll likely organize some sort of extracting working bee, so if that's an educational experience you'd like to be part of, make yourself known to a committee member, or wait until we post further details once a day can be arranged. The committee has been a little short handed this year, so don't be shy about stepping forward if there's an activity you feel you could help with. We do not have a Products Manager at the moment, so if that's your thing, step up.

Next month will be the end of year BBQ, making this weeks meeting the last of the year , so I'd invite you to come ready with your beginners corner questions and take the time after the talk to meet locals, and maybe set up some co-operative hive inspections. We are a bit spoilt in Canberra with the number of world class scientific experts, and we are fortunate to have as our speaker this month **Ian Wallis from the ANU Research School of Biology** to speak about bee nutrition. Having kept bees for 40 years, Ian should have no trouble relating to our audience.

'Sweet' dreams,

Dermot Asls Sha'Non

Vice President

Beekeepers Association of the ACT

P.S. Is anyone interested in taking over the hosting of the south side extractor? The current hosts are travelling a bit more these days and feel someone else would be more accessible.



Biosecurity update: European Foul Brood

October was American Foul Brood (AFB) Awareness Month. You can get the low down on this devil of a disease at the [NSW Department of Primary Industry website](#). This month, we're looking at the similarly named European Foul Brood (EFB).

Check out the facts below, also from the NSW DPI site:

*European foulbrood (EFB) is caused by the bacterium *Melissococcus pluton* and has become one of the most serious bee diseases in NSW in terms of reduced productivity of affected hives. The condition was identified in Australia in 1977 in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales; 1980 in Queensland; 1984 in Tasmania. EFB has not been found in Western Australia.*

The disease remains in a vegetative cell state all the time and can remain viable for up to 3 years. Only when the disease is multiplying in the bee larvae is the bacterium susceptible to antibiotics. EFB is highly contagious with all stages of larvae development susceptible to infection. Incidences of the disease are strongly correlated with climatic and nutritional stress factors. Cooler wet weather and poor nutrition will promote the incidence of this disease.

(Extract from the [NSW DPI factsheet](#) by Dr Doug Somerville)

Bee Buzz Box - Hive management report

The 22 October Sunday working party led by the very noble Steve O'Hearn did a grand job tidying the apiary. Steve's wood-fired Webber produced just the tastiest sausages and also kept the branding irons hot. We managed to brand over half of all apiary frames (600 hundred sizzlers) most inside hives so we exercised care. In itself that was a major step forward in securing your bees. And the weeds are no longer taller than the hives so many thanks guys and gals and especially Steve, Bill and Phil. Bill is one of *those* emerging hive buddies.

Anti swarming antics

To date we have prevented all of four colonies swarming. We didn't want to lose your bees and I guess we have been successful in keeping them at home. For the record, we split or Demareed all of them to keep the building and honey gathering instinct going. We've also steadily reversed and supered colonies to provide ample brood space and room to ripen nectar. These are all great and simple measures to keep



honey gathering on track. Not much point keeping bees, forgetting to close the front gate and then wondering why your bee escape instead of giving you this season's giant honey crop.

A model requeening exercise

Yellow is the colour to mark your new queens and is the colour of the box tree that threatens to fill your hives so quickly that you will miss a bigger harvest if you don't take honey off quickly.

Any queens you see in the apiary are easy as pie to age. The ones with a blue (occasionally a white) dot are from the last spring-to-autumn season. Newbies are marked yellow and ring-ins will be unmarked or will have a red dot. The oldest, swarmiest, crankiest and crookiest colonies are being progressively requeened.

One of the most taxing of requeening exercises is to find and remove the old queen. Sometimes that means removing more than one queen and it's always a good idea to check all brood combs just in case. This situation arises where a queen is being naturally replaced. Often enough the old queen lays alongside a daughter queen only to 'disappear' weeks to few months later. We call this supersedure.

Strong colony papered each way (the nuc is in the second brood box) with an excluder and honey super atop





**Above: Solitary supersedure queen cell
seen at the bottom left of the picture.**

**Right: Same supersedure queen imago
about three days from emergence**



Your story

Put that pen to paper folks and drop your tall stories onto the newsletter forum - But get in early so you don't miss out. *My turn on the Swing* comes to mind. We desperately need more quirky tall stories about keeping bees that only you can share with a credulous audience topping 500.

Upcoming apiary activities - *Canberra City Farms, Open Day and Launch - 19th November 2017*

Get your diaries out folks! Canberra City Farms is holding its Open Day & Launch from 10 til 3 on Sunday the 19th November.

They plan to offer:

- Tours of the farm - These will showcase the community plots, the demonstration garden beds, the vines/orchards, the roundhouses, and the vision for the farm into the future.
- Free pizza - The pizza oven will fired up on the day.
- Wicking bed demonstrations during the day.

The Association will be there in our marque to offer our support and to highlight our own presence at the Wetlands via the apiary.

Any Association members who would like lend a hand in the marquee for an hour or so, please contact Jon Justin (Treasurer) on 0417 293 009 or email

enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au

We will be running hive openings roughly hourly all day on Sunday 19 November.

Note: Don't turn up to Jerrabomberra on Saturday: we have shifted our monthly hive opening Show and Tell from Saturday to coincide with the Sunday Open Day activities.

Upcoming Christmas activities - *Christmas Party 7 December*

Then there is the matter of the friendly after work club Christmas Party at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands from 4 pm (BYO everything except the barbecue plate) on Thursday the 7 December.

More apiary activities - *Hive Demo 2-3pm 9 December*

There will be a very sticky hive demo at 2 till 3.30 pm on Saturday the 9 December.

Just turn up at 2 Dairy Road Fyshwick for all these good fun events.

To finish off, some retrospect readings that have informed apiary management this season! Dip into these old gems while cracking a tube or sipping a Chardonnay.

Demuth, G.S. (1919). Commercial comb honey production. US Department of Agriculture Farmers Bulletin **1039**: 1-40.

<https://ia802309.us.archive.org/19/items/CAT87202962/farmbul1039.pdf>

Making honey while the sun shines

We are all keen to turn on the honey tap by creating conditions where the bees stay at home to make honey rather than swarm. Last year was a shocker: last spring started well but we then had a dry summer when virtually nothing flowered.

This year we had a rotten start to spring – too dry and cold – and the usual plants such as cape weed just sat up and laughed at us. So with a little TLC (100 L of heavy sugar water) we nursed your bees and prevented them starving.

What we didn't expect was a warm October accompanied by a massive red box flowering.



If you don't believe it check out many club member hives like these ones – perhaps the best spring flow in 30-40 years. Take care, yellow box and Blakely's red gum, the mainstay of big honey flows, are in full flower from northern Victoria to the Northern Tablelands and are just breaking bud here.

A very buzzy and sticky new year to all!

If you would like to sign up as a hive buddy, please see Alan or Christine at our monthly meetings or email us:

Alan Wade
Hive Manager

alanlynnewade@me.com

0417 775 201

Christine Joannides
Assistant Hive Manager

christine.joannides@gmail.com

0412 214 632

ABC Organic Gardener magazine bee project

The ABC is embarking upon a collaborative project between ABC Organic Gardener magazine and ABC Books and have sent the following message to our members and friends.....

"With bees in decline all over the world, we want to celebrate Aussie backyard beekeepers. That is why we are so excited to launch a call out to find true stories and photos from beekeepers of all kinds and from across Australia to feature in a photographic book that will be released in September 2018. Whether from the country, the suburbs or a city, we want to hear from as many backyard beekeepers and native bee enthusiasts as possible. Beekeeping is becoming increasingly important in supporting bee populations and keeping our gardens pollinated, and we hope that publishing real-life beekeeping stories will help to inspire other Australians to support their local environment in this way."

Entrants can find all the details, read the terms and conditions and submit their story and photos at <http://organicgardener.com.au/backyardbees>

Jon Justin

jonjus10@me.com



Native Bee News - November 2017

Native bee Spring activity

The Canberra Spring is doing its usual fickle thing - sunny one day, icy the next. This is a cause for some confusion for the local native bees - unlike the tough honey bees, native bees like steady warm weather. Some Canberra species have learnt to adapt - why wouldn't they, when there are all those flowers out there!

Canberra City Farm Open Day

Canberra City Farm will be holding an [Open Day](#) and Launch on Sunday 19 November at their Jerrabomberra site from 10am till 3pm. We are hoping to have a few native bee homes on display to encourage others to get creative. We might also take a walk around the farm and Wetlands to see if we can locate some native bees. [Act for Bees](#) will also be at the Open Day explaining how to create a bee-friendly garden. Hope you can come along.

Australian Pollinator Week

November 12-19th is pollinator week. You can join the [wild pollinator count](#) by observing a flowering plant in your garden or anywhere for just 10 minutes, recording what you see, and submitting the results on-line to be included in the national tally. Check out this site for more details.

Peter Abbott 0421 227 315 peterabbott@inet.net.au

Congratulations to our dedicated committee for spreading the word!

Your editors: Juli and Stuart

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