



# ***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

**Next Meeting**

**President's Report**

**Biosecurity update- latest  
Varroa update**

**SIG-native bees**

**Hive management updates**

**Training update**

**What is honeycomb?**

**Links to our websites**

**Classifieds**

**Contact: President – Cormac Farrell (0422) 441 358**

**Email: [enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au](mailto:enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au)  
[www.actbeekeepers.asn.au](http://www.actbeekeepers.asn.au)**

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

**October 2016**

**Monthly meeting: 20 October 2016, Yarralumla Primary School at 7:30pm**

## **AGENDA**

1930 Introduction & Welcome: President (Cormac Farrell)  
1935 Beeginners Corner  
1955 Helen Vaughan will speak about bee friendly gardening  
2030 Networking (light supper)  
2100 Meeting close

**Steve O'Hearn Secretary (0408) 657 871**

## **President's Report**

Dear Members,

### **Meeting a Flow Hive inventor**

They say it is not what you know, but who you know, and that principle certainly helped with our most recent event. The inventors of the Flow Hive recently won the Australian Good Design Award, and one of the executives from my company was on the judging panel. They got chatting, and when they heard that Stuart was going to be in Canberra got his details and put us in touch. Normally it is hard to organize a venue at short notice, but our awesome events coordinator Stephanie swung into action, and we had a really fun impromptu, informal get-together at the Wig and Pen pub.

It was a really interesting conversation, ranging from beekeeping (obviously), the sometimes variable reception that the Flow Hive has received, and corporate social responsibility. I still find it funny that a couple of hippies from the back-blocks of Byron Bay have suddenly found themselves in charge of a multi-national corporation. Stuart was very much as he appears on camera, engaging and interested in hearing how people are going with their hives.

We had a nice mixture of new and old members attending, and there is definitely interest from Stuart in attending our Field Day next year. We will continue to follow up to see if we can get the flow hive inventors to provide a presentation, and ideally a demonstration with the hives at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Apiary.

### **Sentinel Hive Program**

The Association has been in negotiations with the Department of Defence for several weeks now to secure sites for our sentinel hives around Canberra Airport as international flights start to arrive. I am pleased to report that we now have access agreements in place and hives have been moved into position. Special thanks to Jeff, Frank and John for moving the hives into place while I was working down the coast. As it happens, I was working next to an existing sentinel hive on a Defence base, it was interesting to see how this was set up.

Now the real work begins - please consider joining the sentinel management teams to share the load. As an added advantage, you will get training in advanced pest and disease detection techniques. In addition to giving you a head start on management should we have an incursion, this training opens doors to take part in major control programs. Our hive manager, Jeff Matsen has been doing us proud as part of the control efforts for Asian Honeybee and Varroa mites, and will be reporting on this soon, as well as leading one of the sentinel hive teams.

Please let me or Jeff know if you are interested in getting involved - training is due to start soon, and we would really like to give as many members as possible the opportunity to be part of this.

Regards,

**Cormac Farrell, President**



Another Asian honey bee nest has been found in the Hyde Park area of Townsville, but there were no varroa mites on the bees or in the nest. Varroa mites (*Varroa jacobsoni*) have been found on Asian honey bees at Townsville Port and Annandale. Varroa mites have the potential to

significantly damage the Australian bee industry, disrupting honey production and pollination services.

Biosecurity Queensland Varroa Mite Response Coordinator Dr Ashley Bunce said this latest nest was located in the eaves of a house that backed on to the property where the last nest was found in a wine barrel on the verandah of a family home.

“The varroa mite response team found this latest Asian honey bee nest using a technique called bee-lining, which tracks foraging bees back to their nest,” he said. The technique is normally used when suspect bees have been spotted foraging on flowers, and involves setting up a feeding station as an artificial food source for the bees close to where they have been seen.” By luring the bees to the feeding station with a floral scent and converting them to the artificial food source, the response team can then track the flight path of the bees back to their nest.

## Special interest group on native bees

### Native Bee SIG News



Despite less than ideal spring weather, some of the more hardy native bees are beginning to get out and about. The small black bee with a reddish thorax shown in the picture is a *Lasioglossum* sp. and can be seen in the Botanical Gardens on many flowers, particularly *Boronia*, *Phebalium* and *Prostanthera*. It is worth having a look around your garden, but chose a warm day.

Creating bee homes is one way of increasing the local bee population. Many native bees burrow in the ground – these homes are a little difficult to create artificially, but not

impossible. Other native bees prefer to live in holes in wood or inside stems, these homes are a little easier for us to create. There is a higher chance of attracting native bees to these homes if they are placed in areas where native bees are known to live. Success is not guaranteed, but it is worth a try, and bee homes are fun to build.

For homes made from wooden blocks, holes should be various sizes between 3-10mm and 100-150mm deep to attract masked bees or leaf-cutter bees. Homes can also be made from a suitable structure filled with bunches of various stem material. These stems can be hollow such as wax drinking straws or bamboo, or pithy such as fennel or lantana stems. There are no hard rules here, so different materials and designs can be tried. Google 'native bee homes' if you want some ideas.

There are some pictures on the BAACT Facebook page showing some recent trial runs at creating comfortable native bee accommodation – two examples of wooden blocks and one of pithy stems - only time will tell if the bees think the décor is suitable! See -

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

If you would like to participate in this group or make a suggestion, contact me at [peterabbott@inet.net.au](mailto:peterabbott@inet.net.au) or on 0421 227 315.

**Peter Abbott**  
**Native Bee SIG Coordinator**

# Hive Management updates

## National Bee Pest Surveillance Program

To sign up, simply contact either the ACT NBPS co-ordinators: Jeff Matsen or Frank Derwent or one of the six National Bee Pest Surveillance Program team leaders below:

- \* Sentinel Team 1: Cormac Farrell [jagungal1@gmail.com](mailto:jagungal1@gmail.com)
- \* Sentinel Team 2: John Grubb [the.grubbs@gmail.com](mailto:the.grubbs@gmail.com)
- \* Sentinel Team 3: Dick Johnson [bindaree@netspeed.com.au](mailto:bindaree@netspeed.com.au)
- \* Sentinel Team 4: Alan Wade [alanlynnnewade@me.com](mailto:alanlynnnewade@me.com)  
and Steve O'Hearn [gooster777@gmail.com](mailto:gooster777@gmail.com)
- \* Sentinel Team 5: Frank Derwent [fderwent@home.netspeed.com.au](mailto:fderwent@home.netspeed.com.au)
- \* Sentinel Team 6: Jeff Matsen [snow.gum@hotmail.com](mailto:snow.gum@hotmail.com)

## Special interest groups: Top bar and Warre beekeeping

For more details contact Hive Manager, Jeff Matsen, or Assistant Hive Manager, Frank Derwent.

## Become a BAACTI hive buddy

Simply e-mail Jeff Matsen or Frank Derwent and ask to be placed on the e-mail distribution list for hive management activities. There's no specific time commitment, just come when you can and help out. No need to have any beekeeping experience. If there is enough interest, we may even be able to allocate a beehive for the year to a small group to look after under guidance - a great way to get hands on beekeeping experience if you do not have a hive at home.

Good beekeeping!

**Jeff Matsen**  
**Hive Manager**  
[snow.gum@hotmail.com](mailto:snow.gum@hotmail.com)



## News from the UK

The Chairman of the Somerton Beekeepers Association, Stewart Gould, has reported that the Asian Hornet has arrived in England. We will hear more from Stewart when he visits Australia, and hope he can talk at one of our meetings.



# Training Update

## Jerrabomberra Wetlands (JW) Courses.

### Natural Beekeeping Course

Adrian Iodice conducted a Natural Beekeeping course at Jerrabomberra Apiary on 24/25th September. Positive feedback on the value of the course was received by all who attended this two day course. I specifically wish to thank Jon Justin for his time and direct involvement in making this course so successful.



Adrian has kindly agreed to present this course again on 22/23rd October. Vacancies for this course are available but time is running out. For those of you interested in doing a natural beekeeping course, please go on to our online booking system at <https://bookwhen.com/actbka> to reserve your spot. During the course we will have Adrian commission our second Kenyan Top Bar hive (KTBH) which he kindly donated to the Association. The photo shows this hive together with a nucleus KTBH plus recently acquired swarm. I also wish to thank Jon Justin for constructing this nucleus hive and making it

available to the Association.

### CIT Courses on Backyard Beekeeping.

Over the next few months, the Association will be conducting three courses on bee keeping in conjunction with CIT Solutions. In preparation for these courses much effort has been expended in ensuring our Bruce apiary is 'Training ready' and I wish to thank Alan Wade and Jon Justin for their tireless efforts in assisting me in this endeavour.

By the time this Newsletter is released we would have completed Course 1 at Bruce CIT. For the first time these courses are being conducted over two full Saturdays and I wish to express my sincere thanks to all those members who unselfishly give of their time to support these courses which provide the Association the opportunity to directly interface with the public.

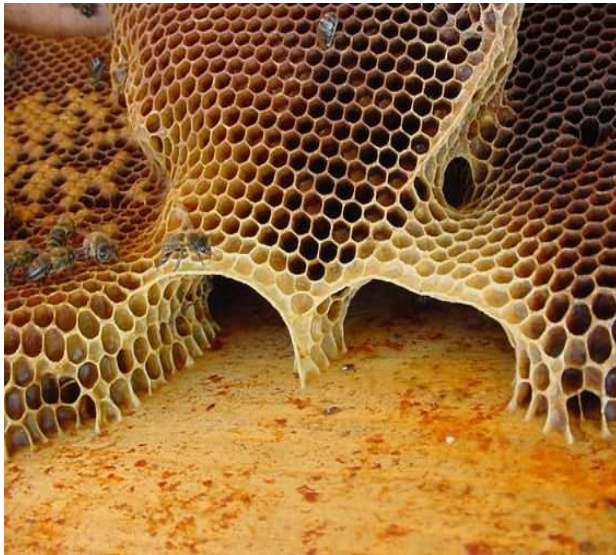
Courses 2 and 3 will be conducted at Jerrabomberra Wetlands Training Centre. Course 2 is fully booked and will be conducted on Sat 29<sup>th</sup> Oct and Sat 5 Nov. However, there are vacancies for Course 3 which will be conducted on Sat 26 November and Sat 3 December. For members interested in attending Course 3, a link to the CIT Solutions booking system is provided on the Forum section of our Web site.

John Grubb  
Association Training Manager  
Email: [the.grubbs@gmail.com](mailto:the.grubbs@gmail.com)

## What is Honey Comb and Why do Bees Make It ?

First of all it is not just honeycomb that we will discuss, because comb has more functions than just containing honey. In addition to providing the prime structure for brood rearing, products storage etc. within a hive or nest, comb is also used for the following functions.

- Transmission of vibrations created by worker bees and the queen bee.
- Pheromone deposition.
- Emission of volatile odours that serve as a foraging stimulus.
- Dancing platform for communicating the best foraging sites.
- Clustering for thermoregulation.
- Water spreading for thermoregulation.



Comb is an essential, expensive and permanent investment for the honey bee colony. The comb in a typical nest of a fully-established colony in the wild will be made from about 1.2 kg wax, contain about 100,000 cells and have a surface area of about 2.5 square metres. Each individual piece of comb will be securely attached to the roof and sidewalls of the nest, but occasional gaps are left between the comb and the sidewalls to allow bees to pass between the various seams. About 7.5 kg honey will have been used in the comb manufacture, equivalent to over a third of the colony's winter energy requirement. At least 6g of honey is used in the manufacture of 1g beeswax. It takes about 66 bee hours to

convert this into 20 square centimetres of comb. Being such an expensive resource, a honey bee colony only adds to it in response to immediate demand. Wherever possible, damaged cells are repaired and wax scraps such as cell cappings are recycled by the colony. Queen cells are built from bits of wax cut away from adjoining worker cells and once used, they too are recycled.

**Comb Architecture** - Each piece of comb comprises a flat midrib of wax about 0.1 mm thick. On either side of this is a layer of tessellated hexagonal cells with wax walls approximately 0.075 mm thick. Each cell floor is angled upwards at 13° to the horizontal from the base to the opening to prevent honey contents from spilling out. The tessellated hexagonal arrangement maximises cell density on the comb face by avoiding any dead space. Furthermore, as each cell wall is shared by two cells, the quantity of wax used per cell is kept to an absolute minimum. By all these means, material economy is optimised. Material strength is enhanced by the non-alignment of cells on each side and 1 kg comb can easily support 22 kg honey at normal hive

*Article courtesy of John Chambers Warwickshire BKA*



**Our website:** [www.actbeekeepers.asn.au](http://www.actbeekeepers.asn.au)

It's all there in one handy location: information, news, forums and links. Register to take part in the forum discussions, ask a question or provide advice.

**Have you taken a look?**

***More photos and information from our [forum](#) at the [website](#) or [Facebook](#)***

## Classifieds

### **WANTED - AUDITOR for ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS**

The Association auditor retired last year, and we are desperately seeking a replacement auditor to make sure we are able to comply with the Association's Act.

Is there one of our members registered as an auditor under the Corporation's Act, who would be willing to provide this valuable service or who might know a friend who is willing to help?

Please contact Jon Justin - [treasurer@actbeekeepers.asn.au](mailto:treasurer@actbeekeepers.asn.au) if you would like to discuss or volunteer.

The Association financial year is January to December, and the accounts need to be audited by April each year.

### **Seeking guest speaker**

Canberra Girls Grammar School Early Learning Centre are seeking someone to act as a guest speaker for their students later this term. The students have shown a keen interest in learning where honey comes from and how it is made. They are looking for someone who might be able to share their beekeeping knowledge, and perhaps bring in some items for the children to see. The children involved are 4 years old.

Please contact Kate Columbine, Canberra Girls Grammar School Early Learning Centre on 6202 6458 or email [Kathryn.columbine@cggs.act.edu.au](mailto:Kathryn.columbine@cggs.act.edu.au)



## Club caps

Members are entitled to **one FREE** club cap per subscription. Any member who hasn't received a club cap, and would like one, can pick one up at the Treasurer's table after the monthly meeting. **Additional caps are \$10 each.**

## ACTBKA

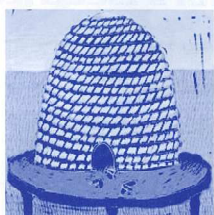
The Association has equipment for loan. If you have any queries or requirements, please contact a member of the committee.



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