



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

Contact: President - Cormac Farrell (0422) 441 358

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www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

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

October 2017

**Monthly meeting: 19 October 2017, Yarralumla Primary
School at 7:30pm**

AGENDA

1930 Introduction & Welcome: President (Cormac Farrell)

1935 Beeginners Corner

1945 Presentation

2030 Networking (light supper)

2100 Meeting close

Phil Andrews Secretary (0408 539 579)

President's Report

**Biosecurity update-
AFB Awareness
Month - Devil of a
Disease**

**Bee Buzz box - Demo
Day**

Native bee contact

**Movie review: SEED
the Untold Story**

Feedback?

Links to our websites

Classifieds

President's Report

Dear Members,

This month there's a major focus on American Foul Brood (AFB) detection and management in NSW. With spring inspections in full swing, now is the most important time to identify and deal with infected hives.

We have been sharing a lot of photos of dead and diseased hives, but I wanted to balance this with the photo below, from one of my apiaries in NSW. This is a Warre hive box full of honey, from a vibrant, happy and productive colony. Two years ago there was an outbreak of AFB in the apiary that this hive is a part of, with two hives showing symptoms of infection, later confirmed through lab testing. Due to a regular inspection cycle (at least monthly, more frequently in spring) these infections were caught early, before the hives weakened enough to allow robbing. As a result, the outbreak stopped with the initial two hives. This hive was right next to them, but didn't rob from the source the other two found, and was saved by the sealing and sterilisation of the infected colonies.



This beautiful hive is why we talk about the need for inspections and education to identify disease – it allows us to save our own hives, and the hives of others. We can beat this – we just need to be diligent with inspections, and catch the infections early to stop hives from collapsing and getting robbed out.

I want to particularly recognise the additional work that two of our members, **Alan Wade** and **Eric Davies** do in helping new beekeepers who suspect AFB. Both are long-standing and active members of the association who take time out to help newcomers with suspected infections. They have been instrumental in catching infections early, and are making a big difference in reducing the numbers of collapsed and badly infected hives.

If the worst does happen and you must kill a hive, we have a long-standing service for taking loads of supers up to Sydney for irradiation. This way you get your hive back in a disease-free state and can start again with a swarm or nucleus colony. We are here to help and support you in learning about disease control - be sure to take advantage of this.

Behind the scenes, your association has been working with the ACT government biosecurity staff to help members organise testing. To support registered beekeepers, the ACT government is covering testing costs for us for registered beekeepers, which is very generous of them and shows their commitment to bee biosecurity. Please make sure that you register your hives. In addition to this free testing service, essential for the next stage of biosecurity controls, we are going to start putting out alerts to warn of potential problems in each region of Canberra.

The current plan is to drive these local alerts through reporting AFB infections into a spatial database called ARC Collector. This is commonly used professionally for science and engineering projects (I use it myself), and will allow both ACT Biosecurity and Association members to identify AFB locations. From this we can map the foraging ranges of these hives, and put out warnings to registered beekeepers.

There are also discussions underway about purchasing an extractor dedicated to removing honey from AFB infected hives, possibly located out at the Stromlo Parks depot. This is where you drop samples off for free AFB testing, so it would seem to be a logical place to keep this equipment. That way anyone with actual or suspected AFB honey can extract the material away from normal club equipment, and then organise irradiation of the honey and supers.

The coming season looks to be a good one already, with mass blooming of Eucalypts and exotic street trees throughout the suburbs. This blend of sources produces beautiful honey, and also kicks off swarm season. I have had a few swarm collections myself, as well as splitting my home hives when I saw swarm cells developing. A great time of year to be out amongst your bees. I hope that everyone is having a good spring, and we hope to see you at the regular meetings and hive buddy days we are running.



Cormac Farrell
President
Beekeepers Association of the ACT

Regards,

Cormac Farrell, President

Biosecurity update: the Devil of a Disease

Did you know that this very October, on right now, is 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](#).

AFB is often-enough referred to as the **Anthrax of Bees**. Once your bees have it, it's curtains. The only options are to give up beekeeping altogether or to cut your losses, clean up, and start afresh. Most experienced beekeepers have seen both AFB and it's treatable cousin EFB (European Foul Brood) and have done the right thing. They have had all their gear sterilised and taken the long road back to recovery.

By now most beekeepers will have not only done their full disease check – shaken off all bees from all brood combs and poked every unhealthy looking brood cell with a matchstick while also keeping a pretty close eye on any bee swarm preparations. In both instances definitive action is needed if the ravages of disease are not to be your bees' death knell or if you not to simply watch your bees fly out the front door – with your summer honey crop. 'After the horse has bolted' comes to mind.



Definitive AFB, but get it checked anyway as a civic duty. It is free to registered beekeepers

Diagnosing and testing for AFB/EFB

Checking for and diagnosing disease is as easy as pie. Many people had a shot at doing so at the definitive cell poking technique on Saturday 23 September club demo day. The club has followed through to demonstrate hive checking to Jenny Conolly (ACT Invasive Species Officer) and Kyelee Driver (ACT Biosecurity Veterinary Officer) at Adrian and Liz Wright's home in Hackett. The happy outcomes were pretty clean hives all round, just a modicum of chalk brood, the usual few cells of sac brood and a couple of wax

moths burrowing into cappings. Nothing planned re-queening won't fix quick smart and that is in hand.



At the Wright Bee Shed L to R: Adrian Wright, Kyelee and Jenny after the disease all clear and a ginger beer

If you suspect AFB or EFB – the cell contents will string out like bubble gum and will stick to the cell as much as to the match – why not submit a sample (a glass slide smear) after checking out the [NSW DPI AFB Fact Sheet](#)

You will also need to do the paper work. Simply complete the standard NSW [DPI Veterinary diagnostic form](#) and drop it into Kyelee Driver at the ACT Government Stromlo Offices, Cotter Road WESTON near the new lake. Don't forget to include your apiary rego number.

Kyelee made a special effort to come to our last club meeting, made time to come out with us to do real beekeeping. She may even come to our Jerrabomberra Wetlands Field Day on Saturday 17 March. Why not do both? Pop a reminder in your diary to register your bees and, to register your interest, also put the field day in your diary.

AFB cleanup

Well you can burn any AFB gear you find but that will put you out of beekeeping. The attractive alternative is to get your gear – after removing honey – irradiated. The club operates a pickup and drop-off service for infected gear (currently \$20 for a single super into which you can pack

cleaned frames – no honey – gloves and other items such as excluders and feeders) and will ship it off to Steritech. Get the low down from the club website and talk to Peter McKeahnie.

Check your bees now for peace of mind.

Alan Wade

Bee Buzz Box - Hive management report

Club demo session Sunday 23 September

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

William Butler Yeats

And now for the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Apiary buzz!

Some 50 or 60 club members turned up after lunch for our inaugural club demo day a few Sunday's back. Apologies to the many that were in the 'back row' and felt they were sort of missing out. We will be better organised next time. Truth is we had the bees well lined up well to demonstrate some interesting techniques – not least disease checking and shook swarming of bees – but fell down on having too few demonstrators. We really wanted everyone to be involved, even it were to keep the smoker alight or pour sugar water into top feeders. Next time...

The field day saw a novel application of the famous Demaree Swarm Control technique. [For more information see the October edition of *The Australasian Beekeeper* (2017) **119 (4):48-51**]. The donor colony (pictured at our old Bruce CIT apiary until a few weeks ago) had just started preparations to swarm – queen cell cups contained eggs so the demo and Demaree was timely.

Box without hinges, key or lid, but golden treasure inside is hid - our hidden weapon

Donor colony J20 at Bruce CIT before moving to JWA for our demo.

The colony was jam packed with bees, brood and stores. It looks quiet but it was 6.30 pm in mid September and the last stragglers had just come home.





Kenyan Top Bar Hive with offset Langstroth frame jig containing brood only. The queen was isolated on standard Kenyan top bar frames (under bars, left, with blue dots) and commenced establishing a new brood nest the other side of a queen excluder three days later. The brood nest (hidden) is located the other side of a follower board into which was incorporated a section of queen excluder.



Crazy bee shook swarming from a standard Langstroth colony: the brood without bees was placed in the Langstroth jig (above)

The field day saw some routine anti-swarming bee-increase control measures: under-supersing honey supers, expanding colonies from 2 to 3 boxes and, more recently, splitting colonies to prevent colonies actually swarming.



Inaugural club demo day Saturday 23rd September: Note the stragglers that seemed unable to decide to go home

Queen Visits to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Apiary

With the apiary tidied and disease checks done, apiary management efforts have now turned to building colonies and to replacing queens that have proved to be 'not quite up to it'.

While the apiary is in fairly good nick, a combination of rotten early spring weather and exceptionally dry conditions resulted in many colonies being close to starvation coming out of winter despite heavy autumn feeding. In fact two Kenyan Top Bar Hives, those that were not topped up with stores, simply did not make it. That meant a depleted apiary, one we have been struggling to fully reestablish. The result! We've had to turn to feeding bees so that there were enough bees around for you to enjoy and for trainers to work with. So far we have fed 100 L of 2:1 sugar water with some colonies only now just turning the corner. In most other apiaries around Canberra garden flora and well watered eucalypts have actually produced an early honey flow and inevitable swarming.

Re-queening goes ahead this week – most queens will have gone into nucs or into colony splits by the time you read this and will need inspection to see how they are faring. The first queens to be replaced will be those in dinks –

colonies that have failed to come away despite a fair amount of molly coddling – and a couple of colonies chronically affected with chalk brood. The oldest, and still well-performing, queens will be swapped to nucs once the new queens are well established.

Good weather permitting join us at 2 pm at our next demo Saturday 21st of October to check out how your new club queens are faring and to see how re-queening can be done in style.

Enough prattle! The bees need attention, there are 57 member and club queens to go into colonies and anyway bees need more watching and less talking about...

Next Month: Re-queening the leisurely way

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

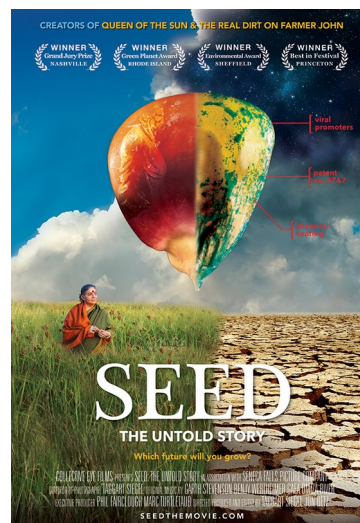
Also interested in native bees?

To join the special interest group, or simply find out more, contact **Peter Abbott** 0421 227 315 peterabbott@iinet.net.au

Book Review: Seed the Untold Story.

Way back in August, the ACT beekeepers assembled at the Dendy with our friends from Canberra City Farm to see this film about seeds and seed saving. Directed by **Jon Betz** and **Taggart Siegal**, and starring **Vandana Shiva**, **Andrew Kimbrell** and **Jane Goodall** of gorilla fame, the film explains the importance of bio-diversity in our food crops, and how this has been lost. Seed savers and activists are the heroes in what just might be a fight for our survival, with climate change requiring new strains of familiar crops. The directors also show just how fragile seed banks can be.

Grandma's backyard vegie patch is where it's at: protecting and restoring bio-diversity of our food.



Newsletter content and feedback

Have your say about what you'd like to see reported, contribute pictures and articles, or just give feedback!

Go to our website below, select 'Forums' on the left-hand side of the menu, and then 'Members forum'. Respond to the topic: Newsletter articles.

We'd love to hear from you!

Your editors: Juli and Stuart

on line

Our website: 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?

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