

Townsville and District Beekeepers Association (Inc)



PO Box 1115, Aitkenvale QLD 4814

www.beesnorth.com.au

Newsletter No 3, April 2023

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Next Meeting:

Sunday, 23 April @ 10 am
Michael Hooper Park, Deeragun

Bring a chair and something to share at morning tea.
Tea, coffee, milk, sugar, cups, hot water will be available.
Free chats with experienced and novice beekeepers are available after the meeting
The Club Shop will usually open 1st Saturday of the month.
Please check the website for details

General meeting 19th March 2023

Notes from John Carr



The March general meeting was held on a nice day at the Bee shed at Michael Hooper Park.

Our deep respect and admiration for Tom Ruddell was expressed.

General discussion notes are attached in the minutes. Variety of topics including some disappointing news in New South Wales regarding the Varroa elimination programme not updating their main website because of the NSW election! The elimination of varroa is too important to be bothered with party politics, especially when the website is now over 20 infected hives out of date.

Ahead of the NSW state election on 25 March 2023, the NSW Government caretaker period has commenced. Limited updates will be made to this website during this period.



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Primary Industries

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Varroa mite emergency response

But on a positive note, the club is getting more involved in a study which video captures the bees as they enter and leave the hive and will examine each bee for varroa!

We are all encouraged to do an examination of our hives for Varroa – AND submit the results. Mick demonstrated the new department App which will make recording out negative results easier.

Remember we are still a hot spot for *Varroa jacobsoni* incursions!

Mick and Nick show

At the General Meeting Mick and Nick demonstrated a few new items from the Shop

A capped honey display box, which I think will look better as freeform and a decapping device rather than removing the cappings.



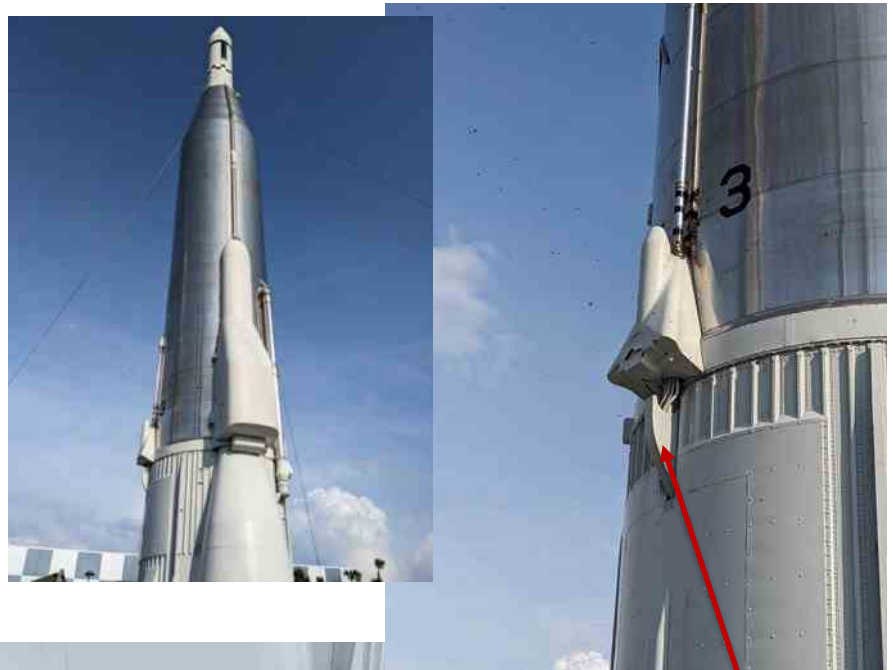
Bees in Space!!!!

From Ray Berkelmans

Roving reporter Ray Berkelmans has checked in from the launch pad in Florida where a swarm of bees is likely to blast off to the moon----or wherever the rocket goes this time (see Aiming at the Heavens photo).

But do those bees realize that the last time that rocket missed the target - the Moon - and headed for the sun instead! See photo bottom right

Had they never heard of Icarus who flew too close to the Sun, and the beeswax holding his wings on melted and his wings fell off. Those bees better "offload" now.



Icarus loses his bees waxed wings



Bee swarm at count down- you can see lots of bees flying if you zoom in

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icarus>

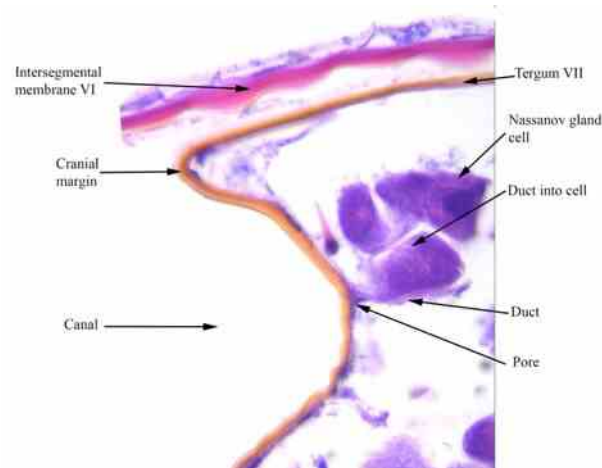
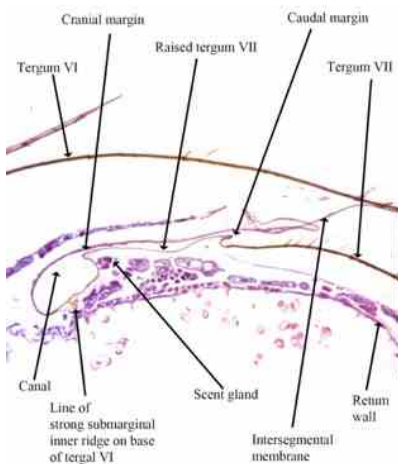
Nasonov's gland

Article from Dr John Carr

In the worker guard bees when you watch them some of the bees will be facing inwards with their rear in the air. Look closely and you will see they widen their upper scales. Between the top scale (which are called Tergum scales) 6 (VI) and 7 (VII) is the Nasonov's gland on the front (hidden normally) edge of the VII scale. This gland produces a scent which attracts the hives bee's home. The gland produces a variety of chemicals, which the bee uses to assist identification of the entrance of the hive. The chemicals are excreted into the canal and released by the guard bee depressing its tergum plate VII. This behaviour can be also seen when we open the hive as part of the alarm.

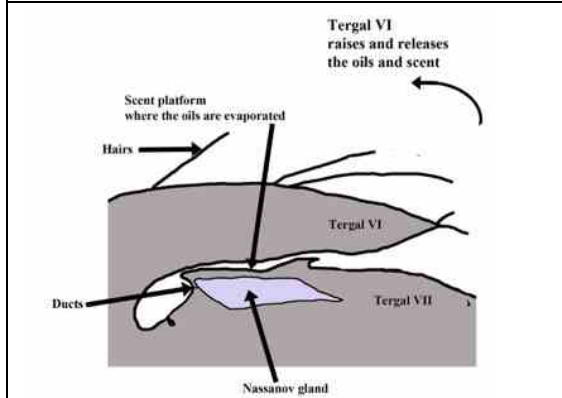


The guard bees displaying their Nasonov's gland



Down the microscope you can clearly see the Nasonov's gland and the shelf on Tergum VII

Detail of the Nasonov's gland showing detail of the canal and duct system



Drawing of the Nasonov's gland the platform to collect the oils



The Nasonov's gland produces the variety of attractant chemicals and these are moved via ducts and then released into the air and they provide part of the guidance system for the returning bees. Because the gland is not required in males (drones) or the queen it is not seen.

We are looking at our natives for similar behaviour so we can examine their anatomy for similar scent glands

A bee at the entrance to its hive adopts the typical stance for dispersing pheromone. The thin white stripe (red arrow) near the tip of the bee's abdomen is the Nasonov's gland.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasonov%27s_gland

Helpful tips on where to place your new hive from Rusty at Honey Bee Suite:

https://www.honeybeesuite.com/hive-placement-how-to-choose-the-best-backyard-spot/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=news_from_the_hive&utm_term=2023-03-18

Hive placement can be tricky. You need to keep everyone happy, including you, your neighbours, and your bees.

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Even before your first colony arrives, you have a critical decision to make: Where will you put your hive? It's a tough choice. And it's not made easier by all the rumours and myths that go along with it. So let's separate what's important and what's not.

Worry about people and pets before bees.

Nothing is more resilient than a honey bee. Honey bees adapt easily to many situations, unlike people and their pets.

Unfortunately, most new beekeepers worry about the bees more than they worry about their families or neighbours. Don't do that. The last thing you want is complaints about your bees, fines, or lawsuits. It's fairly easy to set up your hives correctly but difficult to fix trashed relationships. So let's consider some practical matters.

Honey bees are free spirits.

Honey bees have minds of their own. Sometimes, you cannot convince them of anything. Instead, they will go wherever they want, whenever they want, and do anything they want.

As beekeepers, we can only "suggest" behaviours. We give them boxes to live in, frames to nest in, and supers for storing honey. If we're lucky, they play along. But just remember, they make the final decisions, and sometimes those choices are not especially helpful.

Learning to keep your colonies in line is part of becoming a beekeeper. Once you know what honey bees want and need, you can supply those things and they will usually behave. As I said, they are extremely adaptable.

Place hives so you can work from the back.

Lots of people want to set their hives against a house, barn, or shed. It's a tempting location because a building offers lots of protection for your bees. Tucked under an eave, a hive receives less rain, snow, and wind. Plus, if the building is heated—as is your home—the bees benefit from that, too. The problem is beekeeper access. It's best to tend your hives from the back, especially if you are new. The bees will use their front entrance, so working bees from the back of the hive keeps you clear of their flight path.

It's possible to work them from the side, but it's more difficult than you may think. It's hard to reach across the hive to the other side, and if your hives backs against a building, you cannot get your varroa drawer in and out without altering the hive configuration.

Stay away from doors and open windows.

Also, you shouldn't put a hive close to a door or a window that opens. Even if the bees don't bother you, they may bother family members, guests, delivery drivers, and mail carriers. Remember, too, that the bees' direction of flight may change as forage plants go in and out of bloom.

And it's not just your house. You don't want to put a hive close to swing sets, sandboxes, horse paddocks, swimming pools, dog runs, sidewalks, trails, parks, bus stops, bicycle lanes, or shopping areas. This may seem like common sense, but when I've evaluated disputes between private citizens and beekeepers, more often than not I thought the beekeeper could have been more discreet.

By keeping your bees as far as possible from people, pets, and livestock, you will have a better beekeeping experience.

Things that can go awry

Yes, a surprising number of people worry about living near a beehive. A lot of them are truly wary of bees, so you need to cut them some slack.

Perhaps they've read of people dying from "killer bees" or being hospitalized for anaphylaxis.

These situations are tough, but an entitled beekeeper can make them worse. Many of the disputes I've seen didn't involve stings at all, but merely the thoughtless placement of hives.

I've seen beekeepers place their hives next to a fence with the entrance facing the neighbour's house. The neighbours may think you're protecting yourself by putting them in danger. Or a beekeeper may place a hive near a fence that's 50 feet from his own house and just 20 feet from the neighbour's house. The neighbour may read this as arrogant, thoughtless, or provocative. This is no way to start a new hobby.

Think of those affected by your bees.

Too often, I've heard beekeepers say something stupid like, "It's my property so I'll put the hive wherever I want!" Yes, I get it. If it's your property, perhaps you can put your hive anywhere you want (assuming you follow any setback requirements). But as a beekeeper, you don't want that kind of relationship with a neighbour. Trust me on this.

For example, if your best colony swarms and lands in your neighbour's apple tree, you'll want permission to go fetch it. If you've been a horse's backside from the beginning, you're going to lose those bees, probably to a spray of pesticide. So don't go there.

Put your hives in a place that works for everyone. Give the neighbours honey, candles, and the benefit of the doubt. As eager as you are to make everything perfect for your bees, it pays to be kinder than necessary to the neighbours.

Even gentle bees have nasty spells.

The temperament of a colony can fluctuate throughout the year. Bees that are gentle when the nectar is flowing can get nasty and defensive when the flowers dry up. This is normal, and those uptight bees will usually calm down again when the fall nectar flow begins.

Shifting dispositions offer another good reason to keep hives away from people. If we set the hives away from foot traffic, slight changes in disposition may go unnoticed.

Consider where your bees will drink and defecate.

These two items cause most neighbour problems. People don't want bees crawling all over their pool decks, and they don't want gleaming globs of bee poop on their lawn chairs and picnic tables.

Most beekeepers never consider these two problems until after they happen. And, unfortunately, it's difficult to potty train a hive of bees. As for water, it's best to provide a water source before your bees arrive. They will choose water close to the hive if you provide it. But if you don't, they will go further afield and perhaps use a local pool. Once they've selected a source, however, it's nearly impossible to break the habit. So remember one thing: water before bees.

As for poop, the further away the hive is from your neighbours, the better. The bees will defecate soon after they leave the hive, so the extra distance is a plus. Also, as you get further from a hive, the bees are more spread out, making the number of yellow spots seem less. See "How the inverse square law governs the distribution of bee poop" for an explanation.

Disregard myths about hive placement.

There are legions of rules about hive placement that are not at all critical. For example, your hives don't need to be in direct sun, the entrance doesn't need to face southeast, and its elevation doesn't matter* (But see The Ed's Comment below).

These rules can help if every teaspoon of honey is vital. But for the backyard beekeeper, it's better to raise healthy bees in a way that appeases your family and your neighbours. Many of the hive placement rules come from commercial beekeepers who need to maximize profits. They need to keep the bees working from sunup to sundown in order to make the mortgage and the car payment.

But those rules have little to do with healthy, happy bees. When bees select their own homes in the wild, they usually pick shaded areas near the edge of a forest. The entrances are wherever they are, and the brood nest may be in the ground or 40 feet in the air. It's easy to get confused between what they want and what we want.

Careful placement of your hives and consideration for others will go a long way to making beekeeping an exciting and rewarding hobby for years to come.

Rusty at [Honey Bee Suite](#)

***Ed's Comment:** These tips were written from a Northern Hemisphere (USA) viewpoint and therefore don't include a couple of items worth considering for the tropics:

- Morning sun and afternoon shade is better than all shade or all sun.
- Place hives above flood affected areas and above cane toad, ants and goanna height, as hive beards hang a long way down in hot climates.
- Avoid locations immediately opposite horse and other furry warm blooded creatures.

And please remember to be considerate of your neighbours. It doesn't take much to sour a good relationship if the neighbours are getting stung.

Bees on the Internet

King Charles sweetens the relationship with Germany with some palatial honey

King Charles has apparently cemented the relationship with Germany by exchanging some Buckingham Palace honey with a basket of German honeys (Ed's comment: hopefully not for linden honey which the Ed considers tasting like bitter medicine and looks luminous green!).

King Charles commented on the cultural connections between the two countries by mentioning that the astonishing music of Handel – who was born in Germany, and died British- will once again soar through Westminster Abbey at his own Coronation this year.

I wonder if the King has the Buckfast breed of bees, from that most famous of all time bee breeders- Brother Adam of Buckfast Abbey (previously named [Karl Kehrle](#) , also a German and born in 1898 and died in UK) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buckfast_bee

From [The Telegraph 31st March 2023](#)

Keeping a few queens as "coldies in the fridge" helps their performance and survival

Apparently queen bees benefit from being stored in the fridge over the hot summers in the USA. Really!!!

<https://www.beeculture.com/refrigerated-queens/>

Checking drones for varroa mite is a better way to monitor

Dr John Carr recommended watching this – but at 1 hr 40 mins I reckon I got the message pretty much half-way through - Uncapping drones is a better way to monitor for Varroa mite than alcohol washing or sugar shaking.

Comments please???

<https://youtu.be/mAsXFPakumU>

Nasonov's gland shows the bees the way home

For a quick look at how the pheromones work as described by Dr John in the article above, take a look at this short video n Youtube showing the bees marching home to the queen.

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=NS-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=2Rb1fB&v=1165880014180386

Bees have feelings too

According to new research, bees can suffer from PTSD, depression and other issues normally associated with sentient beings like humans.

No wonder that bees suffer during the annual travelling circus associated with almond pollination in the USA.

More than 2m colonies – about 70% of commercial honey bee colonies in the US – are trucked to California's almond groves every February and subjected to the perils of industrialized agriculture, from pesticides to disease, with billions of bees perishing every year. After a couple of weeks of this, they are trucked back to their home states, and no surprise is that there are about 40% colony losses and unhappy bees. That's 800,000 lost colonies in one season, every season!!!! I stress when I lose one colony.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/apr/02/bees-intelligence-minds-pollination?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwAR36mNAGA9va3BqeLo76_-Hy9eevBEVhP_l70aGPCZUwDI6se2SCt-BN3No



European hives for exchange for native STINGLESS bee hives

Time to get out!!

The Ed has been mentoring a newbee and helping him get his apiary established in his vegie garden on Melton Hill near the city. Unfortunately it looks like he is developing increasingly severe reactions to bee stings, and its time to swap over to stingless bees.

Contact The Ed at trott Lindsay@gmail.com if you can do a swap of Europeans for natives, or at 0409 789 162

Q+A

Who wants a Q+A section in the Newsletter? If you do, just send me your Q's and I will get a whole lot of A's for you.

From the Club Shop volunteers

Hi Bee Club members

Update - our website is up again, you can place your orders via beesnorth.com.au

Next shop opening is first Saturday of the month.

Location: 3/38 Rendle St, Aitkenvale

Time: 9am - 10:30am

Collection at other time by arrangement and when volunteers are available.

If you experience difficulty accessing the web site for orders, please use the following email address to contact the club for shop purchases and other queries - tsvbeeclub@gmail.com

Remember the Shop etiquette – politeness and patience are key components to success

To all visitors to our Club Shop – please be respectful, patient and polite to our Volunteer shopkeepers.

Please arrive with a smile, a dose of patience, and remember your manners.

Advance orders will be given priority and serviced – walk in orders may not be completed.

Place your order before midnight on the Thursday before shop opening via beesnorth.com.au (preferred) or by email if you haven't yet set up online account, to tsvbeeclub@gmail.com



Golden Rules for the Club Shop:

Please follow this guide:

1. Order by Thursday midnight **before** the opening day
2. Bring your order number and print out of the request with you
3. Arrive at the Shop **after** 9:00 am, pay for your order, **don't hang around inside the Shop to chat**
4. Non-emailed or late orders may not get any attention if the Shop is too busy.
5. Please take your purchases and make room for the next shoppers, thanks

Native bee Newsletter – join the group and check out some great info and photos

The CROSS-POLLINATOR - Newsletter of the Australian Native Bee Association

Original articles, new information and news from the world of native bees. The Association has branches in Sydney, Brisbane, Wide Bay and Gladstone, but no Townsville branch?? Are there enough interested native beekeepers to get one "flying"?

Check out these sites: <https://australiannativebee.org.au/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Australian.Native.Bee.Association/>
<https://www.instagram.com/australiannativebeeassociation/>

Meeting Minutes from March 2023 General Meeting available on request

New TDBAI Office holders and Committee for 2023

Position	Name	Nominated	Seconded
President	Nick Smith	Alan	Mick
Vice president	Mark Finn	Mick	Beryl
Secretary	Liz Henning	Naomi	Mark
Treasurer	Derek	Mick	Nick
Assistant Treasurer	Frana McKinstry	Ron	Derek
Newsletter Editor	Lindsay Trott	Mick	Nick
Assistant Editor	John Carr	Nick	Ron
Membership Officer	Frana McKinstry	Nick	Mick
Shop Manager	Mick Olsen	Maria	Doris
Shop Assistant	Alan Ziegenfusz	Paul	Liz
Native bees	Nick Smith	BS	MO
Librarian	Beryl Smart	Mark	Naomi
Website/Social Media	Mick Olsen/Nick Smith	Beryl/Liz	Mick/Naomi
Native Bees	Nick Smith	Mick	Naomi
Committee	Miles Furnas	Liz	Doris
Committee	Danny K	Nick	Mick
Committee	Maria F	Naomi	Ron
Committee	Naomi Olsen	Mick	Nick
Committee	Doris Newell	Derek	Beryl
Committee	Ron Newell	Nick	Naomi
Committee	Paul Payne	Mick	Mark

Welcome to our New Members

Existing Club Members are encouraged to assist/mentor our Newbees. They have joined the club to learn about bees, so even if you only have limited experience, give them a hand if you can. Invite a Newbee to your hive opening and discuss what's inside the box, let newbies experience hive openings to become more confident, and you will learn more yourself by trying to explain what's going on in there.

Subscribe to the Bee Aware e-newsletter and stay up to date

The BeeAware newsletter is an e-newsletter for beekeepers and growers of pollinator-reliant crops, or anyone else simply interested in beekeeping or the pollination of crops. Each newsletter contains the latest in news, research and development, as well as upcoming events relating to honey bee biosecurity and the pollination of horticultural and agricultural crops. Townsville features in Issue 52 due to the latest AHB and Varroa incursion.

<https://beeaware.org.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

Annual Membership Fees for long term members are due on 1 August each year - currently \$30 p.a. Newer members receive email reminder on 12 month anniversary of joining.

Membership fees can be made electronically to:

Name:- Townsville and District Beekeepers Association BSB:- 633000

Account:- 141466078

Refer :- Please make sure you add your Surname so that your membership can be signed off.

Swarm Contact List:

Please advise editor@beesnorth.com.au if you wish to be removed from this list. Contact me with your name, phone number and suburb if you want to be added to the list.

Kelso/Kirwan: Steve Kersnovske - 0417 344 419

Douglas/ Gulliver: Sonya Verburgt - 04 0853 0991

Alice River/ Bluewater: Sharene Dougall – 0415426903; Ronelle Nord – 0417752622; Duane Saltmer - 0400 339 508

Black River through to Rollingstone: Alex Jenkins - 0459472166

Aitkenvale: Pat Dury - mob 0419252829

Swarm List People: Please contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 for any swarm or strange bee activity in the Townsville region. For all swarm collections, please collect 300 bees or roughly 10% of brood comb and submit to Biosecurity Queensland for pest and disease monitoring.

Newsletter Editor needs your input – why not tell me your story?

Club Member Profiles

From The Ed.

The Newsletter Editor receives some wonderful stories and photos from some of our Members. And it makes our Newsletter a personal and relevant method of communicating our bee adventures with to all our Members, many of whom cannot get to the meetings or events. Some of these stories are amusing – like The Blooper Series (The Ed seems to feature in a lot of these), Product Reviews, stories from the many events, markets and school visits, information from our more learned members, news about workshops and open days, and so on.

I would like to include this section in the monthly Newsletter and for this to be about a different Club member each month, but it can only happen if at least 1 out of the 400+ members puts pen to paper, takes a snapshot and sends in the info to me at the Newsletter desk.

So, how about giving it a go? You don't even have to think about what to say. You just have to write in and embellish a little, tell me funny stories, successes, failures, problems and what beekeeping means to you. Go for it!! We would love to hear what you have been up to.

The TDBAI has over 400 members at last count.

Surely one or two are prepared to fill in a half page questionnaire and take a photo? If you cant write, and cant take a photo, then give me a call and I will come over for a cuppa and a chat and we will be able to extract a story with you for the rest of our Members enjoyment. Lets keep the Club Member Profile articles for the monthly Newsletter rolling.

Here's the questionnaire – fill it out and attach a couple of photos, including one of yourself and send to me [mailto::trott Lindsay@gmail.com](mailto:trott Lindsay@gmail.com)

CLUB MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name /HIN /Suburb /Native or/and European bees / No of hives/area of hive locations?
Type of hives? / Type of foundation? /Beetle protection?
Year commenced beekeeping? /Who was your mentor? /Who is involved in your household? Is anyone allergic/sensitive to stings?
What has been your biggest success? / failure?/ mistake?/ biggest lesson?
What would you do differently if you had to start beekeeping again after a disaster like fire/AFB/Varroa/cyclone
Do you sell/barter/give away honey? How much honey does your average hive produce? Do you make any other products from your hives?
Do you volunteer for the Club at Open days, markets, school events, public displays? Would you like to participate?
Any stories you would like to tell?
Attach photo please?
That's it!!!! Just fill it out and send it to me, and you will be a rock star in the Monthly Newsletter.
Please provide more than just a one word answer!!
The Ed

TDBA Bee Starter Kit - \$160

The Perfect Gift for a budding Beekeeper

Available in Townsville from the Club

Shop:

Club Members Price Only! - \$160

Hive tool, brush, vented jacket/veil, gloves, and smoker

Plus: The ABC of Beekeeping book

Contact: shop@beesnorth.com.au



Townsville & District

BEEKEEPERS



ASSOCIATION