



Townsville & District  
**BEEKEEPERS**

ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1115  
Aitkenvale, Qld. 4814



[www.beesnorth.com.au](http://www.beesnorth.com.au)

### Newsletter No.1: January 2025

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- Asian Honeybees back in town
- Bee swarms and kits
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- Queen cells – what are they?
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- TDBAI club member profile

### Next Meeting:

**2pm Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

Michael Hooper Park, Deeragun

**Bring a chair. Tea, coffee and nibbles available.  
Free chats with experienced and novice  
beekeepers.**

### Asian honeybees detected at Townsville Port again

Photo: Townsville Bulletin

Authorities have not reported any varroa mite on this incursion yet.

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/biosecurity/animals/invasive/restricted/asian-honey-bees> - ~:text=Asian honey bees have recently,exotic pests or suspect bees.

Check out the Beesnorth website for some information and pictures of the AHB (Asian honey bee).

<https://beesnorth.com.au/asian-bees/>

Look out for swarms and unusual looking small bee activity, and contact our local rep Carla for help in getting an ID or taking samples.

Don't forget about the Varroa sugar shake inspections.

Carla says she looks forward to supporting our Queensland beekeepers in her role as Varroa Development Officer. She is based in Townsville and you can contact her at:

0467 236 135 or [Carla.Kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:Carla.Kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au)



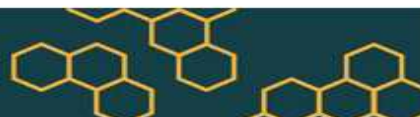
#### Carla Kersnovske

Varroa Development Officer – National Varroa Mite Management Program (NVMMMP)  
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

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GPO Box 1085, Townsville, Qld 4810  
Customer Service Centre 13 25 23 (from interstate use 07 3404 6999)



NATIONAL  
**Varroa Mite Management**  
PROGRAM



## Bee Swarms

According to the literature, bees mostly swarm in the springtime. Of course, our bees don't read the books, and experience shows that the main trigger for swarms in our neck of the woods is a bright sunny day after a period of rainy days. Many of you have had your hive swarm or received a request to collect a swarm or remove a new colony from the 'wrong place'. Inside house walls, under floorboards and compost bins are proving very popular for bees at present.

Beryl's bees swarmed on New Years Day, with the help of Ry she managed to move them from a tree to a box. *Beryl: "So, the swarm fun and games continued yesterday afternoon with the bees moving across the street and 3 doors down. Ry and I managed to get some of them in box but had to leave them overnight as still lots hanging outside. This morning things had not improved so I called in the cavalry who corralled them into a box and transferred them to the top bar hive at the club compound. Hopefully they will settle into their new home".*

While we were transferring Beryl's bees into the top bar hive, Beryl just happened to notice a swarm in a tree. Handy being at head height and having the swarm box with us. Another capture and a trip home with this colony. Bloody bees!

### First attempt with Ry



### The sight that greeted Lou, Al and Frana (Jan 2nd)



### Getting them into the box



### And they are in!



**Covered with a mozzie net to retain the stragglers and Off to the compound.**



**The top bar hive at our compound. There's a good clip on the TDBAI Facebook page showing the transfer into this hive. A check on 4 January, and they have stayed put.**



**Al & Frana capturing the second swarm, and in their new home.**



### **Swarm Kit**

It seems that a hive can swarm at any time so it's a good idea to keep some spare equipment on hand to capture, or at the very least, to house a swarm. A spare box, base & lid and some spare frames (or a colleague who can loan you these at short notice) is a must.

**Swarm catching:** a box to put them in (Styrofoam is ideal), a sheet to put on the ground under the swarm, something to scoop the bees (dustpan, stiff cardboard), a queen clip – if you're lucky enough to spot her, having her in the clip makes it so much easier to capture the rest of the bees.

If you do receive a request to collect a swarm, some questions to ask are:

- How high up?
- How long has it been there?
- How big is it?

### **A simple ventilated swarm box**



If it's too high, it may not be retrievable. If they say about 2 metres, it will be five. Get an estimate by asking "Head high? Ladder needed? Accessible?"

How long has it been there? Swarms will stay in place anything from an hour or so or a couple of days. If the answer is days/weeks/months, then it's likely an established colony. A whole different scenario.

How big? – this will give you an idea of what size container to bring. Ask for photos but keep in mind a picture of a swarm can make it look huge when in fact it may be quite small. Ask for size comparison to (e.g.) a basketball, orange, or similar.

## Bee Eggs

Many people find it hard to see eggs in the cells. The easiest way is to hold the frame up with your back to the sun. Adjust the angle of the frame so that the sunlight shines into the cell. This is what you're looking for. The slight angle indicates that these eggs were laid within the previous 2 days. Having seen eggs, you can be certain the queen is present.



## Where are the queen cells and what do they mean?

- **Queen play cell:** The worker bees will practice developing queen cells with a structure called a "play cell" which is an enlarged cell outside the main frame structure but without an egg or developing larva inside.
- **Swarming Queen cell** at the bottom of the brood frame:
- **Superseding queen cell:** A cell which is hanging from the middle of the brood is often an emergency superseding cell.



Queen play cell



Swarming queen cell



supersedure structure

## Bee Club Compound

Doris, Ron, Jon, Liz, Lou and Al taking a well-earned break.



One way to spend New Years Eve, some of our members got together to continue the inspections and cleanup of hives at the compound. One hive was found to be queenless, another had a new queen, and a third had many queen cells. We're gradually removing old frames and replacing them with foundation or stickies. These hives will be ready for more work at the February meeting.



## TDBAI Club member profile – Lesley Barr (TDBAI Assistant Editor)

Hello everyone! My name is Lesley Barr, and I am a relatively new member to the TDBAI club. In fact, my husband and I are relatively new to North Queensland having just relocated to Mutarnee (near Crystal Creek), from Perth (WA) approximately 3 years ago. We live on a 9-acre rural block of land surrounded by mango trees.



Not long after settling down in our new property, we decided to embark on our beekeeping journey. We had no idea what was involved and so we did a fair bit of online research and found the TDBAI club! We are both regulars in the club and make every effort to participate/volunteer in any events. We have enjoyed immersing ourselves in the club; listening to member stories, learning about beekeeping practices and meeting new faces.

Initially, we bought a replica flow hive, but found that the European bees that we have didn't seem to take to the plastic frames in the super. We then set up four Langstroth hives.

We have produced some delicious honey and look forward to selling it. We would also like to get involved in making candles.

We will be eternally grateful to Frana, Jon, Mark, Maria, Alan and many others for the advice and guidance on our journey. Our biggest challenge so far has been adjusting to the North Queensland climate and understanding its impact on beekeeping.



As we continue on with our beekeeping adventures, we look forward to all the new knowledge and experiences that it brings. We also hope to give back to the TDBAI club by volunteering for club events and I have taken on the role of assistant editor. We both look forward to meeting you all at club events.

### ***Minutes of General Meeting November 2024***

There was no general meeting in November, instead we encouraged members to attend the Varroa workshop on 17 November. No meetings in December or January.

### ***Future Meetings***

Sunday 9 February 2025, Michael Hooper Park, Deeragun

## Facebook

There is a Facebook page for financial members, this is a private group separate from the general Townsville Beekeeping group. Here is the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2575955886035277>

## 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.

## From the Club Shop volunteers

Preferably – log onto the website and place your order there: **Members Only \ Shop**

If you experience any difficulty accessing the web site for orders, please use the following email address to contact the club using [tsvbeeclub@gmail.com](mailto:tsvbeeclub@gmail.com)

Alternatively you can place your orders via [shop@beesnorth.com.au](mailto:shop@beesnorth.com.au)

Shop opening is first Saturday of the month.

**Location:** 3/38 Rendle St, Aitkenvale

**Time:** 9am – 10:30am Collection at other times by arrangement and when volunteers are available.

## Golden Rules for the Club Shop:

Please follow this guide:

1. Order and pay 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
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.



A rare photo of our star personnel before the shop rush starts. From L-R we have Mark (shop manager), Beryl (librarian), Maria (committee member), Ron (shop manager) and Doris (committee member)

## Cardboard

We have lots of flattened cardboard cartons at the club shop. If you want any of these to use in your garden, let us know otherwise they will be taken to the dump.

## TDBAI Office holders and Committee for 2024/2025

Position	Name	Contact
President	Frana McKinstry	<a href="mailto:president@beesnorth.com.au">president@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Vice President	Al Cooney	
Secretary	Liz Hennig	<a href="mailto:secretary@beesnorth.com.au">secretary@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Treasurer	Louise Clark	<a href="mailto:treasurer@beesnorth.com.au">treasurer@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Event Co-Ordinator	Shandelle O'Reilly	
Biosecurity Awareness Officer	John Carr	
Newsletter Editor	Lindsay Trott	<a href="mailto:editor@beesnorth.com.au">editor@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Assistant Editor	Lesley Barr	
Membership Officer	Frana McKinstry	<a href="mailto:membership@beesnorth.com.au">membership@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Shop Managers	Ron Newitt & Mark Finn	<a href="mailto:shop@beesnorth.com.au">shop@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Shop Assistant	N/A	
Librarian	Beryl Smart	
Website/social media Officer		
Native Bees Representative	Jon McKinstry	
Committee 1	Doris Newitt	
Committee 2	Maria Finn	
Committee 3	Greg Skellern	
Committee 4	Carla Kersnovske	
Committee 5	Blake Steward	
Committee 6	Wendy Aspery	

And for all general enquiries: [info@beesnorth.com.au](mailto:info@beesnorth.com.au)

### Swarm Contact List:

Please advise Lindsay Trott (Editor) [editor@beesnorth.com.au](mailto: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.

### Swarm Collection – honey bees

Alex Jenkins **Townsville to Rollingstone** 0459 472 166

Ben Taylor **Douglas, Riverside Gardens** 4728 4992 or 0428 186000

Duane Saltmer **Alice River** 0400 339508

Sonya Verburgt **Gulliver** 0408 530 991

Sharene Dougall **Bluewater** 0415 426 903

Phillip Plant **Townsville, Ayr, Rollingstone** 0456191 000

Bruce Mogensen **Railway Estate/Idalia** – 0427 174 705

Liz Hennig **Northern Beaches** – 0409067 367

Ronelle Nord **Alice River, Rupertswood** 0417 752 622

Tito Parigi **Magnetic Island** 0418 796951

Patrick Dury **Aitkenvale** 0419 252 829

### Native bee removal

Jon McKinstry **Townsville & surrounds** 0401 014 948

Bruce Warren **Townsville Area** 0413 395 928

### Nest Removals from houses, trees and other structures

Alex Jenkins **Townsville to Rollingstone** – 0459 472 166

Phillip Plant **Townsville, Ayr, Rollingstone** 0456 191 000

**Remember that Varroa is down south and we don't want it up here – check those swarms.**

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

**Club Member Profile Questionnaire**

Send stories and pictures to : [trottlindsay@gmail.com](mailto:trottlindsay@gmail.com)

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!!

Cheers The Ed

***Blooper of the Month? Send me your blooper for totally anonymous recognition- honestly***

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

The Bee Aware 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/>

***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.

Check out these sites: <https://australiannativebee.org.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Australian.Native.Bee.Association/>

<https://www.instagram.com/australiannativebeeassociation/>