

June 2013

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Issue 6



PO Box 1115, Aitkenvale, Q4814

Special points of interest:

- **TCC Eco Fiesta was a great success. Thanks to all who gave their time and a big thank you to Grant for organizing the TDBA stand!**
- **How to reconcile the US and European stance on neonicotinoid pesticides. P.6**
- **Chalkbrood—a disease of hard times, so be alert, not alarmed!**

Next meeting:

Sunday 16 June, 2013, 14:00 at Dennis Anger's place, 128 Bartlett Rd, Giru. Bring a chair!

Newsletter of the Townsville and District Beekeepers Association



Editorial

It's only two months until our AGM in August (at Ron and Rose's place in Mundingburra—see Minutes, p2). I think this is a good time for all of us to consider making a contribution to the club and, if possible, putting your hands up for an elected position. I want to point out that it doesn't matter if you are new or old to beekeeping, or to the Club, that should influence your decision. The important thing to guide your decision is that you have talents, energy and enthusiasm to give which the club needs! Yes, really! It's also important to consider that it is healthy for the club, and for the existing office bearers, to have turnover. When I took on the editorship last year I certainly did not expect to be stuck with it forever, so please don't make me! That's not to say I haven't enjoyed doing the newsletter, or that I would rule out doing it again in the future. On the contrary, it has been an absolutely fantastic

experience and I think I have gained more than I've given in this role! But, all in good measure and in good time! Let's cycle though? So, please give club positions some thought between now and August.

Ray



An interesting bee colony catching operation in action at the May meeting at Ryan and Collete's place.

Chalkbrood

We've covered American Foul Brood (AFB) pretty well in the last few issues of **Bees North**, but so far little else on tropical bee diseases. Chalk brood disease made a big appearance in late summer and early spring in Townsville this



Chalkbrood usually manifests as dried and 'chalk-like' mummies in brood cells.

year. It is caused by a fungus and affects sealed and unsealed brood. From Mike James, this advice:

"It is more a problem of poor nutrition rather than a disease. It might be because of poor pollen quality or variety. It will only kill the hive if left in poor condition for some months. Normally you could move it onto a honey flow, but seeing it is a house hive, feeding it a pollen patty or some sugar and water will help. 50/50 should do. Heat up some water and add white sugar. Allow to cool and put some into a low dish under the lid. Put some sticks or shade cloth in the dish to allow the bees to walk into the food without getting drowned. If the queen is more than 18 months old, now would be a good time to replace her before winter as a new queen will also add vitality to the hive"

Minutes of the last Meeting

Townsville and District Beekeepers Association meeting 19-May-2013.

Before the sit down meeting we had a look at the positioning of Collette's and Ryan's hive and an interesting nest close to their fence in the neighbour's yard. It was big and made between some palm fronds. They had a box next to it which the bees were putting honey into but had not moved into it. It was quite interesting.

President Dennis A. welcomed members and guests.

Present: as per signed book, over 28 members and guests

Apologies: as per the book.

Minutes of Previous meeting read by Grant . Moved Dave T. sec: Vic Mc. Carried.

Matters arising:

The new address of our helpful people in Warwick. Phone still the same 132523. The new SHB traps that Dennis tried are working well. They have no chemicals in them and can be used over and over. \$6 from Burnett Supplies, or from our members Rod and Karen Palmer.

The hive Dave and Doug were dealing with has been put on hold.

Correspondence:

A reply from the MP John McVeigh telling us they are doing a lot to halt the Asian Honey Bee, *Apis cerana*, and referred our club to Trevor Weatherhead.

An email from Guy Tickle asking for the bee club to have a hive at the community gardens and at Queens gardens. Moved Grant W. Sec Dennis A.

Treasurer's report:

Healthy account, \$2806.77 plus what was gathered today with membership and Apithor trap sales. Moved Doug McB. Sec Dave T.

General Business:

The roll test. Please report any varroa tests, particularly negative ones, let Rob Stevens know. He needs to collect data and we can help him here. It is easy so please try, it is our best interest.

AFB found in other places in and around Townsville. Please don't move affected hives and get help to destroy them if necessary. It is a notifiable disease.

Bee registration is now on \$13.90 and is heavily promoted by this club to join and be registered and give the club your registration number.

Virginia M. spoke of their re-queening experiences and asked questions on how to manage the older queens. She explained what she did recently. Check your excluder to see if the queen



Photo: Ray Berkelmans

It's Hibiscus flowering time. Bees are quite fond of it's pollen!

can get through.

Doug McBride had a hive stolen, DPI number MB390. It had a metal lid and a metal base, a super and a brood box, taken from Roseneath. Remember only beekeepers steal bee hives! Those who have hives away from home should think about having observers in place to help monitor the hives.

Grant W to co-ordinate the Eco Fiesta. Members put forward the times they would like to man the stall we will have. Another good response from the newer members which was great to see. Held June 1st and 2nd.

Rob Stevens spoke about the updates on what was happening with the monitoring etc of the Asian Honey Bee, *Apis cerana*. He spoke about the recent conference he attended. He was keen to see more members on the swarm list and asked every club member if they catch a swarm within 3 kilometres of the Port to report it to him. He mentioned an industry response to the issue from Trevor Weatherhead. Rob still needs help with surveillance as the *Apis cerana* programme is finishing at the end of June. They are still testing swarms to see if it is from the same queen. The sentinel hives - 6 hives now, thanks to Lindsay T and Ray B and Graham Smith. These are set but more testing is being done. So far all clear. The honey has been "cleared" of chemical residue.

Grant had a ring from a beekeeper in Mena Creek who may have bee hives for sale in the future. The QBA are looking at changing their systems but more on that later.

Mrs. Patterson is OK.

Some members spoke on the 'wintering' of the hives here in the north. If looking to take honey off in the coming weeks, think about leaving enough honey for them to come through the coldish winds in a good condition. The 'winter' looks to have come late so maybe the Spring will be late. Honey is still coming in and members are getting plenty off still but be sure not to starve the bees. There will be less bees in the hive and therefore less food

Minutes of the last meeting (cont)

coming in.

Graeme Armstrong sent 10 queens to the club with Dave and Virginia, and the members bought them. Thanks to Graeme!

If you wish to have your name added to the swarm list, you need to be a registered beekeeper (see minutes) and have it added to our and Rob Steven's list.

Meeting closed at 3.20pm.

Tea and coffee were enjoyed.

Next Meeting

- June 16th at Dennis's place, 128 Bartlett Rd, south of Giru.
- July 21st at Dave and Virginia's at the pistol club, Mona Park near Clare. This will be a luncheon provided by the club. Meeting at 11am and finishing around 2.30. It is a nice drive down (about an hour and a bit) and an opportunity for our members to see more than a couple of hives in operation in the one place.
- August the 18th at Ron and Rose's place - the AGM, 10 Mango Ave, Mundingburra.

The up to date swarm list as at June 2013 is below. Have a think about having this in the car or at work to inform people quickly as to who can collect a swarm if needed.

Colette and Ryan Thomas	0487 448 893
Ray Berkelmans	0427 473 239
Lindsay Trott	0409 789 162
Jon and Frana McKinstry	0413 765 192
Ron Rapson	0419 219 880
Kirsty Sugden	0447 762 686
Dan Donovan	0428 186 816
Mike James (when in town)	4773 7657
Grant Whiteford	4728 3051
Paul and Jacinta Payne	0428 745 340

Grant

My start...and re-start in beekeeping !

Our treasurer Doug McBride has been my mentor for a couple of years since I became a member of the TDBA. When I started with bees, Doug was kind enough to lend me a hive. He brought it around one evening and set it up in the back yard with the hope of pollinating my passion fruit vine which I had been hand pollinating for about 6 months with limited success.

All things were going well for a couple of months until one day my darling Cheryl was out the front of the house and a bee stung her causing some minor swelling. Because Cheryl has allergies and is sensitive to many foods and chemicals she decided to talk to her doctor by phone and he suggested that she not get stung again as she may start to react more severely and may have an anaphylactic reaction. Two days later she was out the back of the house about 30 meters from the hive talking to our neighbor over the fence, when a half dozen bees attacked her mainly around her dark hair but only suffered one sting on her other arm. The swelling was immediate and greater than the earlier. I was not at home when this incident occurred.

You can imagine the reaction I got when I did arrive home: "Those bees have to go David"! I made a quick call to Doug and asked if he would mind removing the hive. Doug and Neil arrived on dusk to remove hive. Doug closed the hive with a piece of foam to lock the bees in and as we proceeded to load the hive in the trailer. As we did the bit of string attached to the piece of foam got caught on a small shrub and it pulled the plug out. There was a commotion as bees flew out (we were not suited up). Got the hive in the trailer and I had a piece of shade cloth in the shed which we threw over the hive after Doug had replaced the foam plug. The shade cloth trapped most of the escaped bees and Doug and Neil took them away.



Half-depth plastic boxes made out of 10mm Nemo board. This depth suits the back a bit better, especially when the supers are full of honey!

My start...and re-start in bee-keeping (cont)

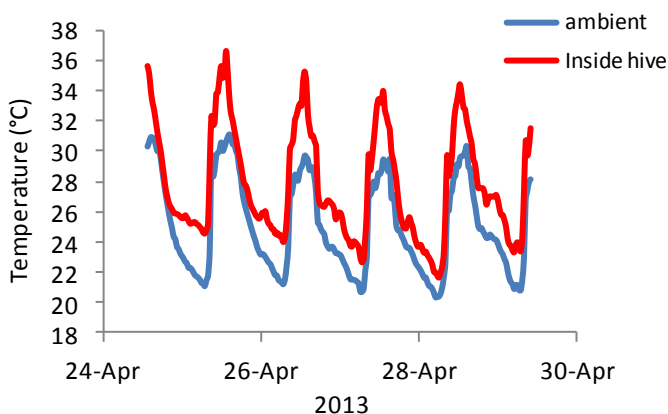
Having enjoyed the bees for a couple of months I was rather disappointed that I could not continue with the enjoyable hobby.

A month or so later Doug asked if I would like to put a hive on his Roseneath block. This was a very generous offer which I took up. Doug suggested that we construct a plastic hive as it would be cheaper than timber.

Doug purchased a 10 mm thick 1200 x 2400 sheet of nemo board for \$150.00 from which we were able to construct 8 half frame boxes with enough left over to make handles. Doug made a metal base and lid which we then we painted inside and out with two coats of white undercoat.

Some may say why ½ frames? Well when you have a back as bad as mine and with age creeping up, lifting a box of ½ frames is lighter than a box of full frames!

Ray Berkelmans gave me 2 temperature loggers to check temperatures inside and outside the hive. I will have to borrow another logger from Ray so we can compare the temps between wood and plastic. But



Temperatures inside and outside the plastic hive. Note that it was up to six degrees warmer inside the hive than outside.

the graph shows the comparison of inside and outside temperature. The hive logger was placed under the metal lid on top of the frames which may account for the higher temps around midday. Next time I will place it between the frames.

(Note: Nevertheless, these temperatures are real and highlight

what the bees have to cope with, even in autumn! As beekeepers in the tropics we need to be vigilant to overheating and help our bees along a bit. Ed)

David Turnbull

Ideas department!

Sick of taking a frame out and having to find somewhere to lean it on the ground, ... only to find it falls over!? Then there are the upset bees and you have to pick out the dirt, rocks, leaves and twigs from the wax? Why not use an external frame holder?

This is not a new idea by any stretch, but it is still a good one. I made this pair from a short length of thin-walled 20 x 40mm RHS (from a cheap Chinese bed frame), cut the bottom end open and silver brazed a bit of 6mm rod (from an old clothes drying rack) onto it. A bit of enamel paint to tart it up (a welders best friend!) and hey presto, job done!

If you don't feel like going through the whole construction thing, they are available at bee equipment suppliers like Beeequipment SA (http://www.beequip.co.za/?page_id=77) or Quality Beekeeping supplies (<http://www.qualitybeekeepingsupplies.com.au/index.php/catalogue-2/47-tools>) for about \$20 a pair.

Ray



A pair of external frame holders easily clip along the far edge of the box you are working on and give you somewhere to put a frame giving you room to work inside the hive.

My second chance extractor

Wishing to be as self-sufficient as possible in the bee-keeping hobby, I felt I should own an extractor instead of taking frames to my neighbours and using theirs, along with the inconvenience encumbered.

With preparation and cleaning up etc., I felt I would rather clean up at my place, no inconvenience to my neighbour.

I therefore fumbled on eBay and found what I thought would suit my requirements: a four frame electric motor powered extractor. A definite overkill for my amount of hives, but I reasoned one reasonable purchase would prevent possibly additional expense later. A bid of \$450.00 was submitted. The result was a winning bid of \$550.00 when the closing time arrived. Well, no luck this time.

I now had an idea of what to expect pricewise, so on to eBay when the next extractor was advertised. I thought seriously and bid \$565.00. I was determined to be up there this time.

The closing time arrived and I was on the computer. Up flashed a message on my message bank from eBay: "Victor, your bid was unsuccessful. The winning bid was \$575.00". Try again.

I felt I may have to look elsewhere or bid higher: such was life!

Checking my mail the following day, a message from

eBay: "VICTOR THIS IS YOUR LUCKY DAY: YOU HAVE A SECOND CHANCE. The vendor has decided to give you a second chance and accept your bid of \$565.00 on an identical extractor. You have 24 hours to accept his offer."

I agonised for a full ninety seconds... of course I would accept the offer. I was prepared to pay the same amount if my bid had been successful.

One week later I was the owner of a four-frame variable speed electrical honey extractor, even if it was Chinese manufactured. It works and needed only very minor adjustments to be made.

Vic.

Next meeting details

The next meeting is at the President's, Dennis Anger, place :

128 Bartlett Road (i.e. 12.8km off the highway!)

Giru Q4809

Ph 47829246

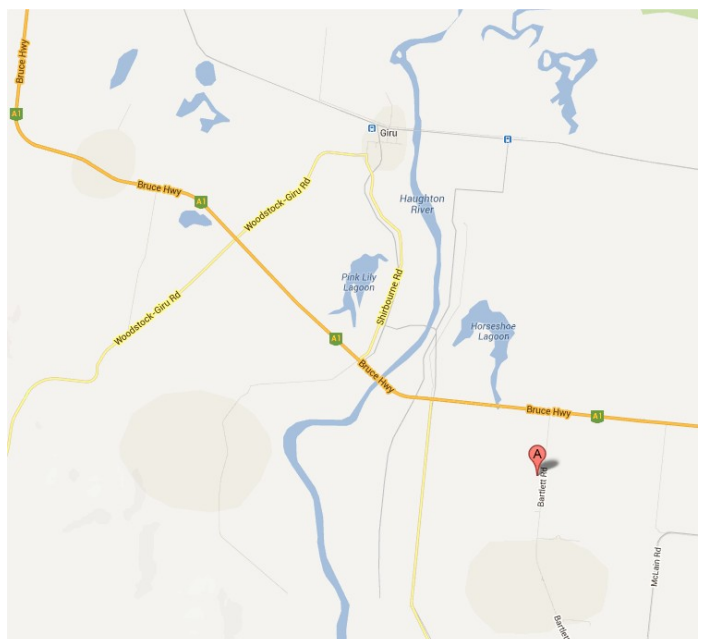
Time: 14:00

Bring a chair!

<http://goo.gl/maps/uzFr5>



My happy eBay experience: a four-frame, electric extractor. Here's to many happy turns...!



Is it an Asian Honeybee? No it's Hoverfly!!

I saw this little creature dead at the front of my hive recently and immediately took a deep breath. I initially thought it might be the Asian Honey Bee in my hive, but then I looked at some Wikipedia sites, and discovered to my pleasant surprise that it was a Hoverfly!

From Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoverfly>:

“Hoverflies, sometimes called **flower flies** or **syrphid flies**, make up the insect family **Syrphidae**. As their common name suggests, they are often seen hovering or nectaring at flowers; the adults of many species feed mainly on nectar and pollen, while the larvae (maggots) eat a wide range of foods. In some species, the larvae are saprotrophs, eating decaying plant and animal matter in the soil or in ponds and streams. In other species, the larvae are insectivores and prey on aphids, thrips, and other plant-sucking insects. Unlike adults, the maggots of hoverflies feed on a variety of foods; some are saprotrophs, eating decaying plant or animal matter, while others are insectivores, eating aphids, thrips, and other plant-sucking insects. This is beneficial to gardens, as aphids destroy crops, and hoverfly maggots are often used in biological control. Certain species, such as *Lampetia equestris* or *Eumerus tuberculatus*, are responsible for pollination. The maggots also have a commercial use, and are sometimes sold for ice fishing.

Aphids alone cause tens of millions of dollars of damage to crops worldwide every year; because of this, aphidophagous hoverflies are being recognized as important natural enemies of pests, and potential agents for use in biological control. Some adult syrphid flies are important pollinators.

Hoverflies are common throughout the world and can be found on all continents except Antarctica. About

6,000 species in 200 genera have been described. Hoverflies are harmless to most other animals despite their mimicry of more dangerous wasps and bees, which serves to ward off predators.



Two Simosyrphus grandicornis mating in midair

On occasion, Hoverfly larvae have been known to cause accidental myiasis in humans. This occurs when the larva are accidentally ingested on food or from other sources. Myiasis causes discomfort, pain, or itching, however, Hoverflies do not normally prey upon humans and cases of myiasis from Hoverflies is very rare.”

So, next time you see these small insects that imitate wasps and flies, give them a welcome, and let them eat your aphids and thrips, while doing the occasional bit of pollinating.

Lyndsay

EU restriction on neonics

For many years, beekeepers and environmentally interested individuals have expressed the opinion that the use of neonicotinoid insecticides (“neonics”) have interfered with the ability of honey bees and native bees to conduct their life activities properly. Since laboratory studies have detailed the disruptive effect on those insects, it was suggested that the same things were happening in the field. Unanticipated losses of formerly strong honey bee colonies, and easily observable decreases in bumble bee sightings, correlated well with increased use of neonics.

In Europe, registration and use of various pesticides



EU restriction on neonics (cont)

are based on the “precautionary principle.” Basically, that means that a chemical is rated on its innate toxicity to honey bees and other non-targets, similar to the requirements of the U.S. EPA. Then, a second component enters the equation: likelihood of honey bees and non-targets to become exposed to the toxicant. This second factor is considered by EPA, but not as strongly as it is in Europe. If the sum of the toxicity and likely exposure is large enough, then the European Commission can restrict or prohibit the product’s use. A report published by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) concluded that the neonicotinoid pesticides posed a “high acute risk” to pollinators, including honey bees, but that a definitive connection between the chemicals and loss of colonies in the field remained to be established.

The complaint against the neonics was brought to the European Commission a while ago, and the members originally voted that not enough scientific information existed to warrant a ban on the products. In the following appeal, the members voted to allow the Commission to prepare new restrictions concerning the use of the products. The restrictions are intended to accomplish two goals: 1) prevent large-scale environmental contamination by dust from agricultural planting equipment and 2) reduce exposure of honey bees and other flower-visiting insects to residues of neonics in nectars and pollens.

Beginning in December of 2013 or sooner, no more neonic-treated crop seeds will be sold or planted in the E.U. Neonics will be withdrawn from use by the general public. Neonics still may be used on plants that are not attractive to honey bees, or other foraging bee species, as forage plants (such as winter cereals).

What might we expect to see as results from this large-scale experiment? First, if large-scale contamination of the air through which bees are flying, contamination of weeds in agricultural fields, along the borders of the fields, and out in the environment no longer happens, then we would anticipate no longer hearing complaints about honey bees and bee colonies dying shortly after the plantings have taken

place. Second, we might anticipate the problems of colony population depletion, sometimes to the point of colony loss, proposed to be due to exposure of bees to residues of neonics in nectars and pollens, would no longer be seen.

However, it is not likely to be that simple. The substantial losses, closely following neonic-coated seed planting, might drop off. But, other colony population problems may not become better for some time. Analyses of residues of pesticides in beeswax, stored pollens, and bees themselves in the U.S. suggest that there are myriad chemicals stored in the hives that are likely to be impacting honey bee physiology negatively already, including a few detections of very low levels of neonics. Since the neonics tend to persist in soil and woody perennials for prolonged periods of time, it is likely that bee exposure at low levels will persist. If the dosage levels of neonics that induce physiological impacts on honey bees are below current levels of detection (LOD), then it will be extremely difficult to determine this effect.

Additionally, removal of neonics from a significant segment of the market suggests that other compounds are likely to be substituted to control pests currently kept subdued by the neonics. Some of the older chemistries that no longer are available were losing their effectiveness against the pests due to selection for resistance, anyway. They are likely to be replaced by newer chemistries that may or may not have detrimental effects on exposed pollinators, including honey bees. The inadequacies in the U.S. to demand definitive, long-term studies on honey bee brood development and adult longevity, following exposure to sublethal doses of the compounds, means that we may find things will not be a whole lot better when we remove uses of neonics from our registrations. It will be interesting to watch this experiment unfold from a distance.

by Eric Mussen

From March/April 2013 University of California at Davis, Bee News

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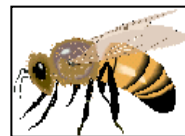
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