

# Townsville and District Beekeepers Association (Inc.)

www.beesnorth.com.au



PO Box 1115, Aitkenvale QLD 4814

## Newsletter No 1, Feb 2016

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**Next Meeting:**  
**2:00 pm Sunday 21 February**  
**Mundingburra Scout Den**  
**10 McIntyre Ct, Mundingburra**  
**Bring a chair - and a plate of food if you can**

## ***Small beasties scare off lumbering pachyderms - Beehive fences in East Africa protect farms from elephants***

by Christopher Jobson on December 7, 2015 All photos courtesy "The Elephants & Bees Project" / Lucy King  
<http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2015/12/beehive-fences/>

When trying to protect farms in east Africa from elephants, it would seem that nothing short of a giant reinforced fence or a chasmic ditch could safely keep the largest land animals on Earth away without causing harm. Unfortunately, building such barriers around every field is impractical, and the interactions of people protecting their crops frequently leads to accidents or even death of both farmers and elephants. But zoologist Lucy King had a much smaller idea: bees.

It turns out elephants are terrified of bees because when the insects sting the inside of their trunks the pain is excruciating and there's little they can do about it. The sound of buzzing alone is enough to make elephants leave an area immediately. King wondered what might happen if a string of suspended beehives at every 10 meters around a field might be enough to keep elephants away. A pilot program in 2009 proved widely successful and soon The Elephant and Bees Project was born.

There are now active beehive fences in Kenya, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and Sri Lanka. Not only do the fences help pollinate crops and safely deter elephants, they also become an additional revenue stream for farmers who harvest honey and sell it locally, a fascinating example of interspecies landscape engineering.

The Elephant and Bees Project is currently trying to raise funds to greatly expand the program. You can make a donation via Neatorama: <http://www.neatorama.com/2015/12/05/This-Fence-Made-of-Bees-Keeps-out-Elephants/>



# North Stradbroke Island Organic Honey farmer recovering from 2014 bushfires

Roving Beehound met Phillip and Theresa Bowman recently on North Stradbroke Island at the local weekly market and heard about the devastating bushfires of 2014, started by lightning strikes apparently, that burned around 60-70% of the island. See ABC article for more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-22/bowman-family-and-the-stradbroke-island-honey-secret/7047576>

The Bowman family run 300 hives in 17 locations amongst the wallum heath, tea tree, banksia, and eucalyptus dominated bush land. While there was only a minor loss of 7 hives during the fires, they lost another 100 hives due to the weak nature of the surviving hives, probably from population loss, lack of flowers, and from SHB which is in plague proportions on North Stradbroke Is. The Bowmans use a table cloth underlay with a furry surface to trap SHB - similar to the TK Beetle Mat sold by The Club. (See top photo on right) The furry cloth is laid on top of the top super frames and also acts as a burr comb preventer. It's cheap and effective enough at trapping the spiky legs of SHB to be able to replace the cloth at each harvesting. Apithor traps are used on the bottom boards. Phillip has also developed his own version of a ventilated bottom board from aluminium "Expanda mesh?" sold as leaf gutter guards. (See photo at right with close up of mesh in insert). This mesh allows SHB maggots and dislodged adults to fall through the mesh and not re-enter the hive.



Apiarists with more than a couple of hives will jump at the simple but effective lifting mechanism that Phillip has installed on his beaten up but trusty Land Rover (See photos below right). Lyco Loader kits (<http://healygroup.com.au/lyco-loader/summary/>) can easily be retro fitted to most utes. There is a 300 kg lifting limit and the expanded lifting tray folds over to be normal height. A hand operated winch winds the load up or down, and a hand trolley moves the load around the tray - what a back saver!! I didn't lift anything apart from full honey frames.

I helped Phillip harvest 96 fully capped frames from around 14 single and double supered 8 frame hives. Townsvilleans will weep when you read this: - Phillip told me it takes about 12 weeks to fill and cap a single supered hive!! - I am still waiting for my first harvest since May last year!!



Another satisfied customer at the Bowmans stall that sells, beeswax candles, honey, propolis, honey sticks, wax, facial creams and lotions.

Phillip gets Jelly Bush honey at different flowering times during the year, and has his honey tested at Sunshine Coast University lab for MGO activity (equivalent of a Manuka UMF rating and antibacterial rating). He tells me he has some honey that is off the MGO scale. He can sell his high MGO rating Jelly Bush honey for \$27/250 gm jar. Phillip is working towards making his own wax foundation due to concerns with the imported Chinese product that reportedly contains up to 30% petroleum paraffin wax.

Phillip took over the apiary from his parents who started off around 35 years ago collecting and selling swarms that they transferred into modified wooden fruit boxes and using chicken wire for foundation. The original European bees apparently came from barges loaded with hives from the mainland and were moored in bays with good flowering bushland around the island: Beehive Road

that leads to the township of Amity Point is appropriately named.

The Bowmans keep up with all the latest bee research and industry developments through the ABK mag and by regularly attending annual industry conferences. They will be in Townsville on 13-14 July 2016 for the National Conference for QBA and 15 July for AHBIC, so make them welcome if you meet them. If you want to get a taste of the Bowman's honey - buy yourself a packet of Kettle Honey Soy Chicken flavoured chips .."with that hint of Stradbroke Island Honey".



# ***Backyard Bees with Frana and Jon Mckinstry***

## **Inner Lids**

We're often asked about the inner lid on a bee hive. Here is a good illustration as to why we should be using an inner lid.- see photo of extensive burr comb development on right. It doesn't have to be fancy, a piece of vinyl, Masonite, tin, corflute or similar will do the job, discouraging bees from building comb in that space above the frames.



## **Flow Hive**

There's been a lot of discussion on-line and within the club about the Flow-Hive. As a club, we've had a significant number of enquiries from people who have purchased these, and who are seeking assistance in setting them up. This includes two at a local school and one at a kindergarten. So, it's time to 'fess up and state that yes, we have also bought one. We did this way back on the first day of the release of their crowd-funding appeal, not realising that they wouldn't need our contribution after all. I will admit that I've occasionally had second thoughts as to whether it was a good idea, but since receiving the Flow-Hive, I am pleased with the decision. Not because I think it's going to take the place of standard hives in backyard beekeeping, but because having one will give us some knowledge and experience in helping our new Flow-Hive members with theirs.



There has been a lot of discussion for and against the design and its potential problems; without reiterating these I will discuss Flow-Hive from our perspective. Firstly, the supers are 8 frame boxes, well, not quite. We transferred 8 frames of brood to the Flow brood box to find it's slightly too wide for 8 frames, but won't fit a 9<sup>th</sup> frame. We got around this by putting in one of our 'end boards' to take up the extra space. If anyone has purchased just the frames, or frames plus super, you will need to take this into consideration when adding to an existing 10 frame hive. The Flow-super takes the 6 Flow-frames neatly.

In order to reduce to reduce the stress on the bees we decided not to load them up with the six plastic Flow frames in one hit. We put three Flow frames each into two separate hives to get them started while assembling and painting the hive hardware. We then put just three of these into the Flow hive, alternating with the standard frames that the bees were working. When these standard frames are fully capped we will replace them with the other three Flow frames. The bees had starting sealing the gaps in the Flow frames and filling cells with nectar in just a few days.



For new beekeepers starting out with the Flow hive, you will need to purchase up to eight frames of bees and brood (usually 4-5 frames only available from club members), add foundation into the standard frames provided to make up the eight brood frames, then wait till these are well established before adding the Flow frames.

A plastic excluder came with the kit, we will be replacing this with a wire excluder as the plastic is quite slippery, enabling the super to be dislodged quite easily. We've also decided to purchase a spare 8 frame box just in case we decide to add a second super with standard frames.

One concern I have over the operation of the hive is knowing for sure when frames are ready for extraction. The viewing panel shows one side of one frame only. There is no way of knowing what stage the other side of that frame is at, let alone the other five frames. In cooler climates it might be OK to extract frames that are not fully capped, but not here. Of course, we could open the hive and check, but that defeats the purpose .

Updates to follow from Frana and Jon M.

Ed's Note: Members who want advice or assistance with assembling or installing Flow Hives on established hives can contact some of the more experienced Club members.

## ***Chalkbrood - selecting for genetic resistance in bees***

Chalkbrood has been labelled the most contagious and destructive disease that affects honey bee brood, and a new study underway in Australia is aiming to test how much the behaviour of bees changes infection levels within a hive. Beekeepers in each state are being asked to volunteer through their state associations to assist with the project by sending in bees from infected colonies for genetic testing.

The project is being conducted by Jody Gerdts from Bee Scientifics through the Honey Bee and Pollination Program, which is a jointly funded partnership with the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) and the Australian Government.

Beekeeper and Program spokesman Ben Hooper says it's great to see research into this often over-looked disease, given some estimates suggest that up to 37 per cent of lost honey production is due to Chalkbrood. "The project, which will run for three years, will investigate hygienic behaviour in bees," Mr Hooper said. "This is where bees use their sense of smell to detect something is wrong in the hive and remove dead or diseased larvae before the cause becomes transmittable. "The trait can be inherited, and overseas has been shown to be quite effective against Chalkbrood and other diseases, as well as some pests such as Varroa mite. "We want to see how different Australian strains of honey bees compare to each other. Chalkbrood is endemic across most of the country, so it's in the interests of the entire industry to get it under control."

The project will investigate colony level resistance to Chalkbrood through hygienic behaviour as well as innate larval immunity to infection, and identify lines of honey bees that exhibit good hygienic behaviour. It will also contribute to the PhD studies being carried out by Ms Gerdts at Latrobe University. The aim is to provide information back to queen breeders so they have a scientific basis for selective breeding of disease resistant honey bees. This will not only benefit the management of Chalkbrood, but other existing pests and diseases – and better prepare the industry for any exotic incursions.

For more information about the Program and its research go to [www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybee-pollination](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybee-pollination)

### ***Honey, have you got ID?*** [www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybee-pollination](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybee-pollination).

Our 'clean, green' reputation means Australian honey is in great demand at home and overseas, but that success may also tempt honey exporters in other countries to make 'Product of Australia' claims – and at the moment we don't have a way to check for fakes. However, research is underway into methods to identify the pollen content of honey from different plant species and regions, to develop baseline data which could be used in future to certify honey as 'Australian'.



The project is being carried out by Dr Kale Sniderman at the University of Melbourne in collaboration with the Australian National University and industry partners Capilano Honey and Beechworth Honey, funded by the Honey Bee and Pollination Program.

"Pollen analysis is done regularly overseas, but Australian data is not extensive," Dr Hornitzky said. "Counterfeit honey damages the industry as others profit off the Australian brand and potentially damages its reputation with an inferior product – for instance, if honey from eucalyptus grown around the world is passed off as Australian and contains contaminants. "The experience of New Zealand, where the high prices received for Manuka honey have seen many fraudulent labelling claims, highlights the importance of being able to identify the origin of honey sold here, and in our exports."

It's hoped the project will create a database reflective of Australian honey, with particular focus on uncommon pollen types unique to Australian vegetation, in contrast to those found on other continents. A secondary benefit of this research is a better understanding of the foraging habits of honey bees in natural vegetation and where they've been put to work pollinating crops.

Stay up-to-date with the latest news and information about beekeeping and pollination with the free BeeAware e-newsletter. Go to [beeaware.org.au/subscribe](http://beeaware.org.au/subscribe)

## ***Restricted area for Asian honey bees removed from North Queensland***

<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/animal-industries/bees/diseases-and-pests/asian-honey-bees>

The restricted area for Asian honey bees has been removed in Queensland, lifting the restraints on the movement of bees or bee products into, within or out of the area. The changes came into effect on 20 November 2015 for the restricted area, which ranged from Cairns extending up to Palm Cove in the north, Millaa Millaa in the south and Mutchilba in the west.

The removal of the restricted area means that bee keepers are no longer required to obtain written approval from a government inspector to move bees or bee products into, within or out of this area.

Asian honey bees were first detected in Cairns in 2007, and subsequently the restricted area was put in place to support an attempt to contain and eradicate the pest. However, Asian honey bees have since spread by natural means and it has been nationally agreed that they cannot be eradicated. Therefore, because the pest bees cannot be eradicated, the restrictions placed on bee keepers are no longer justifiable.

Asian honey bees remain an important pest for Biosecurity Queensland to monitor as they are natural hosts for Varroa mites – a highly destructive mite that has the potential to destroy European honey bee colonies. Fortunately Varroa mites are not present in Australia, however they could arrive with a new Asian honey bee incursion. That is why Biosecurity Queensland will continue to monitor Asian honey bees and any significant colonies found will be destroyed.



Images of AHB from Qld DAF Biosecurity website

To report sightings of Asian honey bees call 13 25 23 or the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881.

## ***Head banging Blue Banded Bee sets record for nodding***

The humble Australian native blue-banded bee gets pollen by banging its head on flowers a staggering 350 times a second, slow motion video reveals.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-15/australian-blue-banded-bee-is-a-head-banger/7019074>

## ***Paterson's Curse creates toxic Australian honey***

Well, .....nothing is ever quite as simple as the headlines make out. For slightly more considered and measured responses to the finding that some Australian honeys contain potentially toxic chemicals from Paterson's Curse plants go to this site:

<https://www.scimex.org/newsfeed/expert-reaction-contaminated-australian-honey>

and this:

<http://honeybee.org.au/australian-honey-is-a-safe-natural-product/>

## ***Bob the Bee man rescues a million native bees from Brisbane meter boxes***

Bob's crusade to rescue and re-house native bees is getting attention in the news. His backyard must be getting pretty busy.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-23/bob-the-bee-man-gives-million-native-bees-new-home/7050876>

## **Glue-sniffing bees? from Ray B.**

While working on building my new shed, I noticed that there were a few native bees hanging around the top of the shed. I only gave it passing thought on the first day. However in subsequent days I was noticing them more and more. Every day dozens of them and they were around all day. I then noticed that they seemed to be attracted to the cloth tape I had used extensively around the top of the shed to keep the rain from getting into insulation before I had a chance to put the roof sheets on. The bees could be seen emerging from inside the cloth tape folds carrying tiny balls of glue on their back legs. (See native bee stealing Rays's tape below). What the heck is going on? Are these glue-sniffing bees? Are they collecting glue to gum up holes in their hives?

Although a search of the internet failed to turn up anything about this curious behaviour, it is apparently not unusual. Dr Tim Heard says in his new book (insert title) about native bee building materials: "Stingless bees may be seen collecting artificial sticky materials such as perished rubber, sticky tape and wet paint. These materials have a consistency similar to natural resin and so are collected by stingless bees."

Clearly, these little creatures are highly adaptable at making do in an urban world. This should serve them well as more native bushland is lost to suburbia.



By Ray B - now on the Gold Coast....will Rays' shed fall down when the native bees have stolen all his sticky tape holding the shed together??

Ed's Note: Copies of Tim Heard's new book Native Bees are available from The Club for \$25 members price.

## **National Conferences in Townsville July 2016**

Put these dates in your diary - this is a fantastic opportunity to be smothered in bee and honey related information, new developments, research and face-to face contact with both small and big wheels in the bee business.

Annual National Conferences of:

Queensland Beekeepers Association on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July at the Mercure Inn, Townsville.  
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July, at the Mercure Inn, Townsville, followed by their AGM.

### **TDBA Office holders for 2015/2016**

<u>President:</u>	Ron Rapson	<a href="mailto:ronald.i.rapson@team.telstra.com">ronald.i.rapson@team.telstra.com</a>
<u>Vice President:</u>	Paul Payne	<a href="mailto:trapper4812@gmail.com">trapper4812@gmail.com</a>
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## ***Xmas bon-bon bee jokes for next Xmas***

Just in case you have exhausted your supply of really bad "Dad" jokes over Xmas , here are some more guaranteed to annoy people next to you at the lunch table:[http://www.guy-sports.com/humor/stories/bee\\_stories.htm](http://www.guy-sports.com/humor/stories/bee_stories.htm)

### **Silly Bees**

What does the queen bee do when she burps? Issues a royal pardon.  
What kind of bees drop things? Fumble bees.  
What is a bees favourite food? Bee-nut butter and honey sandwiches.  
What do bees take to stay healthy? Their bee-vitamins.  
Why did the bee go to the dermatologist? Because it had hives.  
What's the most dangerous bee in the world? Hepatitis B.  
Why did the bees go on strike? Because they wanted more honey and shorter working flowers!



### **Amorous Bees**

How do bees get married? They are bee-trothed.  
What do bees use to do their hair? A honeycomb!  
What did the drone call the queen? His bee-loved.  
What did the bee say to the flower? Hello Honey!  
Why did the beekeeper cross his bees with glow worms? So his bees could work in the dark.

### **Travelling Bees**

What sort of vehicle does a bee drive? An automobeeel.  
What sort of car does a rich bee drive? A Bee-mer (BMW).  
How does the queen get around her hive? She's throne.  
Where do the bees like to go on holiday? To the beech.  
How do bees travel to school? By school buzz!  
Why did the bee cross the road? Just bee-cause!

### **Musical Bees**

Who is the bees favourite pop group? The Bee Gees.  
Who is the bees favourite singer? Sting.  
What's a bee's favourite novel? The Great Gats-bee!  
What kind of bee can't be understood? A mumble bee!  
What did the bee say to the bluebottle? I must fly now but I'll give you a buzz later.  
Why did the bee start quoting poetry? She was waxing lyrical!

## ***Xmas lunch at the Vale Hotel***

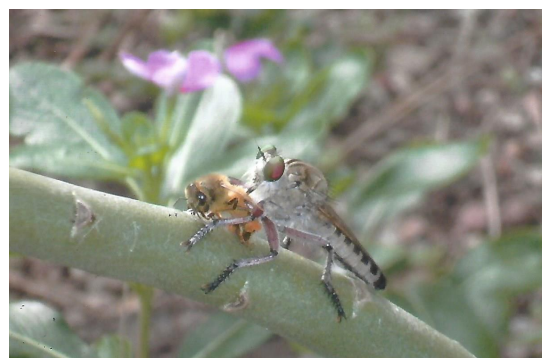
Our 2015 Xmas lunch break up saw a small but well satisfied turnout in December last year. The conversation was not wide-ranging , it was predictably focused on bees and the lack of rain, the dearth of honey flow, and the poor state of our hives in these stressful climatic conditions. A very pleasant afternoon was had in the cool a/c, with cold drinks and good food All had high hopes for the coming year!!



## ***What is it?? Should we be afraid??***

TDBA Club member Neal E submitted this photo of an insect attacking a bee - does anyone know what it is?? Should the bees be afraid??

First correct reply receives a free queen marking cage.



# **ACT Beekeepers Association and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Apiary**

TDBA Club member Mjr Kim Veness has sourced this information for the Newsletter from Cmdr Stephen O'Hearn, and I include this article and photos with their permission. For more details contact:

<http://www.actbeekeepers.asn.au/common/home.htm> or [http://www.actbeekeepers.asn.au/newsletters/nl\\_pdfs/September\\_2015.pdf](http://www.actbeekeepers.asn.au/newsletters/nl_pdfs/September_2015.pdf)

About a year ago the ACT Government and the Association signed an MOU for us to locate 8 - 10 hives on an old agricultural plot located on the south east section of Lake Burley Griffin. The area is part of a larger reserve called the Jerrabomberra Wetlands. We share the area with some other community groups and have access to a couple of old classrooms for training. We plan to have two apiaries on site and so far have the first one completed. We've spent about \$8000 acquiring equipment and materials for basic landscaping. If you are in Canberra on 20 Feb Hive Manager Jeff is organising a field day with some bee experts giving talks and demonstrations at the Apiary. Jeff has grown the apiary from another 10 hives we have located at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) in Bruce (a suburb of Canberra).

We have foam hives, technoset, nuplas and standard wooden Langstroths. We also have two Kenyan Top Bar Hives which I built (they are a little dodge but seem to be holding together), we also have two Warres. See photos on right. Our primary purpose is to show different hive types to our members and conduct basic courses for members. As an Association we have an opportunity to exercise some influence with the ACT Government; for example, we've just managed to reintroduce registration for beekeepers in the ACT. We also have signed up for the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program which I mentioned is run by Plant Health Australia.

The attached low resolution photos below were taken on the weekend and show the Hive Manager sugar shaking. The process was simple, about a cup full of bees are placed into a container with a tablespoon of icing sugar. The bees are gently rolled in the container for two minutes and the contents of the container tipped into water. The theory is that the icing sugar causes the Varroa mites to come off. The bees are then returned to the hive unharmed and no doubt popular with the other bees.

I am pleased to report there were no Varroa mites!



Thanks for the article Cmdr O'Hearn.



# Club Shop Items- New Price List

These prices are only available to current financial members

<u>Item</u>	<u>Price \$</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Veil - cotton	15.00	
Veil - ventilated	20.00	
Jacket / Round hat	55.00	
Ventilated jacket	70.00	
Full Suit - ventilated	95.00	
Gloves	20.00	
Super - Dove tail	26.00	
Super - Treated Ply	35.00	
Lids	25.00	
Bases	20.00	
Lifting Cleats (Handles)	5.00 pair	
Spring clips	2.00	new
Hive tool (S/S)	15.00	
Hive tool (Yellow)	8.00	
Smoker	35.00	
Queen Excluder - Wire	20.00	
Queen Excluder - Plastic	6.00	
Frames - Full depth	1.50	
Foundation - Plastic	2.00	
Foundation - Wax	1.60	
Eyelets pkt 500	15.00	new
Eyelets pkt 100	3.00	new
Bee Brush - Natural bristle	10.00	
Bee Brush - Synthetic bristle	8.00	
Queen Catcher	3.00	
Frame Gripper	10.00	
Bee Feeder	1.50	
Gate valve	10.00	
Capping knife, serrated	15.00	
Comb scratcher	8.00	
Honey jars 250gm	0.65	
Honey jars 500gm	0.75	
Honey Pails 1kg	1.25	
Strainers (fit bucket)	80.00	new
<b>TRAPS</b>		
Apithor trap	6.00	
Silver Bullet trap	7.00	
BeetlTra bottom trap	20.00	
TK Beetle mat	6.00	
"Die Ya Bastard" trap	2.00	
Diatomaceous earth	2.00	
Booklet - Managing AFB	6.00	
Club Polo Shirts	15.00	
Full depth super	25.00	Unassembled
Lid	25.00	Unassembled
Base	20.00	Unassembled

## ***TDBA Starter Kit -***

***The Perfect Gift for a budding Beekeeper***

***All available in Townsville:***

***Club Members Price Only!***

Bee Jackets \$50      Hive tools \$5      Gloves \$20  
Smokers \$35      Uncapping knives \$10 - \$15,  
All five items sold as a Beginners Kit \$90

***Contact: Frana: Ph. 0401 014 948***



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