



Townsville & District

BEEKEEPERS

ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1115
Aitkenvale. Qld. 4814

www.beesnorth.com.au



Newsletter No. 5: May 2025

In this Issue:

- Varroa update, workshops and alerts
- VDO support officer
- Stingless bee workshop success
- Demaree swarm prevention method
- Heaps of Club activities on offer
- Meeting Minutes
- Club office holders
- Shop details

Next Meeting:

2pm Sunday 18 May 2025

**Hermit Park State School
Entrance off McKimmin St**

**Bring a chair. Tea, coffee and nibbles
available.**

Free chats with experienced and novice

Varroa is now in Tingalpa, Brisbane – check your hives

Varroa inspection demo on 17 May at 9 am

<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/news-media/news/varroa-mite-detected-qld> 5 March, 2025

Carla will be giving the next Varroa inspection demonstration at the Club Shop location at 9 am, 17 May. (Note# not during a Shop opening which is on 3 May)

If you are not sure how to check for Varroa, just ask our friendly, dedicated VDO Carla. She will help you become an expert at alcohol washing (preferred method) and checking your brood. Remember the catch phrase – if you're not checking, you just don't know. Feel free to reach out to Carla by calling 0467 236 135 or emailing carla.kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au



Do the alcohol wash and check for these blighters!

Contact Carla or Rob Stephens immediately if you see any Varroa mites.

Rob Stephens Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity

M 0407 374 232 **E** robert.stephens@daf.qld.gov.au

Fill in the [Bee 123 form](#) even if you don't see any mites – a negative result is what we all want to see.

In early March [Varroa destructor was detected for the first time in Queensland](#). Since this time, it has been found in multiple commercial and recreational apiaries in the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Regional Council areas. Last month varroa mite was also reported in Tingalpa. The areas of infestation can be seen on the [varroa mite surveillance map](#).

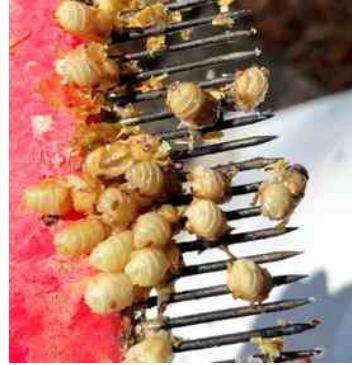
Varroa mite now in Queensland

it is more important than ever to monitor




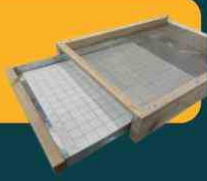
We monitor our hives to check for the presence/absence of varroa mite or for threshold numbers once varroa mite is present.


While there is no evidence of varroa mite in our area we perform presence/absence testing.


- Varroa is **not yet** present in your hive/s
- Methods for presence/absence testing:
 - Alcohol wash
 - Soapy water wash
 - Sugar shake
 - Drone uncapping
 - Sticky mat
- At least every 4 - 6 weeks
- Result: Prevention of a severe infestation or death of hive/s



**Do I have Varroa in my hive?
Monitoring methods for presence**

- Alcohol wash 
- Soapy Water Wash 
- Drone Uncapping 
- Sticky mats and vented bottom board 

 Remember, these monitoring methods are for determining presence of varroa in your hive only

 It has been recommended to monitor your hives every 4-6 weeks while we are the build-up phase

National Varroa Mite Management Program

Once varroa has been detected we start to do threshold testing, thresholds help us to determine what we must do next.

- Varroa **is** present in your hive/s
- Methods for thresholds:
 - Alcohol wash
 - Soapy water wash
 - Sugar shake
- Monthly in the build-up phase except for when treating
- Result: Correct timing of treatments



I have varroa in my hives! How do I know when to treat?

Monitoring for threshold levels

• Alcohol wash



• Soapy Water Wash



Best practice treatment threshold

Season	Mites/300 or ½ cup of bees	Treatment: Plan or control
Autumn/Winter/Spring	1-4	Plan
Autumn/Winter/Spring (1 st March- 30 th November)	5+	Control
Summer	1-8	Plan
Summer	9+	Control

PLEASE NOTE: Mite control thresholds vary around the world

National Varroa Mite Management Program

Here are links to some of the different techniques for monitoring.

Drone uncapping [Drone Uncapping for Varroa Mite](#)

Alcohol wash [Alcohol Wash for Varroa Mite](#)

Soapy water wash [Soapy Water Wash for Varroa Mite](#)

You will notice that I have left out sugar shake, there is a couple of reasons for this

- Sugar shake will kill bees, it slowly suffocates them
- The climate in North Queensland hinders the test. (humidity)
- If the bees are on a flow the nectar will also hinder the test.

I recently performed a sugar shake in Townsville and the bees ended up in a gooey white mess. We would not have been able to see any varroa mite if they were there. NSW VDO's have also performed sugar shakes with no or very few varroa mite were found, when they performed alcohol washes on the same bees, they got a lot more varroa mite.

Carla will be holding regular information sessions at the Club Shop, 3/38 Rendle St, Aitkenvale. The next one will be the 17th of May at 9 am.

As your local VDO, I am available for workshops, one-on-one training and demonstrations. Another option may be to get a small group of like-minded beekeepers together and we can discuss as a group, what we would like to do as a collective in the future.

Feel free to reach out to me by calling 0467 236 135 or emailing carla.kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au

Native Stingless Bee Workshop a big hit

Organised and run by TDBAI Club Members. Some very appreciative comments from those who attended. Looks like it was a real hands on and close up experience with our friendly locals.

“A big thank you to John, Frana , Ron and Doris for a most informative native bee workshop today. The whole day was well organised and ran very smoothly and the morning tea and lunch top notch. Well done. It was a fantastic workshop! So much information with plenty of opportunities to ask questions. Very interactive. Thank you Ron and Doris for the delicious lunch. Thank you! 🙏”

Photos from Lesley Barr





Newsletter items from the President

It's been a busy week for bees. 27 April we had a very successful Native Bee Workshop – the feedback from attendees has been amazing. 28 April, a swarm collection at Stuart, a hive inspection/mentoring at Roseneath and another swarm collection in Kelso.

29 April a presentation to two groups of students at Belgian Gardens SS on the Lifecycle of Bees followed by another hive inspection/mentoring of a very cranky hive. Thanks, Col for that experience, I had forgotten what a nasty hive was like. Happy beekeeping, Frana



The Stuart bees (left) were at head height, very quiet, no PPE required at all.



Above: The Kelso bees had entered the cavity, but still hanging in a bunch. A very easy retrieval and very quiet bees.

Check out all these activities and events that you can be involved in

Hi all,

We have frequent requests from community organisations, schools and businesses to present on various bee-related topics, with a number of events coming up over the next 2-3 months.

We are looking for members to volunteer at any that may be of interest. No particular bee experience is necessary, its about community engagement.

Please let us know which of the following you might be interested in assisting with:

Friday 2 May - helping pack orders at club shop (several of the usual people will be away)

Saturday 3 May - helping at club shop (several of the usual people will be away)

Wednesday 7 May - Bunnings Domain Garden Corner 10-11am

Thursday 8 May - Bunnings Domain Mothers Day event 5:30-7:30pm (ideal to sell your bee-related products, lip balms etc)

Friday 16 May - Rasmussen SS presentation

Tuesday 20 May - TCC Three for Bees for Kindy aged children, in city

Friday-Saturday 23-24 May - Link2Country at Ingham Showgrounds

Bunnings Domain also want an in-store presentation on a Sat or Sun either side of World Bee Day, date to be confirmed.

Thursday 12 June - Rotary Club (covered)

Sunday 15 June - Our Townsville, Anderson Gardens. This is a big one, equivalent to Eco-Fiesta

Monday 30 June OR Tuesday 1 July OR Thursday 3 July - Scout Camp event at

Bluewater (scouts from all over Qld attending)

Thursday 24 July - St Benedicts EcoFair

Sunday 27 July - TCC event at Lou Litser Park

Saturday 23 August - Rollingstone Pineapple Festival (another big one)

Wednesday 27 August - Lions Club presentation (covered)

Regards to all

Your TDBAI committee

How to use the famous Demaree method of swarm control

From Rusty at : <https://www.honeybeesuite.com/demaree-demystified/>

The Demaree method of swarm control was first published in the late 1800s and has evolved since. When using the Demaree method, the beekeeper separates the queen (and flying bees) from most of the brood (and nurse bees) by manipulating the frames and using a queen excluder. The result is a hive with little congestion and lots of room for the queen to lay. In essence, the colony "believes" it has already swarmed.



Basic steps for using the Demaree method

1. Remove the hive from the hive stand, leaving only the screened bottom board and slatted rack (if you are using one).
2. Above the bottom board and optional slatted rack, place a brood box filled with empty drawn comb.
3. Remove the centre two frames of drawn comb and set aside.
4. Go back to the active brood boxes and find the queen.
5. Place the queen and two frames of *sealed* brood in the centre of the new brood box.
6. Place a queen excluder above this box.
7. Above the queen excluder, place one or more empty honey supers (with frames) and then the original brood box where you found the queen. Push the brood nest together in the centre and put the two empty drawn frames (from step 3) on either end of the box.
8. Add your inner cover and telescoping lid.
9. After one week, go through the top brood box and remove any swarm cells.
10. If necessary, the entire procedure may be repeated after 9 or 10 days.

The set-up

From top to bottom, your hive will look like this:

Lid

Inner cover

Brood box with sealed and unsealed brood

Honey super

Honey super

Queen excluder

Brood box with drawn frames, 2 frames sealed brood, and queen

Hive stand with bottom board and slatted rack

What happens inside

Now that you have the hive set up, this is what happens:

- The nurse bees stay with the brood and care for it.
 - The field force continues to forage for honey and pollen.
 - The queen continues to lay eggs and has lots of places to do so.
- This situation is much like a hive that has already swarmed. The major difference is that both parts are in the same box. However,
- As soon as the queen scent decreases in the top box, the bees will try to raise a queen from young larvae.
 - You may destroy these cells or remove them to a nuc.
 - After the brood hatches, the brood cells will be backfilled with honey.
 - In the end, the hive will not have swarmed, so it will contain lots of bees and lots of honey.

- The growing hive may once again develop the urge to swarm, which is why a second Demaree is often needed.

Good control but labour intensive

The Demaree method can be quite effective at swarm control, but as you can see, it is quite labour intensive. It involves a lot of manipulation, good opportunities to lose or damage your queen, and a lot of heavy lifting. On the other hand, not only can you prevent swarming, but you can obtain some queen cells in the process. One more important point: When you set up the Demaree hive, be sure to remove any swarm cells that are already present. Any cell not removed may hatch and cause a problem within the hive.

From: Rusty @ [Honey Bee Suite](#)

Minutes of May General Meeting TDBAI

Date: Sunday 13 April 2025

Note taker: Lindsay Trott

Apologies:

Attendance: see Sign in book.

Meeting opened: 2pm

Meeting closed: 3 pm

Hermit Park State School

Welcome

Attendance book – around 25 attended, plus a few visitors

Previous Meeting Minutes - Moved - Beryl, 2nd Frana – accepted.

General Business – Frana

-several requests for bee talks from local schools and Lions and Rotary, volunteers requested – Contact Frana

- Link2Country Festival in Ingham 23th, 24th May needs volunteers to help with displays, some members staying overnight

- Native Bee workshop still has 5 spots available, ½ day session includes lunch and hive splits, bring a hive to split, fees are cheaper for Members

Treasurer - Louise

Good condition, ask for printout if interested in incomings, outgoings and committed. Closing balance \$72,783

Shop – Ron

- Quiet month due to rain and lack of honey flow, Ron offered thanks to volunteer help which made for a smooth and slick operation

Library – Beryl

- All books accounted for bar one issue only, been a bit quiet, ABK mag having problems with providing hard copies

Other Business – Frana

- 24 queens from Graeme Anderson arriving 14th April, get in touch if interested

- Varroa now in 19 locations in Lockyer Valley – inspect your hives

- John Carr is our rep on the Varroa round table meetings with DAFF

- Carla is our VDO until September 2025, so contact her for help in checking the alcohol wash method complete the Bee123 survey form even for negative results

- QBA Annual Conference is on Gold Coast on 19th, 20th June. Club is discussing ways to assist members to attend, subject to numbers and timing. Contact Frana ASAP to discuss. Club sponsored several attendees at last years Townsville bash and provided merch for the show bags.

- Tea/coffee urn t"urn"ed up its toes and carked it at the meeting, new one on order, the old one had "urned" its keep

- Next meeting shifted from 11th to 18th May will be an Ordinary Meeting and World Bee Day on 20th May will not be a special event for the Club this year

Club Demonstration - Jon

- A novel hive inspection competition was run by Jon McKinstry

- 3 teams competed to see who identified all the issues within the observer hive photos (no live bees)

- Varroa Vanquishers, Bee Warriors, and Buzzy Bees teams pooled their expertise and were rewarded for their knowledge

Questions – Frana

- How to deal with SHB. Oil traps using cheap vegie oil, chux cloth, vented bottom boards, Apithor traps are only legal to be used on bottom of brood box and not in super (oops!). Hive Doctor trays

under hive should have oil in front tray and empty back tray for trapping SHB as they enter the hive. Apparently DE or diatomaceous earth clogs up in our humidity and is useless in lumps.

- Bees have been reported to feed trapped SHB when they stroke the bees to mimic juvenile bees
- Club was unsuccessful in getting Varroa funding, and in applications for use of the sheds near railways. Funding and clubhouse options still being pursued. Hooper Park went under during the floods and services (water, toilets and power) were not available at a previous meeting
- AI mentioned "The Oasis" is a Veterans organisation that will be holding an Open Day at Lavarack where Club members can attend, talk to interested people, sell honey and equipment. AI will advise of dates and details

Meeting closed: 3 pm

Tea and coffee was available in our new jug courtesy of Doris, as well as free chats and biscuits

From the Internet

Boil your drones and feed them to the hive?

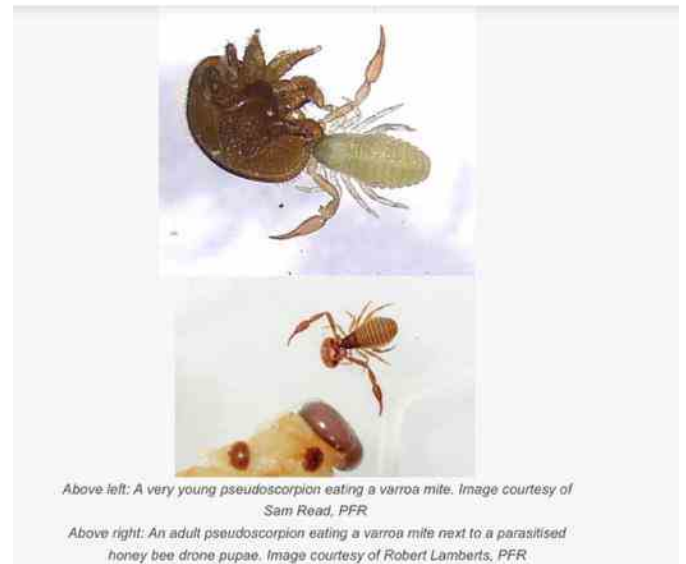
<https://entomologytoday.org/2025/03/24/honey-bees-drone-brood-recycling-flour-patties-pollen-substitute/>

Wow, this article recommends double boiling the drones from you hive, drying them out to make a powder, and feeding them back to the hive to use the proteins, fats and minerals. Might have some benefits if you have 1,000 or more drones as the article suggests, but I usually only ever have 50-100 drones in my hives.

Do we have natural Varroa predators in Oz? – pseudoscorpions to the rescue, maybe

<https://extensionaus.com.au/professionalbeekeepers/does-australia-have-varroa-mite-predators/>

Pseudoscorpions are a real thing and selectively munch on Varroa mites in bee hives without hassling the bees. Apparently they have them over in NZ, and maybe we have tem here in Oz? The authors are requesting beekeepers to look a bit closer at the other little critters that might be wandering around inside the hive and could offer another weapon to combat Varroa



Bee craft activities

From somewhere in the depths of Facebook

On the right- a crochet project, and below, a fruit platter to please the kids.



QBA Conference is on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th June on the Gold Coast

And look at these other Conferences this year.

State Conferences - plan your year ahead!

22 + 23 May 2025 [NSW Apiarist Association Conference 2025](#)

30 + 31 May 2025 [Tasmanian Beekeeper Association Conference](#)

11 - 13 June 2025 [VAA Annual Conference](#)

19 + 20 June 2025 [QLD Beekeepers Association 121st State Conference](#)

4 July 2025 [South Australian Apiarists Association Conference AGM](#)

5 July 2025 [AHBIC AGM 2025, South Australia](#)

Reserve the date in 2026:

18 - 21 June 2026 Australian Honey Bee Congress in Adelaide, Convention Centre

Reminders for membership renewal are sent by email – now \$35/p.a.

Membership fees can be made electronically to:

Townsville and District Beekeepers

BSB: 633 000

Account: 141 466 078

Please make sure you add your Surname or subscription number so that your membership can be signed off.

From the Club Shop volunteers

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

If you experience difficulty accessing the web site for orders, please use the following email address to contact the club using tsvbeeclub@gmail.com

Alternatively you can place your orders via shop@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 times by arrangement and when volunteers are available.

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. We are doing this for fun. It's not a business, it's run by volunteers.

Email orders will be given priority and serviced – but walk in orders may be completed if time allows. Pre-order before midnight on the Thursday before shop opening time.



Golden Rules for the Club Shop:

Please follow this guide:

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

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 Newbees experience hive openings to become more confident, and you will learn more yourself by trying to explain what's going on in there.

When Bee Foundation

Keep up to date with the latest news and research from the When Bee Foundation which is an Australian not-for-profit charity that promotes awareness of the importance of bees for food security and raises funds for research.

Their newsletter provides very informative industry updates as well as education on bees. Check out their page and subscribe to their newsletter [here](#)

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. 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/>

TDBAI Office holders and Committee for 2024/2025

Position	Name	Contact
President	Frana McKinstry	president@beesnorth.com.au
Vice President	Al Cooney	
Secretary	Liz Hennig	secretary@beesnorth.com.au
Treasurer	Louise Clark	treasurer@beesnorth.com.au
Event Co-Ordinator	Shandelle O'Reilly	
Biosecurity Awareness Officer	John Carr	
Newsletter Editor	Lindsay Trott	editor@beesnorth.com.au
Assistant Editor	Lesley Barr	
Membership Officer	Frana McKinstry	membership@beesnorth.com.au
Shop Managers	Ron Newitt & Mark Finn	shop@beesnorth.com.au
Shop Assistant	N/A	
Librarian	Beryl Smart	
Website/social media Officer	Vacant	
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	

TDBAI Committee is involved in many activities – can you lend a hand?

Contact any of the Committee Members to find out how to get involved

Swarm Contact List:

Please advise Lindsay Trott editor@beesnorth.com.au or Lesley Barr <lesleybarr@y7mail.com> 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

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

Native bee removal

Bruce Warren 0413 395 928

Jon McKinstry 0401 014 948

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 now in Qld 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 :

Lindsay Trott: trottlindsay@gmail.com Or: Lesley Barr <lesleybarr@y7mail.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