



Next meeting | 1st May 2019

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

Editor | Eva Durrant edurrant@xtra.co.nz

Topics for May meeting

Beginners session Upstairs meeting room 6.45pm

Topic **Equipment basics**

Main Meeting In the main hall at 7.30pm

Topic **Honey Competition and Gadget and gizmos**

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James Withington – note from the president

Despite winter being nearly upon us, the mild weather has certainly causing discombobulation among the bees. They are not sure if they should be wintering down or building up their numbers. With the warmer days and the lack of food available, has seen the bee winter stores are being consumed rather rapidly. Make sure on the next warm day that you take the time to check your hives winter stores levels. Your hives boxes should be almost too heavy to lift. If you discover empty frames in your hives, either replace them with full honey frames or you are going to have to feed your bees. There is nothing more disappointing in the spring finding that your bees have starved to death.

Likewise ensure you also check the varroa levels within the hives. For some of you who treated early in the New Year you may require additional treatment to ensure the numbers are as low as possible going into the winter. Bees with deformed wings are a classic sign that your hive needs immediate treatment. The days are still warm enough to use most treatments.

For those of you thinking of wrapping your hives for the winter, now is a good time to do so. There are a number of variances of this and you can always check on www.youtube.com to see the options and find out what has worked and not worked for other people.

The number of AFB outbreaks in the Upper Hutt region is causing concern for a number of beekeepers. This may result in the AFB management agency placing a movement restriction in the area to try and kurb the spread of the disease. All beekeepers are encouraged to inspect for the disease each time they are in their hives. Early detection and vigilance is important to curb its spread.

And lastly don't forget this month's meeting is the annual Honey Competition as well as gizmos and gadgets so bring along your best jar of honey and the things you have created for your beehives and used during the year.



Club profile – Graeme Chisnall and Lynn Janes



When I was just a wee lad growing up in rural Taranaki, a swarm of bees showed up one day on the farm and a neighbour helped me to capture them. This became my first beehive and unfortunately, through the years, that memory has faded and in fact, I don't recall much of what became of them.

My Canadian wife, Lynn, and I have always had a keen interest in organic gardening and living off the land. After being nearly self-sufficient in herbs and vegetables from our backyard garden in Canada where we lived during the early years of our marriage, we made the move to NZ in 2004.

I have a background in building/ carpentry/ hardware, IT (networking) and grew up on a Taranaki dairy farm. Lynn has a science background of genetics, organic gardening, and permaculture and grew up in a small town on the Ottawa River in the upper Ottawa valley (Canada).

It took us quite a few years to find the right home to purchase in Wellington (seven years to be exact!), but since then, we have been gradually establishing an edible landscape. Our reasons for taking up beekeeping are numerous - it seemed a natural progression of this “edible landscape” and might help to increase its yields, we wanted to do our bit to promote the health and proliferation of bees on our planet, we were ready for the new adventure of beekeeping and all the challenges and new learnings that would come with it, and last, but not least, for the love of honey.

Lynn's role as head gardener (only gardener, actually, but “head gardener” sounds better!) has been to plan and manage the garden in such a way as to not only



Club profile cont..

provide food for our table, but just as importantly, to provide a continuous smorgasbord of flowering biodiversity to feed the bees and other beneficial insects. She relies on a high volume of apiaceae (umbelliferae, like carrots, parsnips, parsley, fennel,) which readily self-seed, attract other beneficial insects like hoverflies and offer plentiful nectar and pollen for bees. She is continually looking for new plants to nourish the bees and plans to add echinacea, anise hyssop and lemon balm in the coming year (anyone with seeds or plants which need division?).

Honey Competition

A reminder that the WBA honey competition will be held at the May meeting.

The Rules for the competition appeared in the April Newsletter. Please read this article again to refresh your memory of the requirements. Good Luck!





May Checklist

- ✓ Test for varroa mite levels and treat if necessary
- ✓ Remove any varroa treatment products applied in March
- ✓ Feed sugar syrup if needed
- ✓ Winter hives down
- ✓ Bring in honey supers stored on hives
- ✓ Sort combs before storage
- ✓ Freeze combs for wax moth control



Taken from Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand by Andrew Matheson & Murray Reid

Bee Quiz

(answers on page 10)



1. Name at least two common yellow-flowered “pest plants” or weeds that are good sources of pollen or nectar for honeybees.
2. True or False: Varroa mites are part of the Arachnid family.
3. Name the two most common strains of honeybee in New Zealand.
4. Beekeepers wanting to inspect hives for American Foulbrood disease have to pass a disease recognition and destruction course and obtain their DECA. What is “DECA” an abbreviation for?
5. True or false: a newly emerged queen makes a single mating flight before “retiring” to her hive for the rest of her life (unless she is part of a swarm).



APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND

UPDATE – 5th April 2019

From the CE, Karin Kos

What a great response from beekeepers to the 2018 Colony Loss Survey. More than 3,600 beekeepers participated in the survey – around 47% of all registered beekeepers in New Zealand – which is a clear demonstration of the value beekeepers place on understanding impacts on bee health. The top four issues haven't changed over the last few years and include queen problems, suspected varroa, wasps and suspected starvation (caused by weather and other factors). And while New Zealand's loss rates are relatively low compared with many other countries, there is no room for complacency – a focus on good beekeeping practice is critical.

There is some excellent regional data in this year's set of figures and as Barry Foster reported in [our media release](#), members of the ApiNZ Science and Research focus group will be analysing the full data set of results from the 2018 survey against surveys from previous years. From this they hope to gauge any trends and highlight any significant changes to assist industry in identifying ongoing research priorities.

The survey is carried out annually on behalf of Biosecurity New Zealand (part of MPI) by Landcare Research – Manaaki Whenua. I would like to thank Biosecurity New Zealand for funding this research and particularly want to acknowledge the role of Pike Brown and his team from Manaaki Whenua who put in a tremendous amount of work into the survey.

[The full report can be read here on the MPI website](#)



Greenacres School, Tawa

Greenacres is a small primary school in Tawa which currently has a beehive provided and managed by BeezThingz (hive rental company) in Auckland. The Principal is unhappy with the current contractual arrangement and instead would like to offer the school as a site to a local beekeeper – the only proviso would be an occasional talk to pupils about bees, pollination etc. While sustainability and ‘Garden to Table’ are key subjects on their curriculum they do not want to own a hive or be as involved in beekeeping to the extent our other member-supported schools are e.g. Te Aro, Berhampore or Newlands Intermediate.

Is there WBA member who would like to site a hive (or two) on the school grounds and provide occasional interaction with the kids and teachers about bees and the environment ? The WBA can provide supporting material such as posters etc. and maybe lend a few bee-suits if a hive visit is considered appropriate.

Contact John for further information or details if you are interested.



from Punch magazine 2018



Young Waikato beekeeper wins study grant

Beekeeper Ariel Kururangi (19) is the first-ever recipient of the Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ) Ron Mossop Youth Scholarship.



The programme was established to encourage young New Zealanders to undertake training that supports best practice beekeeping.

A queen rearer who is passionate about the environment, Kururangi intends to use the funds toward the New Zealand Apprenticeship in Apiculture at Primary ITO (developed in conjunction with ApiNZ).

“To me, sustainable beekeeping means you as the beekeeper are thoroughly thinking about every practice you are carrying out and being aware of the future implications,” she said. “Sustainability in beekeeping stretches far and wide, from breeding good genetics to understanding how to effectively treat bee pests.”

In fact, it was a Year 13 internal NCEA exam on sustainability – on the topic of honey bees – that prompted Kururangi to get her start in beekeeping.



Young Waikato beekeeper wins study grant cont...

“I found it really interesting and was discussing it with a careers advisor who said I should look into beekeeping,” she said. “I went on Trade Me, found a few job openings and thought, ‘I might as well give it a shot,’ so I applied.

“I find all aspects of beekeeping really fascinating. The rewards extend far beyond just working the hives,” Ariel stated. “Once you are able to grasp a full understanding of the entire cycle from start to finish you develop a huge appreciation for the hard work the bees put in but also the people working alongside them.

“I encourage young people to take the step and begin their career in beekeeping,” she said. “It is challenging but through perseverance, it’s really rewarding. I would love to see more young people in the industry!”

Scholarship donor and founder Neil Mossop started out beekeeping at age 15 with his father Ron, whom the scholarship honours.

“I was very impressed with the calibre of people that put their names forward,” he said. “It wasn’t an easy job to do.” He said that it was ultimately Ariel’s enthusiasm for self-improvement and for the future of the industry that made her stand out.

Newsletter contributions wanted

If you have any interesting news or facts about bees, beekeeping, beekeepers, etc, and wish to share these with club members -send them to the editor:

Eva Durrant edurrant@xtra.co.nz or call on 027 311 8700





Bee Quiz Answers



1. Gorse, broom, dandelion, fennel
2. True
3. Carnolian and Italian
4. Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement
5. False, a “virgin” queen may make several mating flights over a period of several days or even a few weeks.



The gorse flower



Good neighbour beekeeping



By Ron Micksha

Tired of irritating your neighbours with your pesky bees? Help is on the way. A very bright professor at Oregon State, [Andony Melathopoulos](#), has co-authored a guide which you should read: [Residential Beekeeping: Best-practice guidelines for nuisance-free beekeeping in Oregon](#). It was written in Oregon for Oregonians but the advice will help urban and suburban beekeepers everywhere.

The manual is a colourful, user-friendly booklet that should keep you from looking like the guy in the picture above. The best-practice guidelines manual begins by describing why beekeeping is important:

“While residential beekeeping can prove extremely rewarding to the beekeeper (a single colony can produce more than 40 pounds of honey, as well as other valuable products such as pollen, propolis, and wax), it also provides considerable benefits to neighbors and the city as a whole.

“Honey bees play an important role in the residential community, providing pollination for the beekeeper’s property and for properties up to two miles away. As cities and towns encourage residential beekeeping and it becomes more established, the benefits increase and become integrated into a number of public services, such as educational projects, income opportunities for under-employed populations, and personal and community-building activities.”

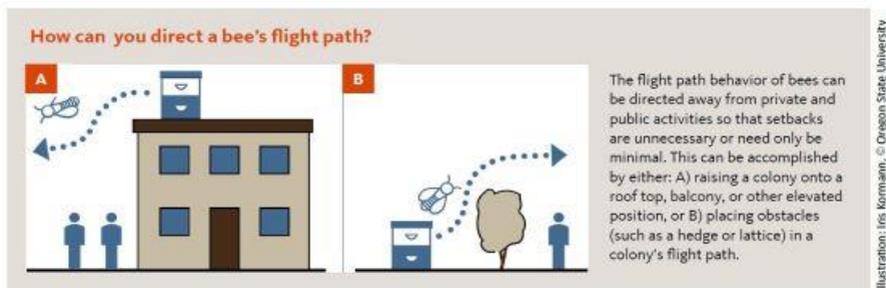
The booklet then gives you the nuts’n’bolts of doing it right. Topics include flight path, water for the bees, swarming, defensive behaviour, prevention of robbing, locating the apiary, proper number of hives to keep, stings, allergies, good neighbourliness, and lots more. It doesn’t cover a few things which every beekeeper should know (diseases and mites, for example) but that’s not the purpose of this guidebook. Instead, the clear focus is on being a good citizen backyard beekeeper and not a nuisance. There are a few paragraphs about legal



Good neighbour beekeeping cont..

stuff, town ordinances, and apiary registration which won't be completely transferable everywhere, but the rest of the manual generally is applicable for most community beekeepers.

This is a well-organized, well-written, and well-illustrated manual. For example, here's a simple figure showing how to reduce pedestrian contact with your bees. As most beekeepers know, honey bees very rarely sting when they are away from their hive (unless you bare-footedly step on one or try to pick one off a flower – then, I'm sorry, but I'll side with the bee on this). Close to their nest, however, bees can become rudely defensive. Foot-traffic along a pathway in front of a hive entrance almost always causes trouble for the bees and for pedestrians. Thus, this simple but appropriate drawing.



From *Best Practices*: Illustration by Iris Kormann, © Oregon State University

There are a few things missing from this 17-page manual (for example: [how to stop robbing once it has started](#); how to [carry a hive of bees into your back yard](#) without discommoding the neighbours) but this guidebook doesn't pretend to cover everything. There's a lot more you need to know before you start beekeeping – things you should learn at a two-day beginner's bee course taught by your local bee club. For those extra details, the authors recommend that you participate in a bee course, learn from a good neighbour beekeeper, or at least seek out good practical advice.

Article suggested by Frank Lindsay



Interesting Websites

The ectoparasitic mite, *Varroa destructor*, and the viruses that it transmits, kill the colonies of European honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) kept by beekeepers unless the bees are treated with miticides. Nevertheless, there exist populations of wild colonies of European honey bees that are persisting without being treated with miticides. We hypothesized that the persistence of these wild colonies is due in part to their habits of nesting in small cavities and swarming frequently. We tested this hypothesis by establishing two groups of colonies living either in small hives (42 L) without swarm-control treatments or in large hives (up to 168 L) with swarm-control treatments. We followed the colonies for two years and compared the two groups with respect to swarming frequency, *Varroa* infestation rate, disease incidence, and colony survival.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297890803 How Honey Bee Colonies Survive in the Wild Testing the Importance of Small Nests and Frequent Swarming](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297890803)



Who can I speak to?

President - James Withington 0272 851206 jwithington2016@gmail.com

Vice-President - Tricia Laing 0274 766540 tricialaing48@gmail.com

Treasurer - John Burnet (04) 232 7863 johnburnet@xtra.co.nz

Secretary - Jane Harding (04) 421 2417 janeh@xtra.co.nz

Best times to reach Jane are evenings, and Friday Saturday/Sunday

Committee Members

James Scott - Membership and website (04) 565 0164 james@scott.gen.nz

Judith de Wilde – Librarian (04 235 8173) kiwicavingrose@gmail.com

Barbara Parkinson – supper co-ordinator (04 2379624) parkinson@xtra.co.nz

PK Tan 021 1093388 pk.propserv@gmail.com

Richard Braczek 021 0344311 ibraczek@paradise.net.nz

Leon Sullivan 021 348201 nzgato@gmail.com

Dave Henderson 0274 848165 Davehendersonnz@gmail.com

Newsletter editor

Eva Durrant 027 3118700 edurrant@xtra.co.nz

Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre,
Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville

