



April 2017 Newsletter

New Look - New Format Newsletter

As you have no doubt noticed the SGB Newsletter has a new format. This one will hopefully be just as user friendly as the other version, maybe more so.

The main reason for the change was to make things a little easier for the editor who finds herself worked finger to the bone at the end of each month.

I hope you enjoy the April 2017 Newsletter

from your editor: Bron



April 2017 President's Report

The daylight hours are noticeably shorter and while I'm happy with the "stores" my bees will have over our often, cold wet winters, they are still busily looking out for any skerrick of nectar or honey they can find. When harvesting I am always mindful of not allowing bees to "rob" to minimize the possibility of spreading any disease and cover any harvested frames. Until my new shed is finished I'm still extracting and bottling in our kitchen and find even though I haven't left anything out for them, the scent is enough to have a significant number of bees around our verandah.

The attendees of the March meeting enjoyed a very knowledgeable and detailed talk by our guest speaker Neil Barraclough on the broad topic of "Pollination". Many members were fascinated by what actually required pollination by honeybees such as onions and what didn't, such as tomatoes. While the honeybee is vital to the diversity of fruits and vegetables that we enjoy, Neil stressed that it wasn't all doom and gloom if the honeybee was to disappear. However, I'm sure you would agree that we never want to contemplate the demise of the honeybee.

Another reminder that the South Gippsland Sustainability festival in Wonthaggi is on the 9th April. Our club will be attending and if you can spare a couple of hours at our marquee helping to promote our club and beekeeping in general it would be very much appreciated. If you can please contact Bronwyn our secretary.

My apologies to Steve Lovie for forgetting to thank him for "manning" the marquee at Foster Market last month. Apparently he was there till stumps, which is not unusual for Steve.

Thank you to all those members who took the time to fill out our club survey forms, your feedback is vital to assist the committee in knowing what our members want. Myself and the committee are always mindful of the fact that our club provides interesting and informative club activities in a friendly and inclusive environment.

The GAA is having their Beekeeping AGM and Conference day on Saturday 8th April at the Maffra memorial hall. There are some interesting presentations on the day such as : the properties of medicinally active honeys (ie Manuka) : Its availability and processing. A presentation on the flow hive. Also Ian Cain will be talking about queen excluders in regards to the use of excluders and the benefits to both the bees and the beekeeper. More information can be obtained from Bill Ringin on 5633 1326 Or 0498 594 897 .

Our next meeting on the 13th April is titled "Hardware-Back to basics" please bring along any "jigs" or devices you use and put them on display for the night so other members can hopefully get some good ideas on the best way to assemble and maintain their hive equipment. On the night there will be the opportunity for members to have a go at assembling and wiring frames and attaching wax foundation.

Happy beekeeping!
Peter Gatehouse

Calendar of Events

April SGB Meeting

Thursday April 13th 7:30pm at St.Peter's Anglican Church Hall in Leongatha.

Back to Basics with instruction on construction of Langstroth Hive components.

May SGB Meeting

Thursday May 11th 7:30pm at St.Peter's Anglican Church Hall in Leongatha.

Special speaker: Ian Cain - Packing down for winter with his 2 box method

June SGB Meeting

Thursday June 8th 7:30pm at St.Peter's Anglican Church Hall in Leongatha.

It's Pizza Night - Yahoooooo!!

Lots of delicious hot pizzas with some salads, cold and hot drinks and a few sweet treats as well.

Pizza night will be enjoyed as we all join in the Beginner or Advanced Beekeepers separate Q & A sessions

Website Changes

New Members Page:

New club members will no longer receive a printed welcome pack. Instead they will receive a 'Quick-Start' letter with instructions on how to access all the information they need to begin beekeeping, on our website.

This change has eliminated the need for reams of printing to be carried out with an enormous amount of paper and ink being used as the beginner packs were quite bulky.

All of the information given to our newbies, plus more is now available in an easily accessible format with the choice given to the new members to print out any of the information or simply keep it accessible on their browser.

Codes of Practice:

Both the Apiary Code of Practice, produced by the Victorian Government and the Bio-Security Code of Practice, produced by the Federal Govt, pdf documents have now been linked to our website.

These documents are quite large but easy enough to download into your reading program rather than printing them out.

It is handy to have them accessible so that you can read them now and then to brush up on the finer points of responsible beekeeping.

Beekeeping Courses 2017:

This page will be updated with courses as we become aware of them.

Presently Beginner Beekeeping Courses are being run by

Rob Fisher - Fisher's Beekeeping 0437 501 113

William Rogers - The Bunyip Beekeeper 0487 100 001

For many more options just Google: beekeeping courses victoria

The Bird & The Bee: Excuse me, who's flower is this anyway??



Time to make sure your bees have winter tucker.

Autumn is the time to make sure that your bees have enough food to get them through the winter. If you leave feeding them until winter it may be too late to help them survive. Also mucking around with the hive in winter can lead to chalkbrood due to chilling. If you overwinter your bees to 2 boxes when you pack them down, there should be 8 frames of capped honey for them if possible. If not, supplemental feeding may have to be considered. Honey is by far the best for the bees especially any brood. Feeding bees with syrup denies them of many of the nutrients which are necessary for a healthy, strong, more disease resistant colony. It's like the difference between breast milk and formula for babies. Babies can certainly thrive on formula but none of the antibodies and other disease fighting elements found in breast milk are present in the synthetic product.

Sugar Candy:

Syrup can be fed to bees during most of the year during the warmer months. During winter, however, particularly in colder regions like Tasmania and the higher mountainous regions of Victoria bees will not feed on syrup. During the winter months in an emergency I feed my bees with crystallised sugar candy, using the following formula.

Ingredients and equipment:

- 2.5 kg white sugar
- 0.5 litre water
- 4 - litre aluminium/stainless steel saucepan
- Wooden spoon
- A bowl of cold water, big enough to sit the saucepan in or fill a sink with cold water
- A shallow baking tray or lamington tin lined with baking paper
- Plastic bags to store the slabs of sugar candy once it has crystallised the baking tray

Method:

Put the water into a saucepan on moderate heat and slowly add the sugar stirring continuously. Bring it to the boil, then boil for 3 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat and stand it in a bowl or sink of cold water. While the mixture is cooling keep stirring.

When the solution starts to thicken pour it into the baking tray or tin, scraping as much as possible of the solution out of the saucepan with the wooden spoon before the solution starts to set or candy.

When the slabs of sugar candy are cool they can be removed from the mould complete with any lining paper and stored in plastic bags until needed.

To use the candy I place it above the hive mat under the lid of the hive. The bees will find it there and eat it as they require.

Candy is only an emergency feed if frames of capped honey are not available and cannot be used as a long-term feeding strategy.

from The Australian Beekeeping Manual by Robert Owen

Links of Interest

The News on Neonicotinoids

[UN experts denounce 'myth' pesticides are necessary to feed the world,](#)

The Guardian, Mar 7, 2017



[UN human rights experts call for global treaty to regulate dangerous pesticides,](#)
UN News, Mar 7, 2017



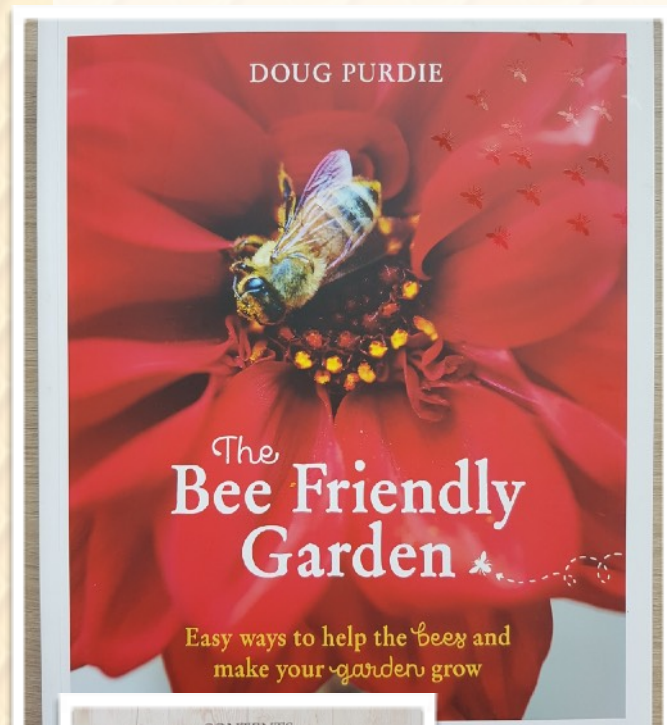
thanks to Colin Goodwin for these articles

[What's Killing our Bees - BBC Documentary](#)

This interesting 54 min. documentary looks at all the suspects.
BBC Horizon One - Dec 13, 2016

thanks to Linda Craig-Sneyders for this article

Book Reviews



DOUG PURDIE HAS DONE IT AGAIN!

The Bee Friendly Garden

Yep, he's nailed it again. This book is absolutely gorgeous. It is beautifully presented with hundreds of lovely pictures of perfect plants, flowers and gardens.

Perusing the contents page makes you want to read it all at once.

As well as having photographs that you want to just dive into, it is packed full of useful and interesting information and it is written by an Australian for Australian Gardeners and Australian conditions.

This book succinctly and effectively covers so many subjects including the well-being of native and European bees, whether total weed annihilation is wise, gardening without the use of 'cides', good bees and bad bees, good bugs, pest control recipes and companion planting - just to name a few.

There are lists and photographs of recommended plants for foraging honey bees from ground covers through to shrubs and trees.

Doug Purdie has made this book very easy to read with his casual writing style but doesn't skimp on facts and research results which back up many of his suggestions for achieving a healthy, well balanced, natural Bee Friendly Garden.

It retails for \$30 from booktopia.com.au

Bron Barton



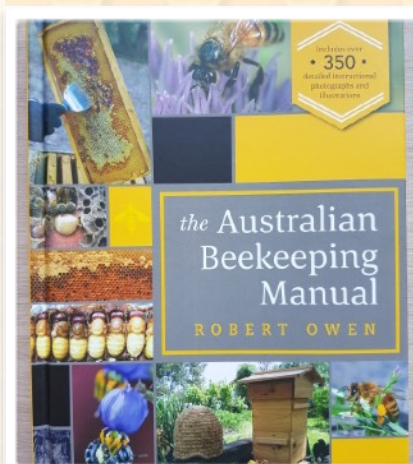
The Australian Beekeeping Manual by Robert Owen

This large hard-cover manual was first published in 2015 making it the most contemporary book of it's kind available at present.

It covers all of the required information for beginners with a four page contents section outlining 19 chapters in all. As well as all the usual information you would expect a book for beginners to cover it also contains chapters on: preparing honey for sale, sustainable beekeeping, the bee friendly garden and native bees.

I have noticed that this book is being included as the Beginner Beekeeping textbook to students attending some Beginner Courses

It retails for \$40 from booktopia.com.au



Bron Barton

Some plants for your consideration



BEANS

These very pretty beans are purple climbing beans. They grow very tall, up to 2 mt. and have classic heart shaped leaves with large beans grown on purple stems that turn from green to purple as they mature. This is a very pretty plant and looks delightful climbing up a trellis or an arbour. It grows very quickly, produces prolifically and has flowers that the bees love to visit. It is unfortunate that the beans change back to green as they cook but if you like them in salad they retain their lovely colour.

Historically beans used to be grown alongside corn, and the beans would wind up on the corn stalks with the beans providing nitrogen for the corn. Squash was also grown alongside, using the corn and beans as a wind break and to help retain moisture - acting as a live mulch of sorts

Beans fruit better if grown in full sun and given plenty of water. Beans can grow from 4cm to 10cm in a day so need to be picked daily.

Not all beans need bees as some are self-fertile so if you're wanting to plant beans more for the bees than the table do some research about which ones need bees for pollination.

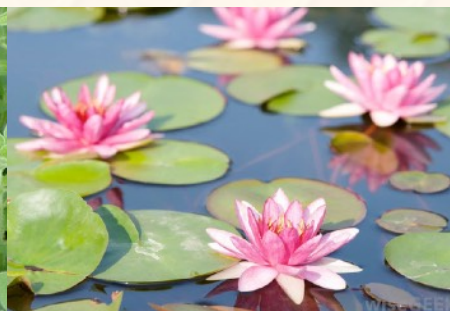


OREGANO

This is a garden herb well worth including in your garden. If you let it grow freely, it produces tiny, delicate flowers in pink or white, which make it another bona fide bee magnet. Oregano honey is common in Turkey and the Mediterranean - no surprise then that it likes full sun. Oregano is just one species of Origanum, and is often called wild marjoram. Marjoram (Origanum majorana) itself (sweet and pot marjoram) has a sweeter spicier flavour, but all Origanum are pretty much interchangeable in the kitchen.

Oregano is a perennial herb, growing form 20-80cm tall. It performs well in a pot as long as it's kept well watered.

Below: Oregano flowers



WATER LILY (Nymphaea)

What a beautiful way to pretty up any body of water in your garden and provide landing platforms for your bees to drink from.

Remember though that water-lilies require full sun and that their roots (usually in pots) need to be submerged no deeper than 30cm - 45cm. Be prepared to have a few mozzie wrigglers in the water unless you have some tadpoles or fish to feed on them.

I have seen photos of honey bees and native bees foraging on water-lily flowers. It's not unheard of though for small insects to be picked off lily pads by frogs and get caught up in spider webs.

It's pretty difficult to find information about a symbiosis between water lilies and bees so if any readers have information or personal observations and could pass it on to me I would be most grateful.

I (Bron) had a lovely lily-pond once but my daughter's Kindergarten duck 'Quack' found it and decided to bathe in it. The result was an empty pond surrounded by fine silty mud, desiccated water-lilies and our previously white duck now stinking of swamp water and resembling a US marine in full swamp cammo gear.

Have you heard of the Asian Hornet?

Well if you haven't then you aren't alone because neither had I, but it would seem that this is another bug which is hell bent on making life very difficult or impossible in fact for the European Honey-Bee wherever they 'co-exist'



EXAMPLES OF AN ASIAN HORNET

Above: The Asian Hornet can grow to 3-5cm in length

These nasty little beasts made their way into France in 2004 in a shipment of pottery from China. Their spread across France was rapid, to say the least, and now, to the horror of the British, these little buggers have crossed the English Channel with the first sighting at Tetbury in Gloucestershire on 21 Sept 2016.

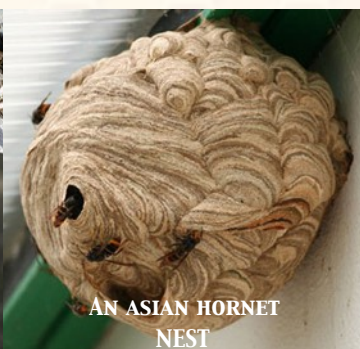
The way they attack is the stuff of horror movies: They can be observed hovering or 'hawking' outside honey bee colonies killing foraging bees that are returning to the hive with a load of pollen or nectar, or guard bees that attempt to defend the hive from attack. The hornets force the bees to drop to the ground before paralyzing them. The foraging Asian hornet will then proceed to decapitate the bee, remove its legs and wings and convert the body into a squashed ball for transport

There are also reports that predation extends to entering the honey bee colony and stealing honey bee brood. When this occurs, it appears that the Asian hornet attacks all of the honey bee guards one by one before robbing the brood nest. A foraging Asian hornet will only consume a portion of the prey it captures; the rest is taken back to the nest to feed developing Asian hornet larvae.

In its native regions of Asia, the Asian hornet has been reported to destroy up to 30 per cent of a colony of Asian honey bees. Reports from France suggest that in some regions where there are high densities of Asian hornet, such as the south of France where there is a long and warm summer season, complete hive losses have occurred. Beekeepers in France have observed that European honey bee hives have been completely lost, and that the Asian hornet commonly attacks hives that are generally very weak, have low numbers of foragers or in some cases are queen less.



AN ASIAN HORNET
APPROACHING A BEEHIVE



AN ASIAN HORNET
NEST



The Asian Hornet - Vespa velutina originates from Southeast Asia, particularly the tropical regions, from Northern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Taiwan, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Indo-Chinese peninsula and surrounding archipelagoes inc. the Indonesian Island of Java.

As an invader the hornet has appeared in France, Spain, Portugal, South Korea and Japan and now England.

GOOD NEWS - DON'T PANIC!

The good news is that this pest is **currently not present in Australia** and there are strict quarantine requirements in place to protect the Australian honey bee industry. If you notice suspicious nests, mark the location of the nest and if possible, take a photo. Do not attempt remove the nest. If you notice hornets or wasps attacking a colony of honey bees, report it immediately.

Report any possible sightings of the Asian hornet, or other suspect exotic hornet or wasp species to your local department of agriculture, or call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881

Click [HERE](#) for a full fact sheet on the Asian Hornet put out by the UK website Bee Base

Click [HERE](#) to see a short YouTube film about the arrival of the Asian Hornet in the UK

What's the buzz? Bee keeping hives being added to Parliament House gardens in Canberra

Click above to hear the interview

There's lots of buzz around Parliament House this week as both houses are sitting, but also because three different bee hives are being added to the gardens.

Bees and honey production have had a long history at Old Parliament House, and now bees are moving in to bushland on the new site.

The President of the ACT Beekeepers Cormac Farrell spoke to ABC Radio Canberra breakfast host Dan Bouchier about the hives which will be installed.

Duration: 7min 8sec

Broadcast: Mon 20 Mar 2017, 8:30am

Below: Cormac Farrell at his home in Evatt with one of the beehives



Pictured below:

Left: A New Holland Honey-Eater and a bee sharing the nectar on Leonotis leonurus (Lion's Ear) flower Right top & bottom pics : A bee busily looking for nectar - Right middle: a Fiddler Beetle (named for the violin shaped markings on it's back) and a bee working the flowers of Eucalyptus Wimmerensis



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