

AUSTRALIAN

VOL. 105 - NO 12 DECEMBER 2024

ISSN 0046-0294

BEE JOURNAL



VAA Queen Rearing Workshop ... page 15



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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

Published since 1918 by the VAA - founded in 1892 -

DECEMBER 2024 - Volume 105 - No 12

Registration No. A8347

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Cover photo: Jamie Trimby. Callistemon pollen

**Deadline for copy for the January 2025 journal is
10pm on Wednesday 1st of January 2025.**

The Australian Bee Journal seeks to publish contributions dealing with all aspects of beekeeping.
Statements expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the VAA Inc or the editor.
Editor: Annette Engstrom

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The Association advocates to federal, state, and local governments to protect and improve Victoria's honey resources and to ensure beekeepers' interests are safeguarded and promoted. We work to secure effective legislation and encourage scientific investigation and research in all aspects of beekeeping.

Our achievements include:

- Introducing the Victorian Apiary Code of Practice allowing bees to be kept in urban areas
- Contributing to the new Apiculture on Public Lands Policy through our involvement with the Buzz Committee
- Working with Plant Health Australia which contributed to the development of the Australian Biosecurity Code of Practice.

The VAA advocates for the beekeeping industry on behalf of all beekeepers in Victoria.

Management

The VAA Board meets a minimum of six times a year. Members of the 2024 - 2025 Board

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All beekeepers and interested groups are welcome to join the VAA.

Membership benefits include:

- The VAA's monthly magazine *Australian Bee Journal* (ABJ) including one free classified ad per year
- Access to the members' only section of the VAA website www.vicbeekeepers.com.au
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- Opportunity to participate in and contribute to VAA sub-committees
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President's Report

The venue for the 2025 Annual Conference and AGM has been selected and booked.

It will be in the north-east of the state on 11,12 and 13 June at *The Grand Oaks Resort* in Beechworth, starting with the Hospitality night on the first day.

The conference committee is busy selecting speakers, menus and preparing a budget among many other jobs that need to be completed. The name of the venue is very fitting as it is set in a beautiful garden with large mature oak trees. Beechworth has many attractions and is a perfect place for a winter break for anyone that plans to have an extended stay. Details regarding speakers and accommodation will be provided soon.

On Thursday we received the sad news that Peter Kaczynski had passed away on 28/11/24.

Peter worked for the Department as an Apiary Inspector and for the several years before his retirement he was the Victorian Senior Apiary Inspector. He went well beyond being an inspector; he regularly visited local beekeeping clubs explaining bee diseases and showed snapshots of his travels.

When you attended a meeting where Peter was the speaker you could expect lots of information and laughs. He attended many VAA Annual Conferences as an Apiary Inspector and continued to do so after his retirement.

Members that have volunteered for the VAA stand at the Melbourne Royal Show will recall the letters and phone calls from Peter as the Show Roster Coordinator.

After his retirement the Association awarded Peter a Life Membership for his contribution to beekeeping and the Association.

Peter will be missed by all who know him.

Our deepest sympathy to Pam and the family.

On 14 November a *Stakeholder Workshop* was held by *The Great Outdoors Taskforce*.

The DEECA Taskforce was set up for stakeholders to discuss the future management of the 1.8 million hectares that was previously used for timber harvesting.

Upon completion of the consultation process recommendations will be made to the State Government.

Discussions were focused on future new opportunities, possible extensions of current uses and what has worked well and what needs improvement.

The overwhelming majority of participants agreed that the loss of local DEECA staff has meant the loss of local knowledge, and the centralized Melbourne management is not delivering a satisfactory outcome. It was stated again that National Parks will not be extended.

Beekeepers were well represented with two NEAA and two VAA delegates.

It is great to see that we now have an online Varroa Management Training course. Members that are unable to participate in one of the Varroa Management Work Shops will be able to learn the basics through the online course.

The beauty is we can watch it again in case we miss something.

The [National Varroa mite Management Program](#) website is well worth having a look.

Another year is coming to an end.

Thank you to all members, volunteers, staff, advertisers and sponsors for supporting the Association over the last 12 months.

May the festive season bring everything you wish for and more.

Merry Christmas.

John van Weeghel
President

Honey & Mead Competitions At Lilydale Show

By John Kennedy

There are relatively few annual Shows in regional Victoria that offer competitive classes for honey, mead and wax products (although of course the VAA offers similar opportunities at the annual Conference).

The Lilydale Show in the Yarra Valley has for some years offered a range of open competitions for various types of honey products (and as an entrant of several years ago I can vouch for just how well supported and contested the various classes are – they are hard to win!).

This year the Lilydale Show Committee offered six classes: liquid honey, crystallised honey, creamed honey, capped honey, mead and wax.

It is reported that the competitions were a sweet success with a first, second and third place award offered in most categories, according to a report from the local Yarra Valley Bee Group, whose members are always

strong supporters.

There was a total of 36 entries across the six classes.

There are other relevant annual Shows where local bee groups could encourage the creation of, and then support with entries, the relevant competition classes.

Over the years the wine industry in Victoria and elsewhere has been successful and supports a multitude of wine shows.

Hence, it's no surprise when you purchase an obscure bottle of wine to find its label graced by often a multitude of show awards or trophies.

Honey and bee products after all are really consumer products, so we need to aim to present them visibly and attractively.

A Show award showing that your own product has achieved some type of critical acclaim or recognition, could just be that something that adds a dollar or so per jar to your sale return!

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Honey Bees Secretly Stockpile Structures Symmetrically

Symmetry is everywhere, and for many different reasons. Humans find symmetrical faces more attractive, and symmetrical buildings, like the Taj Mahal, aesthetically pleasing. Most animals also have symmetrical body plans, which helps them with balance and movement. For similar reasons, the cars, planes, and trains that humans build are symmetrical.

However, just because a body is symmetrical, does not mean that it's symmetrical throughout. The human heart, for example, is on one side of the body. Similarly, while a house might be symmetrical from the outside, the organization of rooms and furniture inside are not necessarily symmetrical. Therefore, while symmetry is extremely common, it often is only on the outside, not inside.

An international group of researchers, led by the Smith Bee Lab at Auburn University, have now shown that honey bees symmetrically organize the internal contents of their nest. This creates a mirror image, where the contents on one side of the honeycomb match the opposite side. What's more, this symmetry benefits the colony, and is found across all species of honey bees they investigated.

The famous honeycomb that bees build, with all the individual hexagonal cells, is double-sided. This had been known for as long as humans have interacted with honey bees, and the double-sided arrangement was thought to exist solely to reduce wax use (a precious resource for the bees).

What the researchers showed was that if you compare the two sides of the comb, what the bees put into

each cell is a mirror image on either side of the comb. In other words, if honey is located on one side of the comb, there will also be honey on the other side, and the same for pollen, brood, and empty cells. This pattern exists throughout a colony's life; whatever is on one side of the comb is a mirror image of the opposite side.

"We kept colonies in huge observation hives, so that the bees could build a full-sized nest between the two panes of glass, and we could inspect the nests many times without disturbing them. The only problem is that when you want to map the nest, all the bees are also in there, so you have to wait until they move out of the way to peek inside each cell. Fortunately, with a good headlamp and a dedicated research team, we were able to collect 148 nest maps from six colonies" said Michael L. Smith, PI of the Smith Bee Lab, and first-author of the study published in *Current Biology*.

The researchers then wanted to know if workers needed to be in direct contact with both sides of the comb to create this symmetrical pattern. To do this, they invented a special type of observation hive, where the base of the comb is impermeable, so independent colonies can build and stockpile nests on either side however they wish. To their surprise, the independent colonies mimicked each other's nest organization, despite not being in contact with one another (each colony had its own nest entrance, and the workers do not mix between colonies).

Read the article in full [here](#)



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BBVAA Summer Activity

Bendigo Branch VAA had a fantastic end of year event on Sunday 24th November, held at Margie and Wayne's awesome farm. It's always great to have a social event, but this had some purpose thrown in to keep everyone honed on great beekeeping practices.



Members settling in on a day of learning

Ross and myself brought along our home extracting gear, showing a few different techniques and equipment options. A visitor to our activity, Chris, got some hands-on experience preparing the frames for extraction.

Chris Dawson, a recently scaled down commercial beekeeper, showed us his simple little engineering idea, to run a small hand extractor with a drill.



*Above: Ross explaining the process
Below: Angelique cutting the comb*



Chris scratching the comb

Jake demonstrated his awesome chimney style wax melter and his really well-developed solar wax processor. Jake's solar melter is so simple and thorough in the way that it operates, leaving not only clean wax, but clean and orderly equipment at the end.



Jake's wax melter and solar processor unit

We waited for the rain to finish and headed over to Margie's hives for a couple of inspections. We had the job of moving a double brood nest into a

(Continued on page 12)



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BBVAA Summer Activity, cont'd

(Continued from page 10)

single box. Stafford and Margie inspected each frame from the top box, searching for the queen, shook all the bees down and removed that frame. Repeating this procedure until all 8 frames had been shaken into the bottom box. Confident the queen was down the bottom a Queen excluder was placed on and the frames put into a box above this.



*Above: Margie and Stafford inspecting the frame
Below: Stafford talking about the frame*



Leading field day chef, Errol, donned the apron and fed us towards the end and cooked a top feed. The sweets kicked off with a birthday cake for one appreciative lady (me).



Angelique's birthday cake

We hobby beekeepers had lots of questions. A practical demonstration is the best place to learn I find and so informative. Having the wisdom of the seasoned beekeepers in our club is such a valuable resource. I recommend joining a beekeeping club to have the opportunity to bounce questions off each other and learn from those that want us to become better beekeepers.

It was a lovely way to finish off our beekeeping year with our club and the friends we've made. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

By Angelique Perry

Photos: Peta Dawe

VCAA Bendigo Branch:

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bbvaasecretary@gmail.com

Chair: Jamie Trimby

bbvaachair@gmail.com

Treasurer: Carol Maunder

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General Information Q&A Meetings

1st Wed. each month (except Jan & Dec)

Dinner at 6.00pm (optional)

Meeting at 7.00 pm.

Lakeside Hotel, Bendigo.

Executive Committee Meeting:

3rd Wed month as required.

Venue: As notified.

Please register to attend all Meetings

AHBIC Chair Report November 2024

I welcome MJ Mortes to the AHBIC team. MJ is the Project support officer as part of Transition to Management. MJ has hit the ground running and is already adding value. Welcome MJ.

AHBIC, along with many other industry representatives, attended a successful Honey Marketing workshop at Sydney University. The funding for this came from the NSW Bushfire Industry Recovery Package grant monies. There had been an underspend due to COVID and permission was received to run a marketing workshop. The workshop was led by two marketing experts from Sydney University and University of Technology Sydney.

Hopefully the result will be a National Australian Honey Marketing strategy/plan for industry to consider. As money becomes available, we can implement parts of the plan giving a clear and consistent message about the benefits of Australian honey.

AHBIC chaired the National Biosecurity and Surveillance Steering Committee (NBSSC) meeting. Long term funding for our BBO's and surveillance hives is an ongoing issue.

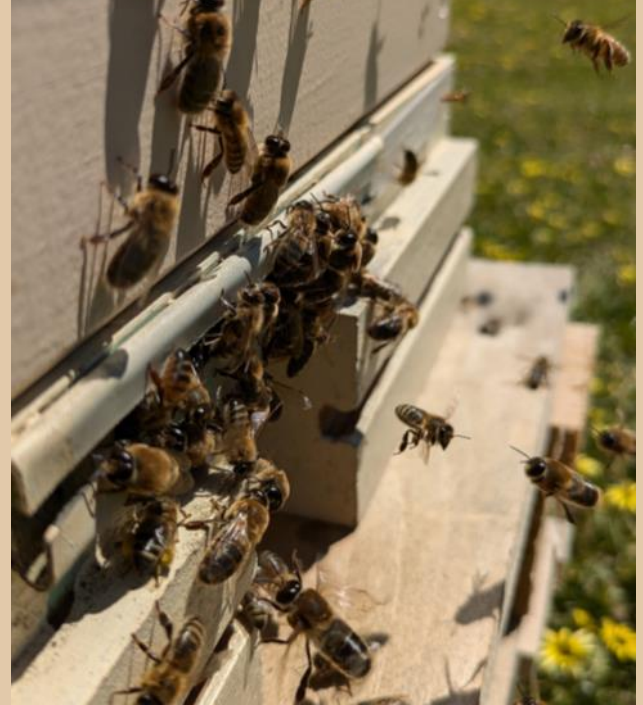
The Education, Imported Honey, Levies, AHBIC events sub committees all have met and are moving forward. AHBIC **thanks** all the volunteers on our sub committees who add valuable input to AHBIC and the industry.

The next steps in planning for the 5th Australian Bee Congress are to decide on a theme and then approach-

ing appropriate guest speakers to make the event a success in Adelaide 2026.

Stephen Targett
AHBIC Chair

Photo: Jamie Trimby. Drone O'Clock



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A Case For Warre Commercial Beekeeping

By John Kennedy

The Warre method and practice seems to be pursued relatively rarely in Australia. Over the years I have only once noted a prominent bee goods retailer offering a Warre hive kit for sale.

NSW beekeeper Tim Malfroy, whose Malfroys Gold honey business is also certainly Australia's largest exponent of Warre beekeeping, has recently updated an article he published in 2016 (originally in the *Natural Bee Husbandry Magazine*) of why he selected this approach.

He comments that when he initiated his involvement in bees "the impact of pesticides and industrial farming on the bees and beekeeper's way of life, young and old were leaving the industry in droves. It was a difficult time to imagine a future in beekeeping.

"I was confident as to why bees were struggling when they had thrived naturally for millions of years without the aid of humans.

"While it was obvious that in many regions of the world humans had created a toxic and barren environment for bees.

"I thought perhaps it was how we were keeping bees that caused, or at least exacerbated some of the other problems that existed."

Malfroy goes on about how he researched different methods of keeping bees with a goal of beekeeping that was simple, cost effective, bee-friendly and suitable for

small-scale beekeeping.

He says he started with foundationless beekeeping in Langstroth hives, and continued researching, focusing on traditional styles of hives and apiculture that predated the industrial era Langstroth system that dominates Australian apiculture.

Tim nominates books by the late Eva Crane, and those of Tom Seeley and Jurgen Tautz as key additions to his library.

"I found these eloquent descriptions of swarm intelligence and the superior-organism concept 'harmonized' beautifully with the practical aspects of natural beekeeping".

So, he commenced a commercial beekeeping operation whose philosophy was centered on the understanding of the colony as a superorganism, "respected the natural functioning of the colony, used bee friendly hives, sourced strong local bees and adopted apicentric management".

His account, extensively illustrated, can be printed - approximately 21 pages. It is accessible from his website <https://malfroysgold.com.au/blogs> and is well worth reviewing.

Tim has his hives (number not available) largely in the Blue Mountains and the Central Tablelands of NSW.

If you go to the website you will see that he offers a range of honey products including wild seasonal honey at prices from \$A42 per 500 grams!

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VAA Queen Rearing Workshop

By Jamie Trimby

On the 16-17 November VAA and EAS Master Beekeeper Andrew Wootton, supported by Mike and Angelique, ran 12 beekeepers through theory on: why rear your own Queen bees; queen bee anatomy; bee reproduction; methods of queen rearing; various queen rearing equipment; setting up a mating Nuc; Drone congregation areas; and recommended text books on queen rearing.

I really enjoyed the practical component; Andrew carefully showed the group the 24 hour grafts he had made in the Collingwood Children's Farm Apiary.

The group then practiced grafting using the Chinese grafting tool with simulated royal jelly and simulated



Photo: Steve Czehmester

hatched larvae.

Once everyone felt comfortable with the practice simulation we headed back to the apiary for the real thing, which was a great deal more challenging with lighting and performing transfers from actual worker cells.

Each person grafted three larvae into JZ-BZ cell cups, which were installed above a Cloake board that Andrew had prepared the day before.

As the photo attests we had somewhat mixed results, however it was our first attempt. We now have the basic skills to practice, ideally

before the Summer solstice on 21st December 2024.

A huge thank you to the Melbourne team for preparing, running, imparting skills, with the added bonus of meeting other beekeepers from as far away as Mildura.

**The Australian Bee Journal welcomes letters and contributions from readers and members.
Please send any letters, articles or photos to abjeditors@yahoo.com**

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Hive Record Keeping With Apitracer

By John Kennedy

Most beekeepers are not traditionally meticulous record keepers of their hives and hive treatments or management actions.

With an emerging Varroa treatment regime likely looming, record keeping will be even more demanding.

This makes the emergence of a program known as Apitracer of interest. It was developed by a French company Ruchers du Bassigny, which according to their website is a multi-generation family owned beekeeping business, which now operates around 2000 hives.

It seems the company sought to improve its information gathering on hive treatments, the geographical location of apiaries including by GPS coordinates, the different queen line or strains in use, deadouts and hive losses, and finally productive information based on individual performance by kilogram of honey produced per super.

The Apitracer system is based on a special durable, relatively small plastic barcode, which is attached to



every box of the hive.

Each barcode is readable and scanned in the field by a mobile phone, with the information then collected and recorded, also electronically on a computer back in the office or honey house.

Each super can also have its barcode remotely assessed by a scanner immediately before it enters the extractor so a record of production by kilogram of honey is provided, so production records are created for further assessment by the beekeeper.

There is also provision to record the empty weight of the super beforehand.

There is extensive information provided in French with English subtitles including a series of video presentations on Facebook on the Apitracer system or at the company website www.ruchersdubassigny.fr

It's well worth reviewing these information links to see how an effective hive and honey business management system has been developed for application by commercial beekeepers with relatively large hive numbers and multiple sites.



Photo: Jamie Trimby. Prickly-leaved paperbark, the bee appears to be foraging nectar

Brood Breaks With Apimode

By John Kennedy

Brood breaks are seen as a potentially valuable management tool under an emerging Varroa mite management situation.

Already available locally are stainless steel and therefore quite costly queen restraining cells, which are about the same size as a hive frame.

They effectively control the queen for a brood break period within the hive while enabling bees to continue to feed her during the period she is held in containment, thus effectively preventing her from laying and thus creating a brood break.

Now an Italian company Api-Mo. Bru has come up with a plastic queen containment alternative called the Apimode.

It is effectively a formed plastic queen container not unlike a standard queen introduction cage but somewhat larger in scale.

My guestimate is that the Apimode is about the size of a cigarette packet and comes with two arms that enable it to be suspended from a



Showing the plastic Apimode queen restraining device and the associated catching device enabling the queen to be placed within and sealed off securely to provide a brood break.

Apimode devices are manufactured in Italy by Api-Mo. Bru.

ble it to be suspended from a standard hive frame.

The product developer advises that although it doesn't appear to have a retail distributor for Apimode in Australia "we have been selling our products to Australian beekeepers since a couple of years ago when the varroa mite arrived there".

According to the company representative Flavio Mazzati, it is supplied with a queen catching device that enables the queen to be relocated directly into the Apimode by a small, hinged plastic port on the front of the device which when clicked closed secures the queen.

The bees in the hive can continue to support or feed the restrained queen via a secure opening on the front of the Apimode.

Further product information on the Apimode queen restraint is available on the website

www.apimobru.com or by emailing info@apimobru.com

The deadline for the January 2025 ABJ is 10pm on Wednesday 1st of January

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Bendigo Branch Report

The sun has officially set on Spring for the southern hemisphere, Spring felt like it lasted less than four weeks with equal parts Winter and Summer. Mid October in Central Victoria saw most areas dry as a crisp, now with over a week of rain, sun showers, humidity, overcast and intermittent showers a green tinge is returning. Whilst heavy rain in late October happens often enough the pockets of toadstools popping up do seem usual leading into December. Here's hoping the recent rain will boost nectar and pollen sources through to January. In Bendigo Bottlebrush predominantly finished with the rain, Prickly-leaved Paperbark (*Melaleuca styphelioides*) is flowering solidly at the end of October, whilst milkflower cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster lacteus* - Google Lens) is well budded. Pollen availability has reduced significantly, reduced nectar has the bees collecting more water. Next source of optimism is Red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) located along creeks and flood prone areas. Provided Red gum has budded well many commercial beekeepers will be moving hives from Gippsland to sections of the Murray river where Red gum provides quality nectar and pollen.



Milkflower cotoneaster

On Saturday 23rd November Recreational Beekeepers turned out in great numbers for the National Varroa Development Officers workshop, thank you Peta and Stafford who coordinated preparations.

On Sunday Bendigo Branch held their Christmas party at Margie and Wayne's property, a lovely day with lovely people, delicious food and plenty of bee related banter. Thank you too Margie, Stafford, Angelique, Ross, Chris, Jake and Peta for running the various activities. Bendigo Branch next meeting will be held at the Lakeside Hotel 286 Napier St, Bendigo on the 5th February 2025 from 6pm. Credit to members of Melbourne Section who were extremely welcoming at the November meeting, a great opportunity to experience their format and meet new and familiar members. I enjoyed Beginners corner interaction and many excellent discussions. VAA and non-VAA beekeepers are welcome to attend Bendigo Branch meeting, we look forward to seeing you in 2025.

Be safe and best wishes over the Red Gum Festive Season,

Jamie Trimby



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Sleep Is No Light Matter For Bees

In an emerging red flag for the digital era, sleep experts have warned us to avoid screen time in bed, sounding the alarm that light emitted from phones and other electronic devices can disrupt our sleep patterns. That's one way that science is waking up to the broad range of health and disease implications related to circadian biology and our daily sleep-wake cycles.

Now, researchers at the University of California San Diego have found that light disruption is not only a health concern for humans. A new study led by PhD candidate Ashley Kim and Professor James Nieh in the School of Biological Sciences has found that artificial light disrupts the circadian rhythms of honey bees and poses a threat to their essential role as pollinators.

"Our research shows just how sensitive honey bees are to changes in their environment, particularly to something as seemingly benign as artificial light," said Kim of the study, published in *Scientific Reports*. "By disrupting their circadian rhythms, we see clear evidence of reduced sleep periods. This raises significant concerns, not only for bee health but also for the health of ecosystems that depend on them for pollination."

Honey bees play a crucial role as pollinators of wild plants and important crops, providing services that support ecosystem stability and global food security. Without pollination, crops worth tens of millions of dollars would be at risk.

Honey bees generally prefer to nest in dark environments, although a small amount of light can enter from the hive entrance. Sleeping bees typically remain immobile but exhibit subtle movements if disturbed by nest-mates. However, bees sleep outside when they swarm or when they form "bee beards" outside the nest on hot evenings, which are increasing under climate change. While the prevalence of artificial light at night (ALAN), or light pollution, on sleeping honey bees varies from region to region, modern urban environments are increasingly exposed to artificial light conditions, especially as temperatures rise. Because there has been a resurgence of urban beekeeping in many areas to support bees and their critical pollination services, bees that experience hotter weather are now potentially more exposed to ALAN.

Like us, when bees experience a poor night's sleep and disrupted circadian patterns, problems in behavior and function emerge. Sleep is crucial for the health and fitness of honey bee colonies since they depend on an intricate system of communication known as the "waggle dance" that informs hive mates about the location of food sources in the environment. Bees dance more poorly and therefore do not communicate as well if they do not get enough sleep.

Through a series of experiments spanning several years, the UC San Diego researchers compared groups of bees that underwent normal sleep in the dark with others that were subjected to continuous artificial light. The results clearly showed that prolonged exposure to light significantly disrupted the circadian rhythms of honey bees, leading to impaired behaviors. Since the bees were video recorded 24 hours a day during the experiments, Kim could immediately see the effects of disrupted sleep.

"Even without analyzing the data you can tell that there was something going on... the bees that were under constant light slept less," said Kim. "The effects of light pollution on biological systems is fairly unknown and something people normally don't think about, which is why it's a rapidly evolving field."

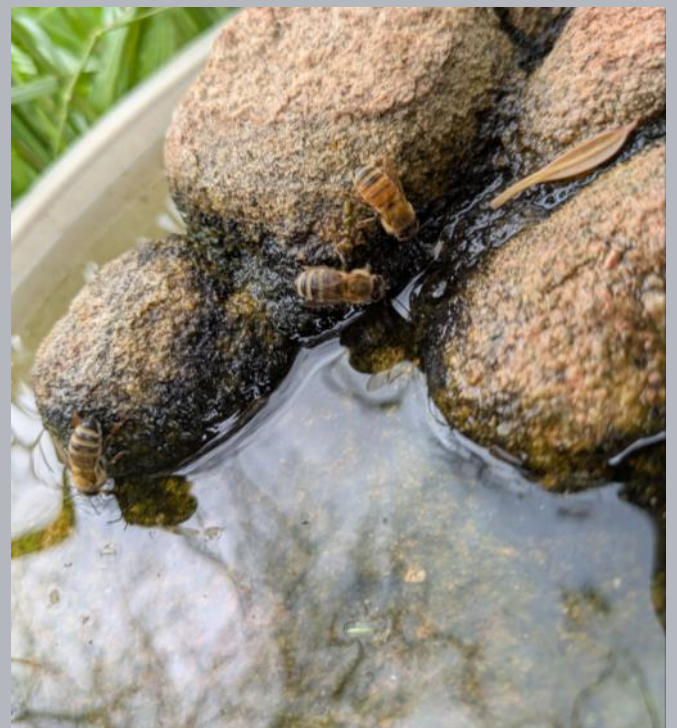
Among the details described in the paper: Bees exposed to continuous light slept less and were more frequently disturbed by their peers compared to those kept in normal darkness. Also, bees under continuous light exhibited a preference for darker areas within their experimental cages.

"Understanding the factors that affect bee health, such as light pollution, is essential for developing strategies to protect pollinator populations," said Nieh. "Light pollution is a growing issue, with artificial light now covering a quarter of the Earth's surface, and this research sheds new light on how such disturbances may be harming pollinators."

Read the full article [here](#)



Photos: Jamie Trimby
Above: Scarce pollen. Below: Thirsty work



Melbourne Section Report

It's the end of another year in the middle of the season. Queen Rearing was lots of fun. Technology and beekeepers! The Melbourne Section's day trip. Christmas and beyond.

Welcome to another month with the VAA Melbourne Section. We started as a meeting for amateur beekeepers based around Melbourne and we were the first organised beekeeping group after the VAA itself.

Well, Melbourne, the city, has grown a lot since 1965 and it may take longer to get across Melbourne than to the 'back of Bourke', but the meetings are still on and the opportunities for beekeeper networking are still there.

November had Queen rearing

The queen rearing course delivered by Andrew Wootton was held in mid November at the Collingwood Children's Farm Apiary. Eleven attendees from Melbourne and country areas had interesting discussions and lots of stories. Knowledge about queens, mating and queen cell creation was followed by grafting practice with plastic comb and sesame seeds in goo. In the afternoon, we grafted larvae into queen cups and put our cells in a queen raising hive. Next day, we came back and visited the hive to see if the bees were providing royal jelly and extending the cell walls. A week later with about 20% success rate for our grafted queens, we were all pretty happy.

November Meeting - What role technology

After last year's conference at Wonthaggi, I had to deliver a raffle prize to Don Tennakoon and after handing over his prize we talked about his interest in technology as a tool for beekeeping and for business. An hour or so later, I left thinking that Don would be a good speaker for a bee group meeting. And so on the last Thursday in November, Don came to the Melbourne Section meeting to share some ideas.

We can choose our technology tools poorly or well (to quote an ageing knight). Each beekeeper has to look at their business and processes to decide how much to invest: money for tech products, time and effort in designing how the tech will be used, the time and anguish of learning / adapting to a new way of operating, and the monitoring of value actually being created.

Don had some excellent examples of technology from spreadsheets and standard business applications that might live in the cloud, to heat sensitive cameras and reconnoitering drones. The success is when we create value (like kicking goals), however, the focus must be on what do I want to collect, why do I want to collect it and how will I present and analyse the data (can I run and handball and kick).

Day trip to Edmonds apiaries

The beekeepers from the VAA Melbourne Section and the Moonee Valley Beekeepers Club travelled to Geelong to visit John Edmonds and tour some of John's apiaries and facilities. Mike Love tells me that the group saw lots and had a good day. All experiences of other apiaries and beekeeping operations will enhance our knowledge and make us better apiarists.

Coming up next year

The first meeting in 2025 is January 30th, the fifth Thursday of January. Speakers during the year will include flora experts and allergy experts. Our varroa skills activities will continue. Beeginners' Corner will continue to challenge our beginners. The library committee is conducting an audit in January and the catalogue will be updated and published online.

Happy Christmas

The Melbourne Section Christmas party will have been smoked, eaten and quizzed by the time you read this, so I hope you saw the advertising. It's the fourth year of the pizza night, smoker lighting competition and trivia quiz. And it's a chance to catch up with your amateur mates and professional colleagues as we wind down for the year (that's the Melbourne Section, not the beekeepers who can wind down!)

The Melbourne Section wish every beekeeper a safe and rejuvenating Christmas and New Year.

Enjoy your bees in 2025.

Rob Kerr

VAA Melbourne Section Secretary on behalf of

James Doery, Chairperson;

Mike Love, Deputy Chairperson;

Janet Conos, Treasurer; and Committee members

Angelique Drew, Isles Arthur, Garry Dumergue, David Baskett, Andrew Wootton, and John van Weeghel.



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USA Convention & Expo

By John Kennedy

AHPA 2024 ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 2024 annual convention of the American Honey Producers Association was held in San Antonio, Texas at the beginning of the month (December 3-6).

The event featured a major trade show as indicated by the substantial bee business sponsorships, followed by three days of technical sessions.

An opening event on the afternoon of the first day was the Beekeepers Gold Day, held on a local course and for the fourth year.

The feature was the prize for a Hole in One - in the previous year it was the successful golfer's choice of a Hummerbee or a Bobcat hive loader.

On offer this year was a Cowen 60 Frame Extraction Line, which the pre-publicity material says is designed for two person operation at the rate of 60 boxes per hour, or 288 boxes in an eight hour shift.

There appear to be no resounding success stories saying that the key prize or prize choices were taken out!

Amongst the substantial line up of presenters three were given Star billing.

They were Dr Jay Evans from the USDA-ARS Bee Lab Beltsville, Maryland whose topic was The USDA ARS Bee Research Portfolio.

Bob Binnie, who runs the Blue Ridge Honey Company in Georgia, and is a formidable video and Facebook presenter on his own commercial operation and industry topics, with the topic Old Comb and Toxic Chemical Interaction in our Colonies.

Third on the Star list was Dr Frank Rinkevich from the USDA-ARS at Baton Rouge, on Varroa Resistant Stocks and its Place in the Future of Beekeeping.

At the time of writing these papers are not yet accessible but were scheduled to be publicly available post the AHPA event.

NAHBE - JANUARY NEXT

The North American Honey Bee Expo (NAHBE) to be held in the Louisville Convention Centre in Kentucky, USA from 3 to 5th January 2025 have put out new promotional material confirming that the Expo will be bigger than ever.

There is currently a long waiting list for late trade exhibitors seeking to obtain a site, with the organisers saying they have already committed 137,000 square feet of exhibition space.

A three day ticket now costs \$US230 but that doesn't seem to deter local USA beekeepers attending.

The existing line up of confirmed exhibitors is already up on the Expo website at www.nahbeexpo.com and it is an interesting giant list of beekeeping businesses and products to explore.

Also scheduled are literally dozens of honey and wax competitions divided into classes.

In addition, there are three days of technical presentations from bee notables from across the world.

This will be the third annual presentation of the show, which has grown in leaps and bounds since its origination.

There is also the Next Gen Bee Program designed to develop young beekeepers under the age of 20 years.

Intending entrants for selection had to present a five minute video on their progress to date.

The organisers claim it is already the biggest bee event on the US continent.

While it is a costly exercise for local traders or beekeepers to get there, the promoters afterwards always issue a wealth of information on new products, innovations, trade exhibitor interviews and new product details along with the technical presenters, making the Show website a great site to follow in the new year.



Photo: Rob Kerr. I have shown many people the display hive at the Collingwood Children's Farm and I always get asked if the queen is there. Well today she was. "The queen is on the window frame of the display hive."

Whither Beekeeping In Climate Change

By John Kennedy

Whilst incoming USA President Donald J Trump, has eschewed climate change as nonsense, he is intending to 'drill baby drill'. If successful, and it should be, this will make that country's prodigious annual oil production even greater.

UK bee researcher and avid beekeeper David Evans, with his hives on several sites in Scotland, and who writes regularly as 'The Apiarist', has given this subject some coverage in a recent writing.

He notes at the outset that the world is warming "which refers to the increase in average temperatures.

"Since the industrial revolution the earth's average surface air temperature has increased about 1.5°C over the last 50 years. This average naturally varies, but the marked increase post global industrialisation is due to the influence of human activity".

Evans posits that major climatic events are likely to occur just a bit more frequently, amongst the natural variations we usually see. He adds that at least in the UK "some seasons will be absolutely 'normal' – a little wetter, or drier, or warmer or colder perhaps, but nothing out of the ordinary.

"These are typical year on year variations you've already experienced".

He suggests that one year in four may be good, about the same number poor, with about half the number considered average.

Under the heading of Climate Change and Beekeep-

ing, he notes that weather extremes are largely unavoidable and will increase.

"Colony management will get more difficult and may require additional feeding more frequently with better protection from weather events such as droughts, pollen supplementation when particular sources fail. With more intervention and monitoring for disease management".

Hives will have more exposure to new pathogens through changes in their distribution (or inadvertent or deliberate human activity e.g. the *tropileaps* mite has recently been introduced to Europe, and I expect it to spread more widely), and their innate resistance mechanisms will be compromised due to a poor diet.

Varroa, he notes, already has a near global distribution and successful management is reliant on miticides.

The available forage is likely to be disrupted by climate change directly impacting flowering and timely pollen/nectar production. Evans considers that bees will gradually adapt to environmental changes, but this adaptation will take millennia, so it is unlikely to make beekeeping any easier any time soon.

The Apiarist's paper on Climate Change headed "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall" is dated 8 November and can be found [here](#).

It is worthwhile background reading for any beekeeper (and it comes with recommended extra reading sources on climate change) as it may or will affect the bees and beekeeping.

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Book Review

By John Kennedy

The Observant Beekeeper: – A Practical Manual By Paul Honigman

Published by Northern Bee Books
(www.northernbeebooks.co.uk).
40 Pounds Sterling plus Postage
& Australian Dollar Conversion.

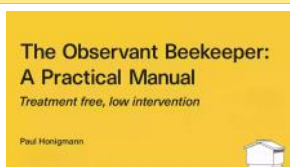
This book of 400 pages, copiously illustrated with photographs, charts and line drawings, is authored by a very well regarded UK beekeeper and educator.

Paul Honigman is also the founder of the Oxfordshire Natural Beekeeping Group, which is a support group for alternative beekeepers.

It now has a worldwide audience, and he says at the outset "I couldn't find the book I wanted so I wrote it."

It is set out as three principal chapters beginning with an Introduction to Beekeeping, or the fundamental concepts from the history of beekeeping to the anatomy of bees, and the essential equipment needed to start an apiary.

Then follows Hive Management where he provides step by step instructions on how to inspect hives, manage colonies and identify and address potential issues with an emphasis on observing bee behaviour to make



informed decisions.

The third section is on Seasonal Beekeeping from preparing hives for winter to optimising summer honey production.

There is a section on Pest and Disease Management and the common threats to bee health and common strategies for prevention and treatment. He advocates an Integrated Pest Management approach to minimise chemical interventions.

The concluding section is on Advanced Techniques including queen rearing, swarm management and selective breeding.

Noted by reviewers are his emphasis on observation by developing a keen eye for detail, and making evidence-backed decisions based on observation.

Paul's writing is noted as enriched, with practical insights and anecdotes from his own beekeeping experience, and thus this book is judged as an indispensable resource for anyone interested in beekeeping.

If you go to the Oxfordshire Natural Beekeeping Group's Facebook page and website, there are further pages of the book presented, plus a lot of detail from their monthly calendar of meetings on alternative treatment methods.

Although fairly expensive in landed cost in \$A terms, this book seems to claim a rightful place as worth having in your own, or your local club or group library.

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VAA Emails To Members

6th December 2024

AgVic Talk Podcast | Strengthening Your Bee-Ness for the Future

Dialogue with Beekeeper Richard Collins

We encourage you to take a few minutes to listen to this fascinating and insightful podcast from the AgVic Talk podcast series from 5th December. Third generation beekeeper, Richard Collins, talks about how planning, risk assessment and contingency buffers are all critical skills in managing a commercial apiary. Thank you to Richard for including the VAA in his mentions of key resources beekeepers can rely on to improve operations and enhance resilience.

This AgVic Talk podcast is available on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and shortly on the [AgVic Talks webpage](#) in Season 9.

National Honey Bee Virus | Baseline Project

To help future-proof our nation's honey and pollination-dependent industries, the *National Varroa Mite Management Program* (NVMMP) is undertaking a nation-wide honey bee virus survey. This survey is designed to help better understand the viruses that are present across Australian bee populations prior to and following the establishment of Varroa and will contribute to a baseline for endemic bee viruses as well as providing confidence that exotic viruses remain absent from our shores.

To ensure a diverse collection of bees, we need to collect samples from different locations, environments and genetic stock across the country. To meet this need samples are being collected from registered beekeepers in each state and territory.

Samples collected are:

100 bees from each of 3 separate hives if you have < than 2,000 hives, or

100 bees from each of 6 separate hives if you have > than 2,000 hives.

In Victoria sample jars will be provided by Agriculture Victoria along with ethanol to preserve the samples. All Victorian samples will be coordinated via Agriculture Victoria and sent collectively to a central laboratory for testing. Samples need to be collected by March 2025.

If you would like to participate in the project, you can complete an Expression of Interest online.

3rd December 2024

Dear members,

We are saddened to learn of death of Peter John Kaczinski. (20-9-1944 - 28-11-2024)

Peter was the beloved husband of Pam and devoted father and father-in-law of David and Lisa, Brendan and Jo, Lisa and Pete. He was the cherished grandfather of Abby, Sam, April and Lochie. Peter was a Life Member of the VAA. We remember and acknowledge his many contributions to the beekeeping community and our association.

A funeral service to celebrate the life of Peter will be held at Alexandra Oval Community Centre, Waratah Avenue, Ararat on Friday, 6th of December at 1:00pm. A private committal will precede the service.

30th November 2024

Mite threshold treatment levels for summer

Recommended mite treatment threshold levels are set to change coinciding with the start of summer when honeybee brood activity reaches its annual peak.

As of Sunday 1 December 2024, right through until the end of February, best practice recommendations suggest beekeepers treat their hives only if more than 9 mites are found after undertaking a monitoring action sample of 300 bees (per hive).

View the [Monitoring for Varroa](#) page to watch a series of short instructional videos on how to perform either an *alcohol wash*, *soapy water wash* or *sugar shake* monitoring action.

Recommended mite treatment threshold levels will revert to the autumn, winter and spring schedule from 1 March 2025.

For more information about treatment thresholds, view the *Varroa Mite Treatment Threshold Table* on the [Integrated Pest Management](#) webpage.

Beekeepers can report their monitoring action results – both positive and negative findings - at [Monitoring Action Results](#).

Beekeepers are reminded they are required to report every positive mite detection, from every apiary, every time they perform a monitoring action.

'Varroa Basics' online course

A new online course has been added to the [National Varroa Mite Management Program](#) website.

Called '*Varroa Basics*', this short course provides beekeepers with a fundamental introduction to Varroa mite.

The online course focuses on recognising and finding Varroa mite in hives. Other topics look at the life cycle of the mite, monitoring actions, integrated pest management techniques, mite spread and symptoms to look for in your hives.

A total of 15 topics are covered in the span of 30 minutes including a quick quiz on conclusion.

The online course is free for anyone to use but has been specifically designed for novice beekeepers and those yet to have taken part in a face-to-face workshop.

Varroa Basics is the latest tool added to the [National Varroa Mite Management Program](#) website with more online courses planned for launch in 2025.

Check out Varroa Basics for yourself at [Online training](#).

21st November 2024

EPPR Levy | 30-Day Objection Period |

18th November - 18th December

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) wishes to inform industry levy payers of the objection period for the proposed increase in the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) levy. The objection period runs from the 18th of November to the 18th of December. This increase, from 2.7 cents to 3.7 cents per kilogram of honey, is necessary to cover the honey bee industry's share of the costs incurred during the NSW Varroa Biosecurity Response, totalling up to

(Continued on page 25)

VAA Emails To Members, cont'd

(Continued from page 24)

\$1.1 million. This will temporarily increase the total levy payable from 4.6 cents per kilogram to 5.6 cents per kilogram if you sell more than 1500kg of honey annually.

You can download the [full announcement here](#).

Bunnings Trade Collaboration with AHBIC

Bunnings Trade are proud to partner with AHBIC and AHBIC Member Associations to deliver exclusive pricing for their members on a wide range of products in all stores across Australia.

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- You must have an ABN to be eligible for this offer.

Further Information how to apply, [visit the AHBIC website](#).

What can bees tell us about nearby pollution? The answer lies in their honey, a new study finds Analysis of honeys from 48 states shows regional trends in toxic metal distribution

Inside every jar of honey is a taste of the local environment, its sticky sweet flavor enhanced by whichever nearby flowers bees have decided to sample. But a new study from Tulane University has found that honey can also offer a glimpse of nearby pollution.

The study, published in *Environmental Pollution*, tested 260 honey samples from 48 states for traces of six toxic metals: arsenic, lead, cadmium, nickel, chromium and cobalt. None of the honeys showed unsafe levels of toxic metals – based on a serving size of one tablespoon per day – and concentrations in the United States were lower than global averages. However, researchers found regional differences in toxic metal distribution: the highest arsenic levels were found in honeys from a cluster of states in the Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Nevada); the Southeast tested highest for cobalt levels, including Louisiana and Mississippi; and two of the three highest lead levels were found in the Carolinas.

Overall, the study highlights a potential dual role for honey as both a food source and a tool for monitoring environmental pollution.

“Bees act as passive samplers, picking up contaminants from the air, water and plants while foraging. These contaminants end up in honey, offering us a snapshot of an area’s environmental pollution,” said lead author Tewodros Godebo, assistant professor of environmental health sciences at the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Tulane University.

The study is the first to test honey from across the country for the presence of toxic metals and used only single-source honeys that listed their origin.

Researchers could only speculate as to the causes of the pollution trends. The high arsenic levels found in Washington (170 µg/kg), Oregon (130 µg/kg) and Idaho (47.8 µg/kg) could point to pollution from historical agricultural pesticide use or industrial sources. The higher presence of lead in honeys from North Carolina and South Carolina – 451 µg/kg and 76.8 µg/kg respectively – could be from mining, soil contaminated from legacy traces of leaded gasoline and paint, or combustion of lead-based aircraft fuel.

Definitively connecting the pollution found in honeys to their sources would require further study. Godebo said he hopes these findings spur further research into the sources of toxic metal pollutants, adding, “The environment can have more of these metals than what shows up in bees’ honey.”

“What we found is that this appears to serve as a good proxy for uncovering regional contamination patterns,” Godebo said. “But there’s a lot we may still learn from bees about what pollutants are present in the environment and how those relate to nearby community health outcomes.”

Read the article [here](#)



Photo: David Ammerlaan
Bee pollinating apples in the Yarra Valley



Better Beekeeping: Basics to Biosecurity



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- Varroa Updates
- Hive Inspection Innovations

Honey Quality

- Honey Chemistry
- Marketing Your Honey
- Winning Honey Competitions.
- Food Safety & Labelling

NZ Has More Than Manuka

By John Kennedy

I think we all now know that NZ's beekeepers are doing it tough with a lot of downsizing in hive numbers and scale.

Supposedly the national hive score is down from a million to 400,000 hives, with varroa still a problem.

And judging by the discounts being offered on purchases of Manuka, that sector also seems to be in trouble from previous hefty pricing, even overproduction, and perhaps some dubious quality standards.

But I was interested to hear recently that the Alps region of the South Island of NZ has a unique honey produced in small volume from a forest of Native Black Beech, by a family with strong Maori origins.

Their production designated NZ Premium Honey Dew is produced in small amounts by apparently conventional hive and beekeeping methods, but they point out it is not a product of flower nectar but honey dew.

And its producer Orohaki Honey claims it has unique health benefits based on its features – an arti-

cial sugar free guarantee, no substitute hive feeding, no added sugar or pollen count, it's unpasteurised, unfiltered and 100% natural, pure and raw.

Its producer has recently launched this product in a limited number of whole food or specialist outlets in Melbourne, and it's costly, at least \$35 for a 340 gram jar.

Orohaki Honey (see www.blackbeehoney.com) says it is produced from a forest of black beech trees managed and protected by traditional owners for generations.

It seems the trees attract aphids that digest the mineral sap of the black beech, which in turn is secreted and harvested by the bees.

I briefly tasted the honeydew honey at a recent function of the Melbourne Beekeepers Club.

I found it much more caramelised than normal honey with a concentrated sharper tasting point.

Apparently, the total production of honeydew in New Zealand is very limited at around 1% of the nation's honey production.

BBC News:

The World Beekeeping Awards have announced that there will not be any prizes for honey next year because of concerns about fraud in the global supply chain. It'll be the first time that the popular cupboard staple has been excluded from the event. Apimondia - the International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations - said in a statement that the change was "necessitated by the inability to have honey fully tested for adulteration".

This decision comes after previous years' events proved that "adequate testing was impossible" as well as recent investigations which showed the sticky situation that importers have found themselves in. Read the article [here](#)

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AHBIC Industry Update 64

T2M November 2024

ApiBioxal Emergency Use Permit Approved

The Australian Veterinary Pesticides and Medicines Authority (APVMA) has approved an emergency use permit for ApiBioxal, for both dribbling and fogging/vaporisation methods. This is the culmination of a significant piece of work by the NSW DPIRD continually pushed by the lobbying of AHBIC. The permit approval process has taken 10 months since the permit application was submitted with the application work initiated mid-2023.

AHBIC would like to refer beekeepers to the emergency permit on the APVMA website to read the details but wish to provide a snapshot of the detail and some clarifications for industries understanding.

- The new permit allows beekeepers, in states that have approval (currently NSW and Vic), to treat their hives with ApiBioxal.

- The permit is held by NSW DPIRD but allows for any retailer to sell the product to the public (except retailers in Tasmania) subject to local state legislation and supply.

- There is no single approved supplier list associated with this permit as was the process for other previous permits.

- We contacted the distributor in Australia and were told commencement of importation was granted only once the permit was in place. It has been confirmed that the product cannot be air freighted so must be shipped, the expected arrival of the first products will be up to 12 weeks, we estimate February 2025 at this stage.

- The permit is not a generic blanket approval for the use of any Oxalic acid chemicals, it is ApiBioxal product specific.

- There are specific personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements that beekeepers must adhere to when using the ApiBioxal products.

- ApiBioxal targets phoretic mites and has minimal effect on mites under capping's, for greatest efficacy use when quantity of brood is non-existent or at its lowest levels.

- ApiBioxal has two application methods:

- * Dribbling solution (5mL per frame full of bees, max 50mL per hive) and

- * Vaporisation via electric device to a closed hive with no ventilation (2.3g per hive, 3 minute treatment followed by 15 minute closure time)

- Regardless of the method of application, ApiBioxal can only be used as a treatment twice per year.

- Beekeepers are reminded although there is no withholding period with the ApiBioxal treatment when following the permit, it is important that on re-entry to treated hives within 48 hours that beekeepers wear prescribed PPE and it is likely to impact the efficacy of the

treatment.

Registration of “generic” products

AHBIC is often asked about registering “generic” products that can be sourced from overseas at a much lower price point than domestically available product. AHBIC has raised this directly with the APVMA and several issues have been highlighted that makes registration challenging.

Whilst these products claim to have the same active ingredient there is no quality assurance in place or overarching regulation to ensure the efficacy and safety of these products. Studies in the USA have demonstrated that there has been variability in active ingredient concentration and inconsistencies between batches when using these types of cheaper products. This can create negative impacts on colony health, poor control of varroa and safety concerns for the beekeeper. The APVMA have reiterated the need for the registration process to be led by the manufacturer. Contacting the manufacturers of these products to encourage them to register is challenging.

Transition from Emergency use Permits

The APVMA and NSW DPIRD have also split the grouped emergency use permits into a single minor use permits per mode of action and chemical class. As specific products achieve their full registration and Australian labelled products begin to hit the market, the separation of the permits by mode of action and chemical class will allow for easier cancellation of the minor use permits in due course. This is an administrative change and will not affect the use, except that supply business' are no longer listed within the permit documents. This means that any supply business can now sell treatments but only to those beekeepers in states permitted to use them.

As we have repeated to several beekeepers, for clarity:

When using an emergency permit approved varroa treatment, always follow the approved permit instructions followed by the label. Any contradictions to instruction, the permit is the law. This is especially important as all current chemical treatments are running overseas labels.

Our AHBIC Chemical Treatment Table has been updated to reflect all the above changes including a summary of the ApiBioxal details.

<https://honeybee.org.au/ahbic-varroa-treatment-table/>

You can reach out to AHBIC via:

National Varroa Mite Coordinator

Bianca Giggins

0402 467 780

bianca@honeybee.org.au

Give a gift with impact this Christmas

The When Bee Foundation has festive gift ideas for the bee lovers in your life.

Consider making a difference this holiday season and buy a gift that helps support the Foundation's work protecting bees and other pollinators - **2025 Native Bee Family Planner, When Bee Foundation Brass Bee Badge, Discover Bees of Australia Poster, When Bee Foundation Donation Card** - Cards are available for \$25, \$50 or \$100 Gifts, and all funds go towards vital research and conservation activities that address the national and global threats to bees. For these and other gifts go to the When Bee Foundation Shop [here](#)

Vaccine Effective Against Deformed Wing Virus

By John Kennedy

Dalan Animal Health, the Georgia USA based vaccine company that has won numerous credits for its successful development of the world's first honeybee vaccine against American Foul Brood, is now advancing another vaccine that is showing 83% effectiveness against Deformed Wing Virus-B (DWV-B) in honeybees.

An announcement from the company says that DWV-B is one of three major variants alongside DWV-A and the less common DWV-C "but this variant is becoming more prevalent worldwide overtaking the A variant in many regions".

They add "that DWV is transmitted by the parasitic mite *varroa destructor* and causes deformed wings in adult honeybees, preventing them from leaving the hive to forage.

"There are currently no preventatives or treatments for DWV, making the management of mite populations critical."

Trials undertaken by Dalan include an experimental one across 400 hives in a commercial operation aimed at understanding and developing new vaccines for honeybee health.

"The full season study showed an 83% reduction in the levels of DWV-B, as measured by PCR, independent of mite load."

The trial found the reduction in virus load "will last from at least four months to an entire season".

Dalan adds that the data was presented at the World Vaccine Congress and has been uploaded by a preprint repository company while it undergoes peer review.

They say that these results are significant because DWV-B is prevalent in honeybee populations worldwide and strongly associated with overwintering colony losses.

(The virus is also transmittable to wild honeybee populations, like bumble bees, which are currently experiencing notable decline and may be in danger of extinction.)

Dr Annette Kleiser, founder and CEO of Dalan Animal Health says, "these results open exciting new possibilities for combating viral threats in honeybee populations which have few methods for control available."

Dalan Animal Health (www.dalan.com) is dedicated to bringing the world transformative animal health solutions to support a more sustainable future.

The company's focus is on honeybee diseases and under-served invertebrates species, such as shrimps, mealworms and insects used in agriculture.

Dalan's biotech innovations including its AFB vaccine, won it numerous international awards and wide recognition.

Its headquarters are in Athens, Georgia, USA at the University of Georgia's Innovation Hub.

The Australian Bee Journal welcomes contributions for inclusion in the journal.

Please send your original photos, articles, handy hints, anecdotes, club activities etc to abjeditors@yahoo.com



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Bee Bits

By John Kennedy

D-I-Y BEEKEEPING

The Wellesbourne Honey Company is a UK beekeeping business of some size with a focus on sustainable beekeeping. Wellesbourne is apparently a village of some scale near Walton in Warwickshire.

Part of the company's sustainability focus is on the use of recycled materials and plastic food crates that are regularly available for collection.

They say they are proud members of BIBBA, the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association.

If you go to the company's Facebook page there is an offering of 27 short video presentations.

The topics are diverse – queen piping, building a bee box from an old wardrobe, making inexpensive hive covers, and forming a nucleus box from a polythene fresh fish or similar vegetable box.

Included in the latter is a show on how to make the frames from low cost or found material in timber.

Most of the videos run for five minutes plus and are largely do it yourself guides effected within a home workshop.

They also provide how to do it guidance for the starting out or recreational beekeeper – especially if you happen to have limited funds available.

THORNE UK INTRODUCES SHINS FOR WINTER HIVE PROTECTION

E H Thorne, one of the UK's principal bee goods retailers, has introduced a new protective product for a range of hives in winter.

Called Shins which is derived from Sustainable Hive Insulation, thus Shins, the product is manufactured from cork, which is known to be a highly efficient insulator used in the construction sector.

Thorne's say cork's conductivity rating is 0.039 W/m.K compared to expanded polystyrene foam which is rated at 0.03 W/m.K.

It is sold as a kit (indicative UK price is 12.60 pounds sterling) containing two frames and two shaped cork inserts that fit between locking bars.

The idea is that they are coated with beeswax and the inserts are placed around the box and held in place with a large rubber band.

The frames are based around a standard Hoffman hive, to fit around the entire box with the cork insulation inserted rather than foundation.

They are designed for insertion after the brood nest starts to contract.

The idea is to remove one outside frame from each box that is to be insulated.

Thorne's say they offer Shins in three popular sizes to fit common UK box or hive types National, National Super and National Brood or a 14 inch by 12 inch hive.

They regard the product as an easy to use, sustainable option for insulating hives against winter chills and add they must not be inserted until the nest starts to contract, "otherwise the bees may 'work' the wax covered cork.

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE ON BEEKEEPING

If you are looking for a European perspective on topical issues and a bit of solid reading, there is a source at hand.

The European Beekeeping Association which says it is made up of 366,000 beekeepers in 28 old and new countries has just published [Edition Five](#) of its glossy magazine *No Bees No Life*.

The good news is that this edition can be downloaded (in English) as either a medium file (75.9 MB) or a lower quality (22.1 MB) version.

It's a quality magazine of 90 pages and I downloaded the softer version in a matter of only a minute or so.

There is a feast of topical issues in this edition including what officialdom in Europe is doing about honey quality testing and actions against fraud, adulteration and substitution.

There's also an interesting piece on Propolis collection from a scientist in Kiev.

Another article is on Apitherapy in Slovenia.

Organic Sunflower honey and its qualities is also discussed in detail.

There is also the opportunity to register yourself on line to receive future editions. [Edition Six](#) is now available also.

UNIVERSITY STUDY CONFIRMS IRISH BLACK BEE

A study recently completed by the University of Galway has confirmed that Ireland has its own distinct native honey bee.

The Irish Black Bee (*apis mellifera mellifera*) is considered a native Irish honey bee that is physically and genetically different from any other species, and is judged to be "smaller and hairier" and endangered.

The three Irish beekeepers who trade under the name of Open Hives as commercial honey producers, say in their latest newsletter that "thanks to the Universities research the Protection of the Native Irish Honey Bee Bill of 2021, which has been stalled since 2022 was voted in bringing us another step closer to our conservation goals".

They add "the study brought good and bad news - while we now have scientific proof of our native honey-bee's existence and its place as a designated ecotype, it also revealed that it is endangered, primarily due to hybridisation with foreign species.

It is interesting to note also that the University of Galway offers a Diploma in Scientific Studies (Apiculture) – Bees and Beekeeping course.

The University says that the main aim of the course is "to provide quality third level education on bees and beekeeping".

The course may be of interest primarily to beekeepers or those considering becoming a beekeeper, with practical modules, including the production of honey and other bee products through to advanced elements including bee breeding.

UK Authentic Honey/Fake Honey

UK HONEY AUTHENTICITY

By John Kennedy

UK Beekeeper Steve Benbow, who founded the highly successful London Honey Company 25 years ago, is the latest industry participant to respond to the claim published in *The Guardian* that “nine of ten honey samples from UK retailers fail the authenticity test”.

Benbow, who has a dedication to produce extraordinary British honey, and also to champion and support British beekeeping, says “there have been repeated calls to have government and food industry support to regulate the honey category in the UK”.

The Guardian's report proved that many of the major honey brands, as well as many supermarkets, “continue to use fake adulterated sugar syrups in their products”.

Under the heading of transparency and authenticity, Benbow says that the British industry has been calling for many years for a requirement to label cheap honey imports (from China and many other nations) with the Country of Origin as the global supply of honey is bulked out with syrup on a vast scale”.

He adds “there is currently no regulation to identify the country of origin of honey blended from more than one country, adding “the European Union is now considering new rules to improve consumer information for honey and ensure the country of origin is clearly identified on the jar.

Meanwhile you can check the side label of every honey being sold “if it reads: Blend of honey from more than one country - THIS IS NOT HONEY”.

He implores that consumers spread the word and continue support of pure British honey.

Benbow had a desire to bring a small green slice of the countryside into the capital, resulting in him in-

stalling honeybees on the rooftop of his council flat near Tower Bridge 25 years ago.

The London Honey Company now sites many hives around Britain, and offers a range of authentic honeys online and via several of its own retail outlets in the City.

For more see: www.thelondonhoneycompany.com

UK'S FAKE HONEY

By John Kennedy

According to press reports the beekeeping industry in the UK is behind a campaign demonstrating that nearly all honey varieties offered in major supermarkets are bulked out with cheap syrups made from rice or corn.

They point out there is no easy way to tell which honey is the real deal.

China and Turkiye are the two largest sources of ‘honey products’ imported into the UK.

They also point out that viral honey tests circulating on social media don't hold up to scientific truthing, adding the staggering size of the honey fraud problem has kicked up a swarm of supposed tests designed to help show the real honey.

“Whether you slather it on your toast, or add a spoonful to your tea, the honey in your cupboard may be nothing more than a jar of sweet lies” is the main point of the campaign.

A quote from Dr Shona Blair, a specialist in medical uses for honey from London's Imperial College reads “there is no truth or scientific basis for the internet solutions, your best bet is buying good quality authentic honey by looking at the label and noting by whom and where it is produced”.

ABC News

Honey producers counting the cost from the bushfire emergency around Cervantes and Wedge Island north of Perth

Hundreds of tonnes of honey will be lost as a result of bushfires burning north of Perth, with apiarists expecting the loss of pristine vegetation to impact bee populations for the next decade.

... The fire zone was home to about 80 apiary sites leased by beekeepers around WA, but the bushfire has turned what was once flourishing vegetation into thousands of uninhabitable hectares.

You can read the full story [here](#)

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honeybeenews@bigpond.com

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lakesidehoney@outlook.com

Gippsland region:

Ian Cane, Mob: 0428 516 325
iancane@bigpond.com.au

Western region:

Daryl Hobbs
0427 340 197

Agriculture Victoria:

Agriculture Victoria: Apiary team
Website: Honey bees | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria
Website:

www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/honey-bees

To report a suspect exotic please call: Exotic Plant Pest Hotline
1800 084 881

For enquiries and endemic disease notification please use:
Ph: 136 186

Email honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

The Varroa project team can also be contacted at the above email.

For enquiries related to permits and movement restrictions:

Email honeybee.permits@agriculture.vic.gov.au

For beekeeper registration please log onto BeeMAX

www.bees.agriculture.vic.gov.au

or call the Bee Registration Helpline 1800 356 761

Current Apiary Officers

Nikki Jones

Biosecurity Manager Apiary
1 Taylor Street, Epsom,
Victoria, Australia 3551
Mob: 0428 617 071
Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

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Biosecurity Officer Apiary
1 McKoy Street, Wodonga,
Victoria, 3690
Mob: 0417 121 987
Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Adam Maxwell,

Biosecurity Officer Apiary
475-485 Mickleham Road,
Attwood, Victoria, 3049
Mob: 0428 893 595
Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Karyn Di Florio

Bee Biosecurity Officer
Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

If you can't reach an Officer and need to talk to someone urgently, please call the Customer Service Centre: Ph: 136 186

DEECA Regional contacts for bee sites on Crown land

Barwon South West

Geelong, Otway District –
Linda Laurie, Ph: 0408 419 759, E: linda.laurie@deeca.vic.gov.au

Heywood, Far South West –
Troy Jenkin, Ph: 0459 807 401, E: troy.jenkin@deeca.vic.gov.au

Gippsland

Tracey West – Ph:0457 501 299,
tracey.west@deeca.vic.gov.au,
tralaral-gon.property@deeca.vic.gov.au

Grampians

Ballarat – Jennifer Bromley,
Ph: 0448 389 270,
E: pub-licland.grampians@deeca.vic.gov.au

Horsham – Jess Dickerson, Ph: 0437 913 538,
E: pub-licland.grampians@deeca.vic.gov.au

(Note: Jess is on maternity leave until March 2025, but emails will automatically be forwarded to the Manager)

Hume

E: landad-min.hume@deeca.vic.gov.au
Wodonga: Lloyd Beaty is contact

Loddon Mallee

Justin Hoy (primary contact) –
Ph:0459 336 836
Daniel Cadmore (secondary contact)
– Ph: 0418 715 831

Port Phillip (Note: enquiries dealt with by Gippsland Region)

Tracey West – Ph:0457 501 299 E: tracey.west@deeca.vic.gov.au,
tralaral-gon.property@deeca.vic.gov.au

Customer Contact Centre (Ballarat based)

Ph: 136 186
E: customer.service@deeca.vic.gov.au

Statewide Transaction Centre (Seymour based)

Ph: (03) 7019 2577
E: transactioncentre@deeca.vic.gov.au

Other contacts

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC):

CEO: Danny Le Feuvre
Mob: 0402 467 780
ahbic@honeybee.org.au
5 John St.
Ardrossan, SA, 5571
www.honeybee.org.au

Crop Pollination Association Inc

President: Steve Fuller,
president.cpaa.us@gmail.com
Ph 0488 434 498
Secretary: Janet Clyde
jclyde.cpaa@gmail.com
Ph 0417 494 867

Honey Bee Research & Development committee (HBRDC)

Annie Stoddart
Program Coordinator Research
02 69236918
Annie.stoddart@agrifutures.com.au

VFF State Beekeeping Branch:

Secretary: Gail Rochelmeyer
Mob: 0408 592 091

Collingwood Childrens' Farm Apiary

Open 10.30-3.30
2nd & 4th Sunday of month.
collingwoodbees@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/collingwoodbees

Contacts

VAA Inc Regional Groups

Bendigo Branch:

Secretary: Peta Dawe

bbvaasecretary@gmail.com

Chair: Jamie Trimby

bbvaachair@gmail.com

Treasurer: Carol Maunder

bbvaatreasurer@gmail.com

General Information Q&A

Meetings - 1st Wed. each month
(except Jan & Dec)

Dinner at 6.00pm (optional)

Meeting at 7.00 pm.

Lakeside Hotel, Bendigo.

Executive Committee Meeting:

3rd Wed month as required.

Venue: As notified.

*Please register to attend all
Meetings*

Melbourne Section:

Chair: A/Prof James Doery

Deputy Chairperson: Mike Love

Secretary, Rob Kerr

Ph: 0421 078 387

Treasurer: Janet Conos

[vaamelbournesection](mailto:vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com)

[@hotmail.com](mailto:vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com)

[www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/](http://www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/Melbourne-Section)

[Melbourne-Section](http://www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/Melbourne-Section)

Information/ Education Meetings:

from 7:30 pm the last Thursday
of each month except December

Location: Church of Christ,

1 The Avenue, Surry Hills.

Sunraysia Branch:

Naomi Forbes-Wilson

Ph: 0407 243 313

billabonghoney@yahoo.com

VAA Inc. Library Trust

Secretary: Russell Goodman,

Ph 03 9735 3836

Affiliated Organisations

Central Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc (CVAA Inc.):

Millie Enbom-Goad

Ph: 0400 083 582

cvaa_inc@outlook.com

Gippsland Apiarists' Association Inc. (GAA Inc.):

President: Stan Glowacki:

jeeralangapiary@bigpond.com

0413 136 878

Secretary: Neil Barraclough:

neilbarra2@outlook.com

0429 888 706

Treasurer: Sean Paul Smith:

kaledprime@gmail.com

0466 041 199

North Eastern Apiarists' Association Inc. (NEAA Inc.):

Secretary: Moss McCallum

secretary.neaa@gmail.com

"J" Beekeepers Club Inc.

Meets on the second Wednesday

of every month (Except January)

at the Goonawarra Community

Centre, 20 Dornoch Drive,

Sunbury, VIC 3429

Southside Beekeepers Club:

Secretary: Ted Cottle

Ph: 0428 429 547

ted@southsidebeekeepers.com.au

7.30pm on the 4th Wed each

month at Monterey Secondary

College,

21 Silvertop St, Frankston North

Geelong Beekeepers Club

President: Nathan Whitford

0403 807 224

Vice President: Stephen Fridey

info@geelongbeekeepersclub.org.au

Meetings third Friday of month at

Belmont Masonic Centre,

25 Regent Street, Belmont

Latrobe Valley

Beekeepers Assoc.

President: Sean-Paul Smith

LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com

Meets 7-9pm first Tuesday each

month, Old Moe Netball Courts,

99 Savages Rd. Moe

P.O. Box 323 Newborough 3825

Mob: 0466 041 199

Woodend Bee-Friendly Society

An action group of the Macedon

Ranges Sustainability Group

E: wbfbs@mrsg.org.au

Meets on the third Sunday of

every month (except December)

at Woodend Neighbourhood

House, 47 Forest Street,

Woodend, VIC 3442

South Gippsland Beekeepers

Inc. Secretary: Anna Jones

Mob: 0411 770 062

secretary@sgbeekeepers.org.au

Web: [http://www.southgippsland](http://www.southgippslandbeekeepers.org.au/)

[beekeepers.org.au/](http://www.southgippslandbeekeepers.org.au/)

Meetings: second Thursday of

the month at St Peters Anglican
Church Hall, Cnr McCartin St. &
Bruce St., Leongatha

Melbourne Beekeepers Club Inc:

Web: melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au

E: [secretary@melbourne](mailto:secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au)

[beekeepersclub.org.au](http://melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au)

Northwestern Bee Club Inc.

President: Roger Mitchell

Mob. 0407 427 431

northwesternbeeclub@gmail.com

Web: <https://www.nwbee.club/>

Mornington Peninsula Beekeepers Association :

P.O. Box 186, Mornington, 3931

Ph: 0401 965 558

E: admin@mpba.org.au

Monthly MPBA Club Meeting -

4th Wednesday of every month

at 7pm Mornington Park Pavilion,

9 Flinders Drive, Mornington

Moonee Valley Beekeepers Club Inc. (MVBC Inc.)

Secretary: Paul Kucera

mvbeekeepersclub@gmail.com

Meets at 7:30pm on the second

Tuesday of each month (except

January) in the hall at

195 Holmes Rd,

Moonee Ponds, VIC 3039

WerriBeeks Inc.

President: Carmel Gerdson

Secretary: Helen Morland

Treasurer: Debbie Conway

E: werribeeks@gmail.com

**If any contact
details or
information on
these pages is
incorrect please
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CLASSIFIEDS

HONEY BUYERS

Archibald's Honey Co.
Spring Rd.
Dingley,
VIC, 3172
Ph: 03 9551 1860
Contact: Stuart Archibald
Email: rosalie@archibaldhoney.com.au

Beechworth Honey Ltd.
38-40 Hammersley Rd.
Corowa,
NSW 2646
Ph: 02 6033 2322
Contact: Steve or
Jodie Goldsworthy

Beeman Honey & Beekeeping Supplies
2/14-16 Tova Dr.
Carrum Downs
Vic 3201
Ph: 0438 7465 01
Contact Moe Jarrad
majarrad@gmail.com
Beemanhoney.com.au

Capilano Honey Ltd
Capilano St.
Maryborough,
VIC 3465
Ph: 07 3712 8224
0419 431 652
Contact: Stephen Covey

Goode's Honey
Lot 1, 75 Bosworth Rd
Bairnsdale,
VIC 3875
Ph: 03 5152 2180
Contact: Terry Goode

Honey Buyers Group
Martin Drake,
Bendigo or
Melbourne
0409 808 332

Redpath's Beekeeping Supplies
193 Como Parade East,
Parkdale,
VIC 3195
Ph: 03 9587 5950
Alan Redpath
redpaths@redpaths.com.au
www.redpaths.com.au

FOR SALE

Business for sale
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Koala Drive, Jeeralang Junction
Ph: 03 5122 2641
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Colin
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NEW MEMBERS

Travis Bentley
Ivan Burch
Rei Collaco
Elisa Hannon

Seasons Greetings and
Best Wishes for the coming year
to VAA members, supporters,
advertisers and all beekeepers.

John & Joanne van Weeghel

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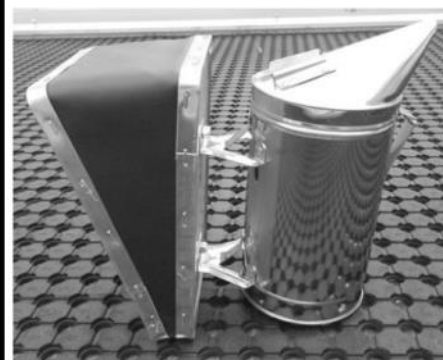
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Vale Peter Kaczynski



Some of
Peter's photos

Clockwise from
top left: Grey
Box - tree,
Bee on flowers,
clump of flowers
on tree, flowers,

Bottom: WA red
flowering gum



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