

# BEE NEWS

April 2021

Issue 117

Monthly newsletter of the Sunshine Coast  
BeeKeepers Inc.

[www.sunshinecoastbeekeepersinc.org.au](http://www.sunshinecoastbeekeepersinc.org.au)



Send in your best bee photos to feature here!  
Email the Editor Linda Blackwell at [lineb@internode.on.net](mailto:lineb@internode.on.net).

## President's Report

More progress with the shed fit out with Graham Gibb busy lining walls and Dean Adams following up with the painting.

We have decided to replace the back roller door with a double glass sliding door. This will provide light and ventilation and a view of the bee enclosure. If you know of anyone intending

to renovate or a builder who specializes in this work, we can pick up their old unit at little notice and some of our members would install it.

While we are on the scrounge, a garden shed up to 3 x 2 would be handy to store tools etc.

Don't forget to buy tickets in the super raffle for 2 prizes generously donated by Bruce Wallace being a complete equipment caddy and a beetle base either 8 or 10 frames.

The first of our big mid-year events is "the best honey in the world competition" at the next meeting. Bring your honey sample in the container provided and Ian & Gillian will get your entry registered for judging.

We then need to get our entries ready for the Show in June and all details will be available at the meeting.

Look forward to catching up with everyone at the next meeting on 24th April. Keep well and bee safe.

*Alby Taylor*

## NEXT MEETING

Saturday, 24 April at the Club House, 43 Farrell Street Yandina.

Morning tea and catch up starts 9.30am, BYO plate of food to share and a raffle prize.

Meeting to start at 10.00am.

The Best Honey in the World - remember to bring your own spoon for tasting, a bottle of water and a pen.

## Upcoming Events

### May

- Preparing and entering the Sunshine Coast Agricultural Show, which is on 11 -13 June. Entries close 8 June. Volunteers for the Club Stand are required.

### June

- Sunshine Coast Agricultural Show, 11 - 13 June.

### June - July

- Australian Honey Bee 2021 Research Conference, from 28 June to 3 July, Perth Western Australia: <http://www.crchoneybeeproducts.com/australasian-honey-bee-2021-research-conference-2/>



## Bee Budy Register

For those members who would like a mentor, and for those who are happy to mentor, contact the Cub Secretary Bill Spencer ([secretarysbees@gmail.com](mailto:secretarysbees@gmail.com), 0419 149 947).

## Mentors for New Beekeepers

**Beerwah** - Bruce Wallace  
0418 833 997

**Backall Range** - John Baker  
0418 791 149

**Buderim** - Rod Hutchinson  
0411 477 241

**Caloundra** - Ian Meyers 0423  
231 754

**Coolum / Perigian** - Katie Livock 0414 843 342, Sarah Keast 0435 388 425

**Maroochy River** - Tony Minto  
0419 661 843

**Woombye** - Chris Johnson, Shane Simpson 0407 520 078

**Yandina / North** - John Writer  
0409 118 888

## Workshops for New Beekeepers

The upcoming Beekeeper Course on 8 May is still open for bookings.

**Booking is essential.**

Book online at [www.sunshinecoastbeekeepersinc.org.au/workshops](http://www.sunshinecoastbeekeepersinc.org.au/workshops).



\* Freepik

## The Club Online

To save our members time searching online, the Club's website has links to the best beekeeping information and websites we can find.

[www.sunshinecoastbeekeepersinc.org.au](http://www.sunshinecoastbeekeepersinc.org.au)

Also, check out our Facebook page for more Club news.

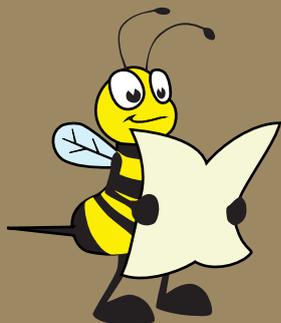
[www.facebook.com/pg/sunshinecoastbeekeepersaustralia/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/sunshinecoastbeekeepersaustralia/posts/?ref=page_internal)

## Swarms

Northern Sunshine Coast:  
John Writer, 0409 118 888.

Southern Sunshine Coast: Ian Meyers, 0412 694 058.

Maleny and surrounds: John Baker, 0418 791 149.



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## BEES IN THE NEWS

### Hobbyist beekeeper creates map to track tree killing native bees - ABC News

A Brisbane man has found there was not an effective mapping system to report the African tulip trees, which are toxic to native bees, so he decided to create his own.

### 'Gut-wrenching' bee deaths prompt renewed call for ban on insecticide Fipronil - ABC News

A Queensland beekeeper calls for an urgent ban on a controversial insecticide after watching up to 600,000 of his honeybees die.

### Hives of Industry - Weekend Australian Magazine, 6 March 2021

Sue Smethurst writes that many beekeepers in Australia are making more money by renting their hives for the pollination of a wide variety of crops from the southern tip of Victoria to Bundaberg and Central Queensland in the north. Examples of crops include almonds, apples, melons, blueberries, canola and avocados.

From early August every year a fleet of vans moves this bee

stock around from site to site with precision being managed by a broker who co-ordinates the exact location and timing also ensuring the hives are well protected. In 2021 an expected 120,000 hives will be hired to farmers to pollinate their crops. Farmers build special bee-watering stations and plant clover pasture around the orchards to supplement the bees diet.

Farmers in Australia sign a strict pollination agreement with the beekeepers guaranteeing they won't use chemicals that could damage the bees while in residence. That guarantee extends beyond the farm gate to neighbouring farmers. In the US 2018-19 50billion honey

bees were wiped out due to chemical use.

The industry faces many threats – climate change, chemicals, lack of diversity of crops, bushfire, drought and flood. One danger that worries everyone is the varroa mite which is already in PNG and NZ.

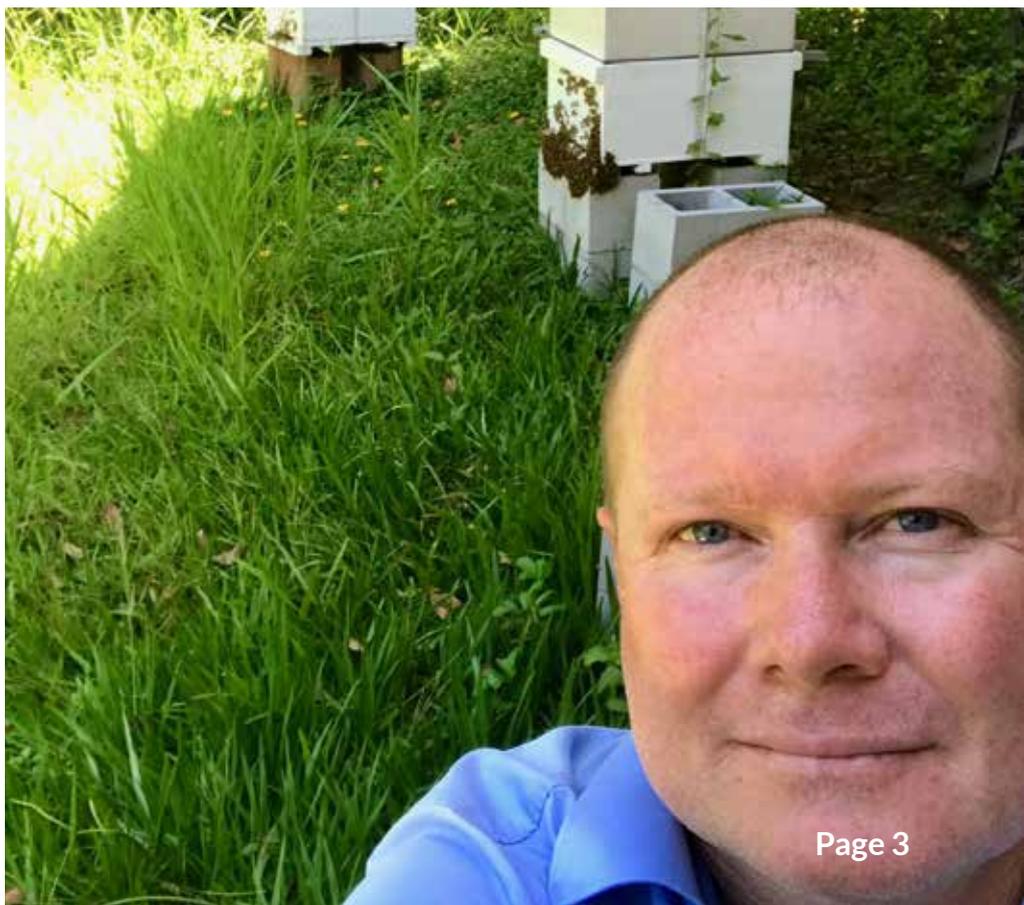
The Bega Chees company is supporting a team of scientists to create special hives capable of detecting the mites presence – The Purple Hive Project. Hives equipped with tiny cameras that can detect the mite on a bees arrival back to the hive.

There is a need for everyone to be more vigilant biosecurity.

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## Beekeeper of the Month - Tony Minto

Each month in our newsletter we aim to profile one of our Club Members so we can all get to know each other a little better. Our April BoM is Tony Minto.





Tony has been a great help to the club in developing the Yandina Centre. When not working on his bees, Tony is Electrical Department Manager of The Pump House. He organised a great deal with The Pump House for plumbing and electrical works at the Centre and personally contributed many extra hours in service. Tony and his wife live on three acres at Maroochy River.

Tony's interest in beekeeping began when his wife noticed a swarm in one of their cycads. "It's probably wasps," was his first thought, but closer inspection confirmed his wife's observation. A call to a beekeeper uncle for help led to their capture and a box left outside his house. When Tony asked what was to happen with it, his uncle simply replied, "You're a beekeeper now Tony". That was back in 2013.

On his uncle's advice, that first hive was split next spring and soon after Tony learnt his first lesson about how bees can behave in a hive. "I was checking them out in a pair of board shorts and got a real toweling up by some angry bees that left me with nearly 100 stings - I straight away ordered a protective veil and smoker!"

To his credit Tony was not deterred and has gone on to add more hives. A third became six and then seven then a split to make 12 the following year then 20 and now around 30. They are all Langstroth Hives although Tony also believes that Flow Hives work well if properly tended. Especially if a Flow Super is placed on two Langstroth brood boxes.

Some things Tony says he learned were that he was visiting his hives too frequently and of course if you find bees in a particular hive are angry when you look, it is best to leave it for another day unless it is essential that you look. Now a very experienced beekeeper who mentors others, he offers the following tips to improve your bee life.

- Catch swarms to grow your colony - talk to Tony about making a swarm trap .
- Pay attention to hygiene - don't swap frames between hives.
- Rotate your frames so the queen always has some fresh frames to use.

Tony hopes one day to become a fulltime beekeeper on a commercial basis so every day he can work at his hobby.

Tony joined our Club in 2019 just as the slab at the Centre was being poured. Since then, he has been a true "worker" helping to build and develop our "Big Hive". Thanks Tony.



## 2020 - 2021 Executive and Committee

<b>President</b>	Alby Taylor	presidentscbees@gmail.com	0418 882 282
<b>Vice-President Publicity</b>	Katie Livock	vicepresidentscbees@gmail.com	0414 843 342
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<b>Committee Newsletter Editor</b>	Linda Blackwell	lineb@internode.on.net	0409 848 466
<b>Committee Strategic Planning</b>	Evan Flower	evan.flower@bigpond.com	
<b>Committee Hive Master</b>	John Writer	monarocove@gmail.com	0409 118 888
<b>Committee Purchasing Officer</b>	Chris (Kiwi) Willitts	kiwichris@aapt.net.au	
<b>Facebook/website</b>	Frank Vos	frankvos@tpg.com.au	0412 066 546

\* Images and artworks are designed by Freepik [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

### Disclaimer

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# Preparing Hives for Winter

## What happens to your bees during the cooler months

Bees do not hibernate during the cooler months. Instead, they form a cluster in the hive to keep warm.

Depending on the temperature and climate, the queen may not lay any eggs, and there may be reduced brood numbers or no brood at all.

All drones are kicked out of the hive early in May or June.

The availability of local flowers determines whether the bees have to rely solely on their stores of honey and pollen.

Bees stop flying when the temperature drops below nine degrees celsius. In the hive, they need a temperature of 34 degrees celsius, which they achieve by clustering.

## Sunshine Coast climate

Summer temperatures from December to February range from 17 to 28 degrees celsius.

Autumn temperatures from March to May range from 13 to 25 degrees celsius with some warmer days.

Winter temperatures from June to August range between 7 to 22 degrees celsius.

Spring is similarly mild with temperatures reaching between 13 to 25 degrees celsius.

The Blackall Range can experience temperatures several degrees cooler than other parts of the Sunshine Coast, but there is always the trademark sunny weather to keep the climate mild.

The Sunshine Coast's main rainfall occurs in the first few months of the year in mid-Summer, with an average of 300 mm falling. This then drops off to an average of just 40 mm throughout the winter months.

## Trees flowering during Winter

The flowering of many trees will depend on rainfall. With good rainfall, some trees will extend their flowering.

Wattles, Banksia, Tea Trees, Bloodwoods, Hairy Pea, and Spotted Gums flower during Winter on the Sunshine Coast.

## Preparing your hive

### 1. Inspect the super/s

- For honey stores – ideally a hive needs six full frames per hive.
- Remove any supers not covered in bees to reduce the size of the hive which needs to be kept warm.
- Position two capped frames on either side of the super to provide insulation.
- If there are inadequate stores you may need to consider and plan to feed your bees. It is always better to feed them before they run out of honey and pollen stores, because if they do run out it may be too late to save them.

### 2. Check the brood box

- Check the brood for solid even patterns and number of brood.
- Check for disease – AFB, EFB, sacbrood and chalk brood.
- Ensure that beetles are being managed and controlled.

### 3. Check the queen – is she healthy, or does she need to be replaced?

### 4. Check the location of the hive

- Make sure the hive is in a sunny position protected from winds by windbreaks.
- Ensure that the hive is tipped forward to

allow any condensation to flow out the front.

## 5. Additional strategies to retain heat

- Consider removing the queen excluder to allow the bees to move freely around the hive
- Consider a hive mat to assist with retaining heat. Place the hive mat under the excluder to maintain heat in the brood box and remove it towards the end of August. Be aware that a hive mat can provide hiding places for beetles. Hives mats are not generally required in our mild climate.
- Consider reducing the size of hive entrances to a width of 50mm or even less to reduce loss of heat and reduce entry of cold winds.

## 6. What to monitor during winter

- Keep an eye on the hive entrance.
- If required check food stocks but quickly and on a sunny still day
- Don't over monitor by opening the hive.

## 7. Feeding your bees

- Only use white sugar to feed your bees. Do not feed raw, brown or dark brown sugar or molasses, as these may cause dysentery.
- Equally as important, do not feed honey to your bees, unless it is from your own disease free hives. If you feed your bees your own honey never place the honey in the open outside the hive as this is illegal under the *Livestock Disease Control Act 1994*.
- Place the sugar syrup (see recipe below) or dry sugar in the hives in the late afternoon or early evening. This minimises other bees robbing your hives, as feeding sugar syrup in the open can attract feral colonies and may cause robber bee activity. This is why it is illegal to do so.

## 8. Making and feeding sugar syrup

- Mix thoroughly one cup of white sugar with one cup of boiling water and allow to cool. Never boil the mixture as the sugars may caramelise and may be partially indigestible and toxic to bees. Place sugar syrup in a plastic bottle upside down in a feeder at the entrance of the hive. The feeder is available from the club.
- Alternatively, you can sprinkle white sugar on the tops of the frames in the the super and, if practicable, the brood box.

## References and further reading

1. R Goodman, *Australian Beekeeping Guide*; Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.
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3. *Preparing Your Honey Bee Hive for over-wintering in Australia*.
4. Bee2Bee Beekeeping Supplies.
5. Ipswich and West Moreton Beekeepers Association Inc, *Overwintering bees in Queensland*.
6. Nuplas June 19, 2019, *Better Beekeeping: Preparing your Beehives for the Cold Winter Months*.
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8. D Sommerville, "Wintering Bees", *Prime Facts for Profitable adaptive and sustainable Primary Industries*.
9. BeeAware Newsletter.
10. A Craig & S Craig, *Natures Gifts*.
11. Sunshine Coast Weather and Climate - travelonline.