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**Amateur  
Beekeepers  
Association**  
NSW

# THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

Newsletter for members

**JOIN THE REGISTER PAGE 4**

**Swarm collectors  
are helping communities  
throughout NSW**

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# OCTOBER AFB Awareness Month

No beekeeper likes to imagine American Foulbrood Disease striking their apiary. That's why the ABA, together with the DPI and other beekeeping organisations, is behind a statewide action campaign this October

## What's it all about?

AFB Awareness Month aims to get all beekeepers involved to "Inspect, Test, Notify, Act." ABA members were sent an email detailing the campaign on 24 September. The DPI is also planning to contact all registered beekeepers. And clubs have been sent a range of resources to share. AFB is highly infectious and deadly to bees. You can help the spread of this disease in Australia.



*AFB Awareness Month Poster. Look out for this at your local club, at beekeeping supply shops and at community locations*

## Claim your FREE kit

Every ABA member is being given a free field pack that contains glass slides, a carrier case, a simplified submission form to order a free sample analysis, and AFB information sheets. Packs have been sent to clubs. Expect to hear from your local group about how and when to collect yours. The packs contain equipment that every beekeeper should have on hand for when they spot suspicious brood cells. Collect a pack and either use it now or keep it with your beekeeping kit in case trouble strikes later.

## What else is FREE this month?

The DPI is distributing a limited number of DIY diagnosis kits to clubs. These can be used to take a brood sample and analyse it on the spot. Clubs are being asked to decide how they are used to best effect.

Steritech has donated 300 free 'bee cartons'. These are boxes that beekeepers can use to load up woodware and equipment for sterilisation by irradiation. Normally, the boxes cost \$3.85 each. They are available from its Wetherill Park facility until the free stocks run out. Members should quote code DPI007 to obtain a free box. Regular irradiation prices apply.

The ABA has developed a range of educational resources to support clubs and individual beekeepers wanting to share or improve their skills. These are detailed below.

## Inspect and act

Beekeepers are required by law to regularly inspect all brood boxes and keep records. It is part of our General Biosecurity Duty. For **AFB Awareness Month** we're asking all beekeepers to inspect in October and take part in our **AFB survey**. The information we collect will provide a picture of where AFB is most prevalent and, also important, where it

is NOT found. It is an important project to protect your bees now and in the future – so please join in. The survey data collected will also help the ABA demonstrate that amateurs take their responsibilities seriously – and will help the ABA lobby on your behalf on matters such as registration fees.



Where can you find out more?

Go to [beekeepers.asn.au/afb](http://beekeepers.asn.au/afb)

Here you will find

- a slideshow outlining the aim of **AFB Awareness Month**, how it works, what support is available and a series of short videos demonstrating essential AFB detection tasks and treatments. The slideshow also contains a list of FAQs.
- A guide to the best online AFB resources, including links to DPI forms, information sheets and handbooks, more videos and reference materials.
- The ABA survey. It's short and easy to fill in. Add your

details as soon as you have inspected your hives. (And if you have already inspected this Spring, you can add your details now.) If you keep bees at different locations, complete a survey for each site so we can capture accurate geographical details. The survey will remain open throughout October and into November – but don't put off your inspections and reporting. Do it now!

## Biosecurity News from DPI



Look out for the NSW Bee Biosecurity News (BBN), a new quarterly newsletter for beekeepers registered in the state.



To get the Bee Biosecurity News, you must provide your email address to the department. Go to: <https://tinyurl.com/y95jkher> to update or lodge your details. You will be asked to provide a valid Beekeeper Registration Number (brand) to

prove you are registered. The first issue was sent out on October 1.

In addition to the Bee Biosecurity News, the DPI plans to email registered beekeepers with **American Foulbrood Alerts** (AFB Alerts). AFB Alerts will notify beekeepers when the DPI is informed about positive laboratory tests for AFB in their local government area. (Privacy concerns restrict the DPI from alerting beekeepers within smaller areas.)

## DIARY DATES

OCTOBER IS TRADITIONALLY A BUSY MONTH FOR BEEKEEPING EVENTS. THIS YEAR DON'T MISS:

**Total Field Day 14 OCTOBER Total College, Paterson**  
**ABA/Inner West Field Day 28 OCTOBER 1a Marion St, Leichhardt**  
**ABA Council Meeting 29 OCTOBER Rose Bay RSL**

For full details, see schedules listed later in this newsletter

## NEWS: BEEKEEPER REGISTRATION FEES FROZEN FOR TWO YEARS

Last issue we outlined the lobbying the ABA has been involved in to convince the state government not to hike registration fees for amateurs.

The good news: in August, Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair met with ABA representatives and other beekeeping organisations to announce that all beekeeper registration fees would be frozen at current levels for the next two years. During this time, a consultative council will be formed to examine the issue.

Read the full report of the meeting and the minister's letter to beekeepers. Go to the News section of [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au) and click on 'Biosecurity'.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

### Membership Cards

The ABA currently issues plastic membership cards to all financial members. These can be used as name badges at club and beekeeper events, or shown to qualify for discounts at some beekeeping suppliers.



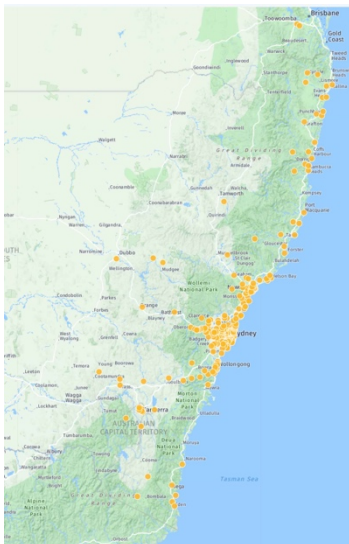
The credit-card-size cards are printed in batches by Doug Purdie who uses the information that you've entered into the online membership records. Doug distributes the cards to club secretaries. Each club decides how and when to get cards to members but typically cards are handed out at club meetings.

**Is your name spelled correctly on the membership database?** Doug exports these details to print the cards so if it's correct on the database, it will be right on the card. You can check and correct your records via the website. [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au)

**Don't have a card?** We issue one card per member each year. Check with your club. Many clubs have a pile of cards that have yet to be collected.

ABA memberships for 2018 will open in mid November and all current members will be invited to renew via the online system. More than 1530 beekeepers have used the system so far.

To reduce waste, next year the ABA may make cards optional. One proposal is we ask members to indicate when paying fees whether they want to be issued with a card or not. Says Doug, "It's clear that many members do like the cards but many don't collect them. It takes time and resources to print each card so we could avoid that for members who tell us they don't need one."



## ABA SWARM COLLECTORS

ABA members from around the state have signed up on our online swarm collector register. We now have collectors in 311 postcodes. Not surprisingly we have a concentration along the coast between Newcastle and Wollongong, but the map shows a healthy spread. Skilled beekeepers are encouraged to sign up or to check their details via our website. Clubs have recently been sent information to help publicise the register in their local community, and the ABA is supplying small cards that can be given away at local events and venues. For instructions on how to register go to [beekeepers.asn.au/faq](http://beekeepers.asn.au/faq)

# WHEN TO OPEN BEEHIVES AFTER WINTER

## ARTHUR GARSKE EXPLAINS WHY BEEKEEPERS NEED TO GET THIS RIGHT

There cannot be a hard and fast rule for when to open beehives after winter. There are too many variables, such as climate change, rain patterns, mild winters and prevailing winds. All these factors affect what the bees are doing in the particular area where the hive is situated.



**ARTHUR GARSKE is Parramatta Club's Education Officer and the ABA's Public Officer. He has 49 years' experience keeping and caring for bees around NSW.**

The way a hive works internally is controlled by the bees' air-conditioning efforts, which are determined initially by the correct bee space. Bees cluster tightly when the external temperature is cold. When it is hot, the cluster loosens and expands.

Bees' activity creates heat at the centre of the hive, which is where the queen and brood are. Here, the temperature is 35° +/- 0.5°. The temperature at which bees cluster is 14°C. So, if night temperatures fall below 14°, the amount of brood that can be raised is limited. The temperature at which bees chill, fall off a winter cluster and die is 8°. So remember: it's not only warmer days that matter; the major factor is WARMER NIGHTS.

Different areas with different local conditions of forage, aspect and topography will affect the early build up and overall strength. And the state of the honey flow has a great influence. If it is heavy, the colony can soon run out of room and the hive will become congested.

Eight triggers for swarming are:

- The season
- The weather
- Amount of shade
- Ventilation
- Temperature
- The area
- The flow
- Congestion within the hive

**All beekeepers should be great observers.**

If I have a hive at home, at least every couple of days I look at the bees coming and going at the entrance.

- Are they coming in light or heavy?
- How many are carrying in pollen?

It's essential to look for pollen carriers in the morning before 10.30 or 11 am if the day is going to be hot. Pollen loses its stickiness in hot conditions and the bees cannot pack it on their back legs as it will not stick. If the day reaches only a moderate temperature, bees can collect pollen all day. The more bees carrying pollen, the more brood being raised.



## Member Contest

We have one copy of Arthur's Beginner's Guide to Beekeeping DVD (valued at \$35) to give away to ABA members. Email [editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.asn.au) before October 20 with the answer to this simple question: **WHAT DATE IS THE ABA INNER WEST FIELD DAY?**

A winner will be selected at random from all correct answers received. For information about Arthur's DVD for new beekeepers, visit [www.arthurgarske.com](http://www.arthurgarske.com)

### What else do I notice?

**Smell.** If nectar can be smelled in the still evening air, that is telling you the bees have been collecting nectar throughout the day and are ripening it. A slightly sour smell tells you that royal jelly is being fed to the baby bees – their food for the first three days of life after hatching from the egg.

**Listen.** A roar indicates the bees are fanning to ripen the day's collection of nectar. Listen to see how many hours the roaring continues.

**Look.** How many bees are clustered on the front and landing of the hive? And the sides also?

**ALL** these signs indicate a high likelihood of congestion and override the usual rule about not opening a hive too early in Spring.

The usual rule is based on not exposing the bees to low temperatures. When a brood box is pulled apart to look at the brood for signs of disease, you need to shake off all the bees – nurse bees mainly – and move all the frames out of the box. After you examine frames for the state and pattern of the brood and any queen cells, then put the hive back together, it will take the bees 24 hours to make the brood nest temperature compliant – in other words, back to what it was before you pulled it apart. If the night temperature is below 8°C, part of the brood becomes chilled and dies.

However, if the bees have started to build queen cells and the bees are really progressive (which you should have read from your observations), you should put the chill rule aside and act to deal with the congestion. Prepare another brood box, bottom board, lid and frames with drawn combs.



**NEW SYDNEY BEE SHOP**

Our new beekeeping shop in Matraville stocks most gear for the hobby beekeeper, offering Australian made or assembled equipment where possible. We've personally tested all our gear and only stock products we'd use ourselves.

Save time – order online for instore pick-up or we can deliver (\$10 to Sydney metro.)

ABA members: use discount code ABA 1612

**[shop.theurbanbeehive.com.au](http://shop.theurbanbeehive.com.au)**

Unit 21, 19 McCauley Street, Matraville 2036  
Phone 02 9232 5600  
Open Fri 10 – 5 Sat 10 - 4

When doing the brood inspection on the existing hive, take out frames of sealed brood and bees, and at least one frame with eggs and larvae and bees. Make sure you don't take the queen with these frames but do take a couple of frames of honey and pollen. Now what to do with the queen cells you've found? Break down all but one. The frame with this cell goes into the new box with sealed brood, etc.

Take the frames of drawn comb you had in the new box and interleave between the remaining brood frames in the original hive. (Do not use frames with new foundation as bees cannot secrete wax until temperatures are 35-37°C.) Take the newly made up box at least four kilometres away while the colony gets established.

The downside is that if the nights become really chilly, maybe some of the brood will be lost. But this option is better than letting your bees swarm. It is so important to **READ THE HIVE**. What the hive is doing determines what to do next.

## DIARY DATE: ABA Council Meeting 29 October

The next ABA Council Meeting is on Sunday 29 October and starts at 10 am sharp.  
The venue is the Rose Bay RSL Club at 1 Vickerey Ave, Rose Bay, Sydney.  
Parking and lunch is available at the club.

The ABA is obliged by its constitution to have at least four council meetings each year. While the ABA Executive Committee may make decisions if the issue is urgent, most decisions are made after consideration at a Council Meeting. All clubs are heartily encouraged to send representatives to council meetings so that they can play a part in decisions that affect the membership.

Council meetings are moved around the state to make it easier for members to attend a range of meetings, particularly those held in their vicinity.

The meetings begin with a forum where members can raise issues and ask questions of the executive. This is a good opportunity to learn about the workings of the ABA and what initiatives are important to amateur beekeepers across the state.

Reports and general business follow the forum.

The big issues at the October meeting will be:

- ABA insurance for members and clubs – what will the premiums be?
- Many members have hives on other people's land. Can the beekeeper insurance be extended to the land owner?
- Should the ABA purchase insurance to cover the possessions of individual clubs?
- Should the ABA have "directors" insurance to cover claims against executive negligence?
- How is AFB Awareness Month going? Why did this initiative happen and how will the results be used?
- Should there be a statewide ABA "sugar shake" survey?

### FEES FOR 2018: THE NEXT STEPS

- ABA fees and insurance charges for next year will be set at the Rose Bay meeting
- Dave Wilson, the ABA Secretary will then contact all club secretaries to let them know the 2018 rates
- In mid November, members will receive an email inviting renewals via the online system.

## SUPPORT BEEKEEPING IN NSW SHOW THE BEE COLOURS!

Look out for the ABA stall at the coming Beekeepers' Field Day at Tocal College (October 14).

We'll be launching a range of items – hats, bags, lapel pins and keyrings – sporting the distinctive ABA NSW bee logo. Each has been designed so that ABA members can show their support for bees and recreational beekeeping across the state.

Can't make it to Tocal on October 14? Go online to [beekeepers.asn.au/shop](http://beekeepers.asn.au/shop). Order a set for yourself – or get together an order for your club.



# SCIENCE OR SNAKE OIL: IS MANUKA HONEY REALLY A ‘SUPERFOOD’ FOR TREATING COLDS, ALLERGIES AND INFECTIONS?

by NURAL COKCETIN Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Technology Sydney and SHONA BLAIR, General Manager, itthree institute, University of Technology Sydney, and Vice President of the NSW Apiarists’ Association

MANUKA HONEY is often touted as a “superfood” that treats many ailments, including allergies, colds and flus, gingivitis, sore throats, staph infections, and numerous types of wounds.

Manuka can apparently also boost energy, “detox” your system, lower cholesterol, stave off diabetes, improve sleep, increase skin tone, reduce hair loss and even prevent frizz and split ends.

Some of these claims are nonsense, but some have good evidence behind them.

Honey has been used therapeutically throughout history, with records of its cultural, religious and medicinal importance shown in rock paintings, carvings and sacred texts from many diverse ancient cultures.



Honey was used to treat a wide range of ailments from eye and throat infections to gastroenteritis and respiratory ailments, but it was persistently popular as a treatment for numerous types of wounds and skin infections.

Medicinal honey largely fell from favour with the advent of modern antibiotics in the mid-20th century. Western medicine largely dismissed it as a “worthless but harmless substance”. But the emergence of superbugs (pathogens resistant to some, many or even all our antibiotics) means alternative approaches to dealing with pathogens are being scientifically investigated.

We now understand the traditional popularity of honey as a wound dressing is almost certainly due to its antimicrobial properties. High sugar content and low pH mean honey inhibits microbial growth, but certain honeys still retain their antimicrobial activity when these are diluted to negligible levels.

Many different types of honey also produce microbe-killing levels of hydrogen peroxide when glucose oxidase (an enzyme incorporated into honey by bees) reacts with glucose and oxygen molecules in water. So, when honey is used as a wound dressing it draws moisture from the tissues, and this reacts to produce hydrogen peroxide, clearing the wound of infection.

The antimicrobial activity of different honeys varies greatly, depending on which flowers the bees visit to collect the nectar they turn into honey. While all honeys possess some level of antimicrobial activity, certain ones are up to 100 times more active than others.

## How is manuka different to other honey?

Manuka honey is derived from the nectar of manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) trees, and it has an additional component to its potent antimicrobial activity. This unusual activity was discovered by Professor



Peter Molan in New Zealand in the 1980s, when he realised the action of manuka honey remained even after hydrogen peroxide was removed.

The cause of this activity remained elusive for many years, until two laboratories independently identified methylglyoxal (MGO) as a key active component in manuka honey in 2008. MGO is a substance that occurs naturally in many foods, plants and animal cells and it has antimicrobial activity.

Australia has more than 80 species of native *Leptospermum*, while New Zealand has one, but the “manuka” honeys from each country have similar properties. There is currently a great deal of debate between the two countries over the rights to use the name “manuka”, but for simplicity in this article we use the term to describe active *Leptospermum* honeys from either country.

### Can manuka honey kill superbugs?

The activity of manuka honey has been tested against a diverse range of microbes, particularly those that cause wound infections, and it inhibits problematic bacterial pathogens, including superbugs that are resistant to multiple antibiotics.

Manuka honey can also disperse and kill bacteria living in biofilms (communities of microbes notoriously resistant to antibiotics), including ones of *Streptococcus* (the cause of strep throat) and *Staphylococcus* (the cause of Golden staph infections). Crucially, there are no reported cases of bacteria developing resistance to honey, nor can manuka or other honey resistance be generated in the laboratory.

It's important to note that the amount of MGO in different manuka honeys varies, and not all manuka honeys necessarily have high levels of antimicrobial activity.

### Manuka honey and wound healing

Honey has ideal wound dressing properties, and there have been numerous studies looking at the efficacy of manuka as a wound dressing. Apart from its broad-spectrum antimicrobial activity, honey is also non-toxic to mammalian cells, helps to maintain a moist wound environment (which is beneficial for healing), has anti-inflammatory activity, reduces healing time and scarring, has a natural debriding action (which draws dead tissues, foreign bodies and dead immune cells from the wound) and also reduces wound odour. These properties account for many of the reports showing the effectiveness of honey as a wound dressing.

Honey, and in particular manuka honey, has successfully been used to treat infected and non-infected wounds, burns, surgical incisions, leg ulcers, pressure sores, traumatic injuries, meningococcal lesions, side effects from radiotherapy and gingivitis.

### What about eating manuka honey?

Most of the manuka honey sold globally is eaten. Manuka may inhibit the bacteria that cause a sore (“strep”) throat or gingivitis, but the main components responsible for the antimicrobial activity won't survive the digestion process.



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You can also shop online at

**[www.hornsby-beekeeping.com](http://www.hornsby-beekeeping.com)**

Nonetheless, honey consumption can have other therapeutic benefits, including anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant and prebiotic (promoting the growth of beneficial intestinal microorganisms) properties. These properties are not solely linked to manuka honey; various other honeys may also work.



### What doesn't it do?

There is a commonly touted belief that eating manuka (or local) honey will help with hay fever because it contains small doses of the pollens that are causing the symptoms, and eating this in small quantities will help your immune system learn not to overreact. But there's no scientific evidence eating honey helps hay fever sufferers. Most of the pollen that causes hay fever comes from plants that are wind pollinated (so they don't produce nectar and are not visited by bees).

There is some preliminary work showing honey might protect from some side effects of radiation treatment to the head and neck. It warrants further investigation. But other claims honey has anti-cancer activity are yet to be substantiated.

There isn't any robust scientific evidence that manuka lowers cholesterol, treats diabetes or improves sleep. One interesting study did show honey was more effective than cough medicine for reducing night time coughs of children, improving their sleep (and their parents'). Manuka honey wasn't used specifically, but it may well be as helpful.

Claims that anything helps to "detox" are innately ridiculous. Similarly, "superfood" is more about marketing than much else, and the cosmetic and anti-ageing claims about manuka are scientifically unfounded.

### Final verdict

If consumers are buying manuka honey for general daily use as a food or tonic, there is no need to buy the more active and therefore more expensive types. But the right kind of honey is very effective as a wound dressing. So if manuka is to be used to treat wounds or skin infections, it should be active, sterile and appropriately packaged as a medicinal product. The best way to ensure this is to check the product has a CE mark or that it's registered with the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (marked with an AUST L/AUST R number).

Manuka honey isn't a panacea or a superfood. But it is grossly underutilised as a topical treatment for wounds, ulcers and burns, particularly since we face a looming global superbug crisis.

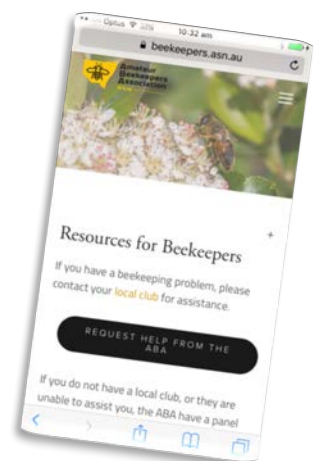
Article reprinted from  
**THE CONVERSATION**

To read the many comments the authors have received to this piece, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/yavjmca7>

## Need beekeeping advice?

**THE ABA has set up a service to help beekeepers get answers to beekeeping queries – particularly if you live far from a club or mentor.**

Log on to [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au), select RESOURCES from the drop down menu, and then click on the heading RESOURCES FOR BEEKEEPERS. Here you will find a simple form where you can log your query, leave your contact details and indicate if you have asked anyone at your club to help first. Your details will be sent to our volunteer panel of experienced beekeepers and, if they can help, one will get back to you.



38th ANNUAL  
2017

FREE!

# Total Beekeepers' Field Day

## Program

- 9.00 Welcome and Introduction
- 9.15 Beekeeping around the world  
Bruce White OAM
- 9.45 Honey bee pollination  
Dr Doug Somerville
- 10.15 Beekeeping courses,  
Qualifications and Traineeships  
Elizabeth Frost
- 10.30 Morning tea - field demonstration of  
opening a beehive
- 11.30 Small Hive Beetle research  
Dr Diana Leemon
- 12.00 National Biosecurity Code and AFB  
Rod Bourke NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer
- 12.30 Preparing hives and  
equipment for irradiation  
Jamie Crighton Steritech
- 12.50 Honey: extracting and harvesting  
Bill Winner
- 1.20 Lunch - field demonstrations of  
hiving a swarm, opening a native  
stingless beehive
- 3.00 Medicinal honey experiences  
Dr Lamorna Osborne
- 3.30 Leptospermum research update  
Simon Williams PhD candidate
- 4.00 Raffle draw and close

A **free** event for  
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Total College, Total Road  
Paterson NSW

Saturday 14th of  
October 2017



Trade show, hive construction demonstrations, honey tastings and sales, food/coffee available all day.



Department of  
Primary Industries

**Total**  
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RTO 92386



Amateur  
Beekeepers  
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## DECODING THE LANGUAGE OF BEES Karl Von Frisch

Jim Wright outlines the story of the researcher who revolutionised our understanding of how bees communicate

It is widely known that bees communicate by dances, but few would be aware of the complexity and detail of the information they so convey. Fewer still would know the fascinating story of the research behind the discovery or of the researcher himself, Professor Karl von Frisch. This is told in a book *The Dancing Bees* by Tania Munz.

Karl von Frisch was born in Vienna in 1886, became a doctor and served as a surgeon in the German army in both World Wars. But he didn't like clinical medicine: his heart was in research.

His first interest was in the pigment changes and colour perception of a species of fish, but he soon turned his attention to bees. There was a view then that bees were attracted to flowers by smell only, but von Frisch explored the possibility of colour playing a role. By meticulous studies he found that bees do perceive colours and are most attracted to blue and purple but blind to red.

While conducting these studies, he noticed a single bee on his bait station returned to the hive and within a short time many more bees arrived to forage on his sugar syrup. Clearly the one bee had directed them to the food. He was even more intrigued when he set up a glass-paned observation hive and, for the first time, saw a bee communicating in dance. Years of meticulously planned and painstakingly executed experiments elucidated details of the dances; how they communicated the direction of his sugar baits, the distance and the richness of the source. And all in the dark!

Beekeepers nowadays often mark a bee, but von Frisch in his studies put several distinctive marks on bees so he could track their individual movements in and out of the hive. He played tricks on the bees by putting obstacles in their way. Would they fly over or around them? Some went around, some over, but the distance they communicated was always the distance actually flown. So refined were his studies that he detected dialects in different strains of bees. Bees have accents! More sophisticated experiments revealed that bees are sensitive to light polarisation which enables them to use the position of the sun for navigation even on a cloudy day.

During the Nazi era, his work and survival were in jeopardy because he had a Jewish grandmother. Fortunately, his research saved  
The Amateur Beekeeper October/November 2017

## Keeper & HIVE

The giftshop for beekeepers.

Discover our range of bee-themed books, gifts, clothing and homewares

### BEST SELLERS:

- **The Buzz About Bees** by Jurgen Tautz
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- Cake and soap moulds
- 'Pollinator Friendly Garden' signs
- 'Buzzy Bee' toys and decorations



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**keeperandhive.com**

\* Valid until November 31, 2017. One code per member

him. He had discovered that by training bees to forage on particular crops, the harvest yield could be measurably increased, and because of the dire need for food production during the war he was encouraged by authorities to continue his work. Though never a Nazi, he exploited this activity to maintain his freedom and his work. He continued his research long after World War II and died in 1982 in Munich.

## WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUR CLUB



The ABA has produced new signs with the warning that clubs must display at meetings, community events or any occasion where hives are being opened or people are near to the bees.

The signs are designed to be clear and bright. The words have been agreed

with our insurer. Please make sure the signs are used and placed where everyone can read them. If your club needs replacements, or order through [beekeepers.asn.au/shop](http://beekeepers.asn.au/shop)

## SPRING CLEANING TIPS

Now that the weather is warming up you may do a bit more manipulation with your hives.

**Clean bottom boards.** If you have a spare box, transfer brood combs to it, being careful to keep them in the original order. If you don't have a spare box, take out a few frames at a time and scrape the bottom board as best you can.

**Remove burr comb and propolis from frames and hive edges.** This will make it easier to manipulate them later.

**Pick up** bits of wax and propolis that are on the ground so as not to attract ants and robber bees. This will keep your shoes cleaner too.

**Trim long grass and weeds** from around the hive entrances, so bees will have easy access with their loads of nectar and pollen. This will also help to assist with ventilation.

**Enlarge the entrance** if it has been restricted.

**Give foundation to stronger hives** as this is the time bees like to build rather than store honey.

**Consider the prospects** for honey, pollen and weather over the next few weeks. If nothing is coming in, the hives won't prosper and bees won't build new combs.

Be a good observer.

LOVE THOSE BEES - Frank Karabaic

## ... and advice for identifying your own hives, from the Biosecurity Code of Practice

### PART D: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS

#### 12. Apiary sites should be identified

The identification of apiary sites with clearly visible signage bearing contact details will enable the beekeeper to be contacted quickly in the event of a natural disaster emergency (e.g. bushfire) or other potential threat to the bees (e.g. exotic disease incursion, pesticide spray drift). Although hives are identified in most jurisdictions with brands or registration numbers, this does not facilitate rapid contact with the hive owner. This requirement is not mandatory but all beekeepers are encouraged to comply.

This does not apply to hives or swarm catch boxes located on the beekeeper's normal place of residence.

#### REQUIREMENT

**12.1** All occupied *apiary* sites, not on the *beekeeper's* normal place of residence, should be identified by a clearly visible notice legibly showing the *beekeeper's* name (or company name) and a contact telephone number in lettering no less than 25 mm high. This is in addition to any other requirements of relevant state or territory legislation.

**12.2** **Beekeepers** are strongly encouraged to use the template available on the Plant Health Australia website at: [planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Honey-Bee-biosecurity-sign.pdf](http://planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Honey-Bee-biosecurity-sign.pdf)

## Department of Primary Industries Report from Rod Bourke, NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer

It has been a busy time for beekeepers in NSW, with hives building up fast and many swarms being noted since the start of August. As with this time most years, the availability of commercially reared queens is still somewhat limited, so hopefully beekeepers have been propping up any failing hives with brood/eggs/young bees from their stronger hives until they can rear their own new queen or one can be bought.



There is always a biosecurity risk when transferring frames of bees/brood/honey from one hive to another, so please check the hive and equipment very carefully before using it.

If you are taking a split then the best method is to find the queen of the donor hive and put her aside in a safe place. (A queen catcher is helpful. Keep her out of direct sunlight and away from ants etc.) Ideally the recipient hive can be located some kilometres away from the donor hive so that half the bees you are taking will not simply fly back home!

Once the queen is contained you are ready to really rip into the donor hive. Make sure you have a spare bee-less one-box hive with frames/wax foundation. Ideally it is also well ventilated (lid or bottom board) as you may be containing these bees for some hours before adding them to another hive. You should block up the entrance of this box so bees can't escape while you are moving it.

Find the frames with young larvae that are being fed by nurse bees and visually inspect any capped brood. If healthy, put these frames aside (with all bees still on them) for later. Then go through your frames of capped brood and shake every bee off each frame. THOROUGHLY inspect them for AFB. If you find even ONE CELL of AFB this hive should be quarantined as it is now a biosecurity risk to the rest of your apiary as well as any other hives nearby. It doesn't matter if it was your favourite or best hive; its days are now numbered!

If the capped brood frames are free of AFB (and EFB), transfer them to your spare box. Replace the stolen frames with either new frames with wax foundation, extracted honey frames previously sourced from this hive or irradiated frames from another hive. Using non-irradiated frames from a different hive is a really effective way of transferring AFB, as is transferring bees and brood from another hive. This is why it's EXTREMELY important to thoroughly inspect those capped brood frames. Often you will remove three or four frames of capped brood from a very strong hive as this will slow it right down and prevent it swarming. These frames will also boost up a hive that is weak after winter.

Once the brood frames are in the new box you can start selecting frames of bees from the donor hive to shake into the split box to ensure sufficient bees to cover the brood effectively. Pick frames with lots of bees and place them in an organized manner next to the previously selected frames of uncapped brood. Starting with these uncapped brood frames, shake off all these young (and most valuable) bees directly over the middle frames of your split. Then very quickly start shaking the other frames of predominantly field bees. Field bees will be more "flighty" and you will lose a lot of them from each shake, so you need to be quick here. Once you have a nice split, give it a quick smoke to clear the top-bars and get the lid on quick and seal it up.

You will squash a few bees, and bees will also be flying and crawling all over the place as you have just severely disrupted the donor hive. Take your time to carefully replace the frames of uncapped brood into the middle of the donor brood box and then any remaining capped brood on the outside of that. Put in the new frames (normally the same number is needed as frames of capped brood etc. that you stole from the donor hive) and the old outside frames (generally with pollen and honey) on the outside. Get your queen back into the brood box (it's a good time to mark her). Give it a puff of smoke and put the excluder and honey box back on.

If you were unable to find the queen then the process will be more time consuming, plus you may accidentally either transfer the old queen in your split, damage or kill her. You will need to do a follow-up examination of your split and donor hive in four to six hours (or the next day) to see if you can find her. (Do this before adding the split to the recipient hive.)

If you don't want to use the split for propping up a hive then it could be left to rear its own queen. In that case add at least one frame with eggs and young larvae (from which they will draw queen cells) plus one with honey.

If you are transferring bees and brood to a hive nearby you need to accept that most of the field bees will probably fly straight back home. You are better off to only move over as many capped brood frames as the recipient hive can adequately cover with its current bee population. Don't use frames with a high percentage of brood versus honey/pollen stores unless there are enough extra bees to cover the bottom of that frame. Otherwise you will likely get chilled brood which dies and causes the bees extra work and stress to remove. Two frames with 30 to 40% brood are a better choice in a weaker hive than one with more than 70%.

Just flick nurse bees from frames of uncapped brood into the recipient hive, as they will be more readily accepted, useful and hopefully will not vacate their new home. Shake fine icing sugar onto these new bees to reduce the chance they will be attacked by the resident bees.

The most important thing to understand is that you NEED to thoroughly inspect every frame of brood. DO NOT USE any material from hives with AFB, or if their brood looks unhealthy (EFB, too much Chalk or Sack brood etc.), or downright strange. Any hives that look decidedly wrong probably have something adverse going on. If you cannot diagnose and treat accordingly (if that is possible) then reduce them to one box, extract all the honey, kill the bees in soapy water, burn the worst frames and get the rest irradiated and restart the hive with a split. It may sound cruel, but you are saving millions or billions more bees by getting rid of a sickly hives that have no future. If all they ever seem to do is chug along doing nothing then ask yourself how useful they really are. They could also be a biosecurity time bomb!



THE START OF AUGUST heralded the busiest pollination period that we see in Australia, with the almonds in northern Victoria and NSW requiring many tens of thousands of beehives, of which a lot came from NSW. While many think of almond pollination wholly as a game for large commercial beekeepers (one took around 5000 hives down to Robinvale), the smallest beekeeper presenting hives for the almonds only had 10 hives.

There is an opportunity for amateur beekeepers to participate in this pollination event, but you do need to put in time and effort in late summer-autumn to ensure that your hives will be strong enough for the start of August.

I will discuss the requirements of and best ways to prepare your hives for the almond pollination next issue. RB

[rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au)



# 2017 INNER WEST BEEKEEPERS FIELD DAY

SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER  
10:00AM – 3:30PM

1A MARION STREET, LEICHHARDT (NEXT TO THE FIRE STATION)

## Programme

- 10:00am Welcome/Introduction
- 10:05am Honey the Natural Healer
- 10:30am Pests and Diseases of Bees
- 11:00am **Demonstrations:**
  - ⊕ Hive Management
  - ⊕ First Aid for Bee Stings
- 11:30am **Demonstrations:**
  - ⊕ Frame and Box Assembly
  - ⊕ Opening a Native Stingless Beehive
- 12:00pm **Demonstration:**
  - ⊕ Hive Opening for Beginners
- 1:00pm **BBQ with Mead Tasting!**
- 1:30pm **Demonstration:**
  - ⊕ Extracting Honey
- 2:00pm **Demonstrations:**
  - ⊕ Uncapping Knives
  - ⊕ Preparing Honey for Sale and Show
- 2:30pm 10 Things Every Beekeeper Should Know
- 3:00pm Thanks and Close



<https://www.beekeepers.asn.au/inner-west>  
[innerwest.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:innerwest.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au)

**FREE ADMISSION  
PUBLIC  
WELCOME!**

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**WORKSHOPS!  
NATIVE BEES  
OPENING A HIVE  
REMOVING HONEY  
ASSEMBLING HIVES**

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**SPEAKERS!  
BEE FIRST AID  
HONEY SHOWING  
HIVE HEALTH  
ADVICE**

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**REFRESHMENTS!  
BBQ  
MEAD TASTING  
HONEY CAKES  
TEA & COFFEE**

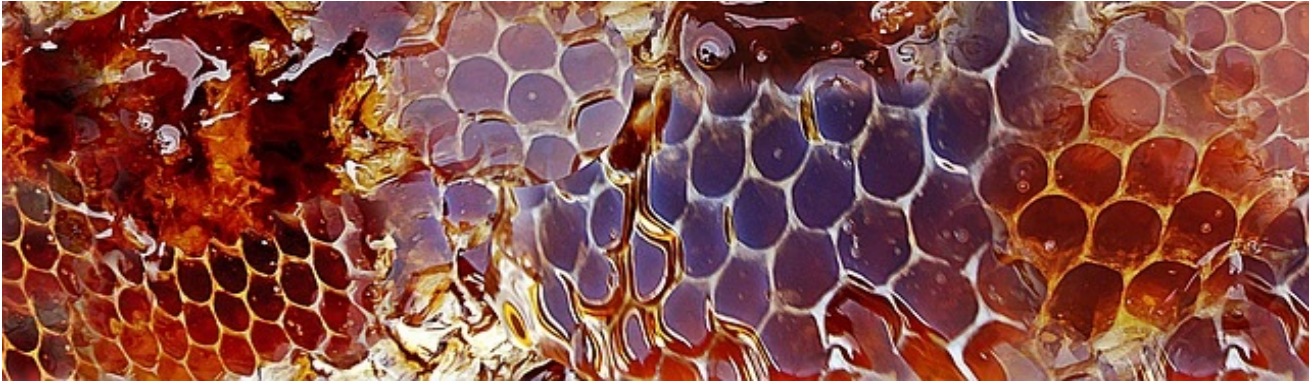
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**STALLS!  
LOCAL HONEY  
CANDLES  
LIP BALM  
T-SHIRTS  
PRINTS  
BOOKS**

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**INNER WEST BEEKEEPERS**  
[www.innerwestbeekeepers.org.au](http://www.innerwestbeekeepers.org.au)  
0432 505 844 / 0433 755 719  
<https://www.facebook.com/sydneyinnerwestbeekeepers/>





## The Inveterate Inventor ... is still waging war on crystallising honey

Last issue, we heard about the horrors of hot water baths. Now it's the turn of DIY warming cabinets – the good and the bad

**NOTE: All electrical work associated with mains electricity MUST be performed by a licenced electrician**

OLD FRIDGES make excellent warming cabinets to de-candy drums of honey. Fridges are usually well insulated and have a suitable shelf for the honey drum. The extra removable shelves can be used when de-candyng jars of honey.

Incandescent light bulbs have traditionally been used as the source of heat and often old mechanical thermostats were used for temperature control. These days, incandescent light bulbs have largely been replaced with high efficiency LED or fluorescent bulbs which produce little heat. Incandescents are still widely available however. Typically one or two 60W bulbs or their equivalent are ideal. Low wattage heat bulbs (as used in incubators) are another option.

The image shows a small bar fridge that has been converted to a warming cabinet. With no freezer compartment, the whole fridge space is available. The heater is a commercial unit. The older mechanical thermostats, using a bimetal strip or gas bellows have been replaced with a modern digital thermostat. They often have all the plugs and sockets in place. Brewing stores often stock relatively inexpensive thermostats.

Modern digital thermostats can control the temperature limit and range to within 0.1C. They often use a remote sensor to measure the temperature allowing the thermostat controls to be outside of the fridge cabinet. Typically the upper temperature is set at 35C to 40C. Note the thermostat probe is placed via a hole in the fridge cabinet so the probe samples the temperature of the air inside the fridge. The thermostat is fixed in place to avoid the disaster now described.



The Inveterate Inventor had an earlier fridge that had been used for many years as a warming cabinet. The fridge had the thermostat sensor loose in the cabinet with their lead running to the control unit via the fridge door.



The heater was loaded with a drum of candied honey and heating commenced. Alas, the thermostat had fallen out of the fridge and so was now measuring the temperature of the air in the room while the heater was heating the air within the fridge. Needless to say the heater increased the cabinet temperature to the point where the plastic lining of the fridge melted and the bottom of the honey drum was scorched. A fire was averted more by luck than good management. Now the thermostat sensor is fixed in place!

Another reason to heed that official advice and legal regulations: electrical work associated with mains electricity must be performed by a licenced electrician.

## Here's another reason to attend the **Tocal College Beekeepers' Field Day, October 14**

Visit the ABA stall and pick up your free copy of the **BASIC GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING BEES AND SIMILAR SPECIES**. This fold-out brochure is filled with information and photos of 14 bees, wasps, hornets and flies. It's a great resource for anyone interested in Australia's insect populations, and something that every beekeeper should keep on hand to identify creatures commonly mistaken for honey bees.

Originally produced by the NSW DPI, the ABA has funded a reprint of the brochure for our members. We have one free copy per member, plus extra copies on sale for \$1 each. Pick your free copy up on October 14 – we'll check you name off on our membership list – or, if you can't make it, we will be arranging distribution via clubs later.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**In Australia, bumblebees are established only in Tasmania. If found in mainland Australia this bee must be reported to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.**

**The Basic Guide to Identifying Bees and Similar Species will show you what to look for, and lists the bumblebee's distinguishing features.**



## **LIMITED SPACE: INNER WEST FIELD DAY Leichhardt October 28**

Don't miss out. ABA members can secure tickets to presentations at this event, by booking via Meet Up. The day is free but numbers are limited to hear the speakers, which include Shona Blair, Bruce White, Arthur Garske, Dave Wilson, Bryn Hutchinson and Len Verrenkamp.

**<https://tinyurl.com/y9t6rouz>**

## ABA Club contacts

To join a club, go to [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au) and click APPLY TO JOIN. Applications are forwarded to individual clubs for approval

<b>CLUB</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS</b>
<b>Bathurst</b>	<b>Kerry Klemens</b>	secretary@bathurstbeekeepers.org.au
<b>Bega Valley</b>	<b>Suellen O'Brien</b>	begavalley.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au
<b>Central Coast</b>	<b>Max Rae</b>	secretary@centralcoastbees.org
<b>Goulburn District</b>	<b>Lee Towle</b>	secretary@goulburnbeekeepers.asn.au
<b>Hawkesbury</b>	<b>Sheila Stokes</b>	hawkesbury.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au
<b>Hunter Valley</b>	<b>Linda Winn</b>	pclawinn@bigpond.net.au
<b>Illawarra</b>	<b>Geoff Henning</b>	lincres@ozemail.com.au
<b>Inner West</b>	<b>Mel Barrs</b>	melbarrs@hotmail.com
<b>Macarthur</b>	<b>Anna Grocholsky</b>	secretary@macbeekeepers.asn.au
<b>Manning Valley</b>	<b>Vicki Grace</b>	covenanttreasures@msn.com
<b>Mid North Coast</b>	<b>Philip Jury</b>	midnorthcoast.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au
<b>Mudgee</b>	<b>Claudia Wythes</b>	claudia.wythes@watershedlandcare.com.au
<b>Nepean</b>	<b>Sheila Stokes</b>	secretary@nepeanbeekeepers.com
<b>Northern Beaches</b>	<b>Paul Hoskinson</b>	northernbeaches.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au
<b>Northern Rivers</b>	<b>Sally McMahon</b>	sallyandkids13@gmail.com
<b>Parramatta</b>	<b>Robyn Alderton</b>	parramattabeekeepers@hotmail.com
<b>Shoalhaven</b>	<b>Tim Haddad</b>	shoalhavenbeekeepers@gmail.com
<b>Southern Highlands</b>	<b>Jim Stonier</b>	jwstonier@bigpond.com
<b>Sydney Central</b>	<b>Lisa Blythe</b>	secretary@sydneybeeclub.org.au
<b>Yass and District</b>	<b>Linda Swadling</b>	yass@beekeepers.asn.au

## USEFUL RESOURCES

Check out the Resources For Beekeepers tab on the website at [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au)  
AFB resources are gathered together on the ABA website at [beekeepers.asn.au/afb](http://beekeepers.asn.au/afb)

The new mandatory Beekeeping Code of Practice

<https://goo.gl/fbJTzt>

The Amateur Beekeeper is distributed by email to members of the Amateur Beekeeping Association of NSW.  
Editor: Sue Carney ([editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.asn.au)).

ABA President: Bruce White ([president@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:president@beekeepers.asn.au)). Vice President: Sheryl McIntosh ([vicepresident@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:vicepresident@beekeepers.asn.au)). Secretary: Dave Wilson ([secretary@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:secretary@beekeepers.asn.au)). Treasurer: Lyall Zweck ([treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:treasurer@beekeepers.asn.au)). Biosecurity Officer: Doug Purdie ([biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au)). Web Administrator: Sheila Stokes ([web@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:web@beekeepers.asn.au)). Branch Development Officer: Len Verrenkamp ([development@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:development@beekeepers.asn.au))