


THE BUZZ



The official newsletter of the Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society Inc. Est. 1979
 Website: gcabs.net.au  [Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeping Society](https://www.facebook.com/GoldCoastAmateurBeekeepingSociety)



A very busy time of year!

DATE SAVERS

The Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeper's Society inc. welcomes new members, existing members and visitors to attend our meetings. Non-members attending will be asked to make a gold coin donation.

MEMBER MEETINGS

Please bring a plate to share at our member meetings.

- **Sunday April 21, 2024** 10am-noon at GCABS Shed. ALL WELCOME. Topic: AFB and EFB management. Varroa Update.
- **Sunday May 19, 2024** 10am - noon at GCABS Shed WORLD BEE DAY. Topic: Swarm collection. We will have several simulated swarms present and will workshop how to carefully capture the bees. Live Bees will be present, byo PPE.
- **June 8-9th** Introduction to beekeeping class: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/introduction-to-beekeeping-class-8th-9th-june-2024-for-15yrs-tickets-864850139047?aff=erelexpmlt>
- **June 29 & 30th** Mudgeeraba Show - volunteers needed

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All welcome to attend our monthly online Committee meetings. [Email](#) the secretary and ask for the link. Seeking casual committee members to share the responsibilities on a rotating roster, no experience required.

From GCABS President



Are you looking for some beekeeping advice or guidance? If so, did you know that the GCABS provides a free mentoring service to members of the club? We have a team of experts who are on hand to help answer any of your questions.

Depending on your location, they may also be able to provide on-site guidance to help with your on-going learning. This free service is offered on a 'pay it forward' basis where all we ask is that you help out as a mentor once you have gained sufficient experience and confidence to be able to help others.

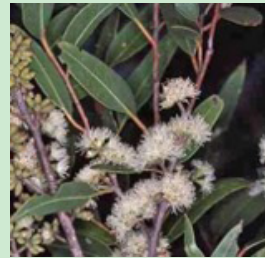
If you would like to use this free service, please send an email to our mentoring coordinator, Tony Herbetko, at gcabs.mentoring@beekeepers.asn.au.

Kind regards... Kathy

April Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

Submitted by Jim O'Regan

Banksia. Blackbutt. Broad-leaved Banksia. Broad-leaved Ironbark. Brown Bloodwood. Flooded Gum. Glycine. Golden Candlesticks. Groundsel Bush. Gum-topped Box. Hickory Wattle. Honeysuckle Oak. Malley Box. Mountain Coolibah. Paper-barked Tea Tree. River Sheoak. Rose Sheoak. Tumble-down Ironbark. White Box. White Stringybark. Easter Cassia (Easter Senna)



White Stringybark



Paper bark Tea-tree



WELCOME TO OUR HIVE!

GCABS is the Gold Coast's longest standing beekeeping club, offering a friendly environment and training for new to senior beekeepers. To all new members who have joined GCABS this month, we bid you a warm welcome.

Biosecurity Update

Keith Barton

Latest updates on the NSW Varroa Mite and Port Of Brisbane Varroa Mite situations can be found on the QBA site and DAF updates.

In summary, DAF surveillance located a single AHB nest at Port of Brisbane. This nest was euthanased and testing confirmed presence of varroa jacobsoni. The Movement Control Order remains in place. Please consult authoritative sources for the latest updates.

In other biosecurity news, as you perform your winter preparations and brood checks, please remain vigilant for brood diseases such as AFB. You should be mite testing your colonies during this winter preparation and reporting the results of your mite washes on the QLD DAF Bee123 form or appropriate NSW DPI site (as appropriate).

Port of Brisbane 22nd March update linked below:

<https://members.qbabees.org.au/Port-of-Brisbane-Incursion/13333148>

JOBS in Your Bee Yard this Month

How to clean a dirty smoker *By Keith Barton, Creekside Bees*

Every time you use your smoker, resin and tar build up. Eventually, the smoker no longer works efficiently and it can become difficult to light and keep smoking. Cleaning is essential, and here's my simple process that takes almost all the effort out of this job.



Step 1: Check how dirty your smoker is, perhaps it's good for a little while yet and all it needs is a quick clean of the spout and trivet. This old Beeco definitely could do with a clean!

Step 2: If your smoker is truly gummed up, like the Beeco above, then proceed to step 3

Step 3: You need to get your smoker **HOT!** Hot enough to begin to char the resin and tar that has accumulated.



Use a butane or other gas-fuelled torch to heat the smoker to a very hot temperature. This will liquify and char the resin and tar making it brittle and easy to scrape off. You can also achieve this with certain fireplace cleaners or a good hot fire in the smoker. However, the gas-torch approach is the most reliable and only takes a couple of minutes.

Step 4: When the smoker is thoroughly charred, you will see the tar and resin will be turning grey and cracking away from the metal. Let it cool for a few minutes (or grab some gloves!), and get your scraper (a hive tool works well). You can now work around

the lid and inside the smoker, scraping the charred remains clear. A flat screwdriver can help when clearing tight spots like deep in the spout of the smoker.



Step 5: Repeat steps 3 and 4 as needed until the smoker is clean to your satisfaction.

Job done, a clean Beeco ready for next inspection.

You should now be able to light the smoker and maintain the smoking for as long it has fuel!



Remember:

To minimise the risk of spreading disease, regularly scrape down the bellows and other exterior parts of the smoker where honey, wax, or propolis may accumulate.

Adventures in Beekeeping - Woodroffe Park Wild colony removal

By Kathy Knox

First let's differentiate between a managed colony (kept in a hive / combination of boxes of some sort, cared for by a beekeeper) and a feral or wild colony of bees who are living in the environment but are not actively managed by a beekeeper.

Next let's make a distinction between the feral colony that has taken up residence in a cavity space ... perhaps in a tree hollow, a brick wall, or under the floorboards, and occasionally beneath a recliner or in a boat or such sheltered and enclosed space ... and the feral colony who are building and living on exposed combs hanging from a tree branch or similar.

I was called to remove an exposed feral colony in Woodroffe Park at Southport on March 15, day before the local election. The colony were in a mature camphor laurel tree, about 6 metres above ground, and had been there for up to 12 months. Bees not causing any issues however with the busy polling place and public park the council were keen to have the bees relocated urgently. Council found my number on the ABA Swarms list.



Packing the car in the evening for a 6am start, what will I need in addition to the audacity to believe I can do this?

- A ground sheet
- An extending ladder
- A second ladder that can be used as a platform
- An empty 20L Bucket
- PPE: Gloves & Jacket
- Extension lead for power and a second extension lead in case
- 2 x 10 frame bee box
- 20 empty frames with no wire
- 10 frames with foundation for the vacuum box
- Loan of a Bee Vac
- Knife or hive tool , bee brush
- Queen cage or clip (substitute a clean takeaway food container from the cab of the ute)
- Ropes, straps and other random tools (shovel, rake).
- Tape / problem solving items
- Support from another team member
- Bit of courage



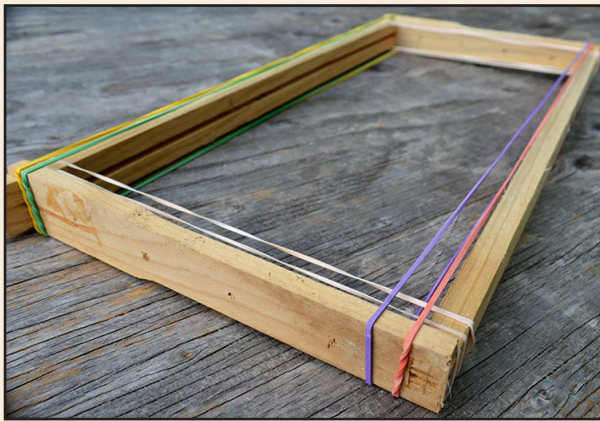
Having a council officer to oversee the operation is recommended in the event that there is no elevated work platform or cherry picker available for free at 6am the next day.

After recruiting a willing team member, securing power from a nearby office, lashing the ladder to the branch, and setting up a work platform on the back of the ute to get the bee vac as high as possible, we set about cutting the combs off and lowering these in the bucket to the workstation where one team member gently hoovered the bees into the safety of a box of foundation frames. The brood combs had very little honey stored but plenty of bees in all stages of development. These were laid in a box to be sorted out later.

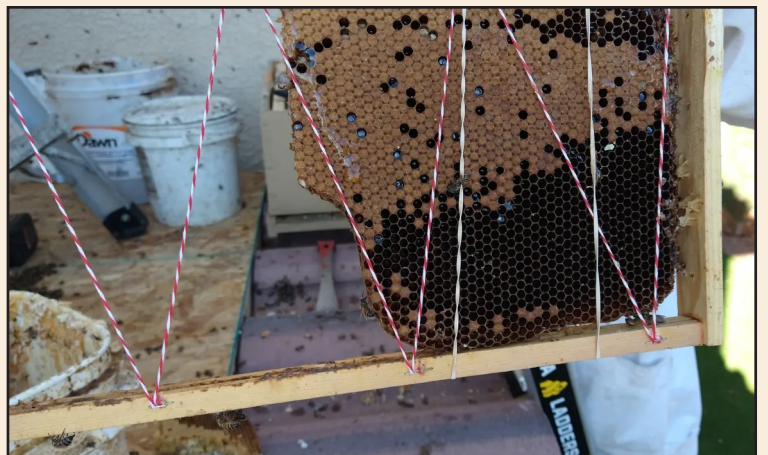


On completion of the job while having a yarn with the council guy I spotted a clump of bees beneath the tray of the ute on the woodchip. Walking over to have a look, low and behold there is the chocolate queen relaxing calmly with her retinue. Good thing she was not damaged in the chaos, and what a relief she has been located with certainty. The takeaway food container came into play here to carry the queen and co. home to be reunited with the two other components: the vac box bees and the box full of the brood combs.

Next stage of the job was to assemble the brood combs into the frames with rubber bands, and then place all components plus Queen into the one hive to repair and recoup. No images were collected of this stage however here is a guide for how to mount comb into a frame with rubber bands and some images borrowed from the internet:



I normally slip 5-6 rubber bands around the frame and scoot them to either end. Lay your frame down over the comb you are trying to save and use it as a guide to cut the comb so that it just fits inside the frame. Then just slip each rubber band along the frame to hold it in place. The bees will fix the comb and attach it to the frame within a week or so if there is a flow or you are feeding. The rubber bands will break within a couple weeks and the bees will try and pull them out of the hive. Once the comb is attached to the frame you can go ahead and remove bands to save them the trouble.



I will update on Woodroffe Park (this is the colony's name now) again in a future issue.

DISCLAIMER: GCABS do not recommend that you ever use a ladder to retrieve bees. Keep your feet firmly on the ground at all times. What on earth was I thinking!

Kathy

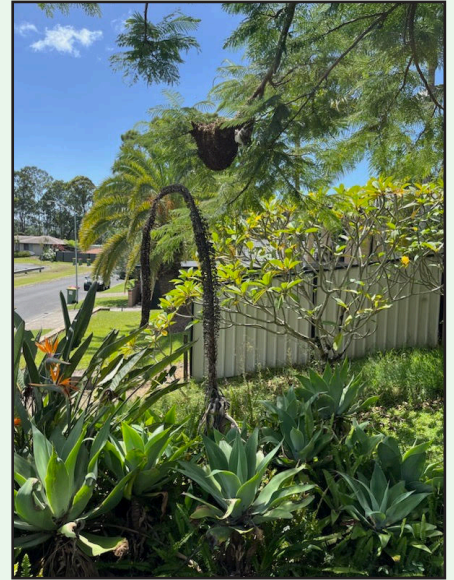
Elanora swarm collection

Submitted by Roger Peterson

On Saturday, three of the club's members successfully removed this hive from a tree at Elanora. The hive was attached to a tiny branch and in the last week, four sheets of brood had fallen off with the nurse bees consumed by cane toads. Fortunately not the queen.

Keith Barton and Graeme Smith carefully cut the branch and lowered the hive into a box. The bees were then removed with a bee vac and the sheets of brood comb fixed into three frames and place in a box. The bees in the bee vac were then put on top. In order to combat hive beetles, the hive was reduced to one box the next day with an AJ beetle trap added.

The hive will remain in situ for a few days before Keith removes it. All in all, a good morning's work and a happy resident as the bees were going to a safe home.



Trading Post

Looking to Buy? Gear to Sell? Send a clear written description and photograph to editor@gcabs.net.au for inclusion in the next buzz newsletter. Pictures say a thousand words.

Hall Hire

The GCABS hall is available for community groups to hire at reasonable hourly rates. To inquire please email secretary@gcabs.net.au

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