

## Your Club News

### *From the President*

Welcome members to our new newsletter, as yet unnamed, which we hope will keep you informed and in touch with each other in the present uncertain times.

Our March guest speaker Bruce White was again cancelled owing to the ongoing effects of COVID 19. Hopefully, Bruce will not give up on us and we will be able to get him back here sometime in the future. Bruce is a mine of knowledge on bees and a highly engaging communicator. As to when we have the next club meeting, time will tell.

The AGM last year was in May, at the present time it's anyone's guess when we have it this year because of the unprecedented disruption that COVID 19 is having.

The April Club meeting would have focused primarily on two subjects, sugar shake testing as it's 'Sugar Shake awareness month' and 'closing down the hive' at the conclusion of the honey season, which of course involves the all important hive / brood inspection and recording documentation of the health of the hive. Read on for more information on these topics.

The Col Pulling competition is on in April though the NSW ABA AGM and Conference at Bathurst has been cancelled. Honey, even though it is scarce to come by, has been submitted by Vicki and Scott and Chris Bawn to enter into the honey judging competition. Wish us luck!

At this present time, exactly when and where this momentous pandemic event is taking us and when some sort of resolution is achieved is unknown. In the meantime, we'll keep you informed through this newsletter. And Happy Easter everyone!

Robert

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## 2019/2020 Committee

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Sandra Sargent

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### LIBRARIAN

Paula Fulton



See message from Mark Page re sugar shaking and links to youtube videos

## Sugar Shake Kits

For those members who don't have a kit please contact Vicki to receive one (phone number above)

## Competition Time!

We need a name for our newsletter! So put your thinking caps on and send your suggestions to Robert at [robertodibben@hotmail.com](mailto:robertodibben@hotmail.com) by the end of April.

Contributions for next newsletter are also welcome – again, email them to Robert

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM MARK PAGE, BEE BIOSECURITY OFFICER SURVEILLANCE, NSW DPI

### COVID 19 and visiting hives not on your own property

As we at NSW DPI have not put in place the COVID 19 restrictions I can only give you our interpretation of the current legal conditions as outlined in the NSW Public Health Orders related to COVID 19.

If you would like direct legal advice regarding the situation you will need to contact an authority on the Public Health Act – as this is what the conditions are enforced under.

However, on reading the public advice surrounding the conditions outlined on this page it clearly states that:

**“You may only leave home with a reasonable excuse, including to:**

- ....
- Undertake legal obligations
- ....”

As a registered beekeeper in NSW there are certain legal requirements you must adhere to while keeping bees. In particular you are currently bound by the General Biosecurity Duty to prevent, eliminate or minimize biosecurity threats under your control and you must not allow hives to become exposed, abandoned or neglected. Following July 1 the [Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice](#), will also legally come into effect which includes your legal requirement to perform a minimum of 2 hive inspections per year.

## BORED IN ISOLATION?

Why not plant a few bee friendly plants in your garden ready for the spring?

Here are a few that bees absolutely love!

### SALVIA



### CALENDULA



### BUDDLEJA



Under these legal conditions of beekeeping it is our current interpretation that you would have a "reasonable excuse to leave home to undertake legal obligations" and attend your hives.

As sugar shaking in itself is not a legal requirement in its own right until after 1 July I would encourage you to think about whether you can combine an upcoming hive visit with other necessary hive attendance activities. If you have no urgent need for checking your hives at this time then I would encourage you to consider delaying your sugar shake until spring. Please note that April is simply our promotional month, but a sugar shake test can be completed at any time that suits you and our webpage and results submission form are accessible all year round.

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Sugar shake Link DPI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48vomY-lf2Q>

Hive Inspection Link DPI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrMfOWhnlOo>

## Getting Your Bees Ready for Winter Hive Inspection

It's mandatory that your hive(s) are inspected a minimum of twice in a season (can be more of course), once at the beginning and once at the end of the honey season, which is considered to be around the middle of April (ANZAC Day).

The trusty DPI Bee AGSKILLS book can be referenced on Page 30 under the heading 'Open, Inspect And Close a Hive'

### Pre-Winter Inspection

- The first thing to do when getting your bees ready for Winter is to do a pre-Winter inspection of your hive.
- The final inspection before the onset of Winter, in this area, should take place in April or the beginning of May at the latest.
- Pick a sunny day on the warmer side and remove the lid and any supers. In doing so, estimate the amount of honey stored.
- Thoroughly inspect the brood for disease symptoms and, at the same time, check the status of the colony and queen.
- This is a good time to do a sugar shake test for the presence of Varroa.



### Stores

- More colonies die from starvation than from any other cause during Winter. Leave plenty of stores on your hive for Winter. If your bees don't use it over Winter, you will have honey at the beginning of the new season.
- Compact your bees into one or two boxes with enough Winter stores. You won't be opening the hive during cold weather.
- The basic guide is to only give the bees enough room to accommodate them. The tighter they cluster the better, and you will be surprised how many bees can fit in a box.
- Consider removing any queen excluders so the bees can move freely - the cluster will always locate itself in the warmest area.
- If the colony is on the weaker side, it is desirable to over-winter the colony in just a brood box as a single deck hive. This will be easier for them to keep warm. The colony should have three or more frames full of honey.



## Meet our Members

Janne and Tony Moran began their beekeeping journey in September 2018 with a beekeeping course at Robert and Paula's place in Moorall Creek. Here's what they have been up to:

"We recently opened our hive to find it packed with bees, more than we had seen previously. We swapped out 2 frames from the brood box. On one of these frames we observed a drone hatching, what fun, so interesting. Poor little one took 15 minutes and straight away hopped into a feed of uncapped honey.



The other 8 frames were full of brood and capped honey so we left these alone. In our honey super all 10 frames were full and capped. So we extracted 20 kgs of honey, put the stickies back and will check them April 25 when we close our hive down. We have stored in our fridge a full frame of capped honey as back up food should we need it.

We are living this adventure, enjoying our own honey, making wax wraps and mead. Tony has made two batches of mead. We have tasted it and it is drinkable. Some has been stored to see what age does to it and other bottles we drink over ice.

Planning some mulled mead for winter.

## Location and Site of Apiary

- The siting of an apiary, important at any time of year, is of concern during cooler months.
- Locate your hives in a dry sunny area, preferably with a north-east aspect and protected from prevailing winds.
- Winter months are often wet and vehicle access to the site can be a problem. Take this into consideration when choosing a position to over-winter bees.



## Other Factors to Consider

- It is often an advantage to reduce the hive entrance to 50-75mm. Tape or foam rubber can be used to do this. This will allow weaker colonies to guard their entrance more effectively & keep the hive warmer. When the weather warms up you will notice the bees will start to remove the tape or foam.
- Paint lids black for more heat in the hive. Just be aware that the bees will react to the smell of the paint while you are painting the lid.
- Remember the best time for over-wintering preparation is autumn.



## What Do I Do Over Winter?

- Do a stocktake of your bee gear.
- Order any equipment needed for the next season. Better to do this in Winter so that you have what you need by Spring as it can be more difficult to get the equipment in Spring.
- Repair, repaint & prepare hive equipment for the Spring.



- Check hives during Winter by observing how the bees are coming and going from the hive.
- The weight of a hive can be checked from time to time by lifting the back of the hive by the hand grip.

## What else can you do over winter?

You could do all or some of the above, and then perhaps, if you have the time and resources, go on a cruise, take a road trip around Australia, go on a skiing holiday, take dancing lessons, oh but, on second thoughts, you might be better off to put it off until next year assuming this horrible virus situation is over and things go back to normal.

In the meantime it's a chance to do heaps of reading and get stuck into the garden, plant winter vegies and plenty of nectar producing plants, trees and shrubs

On a more serious note, the added disruption of the corona virus on top of the drought and bushfires has been incredibly disruptive, causing a loss of continuity for the club over the season. On the positive side of things, the late summer rains, though very late, have put us potentially in a positive position for a good spring and start for next bee season.

If anyone has a problem, give us a call, via Vicki (number on front page) and we will do what we can to help.

Cheers

Robert D