

Minutes for Valley Bees monthly meeting • 11 FEBRUARY 2018

APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Kayle Findlay, Phil and Debbie and Andrew Browne, Skaidra Craig, Pauline Alexander, Robyn Bowman, Dan and Marilyn Luck, Diane Simpson, Dave and Trish Mallabar, Roy and Maureen Groves, Cynthia Pearson, Howie Bizzell, Rob McCausland and Don Turnbull.

We welcome newcomers, and guest speaker Lenny Weller. Noted that we are wishing Pauline best wishes and good health.

MINUTES PREVIOUS

Noted that Minutes were received through email and post. No business arising from the Minutes. Athol moved they be accepted, 2nd Kaye.

TREASURER'S REPORT

MRCCC account

\$3838-08 from last meeting.

Membership \$40

Withdrawn (for the bee shed) \$470

Balance \$3408-08

Bendigo account

Deposited \$56 (from entry fees).

Paid for 15 books. Paid for 150 apithor.

Withdrawals \$15, \$50 and \$95 for the website.

Balance \$3102-23

In total: \$6510-31

Jeanne moved that they be accepted. 2nd Mark.

Reminded that we are auspiced by MRCCC, membership goes into this MRCCC account. All other accounts/dollars go through our Bendigo account.

Motion: That motions passed at the meeting be clearer. Read motion out clearly for all to understand, and document well.

APITHOR

Apithor has gone up the last 2 orders, so close to \$6 dollars cost now. Valley Bees have always subsidised this cost for our members, and we were charging \$5, the actual cost is \$5-88. You pay up to \$9 if you buy Apithor yourself. By VB ordering a full carton, freight free. Motion: Sara moved to have price for the Apithor for members to be changed to \$6. Put to the vote, and more than half attendees voted to change to \$6. It will now be \$6 to members.

SHED

It was requested we provide a list of items of what is going into the new Bee Shed. We have committed to spending \$3550, and \$1550 still to be spent.

Still to do on shed: Aluminium skirting, Paint floor \$100, flashing, make up door, locks and benches (benches are in Brisbane, need to be brought up, but they are bigger than what a ute can safely carry), sink (supplied from HB Farm - Mark to organise something a bit bigger than a ute).

VIC - HONEYBEE SESSION

Held at Landcare last Saturday, drizzly weather. 10 people still turned up. Rain stopped at 9-00. Put nuc hive into our VB flow hive. Noted that Mark and Maree are overseeing the flow hive operations, and teaching people/working with people through the process - working well.

We also have another nuc - a few frames had chalk brood - it is going to Jae. It was transferred into another empty box, nice and clean, not much chalk brood now, well under control.

We had one hive from last year which had been very nasty, so replaced the Queen, tickled pink! Bees are now very very quiet.

Nothing else, except that on and off raining extended the smoko!

HIVE BEETLE

Warning to look out for hive beetle just now - hives are very much more susceptible to SHB at the moment. Conditions are perfect for them, so beetles are very active. SHB hates sunlight, hates smoke. If a frame looks "damp", hold it to the sun, and see if you can see the SHB / SHB larva.

DRONE LAYING QUEENS

Through this year a number of queen cells purchased were not successful, as very poor mating conditions turned the Queens into drone layers. Hives observed with drone cells only in the hive.

Noted from Lenny Weller that if the bees in a queenless hive think there is a problem in the hive, the laying workers will kill any new introduced Queen, thinking that she is the problem. Some of the workers will continue to keep laying unfertilised eggs, which will become drones.

Athol: when you have a hive with laying workers, take the whole hive down to paddock (at least 50 meters away), shake all bees onto the ground, the laying workers can't fly so they will all be wiped out, Replace the hive back into its original position quickly, and all remaining bees will return.

Joan noted that with a cranky hive, if you replace the Queen, it takes time for the hive to take on the new calmer vibe.

QUACKING QUEENS

Glenbo played a recording he captured of the Queen bees quacking, and unusual and almost eerie sound they make in their communications. The recording will be posted this month onto the website and the VB facebook.

HONEYBEE FARM SESSION - JAN

Reported that it was a very interesting day with the most people that have ever attended this event. All hives in good order, but some hives need attention. Boxes and frames need replacing.

Extracted 15 frames, all had a turn at uncapping and extracting. Next workshop here next Saturday.

Also flow hive, Mark: there now are flow hives both here at Honeybee, and at Landcare Nursery site. We looked at Kaye's hive here, drained one frame out. Showed guests the operation.

Noted that Derek and Mark did concreting.

NATIVE BEE SESSION - DEREK

Had a great morning this morning, 18 people turned up - very good numbers. One of the native hives (at last meeting it was noted that they were gone), had a look inside the box, lot of hatched cells still, so not sure, it just might have got too hot, brood to hot. Took brood out and connected it to other hive with pipe, using the 'MacIntosh Method.'

Bill has taken hives from the hive mother hive in his block wall - he has created 8 new hives already, using a T-junction and polypipe. We will look at documenting his successful method over the coming months, and make that document and process available to the broader bee community.

Notes also that at the next Landcare Day, there is a log that has been there for a long time, and plan to add an extension, giving the bees the option to populate a new hive. This don't touch existing hive in log.

NATIVE HIVES AT MARY VALLEY COLLEGE, IMBIL

We have been asked to check on, and replace, some of the boxes in the hives at the school. May be in need of a split / transfer. They are very very full, and boxes are in poor condition. Glenbo has passed onto Derek the details of the teacher in charge of the garden / bees at the school. Derek to contact teacher.

Confirm that we need a Blue Card to operate at the school, or whether the teacher being present there on the day is enough.

Motion: that Derek provides expertise in improving the native hives at the school. 2nd Rob.

Noted that previously we had passed that VB is supplying the new box for the school, and that the school has asked if there could be an observation element to the hive, so the children could follow the progression of the hive.

LENNY WELLER

Lenny has agreed to come in today to discuss Qld Muck Disorder. Below is a brief overview of his guest speaker talk.

Note: So far, it has been proven in research to be a non-pathogenic condition of bees, has been shown to not be a virus, and does not appear to be caused by micro-organisms. The same research throws suspicion on Qld Muck Disease being as a result of an excess of aluminium or iron in the bees diet.

Lenny started bees in 1947, his Dad had 50 hives. In 1953 they lost all their hives, with local newspaper headlines saying thousands of hives dieing in SE Qld. A beekeeper mag called it a 'mystery virus.' Over the years it has been called 15 to 20 different names: 'Disappearing Bees,' 'Disappearing Disorder,' 'Qld Muck Disease/Disorder,' 'Black Cell Virus,' 'Crippled wing Disease,' and many more interpretations.

In 1994 he had 4 years of the disease in his hives, in 2000 he had 5 years of the disease. He has lost 1500 hives in past 2 years. We've had it here for 150 years. Can feed hives a pollen substitute and fix them up, but it costs money. Some believe adding lime to the soil helps as well. It is prevalent throughout SE Qld and Northern NSW.

The disorder mostly affects the brood in the hive, but can also seriously affect the adult bees and the general health of the hive, as well as kill off the whole hive. In on-going strong conditions, the hive can fully recover.

Basically, it is a nutritional problem. If below average rainfall is experienced for a period, high aluminium levels are made available in the soil. If this is followed by storms, there can be an excess aluminium uptake by forage trees. This excess aluminium goes into the sap, then into the pollen. This pollen, when collected by foraging bees and fed to the young bee larva, is toxic to the larva, the larva gets diarrhea, and can die in the cell. Adult bees don't eat pollen, but ingest the pollen to make 'Bee Bread' to feed to the larva.

It appears during Spring and early Summer, and is indicated by 'peppered brood' (ie not a full consistency to the brood areas, capped cells and empty cells are peppered all across the frame). The dead brood takes on a brown appearance, can appear dried out or liquefied, though it is not sticky as it would appear if it was AFB or EFB.

Another indicator is very low levels of stored pollen, or no stored pollen at all, in and around the brood frames.

It is also indicated by unhealthy looking larva. Basically, healthy larva should always appear white, and as the shape of a perfect letter 'C'. If the larva is straightened out, it slides down and lie in bottom of the cell.

If the larva is brownish, misshaped, distorted, straightened out, or not a perfect C shape, this could well be an indicator of Qld Muck.

Lenny indicated in his talk that he believes the Muck Disorder greatly affects native bees as well as wasps. He also said aluminium poisoning affects animals and humans as well. Animals know it's poison, koalas will test the leaves in 4 different places, before deciding where and what to eat. They leave the toxic trees. Possums also are known to test the sap of trees for the toxins.

But certainly Lenny offered an amazing over-view of the disorder, and some good advice and suggestions. Thanks to Lenny Weller for his valuable insight, and sharing his extensive knowledge with us here today.

Athol and Glenbo indicated that in their recent discovery of they believe to be the disorder, it was obvious something was very amiss in the affected hives, they were suffering, the brood looked very poorly, it was peppered in appearance. This appeared over a period of 10 days or so, but that all hives recovered fully and are continuing. Except one nuc hive which battled and did not recover.

It was also observed by Athol and Glenbo that at exactly the same time period, their native bee hive under the verandah, was tossing out dead and discoloured brood for this full period. In large amounts, on the surface under the entrance. Being worried, they asked our native bee experts to check the hive 2 weeks later, and it was a 100% perfect healthy hive, with no sign of brood disorder at all. No sign of dead or damaged brood. So it begs the question - does it exist in native bees as well?

Noted by Athol was that aluminium is in all acidic soils. Only after rain drops to a certain level, the aluminium makes itself available. The actual Nitrogen is responsible for dissolving aluminium into sap. As seen on a recent SBS series 'Mother Earth,' storms drop 20 tonnes of nitrates on the earth daily. Food for thought!

GYMPIE SHOW

It was discussed that for the 'Honey in comb' section at the Gympie Show, it will no longer be in a jar, but now 'Comb in Honey' will be entered as a slab of comb in a flat container. Samples of this will be presented at the March meeting, and photos and specifications and suggestions will be uploaded into a document on the website after the March meeting.

Reg quietly declared that he'll beat Tom anyway, so no need for Tom to enter the comb honey!

FIRST AID KIT

It's to be acknowledged that a very generous donation of a comprehensive and effective First Aid kit has been made anonymously to the club. Thank you to the donor, very much appreciated!

EPIPENS

Noted that we need to check Epipens for expiry/renewal date. Stated that Landcare Epipen good to May.

DATE FOR BEE OPEN DAY

We need to find a date for this years event. Noted that there were quite a considerable number of suggestions, ranging from July through to late September. Some of the issues are: October is too late (it's after the Spring management time, and too hot), July is too early to perform live native hive splits, it needs to fit in around school holiday times, availability of the school hall, other events on. So wish us all well in coming up with a date!!!!

It will be discussed with the school to provide some option dates/Saturdays that suit them, and we will do a little research on availability of a few of our key presenters/sellers. Presented at March meeting.

MEDICINAL HONEY

Honey in WA from the Jarrah tree, was discussed on a recent ABC Landline show. Its medicinal properties are very very high. Good discussion followed on all medicinal honeys all around the world. Bill noted that it can cost \$325 for a small bottle of Manuka. He recently travelled to NZ, bus trip, bee hives in every paddock, like filing cabinets! Scott noted that on ABC's Checkout program, the well researched evidence shows its greatest value as topical, any other claim for internal use is not verified. Flavia noted that Manuka should not be ingested. Topically it's good. Our unheated/unprocessed honeys have effective peroxide benefits. If you really want wound healing, then the tested Medicinal/Jelly bush/Manuka is certainly better.

BEE REGISTRATION NUMBER

Maree moved that Valley Bees applies for a Registration number and Biosecurity number for Valley Bees. Kaye 2nd.

PLASDENE

Scott is visiting Plasdene in Brisbane in the next 10 days, if anyone requires something , contact him and he can pick it up.

HEARING

It was noted that a number of members have trouble hearing the full content of the meeting, and that some spots that you sit make it hard to hear. also some members do have hearing issues. Valley Bees has a Mike and PA system, and this will be brought into the march, and all future, meetings.

NO RAFFLE

Sorry, no raffle today, we just didn't cover for Pauline very well did we?!!!!

MEETING CLOSED 3PM ON THE DOT!

Coffee, cakes, savories and quality bee-banter followed.