

End Of Year Celebrations . . .

Our Valley Bees End-Of-Year Celebration will be held at the Honeybee Farm, following the December Meeting, 8th December. We are assuming 40 to 50 people coming to End Of Year, so will work on 45. The Club will supply the BBQ and salads.

Members to bring along a dessert please.

We tried a list of dessert-bringers, so that we didn't double-up on the desserts. So far we have: Besides, what is the real problem if there end up being 13 Pavlovas and 26 Black-forest cakes? Huh? Pauline - bringing large green salad, Maree - BBQ meats (and vegetarian option) and 2 salads (potato and pasta?), Erin and Glenbo - dips and biscuits. Bill - his Special Sweet Potato Pie 9looking forward to it already!

. . . and a farewell to Phil and Debbie and Andrew

Sadly, we learn of the departure of our wonderful hosts, Phil and Debbie and Andrew from the Honeybee Farm. They are moving on in late December. We will miss them greatly, both as a Club, and as friends. They have been a wonderful addition to our lives; in all bee-business; in facilitating of meetings and sessions; and in friendship. They have always been there to put in the extra attention to detail and always cheery to help.

Glenbo mentions that he will particularly miss the Extra-Curricula Post-Meeting Rib-Digging Sessions with Andrew. I wonder if he will miss them as much?

We wish the Beesome-Threesome much luck in their new ventures, and hope to see them a-plenty at bee events all throughout the coming years.

Straight after the meeting, will hold a thank you session for Phil, Debbie and Andrew.

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Newcomers - we welcome Regula and Danny.

Apologies received from Erin, Tom, Athol, Eric and Jeanne, Kaye, Ann and Frank leBacq.

October Minutes

Report that planned event - Duck Ponds Gold rush market - was rained out for the day, and no display was held.

Next Sunday 17th November will be the RSL 100th Celebration in Nelson Reserve, 11am to 7pm, Valley Bees to share in a display.

Sara moved that Minutes be approved, 2nd Mark.

Change of bank signatories - completed.

Vic and Erin will be attending the First Aid Course on the Coolola Coast. Club to pay for 2 attendees.

Facebook - Glenbo following up on contact with kay, linking with Erin.

Treasurers Report

Bendigo and MRCCC Accounts

\$3587-87

\$5402-39 - Additions \$100 - Total \$5502-39

Moved Maree, 2nd Marj

Change to Open Day Input

Maree - suggested that meetings for Open Day, instead of Cafe meetings, that they be held on the mornings before our monthly meetings, so that all members can have more input towards the Open Day planning and organising.

Change of Meeting Dates

Also suggested that there are 2 changed monthly meeting dates in 2020. In October the meeting falls on the Bathurst weekend, and in May it falls on mother'd day. so suggested that these 2 meetings be brought forward to the 1st Sunday of may, and the first Sunday of October. Glenbo to make adjustments to out 2020 Calendar that will be posted on the website.

Moved by Maree, Merv 2nd. Passed by meeting.

Show Sponsorship

Voted to keep up the \$30 sponsorship from Valley Bees for a prize. Last Show we (QBA) had to find our own sponsorships. The QBA was \$250 short at last show. Seems the days of flexibility are over. Sara moved \$30. Mark 2nd.

It's Tough out there for the Bees

No matter what the immediate conditions, it will still be a tough year next year for honey. For example, as a result of the drought and the fires, there will be no Yellow Box for 4 years, and there will be an Iron Bark

shortage, just to name a few. There is a current honey shortage, and so a higher price.

Forestry

Every year Pauline pays for many sites. Noted that commercial beekeepers pay Forestry for every site they use. Each site is \$143-60 per year, whether it is used or not. They do not maintain roads, up to the beekeeper to fix the access roads. HQ Plantations, DERM, State Forests. and there are some private plantations, but Government says that they can't be renewed.

Government has declared that all beekeepers will be out of the National Parks by 2024. They have now extended the deadline (for beekeepers to be out) until 2026. If a beekeeper has not used a site for the past 2 years, they will now lose the site, it will be classified as "inaccessible."

Local member Tony Perrett is very supportive of the beekeepers when it comes to the Forestry issue.

It was advised not to discuss the 2024 further, until QBA releases a statement with the accurate details.

Grant Successful

Our Valley Bees Gympie Regional Council Grant for 2020 Bee Open Day (for \$2400) has received approval. Round of applause.

Fire Ban and use of Hive Smokers

There is currently a fire ban in the region, we have applied for information regarding the lighting of bee smokers during this period, but have not as yet received any word that the smokers have been banned, they are a contained fire, and are okay for now, with great care taken. Erin is keeping in tune with this, and the QBA are following through on requests for more info.

Nuplas Boxes

Nuplas boxes that club ordered, Erin had invoice. Sara gave breakdown of costs. We brought one box, and one was donated to the club by Nuplas for free.

Sara brought in from Erin plastic foundation inserts to take place of wax foundation, for the Nuplas boxes. Costs \$1 a sheet.

If use plastic foundation, paint both sides with melted wax. Noted: This extreme heat will melt wax off the plastic foundation sheets. Best in Winter time.

Out west is currently a bee-disaster, so hot even insulated hives are suffering.

QBA meet in Murgon in 2 weeks

Couldn't get anywhere in Gympie for the QBA meeting, but no-one interested in holding event.

So in Murgon

Vic's Report

First Saturday of the Month Bee Sessions held last Saturday. Weather was all grey, raining all way in.

Hmmmm, were the thoughts. People still turned up in bulk, weather broke, had a good session.

Started a few nucs, a few were re-housed, 3 were transferred. We went to a bit of trouble, each nuc had brood, eggs, couple frames honey, and frames of drawn comb, no foundations were used.

If foundation in these conditions, they'd stay as foundation until the season got better. A dribble of honey coming into the Landcare hives, but only a little more than the immediate needs of the bees.

Pollen and Nectar

Pauline noted that she has been feeding her bees for a number of months now, just no nectar and food coming in. Noted that in Maryborough / Tin Can Bay Road, there were loads of flowers, so moved hives there. In the first week the bees were eating their stores, in the 2nd week, had to take water, and there was no honey coming in (just a dribble coming in). So the flowering of the trees can be quite deceiving in regards to availability of both nectar and pollen.

Also noted that the periods of strong wind has blown the flowers off the trees.

Nucs

It has been a very difficult year for starting nucs. Vic said that the full frame of honey supplied in the new nuc was eaten by the time the new Queen started laying. Vic uses a 2nd story on nucs, to be able to provide extra honey supplies, using honey out of the big boxes to feed nucs. Challenging.

There have been 21 nucs ordered just through Landcare sessions alone. It is costing a lot of honey to make the healthy nucs. Plus there is an extra frame of honey supplied when sending the nuc off.

At Landcare, all hives are healthy, no extracting this time. A very successful, full crowd of attendees.

Went up to Bills place afterwards, rained again all the way, but cleared once we were there. Gazebo out, and transferred 10 nucs in the arvo.

Noted: Keep an eye on frames, people were taking too many frames for nucs and for honey. Be very careful in these extreme conditions.

Sara: Bees going wild on her cadagi, and on the pecans for a few days.

Vic: Taken no honey out since January, kept it all in the hives or used to strengthen any weaker hives.

Greg: In the riparian river zones, he has got some very good honey coming in from the River gums in

particular, and they are making lots of wax. Seems the river zones have been healthy for the bees.

Feeding Bees:

Take a clip-lock sandwich bag, mix white sugar to warm water 1 to 1, or 2 sugar to 1 water. Mix until fully dissolved and clear. Use bigger 18 x 17cm bags. Create 1/2 a litre of syrup, place into bags, seal, lay on top of frames in honey super, gently create a dozen or so small prick holes.

Use white or castor sugar, not brown. Do not use honey as a feeder.

Replace once a week in a single, twice a week in a double.

If the syrup is too strong / too much sugar, the bees get the poops. If solution is too weak, it stimulates the Queen to lay more eggs. Most common proportion is 1 to 1. With feeding, the hive won't get bigger, but will maintain its strength.

At the moment, it seems some pollen is still coming in, but if this stops, you will need to feed a protein as well (the sugar syrup provides sugars/energy only, the building food is the pollen).

If the syrup is fed over a prolonged period, care needs to be taken that the "honey" / energy created in the hive remains in the brood box, and that once nectar starts coming in again, fresh frames need to be in the hive to capture the true honey, it is important that none of the sugar-honey gets into our harvested honey.

Noted: that when the bees are eating their honey supplies, you will see no uncapped honey, but there will be completely empty cells right up against the full capped cells. The bees eat the uncapped honey first.

Bee Careful: A bad beekeeping season brings out the worst in some people. Hives have been stolen, some knocked over, others have had nuc hives split from them with the robbers replacing the brood frames with old empty frames. Same with the honey, storage drums stolen from the sites.

Bundaberg Robbery: Pauline noted that 40 boxes of honey were taken off the hives on site, and was stored on the site. When the owners came back less than 12 hours later, the whole lot was gone. When things get tough, and the bees suffer, the bees will rob other hives, under these extremes. Just like people will rob when things get tough.

Charters Towers

Beekeepers are going up to Charters Towers, report of good conditions there, but they are flooding the place.

Phorid fly story

Reports are coming in that the Phorid Fly (the adults normally enter the hive through an unprotected entrance, or during an opening of the hive/split), is being particularly active, and quite a number of hives have been lost recently. It was noted that sadly, and strangely, the Phorids were entering and destroying older, settled, fully secure hives. Somehow they are getting in through the entrance defences in a number of hives. In Gympie town, reports of 2 strong hives lost, and a further keeper lost 3 strong hives. All to Phorid. Out Kin Kin way, a report came in of the loss or weakening of over 30 hives all of which had not been opened for a long time, and were well established and secure. Observation needs to be made here. Opened one hive, and there were well over 100 phorid flies active inside. Peter Velenski is trapping the flies inside the hive, will wait on the report from him.

Glenbo and Erin are both attending the Native Bee Conference in Brisbane in early December, and will bring this subject up with the collective of experts and keepers there in attendance. Traps are also made up using vinegar and sugar water. Dean Haley recommends mixing stingless bee honey, a pinch of pollen and a hint of vinegar until a human can just smell it, then diluting it 50% with water. The traps certainly attract and destroy many adults, but it is not proven whether they reduce the problem. Another problem fly is also around, the Syrphid fly, a native to Australia. It is known as the wasp mimicking fly, and it enters the hive through its tiny tiny larva, crawling through the gaps/joins in the hive.

Phil Report:

Phil's report is very similar to Vics. Had an overcast day, drizzle, then cleared enough to get into hives. 18 people attended, 3 newcomers. Good to see. #1 hive strong, lots of SHB but very strong. #2 hive lost its Queen 6 weeks ago, put in a queen cell frame, but still no Queen this time. Another frame with Queens cells put into hive, crossing fingers (and toes) this time. Seems okay, but not as much activity, no SHB. #5 no honey, brood good, only a few SHB. #6 is three-quarters full of honey, lots of SHB. Noted that hive seems to have beaten AFB.

Swarming:

Native bees were "swarming" and in amongst them were 2 or 3 honey bees, maybe trying to get in and rob the native hive. Very very heavy swarming of the native hives, much more than normal.

Derek and Robyn Native Bee Report:

Held our Native Bee Morning this morning, 20 people attended. Derek organised - thanks to Derek and everybody who assisted, Peter and Vic and Bill.

First visit was to Kris and Sheila Kath's property. They were given a box years ago, but the roof is now wrecked. Kris admitted that he had opened a lot more than he should have, lid warped.

2 of Peter's hives, split carbonaria hives. Complicated as wire frame within hive, not easy. But lots of care taken, not hurrying, great that so much care taken. but noted that the bees got up out noses! (maybe the bees wanted a drink!) Not very many dead bees, very clean split.

Then on to Graham and Anita's property outside Amamoor. Native garden. Bill set up education method hive. Good exercise. Garden had Kangaroo paw and Grevillea, and flowering parsley. Small groups, people with questions got good answers, always good to keep these events small. Robyn has solitary bee info sheets to give out

Tom and Shirley

Blockages in heart for Shirley - triple bypass last week. Our thoughts and best wishes are with Shirley, Tom and family. Pauline to send a card on behalf of the group.

Mark - Flow Hive Report

Mark was feeling a wee bit gooey (tooth out), so Bill done it! Took honey box off, all fine. Showed newcomers what the set-up looked like. All good and healthy.

Scott - Top Bar Report

As usual, the Top Bars still remain puzzling. One hive is maintaining itself, good and okay - holding its own, with a slight increase in honey.

Other one expected to die out. Fed it a bit, added a frame of brood, no uncapped honey, tons and tons of drone cells, 20 false queen cells.

6 Langstroth hives all good and strong and increasing in honey. 3 of them more SHB than ever. No single SHB in Top Bar hives at all.

Noted that an unbelievable number of drone cells, Bees no longer aggressive, there is a new queen in one. Other hives all calmed at the same time as well.

Also Scott has made adjustments in his handling of the hives, since then not much aggression from the bees.

Top Bar hive experience: when you open, you only see tops of all the frames. Rarely a single bar, in most times some sort of connection/bridging comb between frames, bees come pouring out. Learned to do calmly and slowly. Observed the bees are quite aggressive in opening.

Valley Bees Top Bar

Club want Scott to make a Top Bar hive for our observation. Heavier timber / thicker. Scott given the go ahead to make - mid December. Estimated cost of \$150 dollars. Moved Scott, 2nd Glenbo.

Meeting Closed

Meeting signed off at 3-10pm, drew the raffle (a food hamper, won by Jay), and drank, nibbled and Bee-Bantered onwards.