



Beekeepers Association of the ACT

PO Box 1482, Woden, ACT, 2606

Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the ACT Incorporated
Website: www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

Meetings of the Beekeepers Association of the ACT Inc are held on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm at the CIT, Heysen Street, Weston in Building A
Contact: Association President – Angela O’Neil Ph: 02 62625220
Email: enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au

February 2009

Next meeting- gadgets night

The next meeting will be held on Thursday February 12. The focus will be on GADGETS, all those special pieces of equipment that at least one beekeeper has found useful. Many gadgets are home-made and these tend to be particularly interesting. Others one can buy but not everyone knows about them nevertheless.

So Members, please bring along YOUR gadgets and spread the word.

This meeting is a must for Beeginners. As usual the meeting will commence at 7.30 pm with Beeginners’ Corner. Supper will be available afterwards when we can chat further about gadgets and bees in general.

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Notice of AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Beekeepers Association of the ACT Inc. will be held at the beginning of the April meeting Thursday 9th April

President’s report

Hello Members and Friends

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2009! I hope that your Christmas and New Year break was pleasant and relaxing, or exciting and exhilarating if that is more your style. But best of all, I hope your bees were productive and healthy!

It’s a long time between the December and the February newsletters. We’ve had two social events in that time – the Christmas Party in Spence, and the picnic and walk in the Australian National Botanic Gardens - more about the walk later in the newsletter (see *Fun at the Botanic Gardens*. p3).

The Christmas Party was well attended by members and friends. The evening started with a bit of a walk to the top of Mt Rogers to look at the feral hive in the tree at the top, and also to have a look at the view, which is quite respectable. Then it was back to the party, so we could be there when the not-so-stout-shoed ones arrived! Everyone stuck to the honey theme and there was a lot of honeyed food and drink to go around. All in all it was a very enjoyable night, albeit a bit cold for that time of the year. Note to

self – remind people to bring their jackets next time.

In relation to bees, and from talking to beekeepers, the season seems to have been a productive one, possibly because of the rain. There appears to be plenty of nectar around, in Canberra at least.

Well, that's all from me for now. I look forward to seeing you at the February meeting. The most exciting thing – we've bought a lockable cupboard so that the cups, saucers and urns can stay at Weston between meetings. This makes volunteering to do the tea after the meeting so much easier!

Best wishes – *Angie*

CANBERRA SHOW - HELP WANTED

The show will be held from Friday, February 27nd February to Sunday, March 1st and members are asked to volunteer to help on our stall in the Horticultural Pavilion.



Leeza and Brian chatting about the bee display

Roster times are 9am-1pm, 1pm-5pm and 5pm-9pm for Friday and Saturday and 9am-1pm and 1pm-6pm only on Sunday. Please ring Lyn and Pat Shiels on 62862421 or put your name on the roster at the February meeting if you are able to help. A pass is provided so come early or stay on after your shift and enjoy the show. It's a great opportunity to share your enthusiasm for bees. Members who have just started beekeeping are most welcome as well as more experienced members. There is no need to have exhaustive knowledge of beekeeping. We need volunteers to mind the live bee exhibit, supervise honey tasting and generally chat to the public and answer questions. There will always be an experienced person on the stall to refer on tricky questions.

Any members who have honey of a definite variety, eg Snow Gum, Patersons Curse, Yellow Box, and can spare a jar or two for tasting please bring it to the February meeting or let me know and I'll collect it.

All Welcome at Judging

Judging of the Apiculture section will be held from 9.00am on Thursday 26th February in the Horticulture Pavilion and anyone is welcome to come and watch the judging even if they are not competing. There is no charge for entry to the showground on this day and lots to see if you care to wander through as people are setting up and judging everywhere.

If you have entered the Apiculture section and would like us to take your entries to the show rather than bringing them yourself they will need to be brought to us by Wednesday 20th. If you are bringing your entries on the 26th please be there by 8.30 so we have time to set them out ready for judging.

If you can help with our stall please contact Lyn or Pat Shiels on 6286 2421 or come to the February meeting and volunteer your services.



Lyn at the bee display

Lyn Shiels

Fun in the Botanic Gardens

As was announced in the December newsletter, the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (FANBG) agreed to conduct a walk and talk in the gardens for the ACT Beekeepers on Saturday 17th January 2009, starting at 4.00 pm, for a small fee per member. The talk was to focus in the nectar and pollen qualities of the native plants then in flower in the gardens. For those interested, a concert was starting around 5.30pm, so it was a case of bringing chairs and blankets for a picnic dinner afterwards.

Canberrans suffered stifling heat on the Wednesday and Thursday leading up to the picnic – around 37° C each day. What a relief when the maximum temperature on Saturday was a very pleasant and reasonable 25° C. However, it felt much hotter than that when Michael and I pedaled our way up the road to park our bikes at the ANBG car park, with our picnic and assorted equipment carried between our respective backs and my bike basket. Naturally, we had to have the obligatory flat tyre on our way; luckily it didn't require changing – just pumping.

Due to the mild temperature, we had a very good take up rate from our members and friends – 24 people in all. One thing I had failed to factor in for the afternoon was that there would be two weddings held at the ANBG that day. The impact for us was that most of the parking was cordoned off, and the remaining parking filled very quickly as people started arriving. This meant a bit of a delay in getting our walk underway while members searched for alternative parking, and then had to cart their eskies, chairs and rugs back up the hill to the Visitors Centre. We are now forewarned for next time.



Time to relax

The FANBG provided us with three tour guides, who split us into 3 groups of 8, and headed us off in different directions for our walks. From comparing notes afterwards, it was clear that the guides, Judith Erksine, Jill Moore and Warwick Wright, were very knowledgeable about the plants in the garden.

Our group's guide, Judith, went out of her way to show us a flower on a Grass Tree that was dripping with nectar, on which she had seen bees feeding that morning. Judith focused on low level plants (such as Banksias and Callistemon) that she was aware the bees liked, and found some of our questions about the nectar cycles of some of the trees in the ANBG a bit surprising. She hadn't realised that beekeepers would be more interested in the trees than the shrubs.

After the walk, some of us reconvened at the Visitors Centre, and then joined the river of folk and flowed with the rest of the substantial crowd up to the Eucalypt Lawn to enjoy the concert and a well deserved picnic. Thank goodness for mobile phones, which allow people to locate one another in even the most dispersed large crowd (providing you have a signal!). The concert was just the way to end the day – and to toast Lyn's Birthday with a nice cold glass of sparkling wine.

Thanks to all those who joined us for a wonderful day. Hopefully, we can make the walk, picnic and concert an annual event for the Association, in lieu of our January meeting.

Angela O'Neil

Cooking with honey

Cakes and biscuits made with honey will keep fresh longer than those made with sugar. The flavor will improve if the cake is kept a day or two before cutting.

In cakes and cookies honey may be substituted for not more than half the sugar. In milk puddings and pie fillings honey may replace all the sugar.

It is advisable to bake cakes and cookies containing honey at a slightly lower temperature than usual, as they burn easily. Ovens vary, so experiment in this regard.

If using honey instead of part of the sugar in a recipe, reduce the amount of liquid by 1/4 cup for each cup of honey used.

WHOLEMEAL HONEY SHORTBREAD;

Ingredients: 250g butter, 1/2 cup honey, 1cup wholemeal plain flour, 1 cup plain flour, 1/2 cup rice flour, 1/3 cup flaked almonds.

Beat butter and honey together until creamy. Stir in sifted wholemeal, plain and rice flours. Knead on a lightly floured surface to form a soft dough. Roll into a round shape approximately 24 cm in diameter and lift onto a lightly buttered baking tray. Pinch a decorative border around the edge and lightly mark into twelve portions with a knife. Pierce dough with a fork and press almond flakes firmly on top. Bake at 160deg C (less for a fanned forced oven) for 35-40 minutes until golden. Cut through the 12 portions whilst hot and allow to cool on tray. Store in an airtight container for up to one month. Will freeze successfully for 3 months.

Tree identification at Westbourne Woods

We remind members that on the second Sunday of every month a free guided tour of Westbourne Woods is available and well recommended. This is an initiative of the Friends of ACT Arboreta.

Where is Westbourne Woods? It is embedded in the grounds of the Royal Canberra Golf Club (on the South Side). Meet the guide at the gates at 9.30 am. Directions: go to Yarralumla Shopping Centre. Drive along Bentham St. to the end. Phone 62887656. . Web <http://sawapl.tech.officelive.com/Facta.aspx>

Guided tour of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

More tree and bee fodder identification! See 'Fun in the Botanic Gardens' above. Free guided walks are available daily at 11am and 2pm, also at 9.30am during February.

Present yourself at the Visitors' Centre 10 minutes before departure time. More information at <http://www.anbg.gov.au/anbg/guided-walks.html> or phone 62509540.

Groups of more than eight must book and pay \$4 per head.

Discover the man and the revolutionary theory that changed the world

Darwin exhibition at the National Museum of Australia plus discounted admission to the National Zoo & Aquarium

Why would a beekeeper be interested in Darwin and the theory of evolution? The simple answer is that without evolution we are really stumped for an explanation of how the amazing society of bees came about (Sorry Creationists; we know you have an explanation too).



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The Association has received a poster and a quantity of fliers for distribution at the next meeting.

The deal is reciprocal: if you go to the zoo you can get 20% discount for the museum and vice versa. Present the ticket received at one attraction to receive the discount at the other

This deal is valid until March 29.

The *Darwin* exhibition is based on one organised by the American Museum of Natural History, New

York, in collaboration with the Museum of Science, Boston, the Field Museum, Chicago, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto and the Natural History Museum, London.

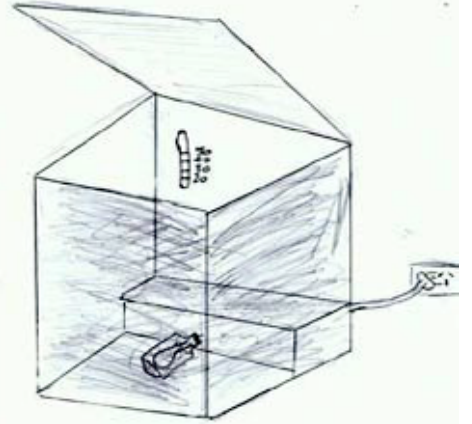
February reminders

Processing honey

Most beekeepers in the Canberra region with strong hives will have been harvesting honey from the middle of Spring and there are no signs of the flow abating anytime soon. Some of the honey harvested in Spring has already candied in the bucket. I am unsure of the source, but it is obviously a “quick candying” variety of honey. A few pointers to follow in processing honey are:

1. Only take frames that are 80% capped to avoid later spoiling by fermentation of unripe honey.
2. The honey from the extractor needs only coarse filtering into a bucket with a tap at the bottom. The honey thus retains minute particles of wax, pollen and propolis which are highly beneficial to health. If you leave that bucket in a warm room for a week, all the wax and impurities will rise to the surface and beautifully clear honey can be poured into jars from the bottom tap without further filtering
3. For those candied buckets, set up a decandying cabinet to heat the honey. But remember, any heat degrades the quality and flavour of the honey. The bees keep the honey at about 34 degrees centigrade, and as a rule of thumb, just heat at the lowest temperature and shortest time to liquefy the honey. Try not to let the temperature drift above 45 degrees. I check the thermometer often. A thermostat would be better. Does anyone know how to set one up? I'd like to know
4. If the stickies are not going to be put straight back on the hive, cycle them through the freezer for 24 hours in plastic bags to kill all stages of wax moth. This time of year, wax moth can destroy a frame in weeks. And ALL frames contain eggs. If signs of wax moth appear later, put them back through the freezer.

Hi-tech Decandying Machine
- old freezer
- ARLEC WC17 heavy duty worklight
- globe capacity changed for different times of year



Dick Johnston (enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au)

Letters to the editors

Work wanted

This is a précis of a letter from Pakistan.

I have been a beekeeper since 1997. My family run a business called Honeybee that specializes in selling beekeeping equipment. Here in Pakistan beekeeping is going through a transition from outdated methods to more modern scientific ways.

I have graduated from Peshawar University learning much about honeybees. As a medical dispenser I have been interested in medicine for bees.

Honorable Sir, the aim of my writing this letter is to enquire about possible job opportunities for me in the beekeeping industry anywhere in Australia. Such a job would allow me to work and gain more experience. It is my earnest wish that in Pakistan beekeeping should modernize enabling increased production.

I hope from God Almighty that you will enjoy the forthcoming Christmas along with your family in a happy environment. I pray for you and your family members for long life and prosperity with sound health.

Thank you

Yours obediently

Mr Muhammad Karim

Swat Steel Centre

Airport Road, Mingora, Swat, NWFP Pakistan. Phone 0092-946-711274.

Letters to the editor may be emailed to editor@actbeekeepers.asn.au or posted directly to your editors Peter and Shirley Carden, 6 Wynter Pl. Hughes ACT 2605.

Quiz

Which two eucalypts can be identified solely from their leaves?

Answers: to *the Editors*. Say what it is about the leaves that are distinctive, and preferably give the botanic names as well as the common names.

If there are no answers to publish in the March News Letter, people will think we're a dumb lot. So don't be shy!!

Membership subs due NOW – pay by cheque (the Treasurer, PO box 1482 Woden, ACT 2606); by cash at the meeting; or by internet funds transfer.

Fees: Individual or Family \$35, Junior \$10.

INTERNET FUNDS TRANSFER to the ACT Beekeepers Association's account.

The BSB is 062 908 and the account number is 0090 5714.

It is important to identify yourself so our treasurer will know who has paid. In netbank for instance type your name in the 'to account' description. Add the membership classification: individual, family or junior.

ABK Digest

For full reports see the December 08 issue of 'The Australian Beekeeper' where the sources of the information are given.

\$50 million proposed for honeybee industry at serious risk

The Minister for Agriculture the Hon Tony Burke MP said that the total expenditure recommended in the Report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee Inquiry into the Australian Honeybee Industry was not possible in the current economic environment.

However he announced a commitment of \$300,000 over the next two years to continue the National Sentinel Hive Program (NSHP). This will allow the Program to continue its important role in monitoring for the presence of honeybee parasites and exotic bees.

The NSHP has hives at 27 sea ports around the country.

The Minister said that the Government was also looking positively at assisting in several other areas outlined in the Parliamentary report e.g. Biosecurity and funding for Pollination Australia.

Bumble bees to stay out of the Mainland

Minister Peter Garrett has again rejected an application by greenhouse growers to export bumble bees from Tasmania to the mainland for pollination purposes.

Nosema Ceranae can cause sudden colony collapse

Nosema ceranae is a microsporidium of the Asian honey bee. It has now spread to European bees all over the world. Researchers have recently shown a direct correlation between *N. ceranae* and sudden colony collapse under field conditions.

It seems that there are no evident symptoms until the Queen is no longer able to replace the loss of infected bees. Sudden collapse then occurs.

Infections spread easily to neighbouring hives but can be controlled by administration of the antibiotic *fumagillone*.

Editors: Peter and Shirley Carden. 0414641823 editor@actbeekeepers.asn.au