



# Beekeepers Association of the ACT

PO Box 1482, Woden, ACT, 2606

Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the ACT Incorporated

Newsletter Web address: [www.bindaree.com.au/newsletter.htm](http://www.bindaree.com.au/newsletter.htm)

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 No: Association President – Bob Shaw Ph: 62540018

## December 2004

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### Meeting

Our next meeting will be our Christmas Party to be held at Dick and Jan Johnston's home at 16 James Street Curtin from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on Thursday 9th December. This will be an opportunity to meet the new owners of Bindaree. All members and friends are most welcome.

### Previous Meeting

Doug Somerville spoke about nutrition and feeding of honeybees. Doug discussed the reasons for feeding and the circumstances when a beekeeper might wish to feed their bees. There were many questions from the meeting and everyone learned a lot about if, when, what and how to feed their bees. Thanks to Doug for another enlightening evening.

### President's Note:

Hi everyone! I hope this finds you and your bees well. Summer arrived with a bang, didn't it! The bees seem to be having a great year so far, with many different eucalypts in bloom in our area.

Canberra Show schedules were mailed out last week to previous show entrants. If you haven't received one but would like to enter the Apiculture or any other Horticulture / Produce section call the RNCAS on 6241 2478 and they will send you one. Competition should be fierce this year with plenty of top quality honey being produced by our bees.

Our recent eucalypt walk at Aranda was very well attended and proved an interesting and enlightening two hours walk. Thanks to Peter Ormay for his time and guidance and to Dick Johnston for organising the walk.

Our December meeting is in the form of a Christmas get-together at the Johnston house at 6.30pm on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 16 James Street, Curtin. See you there.

*Bob Shaw*

### New Members

Welcome to Eric Davies of Weston, Karl Adamson of Fisher and Tony Maurer of Murrumbateman. Memberships paid at this time of year are valid until December 2005.

### Royal Canberra Show

The show is now only three months away so it is time to think about and prepare exhibits. Previous exhibitors will have received a schedule from the show society. Although the schedule shows a fee payable per entry this is no longer the case. Despite the draft being corrected the mistake still slipped through. Please don't send any money with your entries.

*Lyn Shiels*



## Some Hints for Exhibitors

### Honey

Flavour aroma and density are most important and attract 60% of the points while clarity, including absence of crystals, froth or foreign matter is given 30%. The remaining 10% is given for presentation, ie. cleanliness and absence of defects of jar and lid and fill level.

In creamed and granulated honey classes 75% is awarded for flavour, aroma, texture, uniformity and firmness of set. Cleanliness and presentation account for the remainder.

Chunk honey is awarded 80% of points as above for flavour, aroma, clarity and presentation and 20% for neatness of cut for the chunk.

Comb honey is judged for flavour, aroma, quality and cleanliness of frame, evenness and completeness of fill and capping. A well made frame box attracts an important 15%.

### Wax

Points are awarded in wax classes for colour (should be light and even) and appearance (including absence of debris, froth and cracks). In the wax moulds points are given for creativity, aesthetic appeal and definition as well as wax quality. Wax blocks and moulds may be polished with a soft cloth to bring up the sheen but points would be lost for obvious trimming or shaving of rough edges.

### Candles

Candles are awarded 25% each for colour, burning stability, and appearance/feel. 15% for aroma while burning and 10% for the wick.

### Cooking

Cooking classes are awarded points for flavour (40%), appearance and presentation (30% each). Entries should have a distinct but not overpowering flavour of honey in addition to the usual characteristics of good cooking.

### Preparing Wax for Competition

Melt the wax in a solar melter. Scrape off any sediment from the block of wax, wash off any honey and re-melt to remove any impurities.

Place blocks of wax into a bowl with smooth sides and rounded bottom and place over a pan of hot water on the stove. Do not heat wax over 85°C to avoid discolouration.

Pour melted wax into a suitable mould avoiding any settled impurities.

Preheat oven to 90°C and place mould with molten wax in oven and turn off the heat. Allow to cool slowly for two hours or more.

The cooled wax should have no cracks and the surface should be smooth. Present the wax wrapped in plastic or soft cloth to be removed by the judge.

*Taken from a Canadian web site at [www.honeycouncil.ca/chc-ccm/exhibit.html](http://www.honeycouncil.ca/chc-ccm/exhibit.html)*

**Note.** Some members are using plastic wax moulds or chocolate moulds for their set of moulds and of course these can't be placed in the oven. If you use these then the wax needs to be heated just past melting point and poured carefully into the moulds. Slow cooling produces the best results for a smooth surface. *Ed.*

## A Home Away from Home

Bees have been known to make their homes in some weird and wonderful places. Over years of collecting swarms and feral hives from local houses and gardens members have marvelled at the ability of the bees to find the tiniest opening to the most inconvenient spot, and some of the wild and wonderful places they find to hang while they search for a home.

Swarms have been hanging from the usual trees, bushes and pergolas but also from hanging planters, washing baskets, garden seats, children's swings, fences and veranda railings, once on the handle of the recycling bin and once on the side of a delivery van in a busy carpark.

Hives have formed in numerous bird and possum boxes, letter boxes, cupboards and other furniture placed outside temporarily, compost bins, dog kennels guinea pig hutches, barbecues, in pump sections of spas, boxes stored in sheds and carports, a sprinkler control box, under the floor of a pole house, in an upended bucket, in a through the wall wood box, in a styrofoam esky, in a styrofoam broccoli box and numerous other places. Bob found one in this spacious television apartment which does look very upmarket sitting in the middle of his apiary.



My favourite this year is the swarm that took up residence in a speaker box in an outdoor entertaining area. I wonder what would have happened if the owners had not noticed the bees before they turned on the music. It might depend on the music. Do bees like classical, jazz or heavy metal?

*Lyn Shiels*

## Beekeeping Course.

The course at CIT was completed last month and five new beekeepers have started their hives. Two people already had hives started before doing the course. From nine participants this is an encouraging trend with only a short time having elapsed since the course finished. Good luck to all our students in their beekeeping

## Empty Super Story

A recent call to a home in Kambah gave an insight into human folly. Bees had moved into the wall of the home through a gap between the wood panelling and the brickwork. A common enough story at this time of year! These bees, though, had the encouragement of a neighbour who lit a bucket of oily rags to drive them away. Instead the poor saps went straight into the wall cavity to escape the stench.

Carried away with this devastating success he then proposed to cure the problem by using a blowtorch to kill the bees clinging to the outside of their now comfortable hive. Our suggestion that this might be unsuccessful since most of the bees were now inside the wall and unlikely to emerge so they could be fried fell on deaf ears.

Expecting to have to call the fire brigade when the old dry wood panelling burst into flame we retreated, but as a last ditch effort said that perhaps we could have a try at poisoning them with the trusty fly spray. At least if that

didn't work the house would still be in one piece. The home owner managed to stop her intrepid friend who went home in a huff. Into the fray with the fly spray and within a few minutes the buzz from within the wall began to diminish and soon ceased altogether.

The home owner was not convinced that they were dead but we persuaded her to wait till next morning before resorting to other methods. Whew! One house saved from the furnace.

*Pat and Lyn Shiels*

## Irradiation of Beehives

We will send a load of hives to Steritech for irradiation as soon as we have enough to make a load. Anyone who has hives to send please contact Lyn or Pat Shiels on Ph 62862421. Transport cost depends on the number of hives sent and the last load was \$5.00 per hive. The current cost of irradiation is \$22 for a triple and \$15.40 for a double. The total weight of each unit must be less than 25 kilograms and they must be double wrapped and double emlocked. NSW Agriculture has an Agnote detailing the wrapping required. If unsure about packaging contact Lyn and Pat, or Dick at Bindaree for detailed instructions or access the Agnote at [www.agric.nsw.gov.au](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au).

*Lyn Shiels 62862421*



16 James St Curtin ACT 2605

Richard Johnston

Phone: 02 6281 2111

Email: [bindaree.bee@bigpond.com](mailto:bindaree.bee@bigpond.com)

Website: [www.bindaree.com.au](http://www.bindaree.com.au)

Shop open: Wed, Thur, Fri 4 pm to 6 pm, Sat 9.30 am to 4pm

Closed: Sun, Mon, Tue.