



Beekeepers Association of the ACT

PO Box 1482, Woden, ACT, 2606

Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the ACT Incorporated

Meetings of the Beekeepers Association of the ACT Inc are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm at the CIT, Heysen Street, Weston in Building A

June 2000

June Meeting

Our June meeting will be held on **14th June 2000** at CIT Weston at 7.30 p.m. We'll be having a discussion about the making up and maintenance of bee gear (e.g. painting and refurbishing of boxes, frames, etc.), and will welcome questions from beginners.

May Meeting

It was resolved to start several new initiatives. One of these is to put together a starter kit for members who are taking up beekeeping for the first time. Another is to prepare a list of mentors to answer queries from members. The third initiative is to draft a code of practice for the ACT – see page 3. At the meeting Bob Shaw gave an interesting precis from the Apiary Association of Southern NSW – details are in the Minutes – including the intriguing news that a queen bee finding device is being marketed. There was also a "Show and Tell" in which members presented some beekeeping innovations/inventions – see next item.

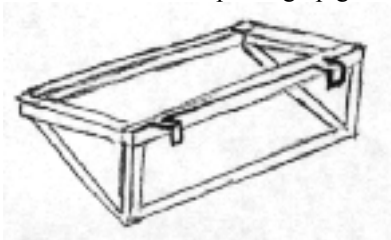
Innovations and Inventions for Beekeeping

Notes by Graham Turner from the May meeting:

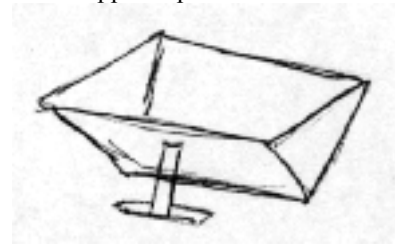
A very wide range of innovative inventions were displayed and described by about half a dozen members. I wasn't able to capture all of the detail, but hope that the following notes at least give some idea of what can be done. I'm sure the inventors would be happy to provide more detail if you ask them.

Derek Butler

- ♦ Metal or wood frame that hangs on the outside of an open super so that honeycomb frames temporarily removed from the super for inspection, manipulation, etc. can be hung in a convenient place without the frames picking up grass and dirt.

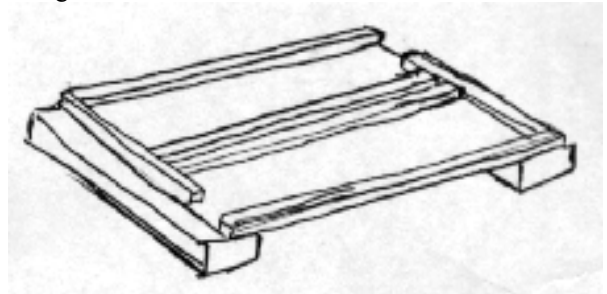


- ♦ Galvanised metal trough in the shape of a 'V', used for soaking the corner of a super in a minimum volume of copper naphthenate.



Herb Waldie

- ♦ Metal frame using a simple pivot/lever to allow two people to easily lift a full super.
- ♦ Full sized bottom board adapted with a couple of extra risers and entrances on diagonally opposite sides, and a vertical separation board, to allow 2 swarms to be housed in the one standard sized box. Also need to adjust the cover so that bees cannot go from one side to other.



Lyn Booth

- ♦ Ventilation frame (four sides and gauze across the bottom) which is added to the top of the hive (under the lid), allowing hot air to escape but preventing bees from building burr comb. Bees observed not to form a "beard" on the hive front. Full description in the April 2000 Newsletter.
- ♦ Wooden carry box for taking 3 frames back to honeyshed/kitchen for extraction, keeping interested bees away - much appreciated by kitchen hand!
- ♦ Solar wax melter made with a piece of recycled glass plate.
- ♦ Cart for moving boxes.

David Lillis

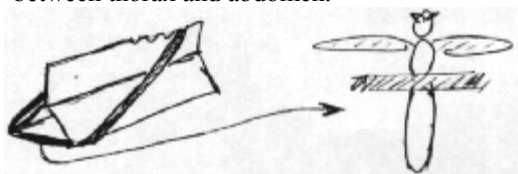
- ◆ Entrance closer made from a wood strip with a magnetic strip nailed on the bottom. The magnet sticks to the metal base of the bottom board.

David Banks

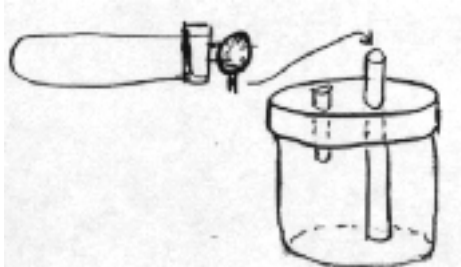
- ◆ Small (3 mm) holes drilled in lid of plastic hive to prevent build-up of condensation. Must be cleared of propolis every so often with a poke of a small stick.
- ◆ Wooden entrance closer, held firmly into place with (brazing) rod hooks that are rotated through 90° to lock behind the front wall of the brood box.



- ◆ Queen holder (to allow application of paint dot) using a rubber band and an inverted 'Y' shaped brace. Notches on the top of the brace allow the tension in the rubber band to be adjusted. The rubber band is quickly lowered over the queen, between thorax and abdomen.



- ◆ Anaesthetic bottle for handling multiple queens. Made from something like a Vegemite jar with plastic hose/pipes in the lid, and using a small CO₂ gas cannister (green).



- ◆ Foundation embedding tool using a triac or silicon switch to activate the embedder, but preventing the switch from burning out under the large currents.
- ◆ Drain holes in splitter boards.
- ◆ \$12 home-made steam knife.

Note from the Editor

I'm back on my feet and keen to receive contributions for future newsletters. You can reach me as follows: phone 62814713(home, preferred), 62465203(work); fax 62465370; email P.Macnicol@pi.csiro.au. Among other things it would be good to have some cooking recipes involving honey. Also, many thanks to Paul Hooper for putting together this and the last Newsletter.

Empty Super Award

A contribution from Edith Thompson:

I have a very active beehive on my balcony near the front door. Just at sunset recently a young man knocked at the door. He was carrying a long sports bag and was wearing an identification badge. He told me through the screen door that he was selling tickets for a particular charity. He wasn't a local boy: his approach and manner marked him as coming from Sydney. When I handed him the money I noticed he'd placed his bag on the landing board of the hive. When questioned he said "Yes, I'm from Sydney". I asked him to carefully move his bag. "Why?". "That's a beehive!". "Oh, I thought it was a bar fridge!".

Internet Delivery of the Newsletter

Delivery of the Association's newsletters is now available through the Internet. Internet delivery provides a number of advantages for both the individual member and for the Association as a whole.

For the member: The newsletter will be available within hours of its completion, rather than days later after paper printing and snail-mailing. Although posted copies are in black and white only, Internet delivered newsletters will be in full glorious colour. They are stored on-line for reading, reference and printing-out whenever desired.

For the Association: Internet delivery will save printing and mailing costs and reduce the workload for the members responsible for the publishing of the newsletters.

Members whose email addresses are already known by the committee have received an email asking if they wish to receive the newsletter by email or normal postal delivery. All other members with Internet access are invited to nominate for Internet delivery of the newsletter. Should circumstances or preferences change reversion to postal delivery will be made immediately on request.

Please consider taking the newsletter by Internet and advise Paul Hooper by email at phooper@pcug.org.au.

Don't delay. Do it now!

Code of Practice

At the May meeting, it was resolved that the advisability of the Association proposing a Beekeeping Code of Practice be further considered. A sub-committee was nominated to progress the idea by drafting a Code of Practice based on existing codes in Victoria and Queensland and on the Western Australian Guide to Backyard Beekeeping.

The sub-committee has met and developed an initial draft which is now with the Association's President for the addition of further materials, including ACT regulatory requirements and swarm collection procedures.

A progress report will be given at the June meeting.

Floral Sources to Encourage Bees into Your Backyard

This excellent list is from Cec Mercer:

Native trees and shrubs: all eucalypts, acacias, bottlebrushes, melaleucas, Leptospermum, Grevillea, Casuarina, Boronia, Pittosporum, Melia, Banksia.

Introduced or ornamental trees and shrubs: Ligustrum (privet), Pinus, Salix (willow), Schinus, Camellia, Tamarix, Wisteria, Abelia, Prunus (flowering).

Garden plants: borage, mint, rosemary, lavender, citrus, fruit trees, vegetables, Cineraria, daisies, gazanias, forget-me-nots, Iceland poppies, portulacas, roses, stocks, wallflowers.

Other sources of nectar and pollen: field crops, e.g. sunflower, rapeseed, clover, maize, lucerne, cotton, soybean.

Weeds: capeweed, false dandelion, dandelion, thistles, lantana, blackberry, Paterson's curse.

Note: Insecticides Toxic to Bees: many of the insecticides used by home gardeners (e.g. lebaycid, malathion) are very toxic to bees. Try to spray very early in the morning or late in the evening. If you have a neighbour close by you who keeps bees he would appreciate your telling him when you are about to spray.

Bees Bring a Breath of Fresh Air into Hives

Your editor has just come across this fascinating article from "New Scientist", 17 Sept. 1987:

If a colony of honey bees is a "superorganism", then might the hive be expected to "breathe"? Far-fetched though this may seem, it now appears that the honeybee nest does breathe, and in a manner somewhat characteristic of vertebrate breathing.

A colony of honeybees controls the temperature, humidity and concentration of respiratory gases within its nest by the combined efforts of individual bees fanning their wings to create a current of air. The bees start this fanning when they detect, by receptors on their antennae, a high concentration of carbon dioxide inside the nest.

In natural nests, however, bees tend to close all openings but one, which they leave unobstructed to provide ventilation. If there is only one opening, there cannot be continuous through-flow of air. To find out how the fanning behaviour exchanges stale air in such nests with fresh air from outside, Edward Southwick and Robin Moritz of the State University of New York placed established colonies of bees in a chamber with only one entrance hole. The opening was the same size (2 cm diameter) as that in the bees' original hive. They then monitored the volumes and characteristics of air passing in and out of the entrance.

Their results showed that there was a regular pattern of ventilation, as if the hive were "breathing", at an average rate of 2.9 breaths a minute. At about 35°C, the bees formed groups of several hundred fanners around the inside of the hive chamber, causing air to circulate

within the cavity. At higher temperatures, however, this air was diverted towards the hive opening. There, special fanners orientated themselves with their abdomens pointing outward at the entrance. No more than three bees were responsible for this "expiration", but their fanning resulted in the warm, stale air flowing outwards. Each "expiration" was followed by a brief influx of fresh air. This "inspiration" seemed to be the result of bees simultaneously ceasing to fan.

Southwick and Moritz point out that hive ventilation shares many characteristics with vertebrate breathing. Both have active and passive phases. Both are stimulated by high concentrations of carbon dioxide and by the need to cool. In the case of the bees, however, coordination of the social group causes the ventilation – another example of the colony acting as a superorganism.

NZ Varroa Update

As at 31 May 2000, the number of apiaries found infected with the varroa mite in the North Island of New Zealand is 279, owned by 129 beekeepers. 2,469 apiaries, containing 47,683 hives have been examined to date. No varroa have yet been reported in the South Island.

Industry and government agencies are currently debating whether to attempt to eliminate varroa or to live with it. Elimination would be costly in the short term and may prove impossible. Reports from around the world point out that no country has ever succeeded in eliminating varroa once it has become established.

It now appears Australia is almost the only country in the world that does not have varroa yet.



Varroa Jacobsoni



Varroa on grown bees

Unfinancial Members

Members are reminded that membership renewals fell due on 1st January. Those who have not yet renewed their memberships are encouraged to do so as early as possible. This June Newsletter will be the last newsletter to be sent to unfinancial members. Newsletters will continue to be available on-line to unfinancial and non-members alike through the Bindaree Web site.

Advertising Opportunity

Advertising space is available in the Newsletter. The cost is in the order of \$15 per half page. Details may be obtained from the Editor. Advertising for sale of equipment by members will not attract a fee

Bindaree Beenotes: It pays to shop at Bindaree.

With the GST coming in on 1 July 2000, Dick can't promise all goods will be cheaper but he has examined all the Bindaree prices to be competitive with the larger beekeeping suppliers. For example, Penders extractors will be available at their advertised Penders price plus 10% freight charge.



Bindaree Bee Supplies

16 James St Curtin ACT 2605

Richard Johnston

Phone: 02 6281 2111

Email: bindaree.bee@bigpond.com

Website: www.bindaree.com.au

Shop open: Wed, Thur, Fri 4 pm to 6 pm, Sat 9 am to 4pm
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