



# 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)

Association email address: [ACTbeekeepers@yahoo.com.au](mailto:ACTbeekeepers@yahoo.com.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

## September 2005

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### Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm, at CIT Weston, Heysen Street, Weston. The guest speaker will be Dr Will Andrew, the Director of Veterinary Hygiene for the ACT Government Veterinarian. Dr Andrew will be talking about ACT legislation and regulations as they relate to beekeeping in the ACT, with an emphasis on the management of diseases and pests of bees.

As usual the meeting will begin at 7.30pm. Dr Andrew will speak from 8.00pm. There will be time for a cup of tea and chat after the meeting.

### Vice President's Note

The August meeting of the Association was both enjoyable and informative thanks to the contribution of the guest speaker, local commercial beekeeper Des Cannon. Des answered questions raised in the Beginners Corner before making a presentation on the beekeeping research undertaken by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). He then discussed some of his methods of hive management in early Spring. I was particularly interested in his method for dealing with colonies that are already making queen cells.

As a follow-up to Des Cannon's presentation on the work of the RIRDC, a copy of "Honeybee R&D Update" and "Publications from the RIRDC Honeybee Program" will be included for current members receiving printed copies of this newsletter. Electronic recipients of the newsletter can view these two leaflets on the RIRDC website at [www.rirdc.gov.au/programs/HBECatalogue2005.pdf](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/programs/HBECatalogue2005.pdf) for the R&D Update and for the Honeybee Publications at [www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybeenewsletter/HBENewsletterIsue6May2005.pdf](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/honeybeenewsletter/HBENewsletterIsue6May2005.pdf)

I have obtained from the RIRDC a number of copies of the "Honeybee Research Report 2005" and of the "Short Report – Update on research to control Small Hive

Beetles – May 2005". I will be taking these copies to the September meeting for anyone interested. I will also be happy to mail a copy to any member who cannot make it to the meeting.

For those with internet access I would very highly recommend a look through the RIRDC website at [www.rirdc.gov.au](http://www.rirdc.gov.au). There is an amazing amount of information on honeybees on the site. All sorts of research reports are available on-line for free download, as well as being available for purchase in well-presented printed colour hardcopy.

**Prospects:** Following two months of well above average rainfall, August produced an almost average reading for Canberra ... only two millimetres less than the long term average. I continue to be surprised by the amount of eucalypt bud I see everywhere around Canberra. The ground moisture is building up after the long dry and with the approach of warmer weather the ground flora should be quite good. We may even get a reasonable display of Salvation Jane again. If the rain pattern continues I expect Canberra home gardens will return to their previous glory and, in doing so, provide suburban bees with much variety.

**October Meeting:** Peter Ormay has again offered to give a presentation on "Identifying Eucalypts in the Canberra Region". He will follow this with a separate weekend walk through the trees when, in a couple of hours, he will help us identify many of the eucalypts common in the area.

**Hive Crawl:** The committee is currently organising another "hive crawl" so that we can look at how some of our members' hives are set up.

*Paul Hooper*

### Puzzles

Q: Why do bees hum?  
A. Because they've forgotten the words!

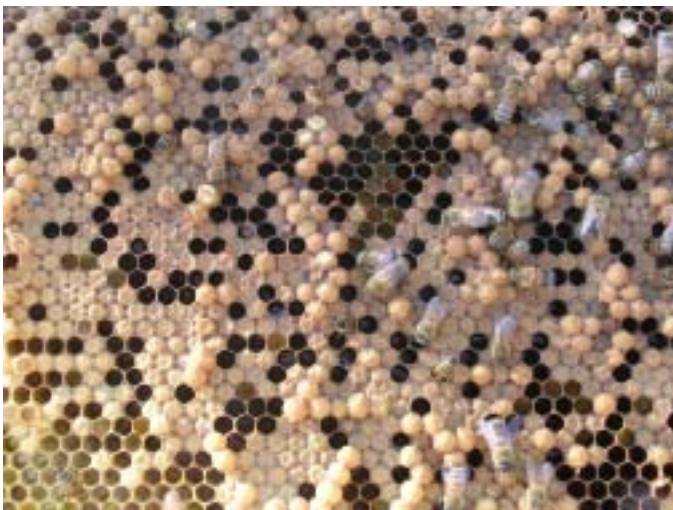
Q. What kind of bee hums and drops things?  
A. A fumble bee!

## Spring Inspections

The past week produced some warm days when it was possible to open hives and check the condition of the bees as spring approaches. A still day with a temperature of at least 15° is an ideal time to conduct a spring inspection.

Firstly check that there are no signs of disease and that the bottom board is clean and the frames free from mould. If you are an inexperienced beekeeper it may be helpful to have an experienced friend along. Certainly if you have any doubts about the health of your bees ask a more experienced member to have a look. Many diseases can be managed well if caught early.

Check for a laying queen and an even pattern of brood. As well as signs of disease look for patchy or uneven laying patterns. One of my hives this year displayed a pattern with drone brood scattered across the worker comb, a sign that the queen is laying many infertile eggs among the fertile ones. This ruins good brood frames and produces far too many drones. This queen must be replaced.



*Drone brood laid throughout the worker comb.*

Secondly check that the bees have enough stores to see them through the early part of Spring when their requirements for breeding may outstrip their ability to forage. Hives that are light on stores may starve if there is a period of rainy or cold weather after breeding has begun. All of my hives have a few frames of brood already indicating that the breeding period has begun in our area. Regular checks of stores in the next few weeks will ensure that your bees are not caught short of food.

Hives that are light on stores may be amalgamated with each other. This will increase the field force available to forage and help the bees to maintain stores. Another option would be to amalgamate a light hive with a stronger one again boosting the field force. In each of these cases the stronger or younger queen would be

retained and the other killed. Hives are sometimes queenless by the end of winter so make sure there is a laying queen in the second hive before destroying the first one. Another option is to retain the light hive and commence a feeding regime until there is sufficient bloom for the bees to feed themselves. This is probably a good option for a hive with a strong population and a good laying queen. Feeding large quantities of 1:1 syrup will usually stimulate the bees to breed more prolifically.

If the hives are doing well the beekeeper needs to consider techniques for the prevention of swarming. Swarming is the bees' natural way of increasing their kind. From a beekeeper's point of view it is desirable to prevent swarming since a swarm weakens the colony by the loss of bees and the honey they take with them. Swarming may be prevented or minimised by maintaining young vigorous queens, provision of space for expansion in the brood box and honey supers, monitoring of queen cell building and drone breeding, manipulating brood to give the queen more space to lay and removal of honey as appropriate

Some beekeepers will artificially swarm a strong hive and either use the opportunity to increase the number of their hives or amalgamate hives later when the urge to swarm has passed.

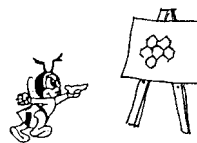
Some beekeepers establish one or more bait boxes near the apiary to attract swarms from their own or other hives and prevent swarms lodging in the neighbours' yards.

A little bit of attention now will ensure that the hives are of sufficient strength to take full advantage when the spring nectar flows begin and mean more honey for the beekeeper and less likelihood of problems later in the season.

*Lyn Shiels*

## Beekeeping Course.

The Beginning in Bees Course at CIT Weston will begin on October 11<sup>th</sup> provided that there are sufficient enrolments. The course consists of four evening theory sessions in the classroom and four Saturday morning practical sessions conducted at beehives located at the CIT, Weston.



Topics include bee biology and behaviour, handling bees, getting started, equipment, seasonal activities, pests and diseases, and extracting. It will provide beginning beekeepers with basic knowledge and some experience to start them on beekeeping. Please promote this course to any new or potential beekeepers.

Enrolments can be made at CIT Solutions on 6207 4444 or at [cit.solutions@cit.act.edu.au](mailto:cit.solutions@cit.act.edu.au)

## Irradiation of Beehives

We will send a load of hives to Steritech for irradiation when we have enough to make up 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 \$6.00 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 for detailed instructions or access the Agnote at [www.agric.nsw.gov.au](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au).

## Diseased Hive Material

American Foul Brood is a reportable disease under the Animal Diseases Act. Reports should be made to Environment ACT on 62079777. Diseased hive material may then be taken to the ACT Government Incinerator Sandford Street, Mitchell for disposal. Please make sure you tell Environment ACT before you take the material. Label the packages clearly as "Diseased Bee Material".

## From days of Yore

As Mrs. Madigan sen., was attending to her apiary she thought that the entrance to one of the bee-hives needed to be enlarged, and forthwith proceeded to carry out the desired improvements, when the bees took umbrage at the proceedings, and, flying out in large numbers, the angry insects clustered about the lady's head, stinging her in a terrible manner. Mrs. Madigan endeavoured to drive off the bees with her hat, but this only increased their ire and added to the evil. Ere the lady gained the shelter of her residence she was smarting with pain. Simple remedies were at first applied, but subsequently such severe inflammatory symptoms set in that Dr. Lynch was sent for, and under his care we are glad to say Mrs. Madigan has thoroughly recovered.

*The Gundagai Times. Friday, September 22, 1882.*

## Swarm Collecting

Phone Environment ACT on 6207 9777 to put your name on the swarm collection list if you are able to collect swarms this year. Mike will also maintain a swarm list on Bindaree website so let him know if you would like to be on his list.



New owners Mike and Maryanne Devey

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