



# 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

## November 2000

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### November Meeting

This will be on 8<sup>th</sup> November at CIT Weston at 7.30 pm. We plan to have a demonstration honey extraction so that beginners in particular can see how to go about it and what gear is needed. We also want to screen a video or two about beekeeping and/or queen rearing.

### October Meeting

One general business item of interest to most of us was whether our Association insurance covers individual members against accidents sustained while working on their bees (e.g. stings to neighbours) or collecting swarms (e.g. falling off ladder). The Committee is looking into this question and will report at a future meeting.

### Tips on Presenting Honey for Judging at the Royal Canberra Show

Rob Gardiner gave a very hands-on talk at the October meeting on how to win at the next Canberra Show.

Actually it wasn't our sense of touch that was tested but our taste and sense of smell that were challenged by about a dozen different samples of honey. Even the most olfactory challenged of us found at least one jar that was our favourite.

But Rob didn't unleash us on the samples until we had some basics right.

For example, keep in mind that the majority of points (50 pt) come from flavour and aroma. So, while it is an advantage to have honey that isn't granulated, clarity only gets 5 points. Consequently it's not wise to heat your honey to remove grains if that means you're also removing taste and aroma.

Rob was also at pains to point out that the honey judging is basically a friendly competition, and encouraged all of us to enter, noting that there are lots of different classes available. In fact, by entering a number of classes, it's possible to win the "best of show" while not necessary topping a particular class.

While the competition is founded on fun, it's worth remembering that success at the Show can lead to commercial success in sales, as Cec admirably demonstrated last year. Also, we should keep in mind that the Honey Judging provides an opportunity to present a positive image to the public. In the end, it's about providing a good product for people to consume.

Rob also provided a hand-out on tips for exhibitors (will this be posted on the Bindaree web site?). Some other points he made are:

- ♦ honey presents better in glass containers (Bindaree have supplies that carried last year's prize winners); and
- ♦ have a spare jar or two in case your jar of liquid gold comes a cropper (or gets gobbled up)-neither are likely during the show, but play it safe.

- Graham Turner

### BYO QB - breed your own queen bees

There's something attractive about the thought of breeding your own queens. And let's face it, if you have a largish number of hives (say, 20 or more) replacing queens on a yearly basis can be a significant element to the cost of your hobby or business.

Perhaps the moral I took away with me from Cec Mercer's talk at the October meeting on queen beekeeping was that there are methods which

aren't overly difficult for the hobbyist or small business beekeeper, but you do need to be organised. Ever the student and wise teacher, Cec knows only too well that there's always more to learn about beekeeping. So Cec recently attended a training course on queen bee breeding held at Tocal, and came back with literally volumes of information.

Importantly, it's not considered to be good practice any longer to raise new queens simply by killing the old queen and letting the bees raise their own. These days there are a range of techniques, right up to artificial insemination (although I recall Cec noting that these queens are only good for about 12 months).

One of the techniques is known as the Cloak Method (originated in NZ?), and is described in the notes Cec has or apparently in the book "Practical Beekeeping". This method involves rotating a 3-decker hive through 180 degrees, and placing a "swarm" box in front of the 'old' entrance to collect the returning field bees. These bees find themselves queenless, so that they will start to make queen cells on a suitable bar frame put in by the beekeeper a day later. There should be plenty of stores for them: 2 combs of honey, a comb of pollen, and 2 combs of hatching brood. Apparently the bars with the queen cells are later put into the top box, but you'll have to quiz Cec for more details.

In another technique, we put a new frame (without eggs) into the "mother" hive that has a queen we want to breed from. This frame could have upside-down V cutouts along the bottom edge of the comb. Let the queen lay eggs in the frame (over about 2 days) and ideally wait until there are fresh larvae (48 hours old is ideal, noting that larvae hatch from the eggs after 3 days - 2 days spent standing "up" and 1 day laying down). This frame is removed and put into a queen-less starter box, probably with 3 other combs of brood, but no eggs. The bees should build queen cells along the bottom saw tooth edge of the comb, and the cells can be harvested after 10 days.

If you'd like to find out more about this very satisfying and cost saving aspect of beekeeping, talk to Cec and have a look at some of the good reading he and the association have.

- Graham Turner

## Enlisting Bees to Fight Disease

Fire blight, caused by a bacterium called *Erwinia amylovora*, can devastate apple and pear orchards. It infects the flowers in spring and then spreads rapidly through the rest of the plant. Traditionally it has been combatted by spraying with either copper-based compounds, which are toxic to the plants themselves, or the antibiotic streptomycin, which is banned for agricultural use in many European countries.

More recently, researchers have been looking for biological controls. A close relative of the fire blight bacterium, *Erwinia herbicola*, is harmless to plants but can check the growth of *E. amylovora* by competing for space and nutrients on blossoms and by producing a protein that inhibits the growth of its harmful cousin.

Rather than spraying the bacterium all over trees, Joel Vanneste of the Ruakura Research Centre in New Zealand and his colleagues decided to use honeybees to carry *E. herbicola* directly to apple and pear blossoms in orchards. He asked growers to put powder containing the bacteria in a small trough just inside hives, where bees would walk through it as they were leaving. After 7 days, more than 95% of the flowers harboured the bacteria. "The key is that honeybees are being used to distribute living organisms, says Vanneste. "They bring a few bacteria and then the bacteria multiply". So even if no more powder arrives, the bees continue to spread the bacteria.

*-from an article by Joanna Marchant in "New Scientist", September 1999.*

Editors note: The article doesn't say whether control of fire blight is actually achieved.

## Hive Sites on Offer

### *From Allan Lebusque:*

I live at the bottom of Mt Taylor near the intersection of Athllon and Sulwood Drives, Kambah. I have a large garden and would welcome a hive in my back yard. There is a sheltered isolated site that is well suited to a hive.

If you are interested I may be contacted at:

Office 6271 1656

Home 6296 6376 (after 7pm)

Mobile 0412 663 529

Email: [lebusque@dynamite.com.au](mailto:lebusque@dynamite.com.au)

**From Monika Binder:**

I'm a property owner in Sutton (near Eagle Hawke Hill) with 30 acres, some of it forested with red gum, yellow box and acacia among others. Do you know of any beekeepers who would be interested in placing their beehives on a small part of my land in exchange for giving me some honey?

ph: 62303729 (ah); 62403238 (bh)

151 Bidges Road, Sutton

Email: mbinder@pc.gov.au

**Honey Recipes of Yesteryear**

An excerpt titled "The Uses of Honey", from the Queanbeyan Age, 2nd May 1872 (thanks to Lyn Shiels):

**Preserving grapes with honey:** Take 7lb of sound grapes on the stems, with branches as perfect as possible, and pack them without breaking in a jar. Make a syrup of 4lb of honey and one pint of good vinegar, with cloves, cinnamon etc. to suit (about three ounces of each is a fair average). Boil this syrup about 20 minutes and skim well; then turn boiling hot over the grapes, and seal up immediately. Apples, peaches and plums may be done this way.

**Preserving grapes cold:** Pick grapes from the stems and pack in a jar until it is full. Then turn honey cold over them until they are covered well. Seal them up without any heat and keep in a cool place. After a few months they will be found delicious.

All kinds of fruit made into jam and sweetened with honey instead of sugar are very nice. Those who are fond of honey consider "butter" made in this way nicer than when made with sugar.

**Ginger Snaps:** One pint of honey, three-fourths pound of butter, two teaspoonfuls of ginger, boil together a few minutes, and when nearly cold put in flour until it is nearly stiff; roll out thinly, and bake quickly.

**Honey Cake:** One cup butter, two cups honey, four eggs well beaten, one teaspoon essence of lemon, half a cup of milk, sour, if possible, one teaspoonful of soda, flour enough to make it as stiff as can well be stirred, bake at once in a quick oven.

**Honey Fruit Cake:** Four eggs, five cups flour, two cups honey, one cup sweet milk, two teaspoonfuls cream of tartar, one spoonful of soda, one pound of raisins and currants, one-fourth pound citron, one teaspoonful each of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg; bake in a large loaf, and slow oven. This

will be good for months after baking as well as when fresh.

**Honey Gingerbread:** One cup butter, two of honey, one of sour milk, one teaspoonful soda; flour stiff as can be stirred.

**Bindaree Bee Notes November 2000**

**– the honey flow**

The honey flow will soon be starting and your crop will need processing. Are you tired of messing up the kitchen? Why not take the hassle out of honey processing with the right equipment!

**Uncapping unit**

**Consists of:**

- three trays
- uncapping spike to hold frame while cell cappings are cut off
- extra sheet of plastic filter
- honeygate

\$120



**Strainer unit**

Can go straight under the extractor.

**Consists of:**

- 34kg honey bucket
- lid
- honeygate
- 1 medium mesh metal strainer,
- 1 fine mesh metal strainer

\$95

For clearer honey, a nytrel gauze sheet with a weave of between 375 and 400 microns can be placed between the strainers.

\$20



## Internet Delivery of Newsletter

Members are reminded that Internet delivery of this Newsletter is available and offers advantages to both the recipient and the Association. The recipient can receive the Internet-delivered version, in colour, even before the snail-mailed copies reach the postbox. The Association saves production and mailing costs.

If you would like to try Internet delivery, please advise Paul Hooper by email at [phooper@pcug.org.au](mailto:phooper@pcug.org.au).



### Bindaree Bee Supplies

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

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

Closed: Sun, Mon, Tue.



## Bee-Line

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