



**Amateur
Beekeepers
Australia**

NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

Vincent Schnyder, President

Dear Members,

At the AGM on 19 November in Carlingford a new committee was appointed and as the new President I'm pleased that we have a team of committed volunteers to run the ABA. Doug Purdie was reappointed Vice-President, Jacqueline Lea re-joins the committee as Treasurer, Sheridan Femia takes over as Secretary role, Mike Allerton and Fiona Fernie were reappointed and Nikki Potgieter appointed as Ordinary Committee members with allocation of tasks to be determined at their first committee meeting.

A big THANK YOU to those who served on the previous committee, Lamorna Osborne as President, Bruce White, Grace Jerrett, Mike Fogarty and Robert Wood who took care of the online shop. A special thank you to Sheila Stokes who served on the committee since May 2015 and since then was in charge of our IT systems and served as President from Oct 2020 till Feb 2023.

After the formal part of the AGM, we had two brilliant guest speakers, Prof Andrew Barron from Macquarie University on Bee Thinking and Decision Making and Dr Emily Remnant from the University of Sydney on Living with Varroa (*See links below*). It was fascinating to hear from Andrew how the tiny brain of a honey bee can learn to differentiate between the styles of different artists. Emily provided a great overview where we currently stand in the transition to management and outlined options that might be implemented. Most importantly, her presentation made it clear that there are ways to keep bees with Varroa which should be an encouragement us all.

USEFUL LINKS:

How Honey Bees Think. Prof. Andrew Barron
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNZmeHb076k>

The New Normal: Living with Varroa, Dr Emily Remnant
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVEdfjR0c>

For the first time since COVID a Col Pulling competition was held. Four clubs entered the competition, Parramatta, Illawarra, Alice Springs and Far North Coast and it was great to feel the vibe of members getting engaged to compete for their clubs. Illawarra scored the highest marks and won the Col Pulling competition. The Bruce White Shield, which is a competition for smaller and evolving clubs, was won by the Far North Coast club. I had to say, the honey cakes were delicious. The next Col Pulling competition will be held either at the second field day or the next AGM. Plenty of time to get your club ready to put your entry in.

The Parramatta club did a brilliant job in organising the venue for the AGM and Col Pulling competition, provided lunch, coffee and tea and took care of the logistics of the event. Without the support of the club and their members, events like this AGM supported by Parramatta, the last two Field days supported by Illawarra and Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers, would not be possible.



For 2024, we have a Field Day, 20th or 21st April at Yass a pencilled in and planning for a second in the Sydney Basin later this year. The AGM in the Hunter, New England/North West or North Coast regions. We hope that some clubs will give us a helping hand to run these events.

You may have noticed some changes to our newsletter. I'm pleased to have Simon Turner, helping out. Some members probably know Simon from his work developing beekeeping in Uganda through Malaika Honey.

Lastly, when I visited family and friends in

Switzerland earlier this year, I met with a few beekeepers who coordinate the Varroa resistant bee breeding program in their area. It was interesting to hear how recreational beekeeping is thriving regardless of having to deal with Varroa. Their biggest fear is the potential arrival of the Small Hive Beetle which we learned to manage since the early 2000's. I think all agree that we didn't ask for the Varroa mite to come to Australia, however, now that it's here, we will learn to adapt our beekeeping practices to deal with it, like we have with all other pests and diseases ■



Your best practice beekeeping will help everyone around you.

Rod Bourke, Bee Biosecurity NBBP

A few weeks ago, I was driving home when I noticed two open 20 litre buckets on the ground next to a beehive within a fenced property. I called the beekeeper and he informed me that these buckets contained candied honey and he was “letting the bees clean it up!” Please, please never feed extracted honey back to bees, or allow bees access to rob any used bee equipment.

Allowing robber bees access to exposed used frames, combs, honey or beeswax or an appliance is a significant biosecurity risk which increases the transmission of American Foulbrood (AFB).

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice, reference 7.1 states:

“A beekeeper must not allow a used hive, part of a used hive (including frames, combs, honey or beeswax) or an appliance containing honey to be exposed in a manner or under conditions likely to attract robber bees; including during transportation.”

Unfortunately, early last year in this same area, where I observed the exposed honey buckets, we experienced a significant outbreak of AFB. This affected a number of nearby beekeepers' operations (including myself), so who is to say that this was not caused by this same type of behavior.

To reduce the incidence of AFB all beekeepers should practice the following:

1. Bee-proof your extracting shed and bee equipment facilities so that no bees can enter and forage for honey or bee products. Even simply placing shade-cloth over equipment and tucking it in will stop bees gaining access to exposed product and used equipment.
2. Accept that you have a legal responsibility under the Biosecurity Act 2015 and that there are significant fines in place for those that allow bees to rob exposed product or used bee equipment.
3. Do not feed extracted honey back to bees or expose it in any way so that bees can access it.
4. Do not leave wax cappings or extracted sticky frames, boxes and other used equipment outside or accessible to robber bees.
5. Wash down any spilled honey instead of leaving it for “the bees to clean up”.
6. If bees are starving and need resources then it is preferable to feed them internally with sugar syrup instead of moving honey frames over from another hive, unless it is an emergency and worth the biosecurity risk. Swapping equipment between hives can significantly increase the risk of spreading diseases such as AFB, EFB, chalkbrood and nosema. So, unless it is a nucleus or split derived from a known disease-free colony with some of its own bees you really should avoid swapping equipment.
7. Manage weak colonies by reducing entrances (so they can defend their entrance against robber bees) and try to resolve the colony strength issue. Managing colonies to keep them strong (preventing swarming, re-queening and

adding new brood combs) is better than allowing colonies to dwindle in the first place. It also reduces small hive beetle problems.

8. Remove any severely weak, diseased or dead colonies from an apiary immediately to prevent robbing. Ensure their field bees have returned home to minimize spreading any disease by remaining bees drifting to other hives.

At the end of the day bee biosecurity is a shared responsibility, so beekeepers should be undertaking best practice biosecurity to reduce the impact of disease on nearby apiaries. Please consider other beekeepers and follow the Code ■

My Thoughts on Varroa

Doug Purdie, Vice President

When I first heard that we weren't going to eradicate Varroa, and that we were moving to management, I had already passed through the stages of grief; shock, denial, anger and depression. I was sad that our lovely bees, who once enjoyed a relatively easy life, would now have this parasite to deal with. I'm still a little angry, but I've moved into the acceptance stage and am keen to get on with managing this pest.

In talking to many other beekeepers, some aren't ready to accept that this pest needs to be understood and managed. Others are throwing in the towel and literally giving their bees away.

We can manage this, but we need to work together. Now is not the time to do nothing or we'll really impact those who are doing something. I recently had the chance to talk to a beekeeping educator who was visiting from Minnesota. She told me about her own experience in Minnesota where many hobbyist beekeepers don't treat their hives, and it often takes them a few years of their hives not surviving winter, before they start to do something about it. I'm hoping this doesn't happen here and we can learn from everyone else in the world who's been managing this pest for years.

The most important message seems to be consistency. This is important when doing mite counts because it accurately defines the percentage of mites to bees, a crucial number when it comes to hive survival and when to apply a treatment. It doesn't matter if you use an alcohol wash or a sugar shake (alcohol wash is more accurate) just measure the bees you're washing so



Queen Breeding course

at the Illawarra Club on the weekend of the 3-4 February. Two days of instruction from expert beekeepers featuring Bruce White. Attendees will have the opportunity to handle live bees, and undertake practical application of Queen Bee grafting. Cost \$350. (Limited places) Further information and bookings can through website: <https://illawarrabeekeepers.org.au/>

that it's the same number of bees each time. Use a measure, don't just guess.

When it's time to apply a treatment, choose a different one to last time (to prevent resistance developing) and follow the label, taking care to apply the correct amount of treatment for the specified period. Once you've treated, don't assume your job is done, because if a beekeeper near you hasn't treated, they can supply your hive with a whole new infection to deal with as their hive weakens and the mites hitch a ride to another hive (yours). So test again.

All of this is frightening and confusing but if we all work together, we can use the experience of the rest of the world and continue beekeeping, just as the rest of the world does. Varroa is not the end of beekeeping, it's just a new set of skills to learn so you can manage your hives.

The ABA has a huge role here and we intend to provide many resources soon to help you navigate this new challenge.

One final word of warning: be careful of all the theories that abound on the internet about how to treat. Despite what you might hear, a "banana with mint inside it, wrapped in rhubarb leaves" is not a universal panacea for small hive beetle, chalk brood or Varroa ■

USEFUL LINKS:

NSW DPI Varroa mite

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa>

Australian Honey Bee Council (AHBIC)

<https://honeybee.org.au>

Basic guide to Varroa treatment

Doug Purdie, Vice President

Note: Soon there will be comprehensive Varroa treatment courses available. This guide is to help in the meantime.

Help I just found Varroa in my surveillance wash...what should I do. **Report the detection to the NSW DPI.**

Ok so you have varroa now, its okdistressing but ok. If you are not doing Alcohol washes I would recommend doing one and using a 1/2 cup measure and always using that measure from now on so you have consistent results.

Count the mites in the wash as this will guide the next steps.


Number of Varroa seen in wash ÷ 300 X 100 = percentage of infestation. So if you found 10 Varroa in your wash that's 10 ÷ 300 x 100 = 3.33 %

The current NSW DPI recommended treatment threshold is 3% so that means you need to apply a treatment.

For assistance choosing a treatment AHBIC has a very useful table that we have reproduced below for the latest version look here, <https://honeybee.org.au/ahbic-varroa-treatment-table/>

It's important to check the label on the treatment for withholding periods and other restrictions. Another very important thing to remember is that you must use a different treatment each time to prevent the mites building resistance to one or another of the chemicals.

Once you have applied a treatment you need to continue to test for varroa as it can more than double every brood cycle so that's every 21 days and in the initial stages other peoples hives will be the source of further infestation if they don't apply a treatment ■

 Australian Honey Bee Industry Council - Varroa Chemical Treatment Table Current on 22 nd December 2023 – check www.honeybee.org.au for the most up to date details								
Product name Current 22/12/23	Bayvarol® PER94055V2	Apistan® PER94055V2	FormicPro® PER94055V2	Apivar PER94153	Apitraz PER94153	Apiguard® PER93639	Api-bioxal™ Unregistered	Alleg CAP® Unregistered
Registration Status	Emergency use permit active Full Registration submitted	Emergency use permit active	Emergency use permit active (Formerly Mite Away Quick Strips)	Registered	Registered	Registered	Full Registration progressing	Full Registration Application Submitted
Active ingredient	Flumethrin	Flumethrin	Formic acid	Amitraz	Amitraz	Thymol	Oxalic acid	Oxalic acid
Chemical Type	Synthetic pyrethroid	Synthetic pyrethroid	Organic acid	Synthetic formamidine	Synthetic formamidine	Organic extract	Organic acid	Organic acid
Product Type and dose for full size hive	plastic strips 4 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	gel strips 2 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	gel product 50g per hive	dribbling, fogging TBA	Cellulose strips 4 strips per brood chamber (pending full registration)
Temperature/hive type limitations for treatment	Not critical	Not critical	Only treat when ambient daytime temps are between 10 °C – 29.5°C	Not critical	Not critical	Only treat when ambient daytime temps are between 15°C – 40°C	No	No
Treat with supers on hives	Yes But comb honey cannot be collected and sold if treated when supers present	No	Yes	No	No	No	TBA	Yes (pending full registration)
Treatment time	6-8 weeks	6-8 weeks	7 days	6 to 10 weeks	6 to 10 weeks	2 weeks then additional tray for 4 weeks (Total of 6 week)	No details - not an approved product	42 days (pending full registration)
Can nuclei colonies be treated	Yes – (2 strips per nuc)	Yes – (1 strip per nuc)	Colonies need to be a minimum of 6 frames of bees	Yes - (1 strip per nuc)	Yes - (1 strip per nuc)	Yes (25g per nuc)	No details - not an approved product	Yes - 2 strips per nuc (pending full registration)
Withholding period	Not required when used as directed	Do not harvest honey when strips are in.	2 weeks from the end of treatment	0 days after removal of strips Do not harvest honey when strips are in.	2 weeks from the end of treatment	0 days but honey tainting may occur	No details - not an approved product	None (pending full registration)

Varroa Coordinator

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GCRB Field Day Report

The Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers hosted a field day for the ABA on Saturday November 4, 2023. The day was overcast with the threat of rain, which thankfully held off all day. Admission was a gold coin donation to GCRB and the club also held a raffle during the day. The day was fully catered for by the Veterans Support Group Men's shed, which was where the Field day was held and where GCRB keep their hives and meet.

The lunchroom was set to make a lecture room to seat 50 people. The club had organised a full day of presentations for visitors to attend. The presentations programme included some very interesting aspects of beekeeping as well as a Varroa and biosecurity update.

Lecture presentations

Topic	Presenter
Apitherapy in China	Bridget Goodwin
Varroa Update	Rob Stevens
Mathematics in Beekeeping	Phil Baxter
Slovenian Bee Hives	Steve Hill
Reportable Bee Diseases	Mike Allerton
Rooftop Beekeeping	Doug Purdie
ABA Open Forum	ABA Executive

All the presentations were of a very high standard and they were very interesting, as supported by excellent feedback from the attendees.

While the presentations were being held indoors, the GCRB club had also organised a full programme of demonstrations under the

GCRB marquee or at the club's apiary. The demonstrations were extremely well attended with all participants given the opportunity to ask lots of questions. All the demonstrations were conducted by GCRB members.

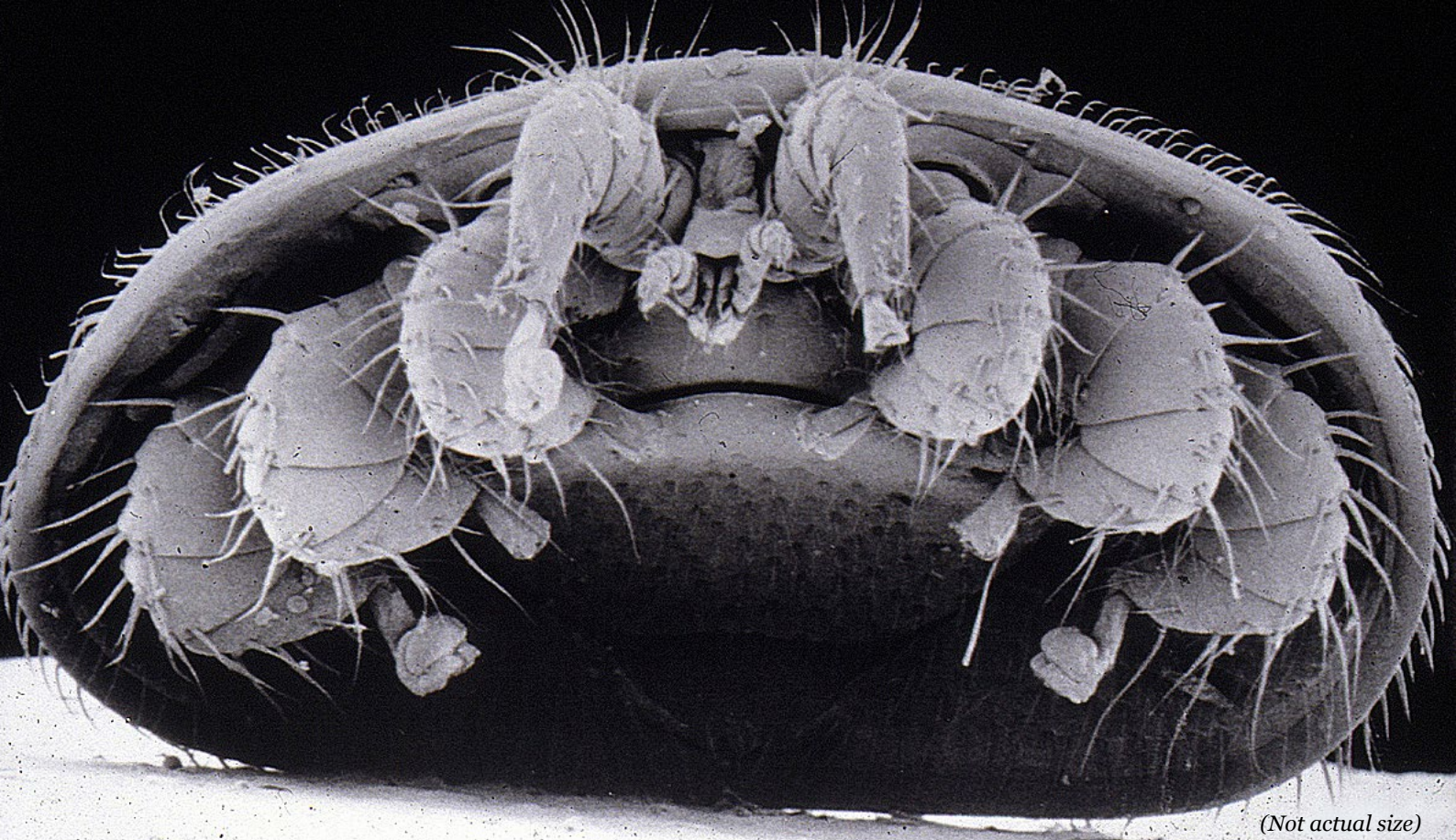
Demonstrations programme

Topic	Presenter
Flow Hive Extraction	Drew Maywald
Making Beeswax Candles	Kevin Finn
Cleaning old Frames	Steve Hill
How to Use an EpiPen	Greg Foster
Screened Top Tray for SHB Control	John Crawford
DIY SHB Traps	Drew Maywald
The Basics of Frame Making	Mike Hynes
Measuring Moisture Content	Fiona Fernie
How to Make Mead	Steve Hill
How to Make Lip Balm	Waree & Angela

While the presentations and demonstrations were in progress, other visitors were free to wander around the site and talk to any of the trade exhibitors who also had lots of products and equipment for sale.

The members of GCRB did a fantastic job whether involved on the gate, demonstrating, presenting, manning the PA, selling raffle tickets, organising the IT side of the presentations, and much more, and are to be congratulated for staging a very successful and enjoyable Field day. The president from another club made the comment that their club had three times more members than GCRB but could not get enough members to help host a field day. Well done to all concerned, GCRB can be very proud of what they achieved ■





(Not actual size)

Photo Credit: <https://www.vita-europe.com/beehealth/diseases/varroa-mites/>

Biosecurity Buzz

Mike Allerton ABA Biosecurity Officer

ABA AGM

The AGM was perfectly hosted by Parramatta Beekeepers 19 November and a new ABA committee formed. I'm delighted to continue as Biosecurity Officer.

As a part of the "Bee Team", I'm looking forward to producing quality educational materials based on world best practice for all the clubs to use.

Our focus is not just on Varroa, but with a holistic approach including Integrated Pest Management for the recreational beekeeper.

Transition to Management

At the recent Bee Industry Biosecurity Consultative Committee meeting, I was assured that the legal deadline is 12 months from the declaration of transition. That means 19 September 2024.

In the transition phase there is a push to have treatment chemicals registered with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) including synthetic chemicals, organic acids and essential oils.

Beekeeper education is a high priority with new materials coming online in the new year, including Train the Trainer sessions so that the ABA can teach our members directly.

Varroa Resistant Bees

Breeding Varroa resistant bees is another way to keeping Varroa under control.

There are breeding programs worldwide including Australia aimed to develop specific genetic traits. Certain bee behaviours specifically limit Varroa's ability to reproduce.

Hygienic bees detect the presence of Varroa in a capped cell and will discard the pupa. Without the pupa to feed on, the young Varroa perish.



Photo credit: Nadine Chapman, University of Sydney

Another mechanism some bees have developed is to chew the legs off the mite. The hard shell of Varroa cannot be penetrated by bees, but the legs are vulnerable. Bees only need remove the last segment of the legs to completely disable the mite from feeding or moving. The mite soon dies.

Some bees partially remove the wax cap a brood cell when it detects Varroa within. This allows the humidity and temperature within the cell to change resulting in the death of immature mites without killing the bee pupa. Bees also use uncapping to control brood diseases such as chalkbrood, EFB and AFB.

Australian breeding programs for Varroa resistance will ramp up now that we're moving to management. Some have asked why we don't import semen and queens from overseas programs.

There is a high risk such imports would bring in the deadly viruses we don't yet have. Strict biosecurity controls must be exercised to prevent contaminating our stock with these viruses.

There is always the risk that an individual will illegally import queens or semen potentially at a high cost to us all.

Breeding for specific behaviours is likely to be out of the reach of the recreational beekeeper, but we may eventually benefit from the hard work by breeders and scientists by requeening our colonies with their resistant genetic stock.

Another approach to breeding Varroa resistance has been conducted by California commercial beekeeper and scientist, Randy Oliver.

Randy described his six-year program at Apimondia this year. His approach is to leave it to the bees to work out how to deal with Varroa. Each season, he selects next season's breeding queens from colonies that consistently have low mite counts.

His priority is for good behaviour and productivity, followed by Varroa resistance.

He said that after six years of his selective breeding program, some of his colonies consistently have zero mite counts.

Perhaps that's an approach some recreational beekeepers can adopt.

Is It Time to Quit?

This is another common question I'm asked.

Varroa is not the end of beekeeping. The rest of the world has dealt with it for decades and we can too. We have the advantage of learning from the experiences of others.

Certainly, beekeeping will require more effort, both mental and physical. There will probably be an increase in costs.

Those beekeepers that don't pay their bees much attention will most likely leave the industry as their hives succumb to Varroa.

Those of us that care for our bees will negotiate the path to success with the help of the ABA and our local club.

My wife's 81-year-old uncle in Slovenia hasn't lost any of his 16 colonies in ten years. We can succeed like that too.

Brisbane Steritech Re-opens to NSW

21 November Biosecurity QLD has announced that NSW beekeepers in the Suppression Zone can send their equipment to Brisbane for irradiation.

This is welcome news to those in northern NSW who faced expensive shipping costs to Sydney.

To do this you must lodge an application under the following link; [Varroa mite carrier permit application \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

Flow Hive owners can gain longer life from their Flow frames with the lower levels of radiation used by Brisbane Steritech. Note that if your Flow frames become brittle after irradiation, contact Flow. They have been very responsive.



Mike Allerton with Randy Oliver at Apimondia

Nuc Aid Off To a Flying Start

Mid-October, I sent to all the ABA members a humble request. *“Can you help those clubs wiped out in the Varroa eradication program? Would you do an extra split this season so they can restart their club apiaries?”*

I thought this would take a while and that maybe there would be enough bees to kick off the club apiaries before winter. I was wrong.

The response has been overwhelming! Generous offers from all over NSW and even QLD have been flying in. Many have Nucs and full hives ready to move NOW!

The Hunter Valley and Central Coast club committees have been rightfully cautious in re-establishing bees in the hot zone.

More recently, DPI Biosecurity Officer Rod Bourke has been encouraging beekeepers in the management zones to start beekeeping again as soon as they can.

His reasoning is that we have an opportunity to gain valuable “Beekeeping with Varroa” skills before the deadly viruses reach us.

We don’t have Deformed Wing Virus and other viruses here yet, but it’s only a matter of time.

I believe the sooner we raise our skill set, the better we’ll do long term.

Nuc Aid for Individuals

With the strong response to Nuc Aid and the DPI’s encouragement to restart beekeeping, I’m now extending Nuc Aid to individual beekeepers that lost everything in the eradication phase.

If you want to start beekeeping again, Email: biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au with your name, phone, suburb, ABA member number and hive brand. I’ll put you in touch with a Nuc Aid donor to work out the details.

Free AFB Honey Testing

The NSW DPI have continued the AFB Minimisation Project this year with many clubs helping me gather honey samples from over 70 apiaries. There were some positive detections, but by far most tests showed no AFB.

The DPI program is open to all NSW members and the ABA have arranged to subsidise the interstate clubs so they can also have honey tested for free.

Club biosecurity officers email me to join the program. Each club can have three tests. Larger clubs can have more ■

2023 Colonel Pulling Competition and Bruce White Shield Results

 The Col. Pulling Competition
Winner: Illawarra Club

 The Bruce White Shield
Winner: Far North Coast Club

The Colonel Pulling Competition and Bruce White Shield was once again held at the ABA AGM. With this year’s venue being the James Ruse Agricultural High School, Carlingford. There were 4 clubs who participated - Far North Coast, Alice Springs, Parramatta, and Illawarra.

The exhibits were displayed in the Agriculture Classroom and individual categories were judged by specialty judges who thoroughly enjoyed their experience revealing Illawarra the winning club narrowly followed by Parramatta in the Col Pulling



Col. Pulling winner 2023 - Illawarra ABA

Competition and Far North Coast winning the Bruce White Shield and Alice Springs runner-up.

The feature category for the competition was the Honey Cake which was won by Illawarra with “The Most Amazing Russian Honey Cake” which was sampled and enjoyed by all ■

Category results

Apiary Products

1st	25 pts	Far North Coast & Illawarra (<i>tied</i>)
2nd	22.5pts	Parramatta
3rd	8.25pts	Alice Springs

Candles

1st	16.5pts	Illawarra
2nd	15pts	Far North Coast & Parramatta (<i>tied</i>)

Cake

1st	10pts	Illawarra
2nd	7.75pts	Alice Springs
3rd	7pts	Far North Coast
4th	6pts	Parramatta

Club Logo

1st	9pts	Illawarra
2nd	8pts	Alice Springs & Parramatta (<i>tied</i>)
3rd	5pts	Far North Coast

Club Report

1st	9pts	Parramatta
2nd	8pts	Illawarra
3rd	7pts	Far North Coast
4th	6pts	Alice Springs

Photo's

1st	18pts	Illawarra
2nd	14.75pts	Far North Coast
3rd	9pts	Alice Springs

Quiz

1st	19pts	Parramatta
2nd	16pts	Alice Springs & Illawarra (<i>tied</i>)
3rd	13pts	Far North Coast

WINNER THE MOST AMAZING RUSSIAN HONEY CAKE

The ultimate recipe for Russia's famous Honey Cake, that you're likely to encounter. Ten layers of soft, caramelized honey cakes that taste like a fine marriage. Lotus biscuits, honey graham crackers and gingerbread cookies, sandwiched between a cloud-like burnt honey and dulce de leche whipped cream. Unbelievably delicious.



INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BURNT HONEY:

- 3/4 cup (9oz/ 255g) honey
- 1/4 cup (2oz/ 57g) water

FOR THE CAKE LAYERS:

- 1/4 cup Burnt Honey
- 3/4 cup (9oz/ 255g) honey*
- 1 cup + 2 tspn (8oz/ 227g) granulated sugar
- 14 tspn (7oz/ 199g) unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces.
- 6 large eggs (300g without the shells)
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoons fine salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 heaped teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 3/4 cups (16oz/ 454g) all-purpose flour

FOR THE FROSTING:

- 1/2 cup Burnt Honey (from recipe below)
- 1 1/4 cups (one 13.4oz/ 380g can) dulce de leche
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
- 4 3/4 cups (1.12 liters) heavy whipping cream, very cold and divided.

* Original recipe calls for wildflower honey, which has more floral notes. However, I used regular, mainstream honey, because I couldn't find it, and still ended up with stellar results.

INSTRUCTIONS

TO PREPARE BAKING SHEETS:

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat oven to 180C/375F.
2. Line 2 or 3 (or more) baking sheets with see-through silicon mats. On a large piece of paper, trace a circle around a 9-inch pie or cake pan and place the paper underneath one of the silicon mats. If you don't have silicon mats, trace a 23cm circle directly onto 11 baking-sheet-size pieces of parchment paper. Place a piece of parchment tracing-side-down on a baking sheet. Set aside.

TO MAKE THE BURNT HONEY:

1. Place 3/4 cup of honey in a saucepan and set over high heat. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to medium. Cook the honey, stirring occasionally with a heat-proof spatula, until the colour darkens and turns from pale yellow to dark amber (approx. 3 minutes.)
2. Turn off the heat and carefully add 1/4 cup water. Allow the honey to sputter until it stops bubbling, then whisk to combine.
3. Transfer to a heatproof measuring cup with a spout and set aside.

TO MAKE THE CAKE LAYERS:

1. Fill a medium saucepan with 5cm of water and bring to a simmer. Combine 1/4 cup burned honey, 3/4 cup honey, sugar and butter in a large heat-proof bowl, and place over the pot of water, making sure the simmering water is not touching the bottom of the bowl.
2. Crack eggs into a small bowl and set aside. Stir together baking soda, salt, and cinnamon in a separate small bowl.
3. Gently stir the honey/butter mixture until the butter has melted, then whisk well to combine. Use your finger to test the temperature of the mixture. When it's warm, add the eggs while whisking. When the mixture returns to the same temperature, add the cinnamon mixture, and continue whisking for another 30 seconds. The batter will begin to foam and emit a curious odour. Remove the bowl from the heat and allow it to cool until it's warm.
4. Place the flour in a fine-mesh sieve, and sift over the batter in three batches, whisking to incorporate the flour completely with each addition, until completely smooth. The batter

will spread more easily when it's warm, so place the bowl in a warm spot, such as atop the preheating oven or over the pan of simmering water (off heat).

5. Spoon a heaping 1/3 cup of batter over the prepared silicon mat or parchment paper. Use an offset spatula to evenly spread the batter to the edges of the traced circle. Make sure that the entire circle is well covered, otherwise, add a little more batter in patchy areas and smooth out.
6. If using silicon mats, carefully slide the paper with the traced circle from underneath the silicon mat and place under another one. Repeat spooning and smoothing remaining batter until you're out of baking sheets. Ultimately, you should end up with 11 layers.
7. As you continue spreading the remaining batter on the baking sheets, bake as many layers at a time as possible, for 6 to 7 minutes, until the cake turns a deep caramel colour, springs back at the touch and a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Do not overbake!
8. When each layer is done, slide the silicon mat or parchment off the baking sheet to prevent overbaking. If reusing baking sheets while they are still hot, reduce cooking time to 5-6 minutes.
9. When the cake layers are cool enough to handle, examine them. If any spread outside the traced circles as they baked, use a sharp knife or pair of scissors to trim them. Don't throw away the trimmings. Before the cakes cool entirely, pull each one carefully from the silicon mat or parchment, then place back on the parchment or wire rack on a flat surface, and allow to cool completely.
10. When all the layers are baked, reduce the oven temperature to 120C/250F, and return the least attractive layer (and trimmings) to a baking sheet, and place in the oven to toast until deep reddish brown and dry, about 15 minutes. Allow it to cool, then use a food processor to grind into fine crumbs. Cover and set aside.

TO MAKE THE FROSTING:

1. Place 1/2 cup burned honey, dulce de leche and 1/2 teaspoon fine salt into a medium bowl. Whisk by hand until combined, then slowly pour in 3/4 cup cream and mix until homogeneous. Chill until completely cooled, about 30 minutes.

2. Pour 4 cups heavy cream into the bowl (preferring chilled) of a stand mixer, with the whisk attachment. Whip at medium speed to soft peaks, about 6 minutes, then add honey mixture and whip to medium stiff peaks. If your mixer holds less than 5 quarts, make frosting in 2 batches, and then combine in a large bowl, or use a large bowl and a hand mixer.

TO ASSEMBLE THE CAKE:

1. Assemble the cake on a 24cm cardboard circle or flat serving plate. Place a cake layer in the centre of the cardboard, then spoon a heaping cup of frosting onto the centre. Use an offset spatula to spread the frosting evenly, leaving a 1/4-inch ring around the edge. Continue with alternating layers of cake and frosting, ending the last layer with frosting. Use any leftover frosting to smooth out the sides of the cake, but don't worry if the edges of some cake layers poke through the frosting;

they're going to be covered up anyway. You should use up all the frosting.

2. Place the frosted cake on a rimmed baking sheet and use your hands to press the sides with the reserved toasted cake crumbs. You could cover the top too if you prefer.
3. Chill the cake in the fridge overnight to give the frosting time to meld into the cake layers and soften them. Slice into thin wedges and serve cold or at cool room temperature. Cake can be made up to two days in advance. Refrigerate leftovers for up to 3 days ■

NOTES: *You can divide the work required to make this cake over the course of several days. If you're making your own dulce de leche, you can prepare it up to a month in advance. The cake layers can be baked and frozen for several weeks, then thawed when ready to use. Just be sure to cool the layers first, individually wrap each layer with plastic wrap, then store in freezer zipper lock bags in the freezer. Thaw completely before using. The finished, frosted cake can be made up to 2 days in advance.*

2ND PRIZE Honey Cake

Made with simple ingredients, this Honey Cake is soft, moist, and tender. Full of honey flavour, you won't believe how easy it is to make.

Prep Time	15 min
Cook Time	40 min
Servings	8 servings
Calories	419 kcal

EQUIPMENT

9" round baking pan
Mixing Bowls
Electric hand or stand mixer
Wire cooling rack

INGREDIENTS

1 cup all-purpose flour (120g)
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup unsalted butter softened (227g)
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar (110g)
1/3 cup honey plus more for garnish (80mL)
4 large eggs at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 cup sliced almonds optional (30g)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F / 160°C. Lightly grease a 9-inch round cake pan with baking spray. Line the bottom with parchment paper and lightly grease the parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon if using, and baking soda.
3. In a large mixing bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, and honey on medium-high until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. With the mixer on low, add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and stopping to scrape down the bowl as needed. Beat in the vanilla until just combined.
4. With the mixer on low, gradually add in the flour mixture, beating just until combined. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, smoothing it into an even layer.
5. Bake for 40 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. If desired, you can sprinkle the top with almonds after 20 minutes of baking. Loosely cover the cake with foil at any time if the top or almonds start to get too brown. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for 20 minutes. Carefully remove the cake from the pan, discard the

parchment paper, and place it on a serving plate (almond side up). Serve warm drizzled with additional honey ■

NOTES: *Make sure your honey is runny for this cake. If it has crystalized, you can gently warm it in a small saucepot of water to make it runny again.*

I highly recommend using a scale to measure your flour as it's the most accurate method and will prevent you from ending up with a dense cake. If you don't have a scale, fluff your flour with a spoon and spoon it into your cups before leveling it off with a knife. This method prevents you from overpacking the measuring cup.

Do not overmix the batter, or you'll have a tough, chewy, or dense cake. Mix everything until just combined.

Tap the cake pan on the counter a few times to pop any air bubbles and level out the batter in the pan for an even bake. An offset spatula is a great

tool for spreading the top of the batter.

The eggs should be at room temperature to ensure they incorporate into your batter evenly. If you forgot to take your eggs out of the fridge ahead of time, you could quickly bring them to room temperature by placing them in a large bowl and covering them with warm tap water for 5 minutes.

Honey is the main flavor of the cake, so I recommend using good-quality honey.

Nutrition

Calories: 419kcal | Carbohydrates: 38g | Protein: 6g | Fat: 28g | Saturated Fat: 16g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 2g | Monounsaturated Fat: 8g | Trans Fat: 1g | Cholesterol: 154mg | Sodium: 276mg | Potassium: 118mg | Fiber: 1g | Sugar: 25g | Vitamin A: 844IU | Vitamin C: 0.1mg | Calcium: 78mg | Iron: 2mg |

3RD PRIZE BANANA CAKE with cream cheese frosting

INGREDIENTS

125g Butter
3/4cup Brown Sugar
1/2 cup Honey
3 Eggs
3 Medium Bananas
Pinch of Salt
1/2 teaspoon Bicarb of Soda
2 tablespoons Milk
2cups Self Raising Flour

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Brush around 30cm cake pan with melted butter to grease. Line the base and sides with non stick baking paper.
2. Cream butter, honey and brown sugar together until light and creamy.
3. Add eggs one at a time, beat well after each addition.
4. Peel and mash bananas (approximately one cup), add to mixture and mix well.
5. Fold into the mixture, the flour which has been sifted, salt and BiCarb alternately with milk.
6. Spoon the mixture into a well-greased pan.
7. Bake in a moderate oven for 30-35 minutes.

FROSTING INGREDIENTS:

125g cream cheese at room temperature
50g unsalted butter at room temperature
230oz (1 1/2 cups) icing sugar mixture
1 1/2 teaspoons of buttermilk

Method:

1. Beat cream cheese and butter in a bowl until well combined.
2. Add icing sugar and beat until well combined
3. Add the buttermilk and beat until the mixture is pale and creamy
4. Place the cake on a serving plate and spread the cream cheese frosting over the top of the cake ■



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