



Amateur Beekeepers Australia

The Amateur Beekeeper



From the Editor

Varroa destructor is still here, dammit!

With the 12-months-since-detection mark passing in June it's hard to stay optimistic about Varroa being eradicated. I truly hope it is, but as at the date of this newsletter, with it being found in the almonds, and the source of a couple of major outbreaks still unknown, it will be a major win if it is eradicated. Fingers crossed and breath held.

When you talk to people around the world about Varroa there are two major cohorts of beekeepers... the before and the after. The before have known beekeeping before Varroa and they say, kill it if you can. The after have never known beekeeping without it and wonder why we don't just treat it and carry on. I am hoping we all stay before.

As the AHBIC representative for the ABA, I recently attended a meeting that has been inaccurately reported. There is a lot of misinformation being circulated, so bear that in mind when reading peoples' opinions on social media. And check the official pages too.

Till next issue, keep on buzzing... Doug Purdie

Varroa Updates

The Varroa emergency response continues in NSW. To keep yourself informed and up to date with the current restrictions on beekeepers, visit the DPI website:

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





What About Swarms?

With the swarm season in full swing, we must ensure that we follow the rules laid out in the [Biosecurity \(Varroa Mite\) Emergency Orders](#).

The following is directly from the DPI

Swarming is a natural part of the reproductive life cycle of honeybee colonies. Swarming usually occurs in spring or early summer to help the new colony grow large enough to store sufficient honey over summer and autumn to support the colony through winter.

During the Varroa mite emergency response, swarming can increase the risk of Varroa mite spreading further. Therefore, it is important to follow the current [Biosecurity \(Varroa Mite\) Emergency Orders](#).

NSW DPI has reviewed, and risk-assessed any changes to the management of swarms in the Eradication (red) and Surveillance (purple) zones. This assessment proved any change to the catch-and-kill requirement for swarms in these zones presents too great a risk to the NSW Varroa mite response aim of eradication.

NSW DPI is actively euthanising and baiting for wild European honey bees in the red zones. In the purple zones, NSW DPI is working with contractors to survey and euthanise wild colonies.

In addition for the purple zones, NSW DPI has appointed a Swarm Destruction Coordinator to assist bee clubs in managing swarms. If you see a swarm in a purple zone location that you are unable to catch and kill yourself, you can call the hotline on 1800 084 881. NSW DPI staff will be directed to the location as soon as practicable.

For more information go to <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroamite-emergency-response/how-to-deal-with-a-swarm>

What Can We Do About Swarms?

The spread of the RED and PURPLE Zones affects more of us as the Varroa Response Team work hard to contain and eradicate Varroa destructor.

How can we help?

In a nutshell, we can catch and kill swarms or report swarms in the RED and PURPLE Zones. We can catch and keep swarms in the BLUE Zone.

Those of us that have pitched in to help the response with surveillance, eradication and baiting know well the horrible task of killing potentially healthy bees.

None of us want to do it, but for Varroa eradication to succeed, every host in the RED Zone and every feral bee in the PURPLE Zone must die.

If you have the skills, the time, the resources and the will to catch and kill swarms, keep your name active in the ABA Swarm Register and answer the call.

If not, save yourself the worry and deactivate now. Head to the end to see how.

Don't Do Nothing!

If you see a swarm or someone point's it out to you, do something about it.

If you can't deal with it yourself for any reason, call for help or report on the Hotline 1800 084 881. The swarm will likely be gone before the DPI can get to it, but at least they are aware of it.

If You Choose to Catch and Kill you must comply with the [Biosecurity \(Varroa Mite\) Emergency Order](#)

Get to know this document, it's the law.

For now, we'll focus on the relevant sections for swarms.

Definitions

swarm means a natural assemblage of feral bees in a migratory state that has separated from a hive or wild nest with the intention of establishing a new colony at another location. feral bees mean bees of the species *Apis mellifera* L in the wild and in a wild state

registered beekeeper means a person who has been granted biosecurity registration under Part 12 of the Act to engage in the registrable dealing of dealing with bees.

qualified pest controller means the holder of a pest management technician licence issued by the Environment Protection Authority (NSW).

16 Feral bees [s 50, s 51(a), (c)]

(1) Unless otherwise permitted by this emergency order, a person must not interfere with or move feral bees.

(2) A person may destroy feral bees within premises with an insecticide for destroying bees, if the destruction is in accordance with all label directions or Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority permit directions.

(3) A registered beekeeper or qualified pest controller may move feral bees from a feral bee colony to a container, but only for the purpose of destruction of those bees.

(4) A registered beekeeper or qualified pest controller may move the container in which the feral bees are kept to another location at which the feral bees will be destroyed, but only if that location is within the same emergency zone.

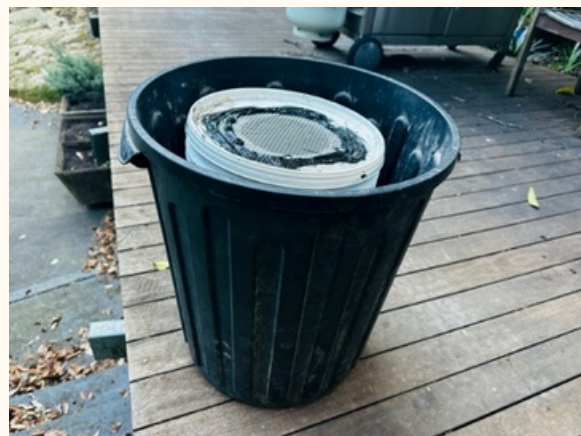
(5) Any feral bees that are moved for the purpose of destruction must be destroyed as soon as practicable after reaching the destination at which they will be destroyed.

Practical Considerations

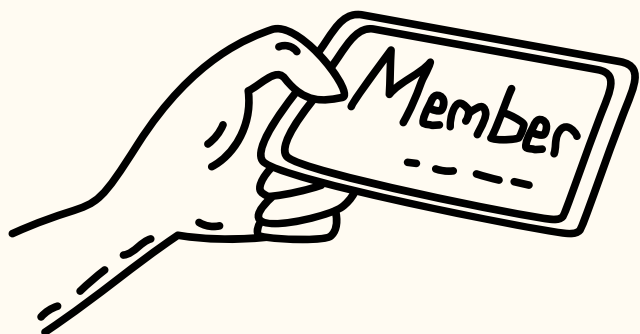
You can catch and kill the swarm within the same zone.

Insecticides suitable for killing bees are dangerous for humans. Petrol is the fastest, most humane way to kill bees, but it is flammable.

A safe, effective alternative is to modify a 20L bucket and lid. Cut out a 125mm radius hole in the base and the lid. Cut 4mm mesh to cover the holes and fit to the base and lid. Catch the swarm into the bucket and close the lid. Move to prepared eradication site. Plunge the lidded bucket containing the swarm into a drum of water (detergent optional) large enough to fully submerge the bucket. The bucket will rapidly fill with water, drowning the bees quickly.

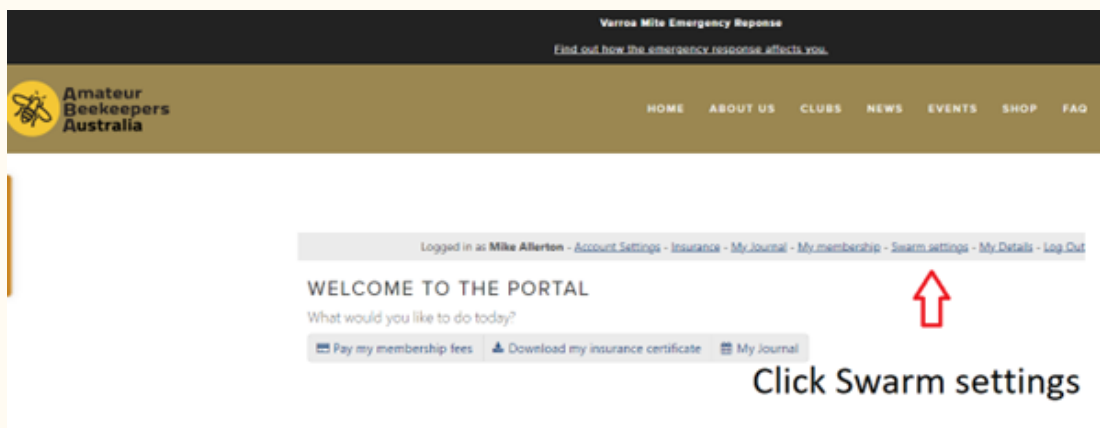
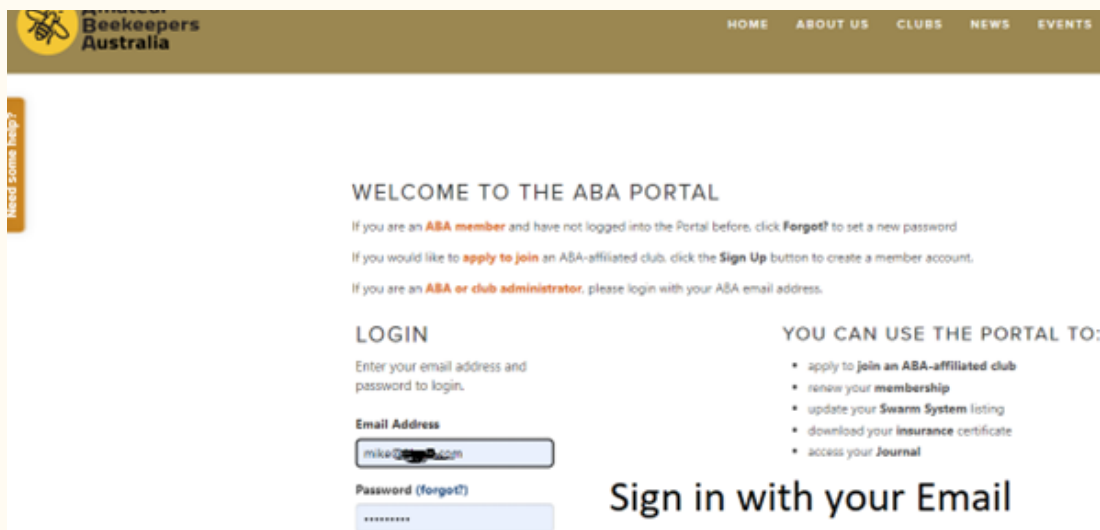
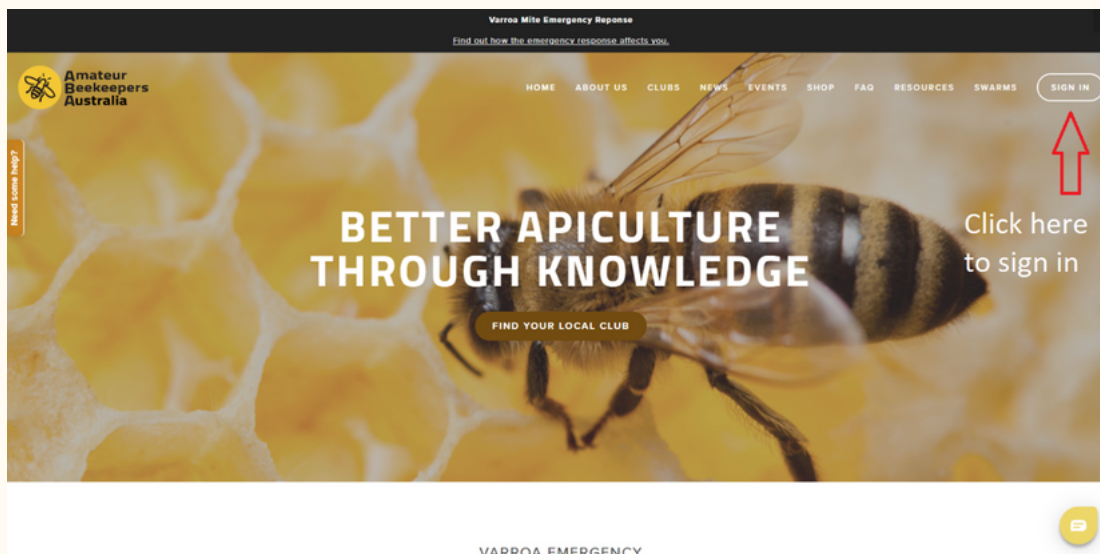


Membership packs coming soon



The Membership pack has been delayed. We were hoping to get permission to reprint the Beekeeping Code of Practice; however, as the Code is currently under review and the review is taking longer than expected, we will change the content of the member pack and hope to get it sent out by mid September. Sorry for the delay.

Don't want to catch swarms this season?
Here's how to de-register from our swarm list.
First head to the portal www.beekeepers.asn.au



SWARM SETTINGS

Name

Mike Allerton

Registration (hive brand) *

NA187

You must be a registered beekeeper if you wish to use the ABA Swarm System

Are you willing to collect swarms?

No



Select No from the dropdown

If you set this to NO, your swarm listing will not be displayed on the ABA website

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

These are the details that will be displayed to members of the public who are looking for a swarm catcher

Mobile number

04184 41951

Location *

Kurrajong Heights

Then scroll to the bottom



2755

Swarm postcode 6

Swarm postcode 7

Swarm postcode 8

Swarm postcode 9

Swarm postcode 10

Submit



Press Submit

Waratah Mite Emergency Response

Find out how the emergency response affects you.



HOME ABOUT US CLUBS NEWS EVENTS SHOP FAQ RESOURCES SWARMS SIGN IN

Logged in as Mike Allerton - Account Settings - Insurance - My Journal - My membership - Swarm settings - My Details - Log Out

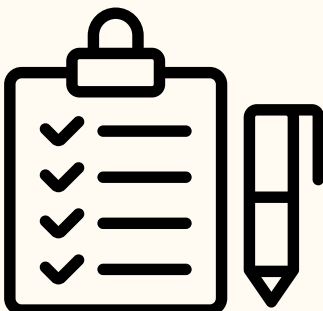
SWARM SETTINGS

Form successfully submitted.

[Retract form](#)



All done. Now press Log Out



Membership Survey

At the last AGM, a motion was passed to review the ABA structure. As part of this review a survey will soon be hitting your inboxes. Please take the time to answer the questions as this feedback will be used to shape the future of your ABA.

Beekeeper training courses

When it comes to beekeeping training there are lots of options out there. It's a confusing landscape so we've attempted to drill down into what the options are.

Accredited and informal training. What does this actually mean? In the scope of beekeeping training, accredited training is a nationally-recognised Certificate III in Beekeeping. Non-accredited informal training may still cover the same areas or may even cover more but you don't receive a nationally-recognised certificate at the completion of the course.

I am a backyard/hobby beekeeper so do I need training? Unlike other parts of the world, no training is required to become a beekeeper in Australia – you just need to follow the rules in your state and/or council area which are all different.



If you are a hobby beekeeper, depending on your learning style and the time you have to learn, a Cert III course may be too much of a time commitment or too expensive. If, on the other hand, you are looking to do an apprenticeship start a business or have the time then it might be ideal for you.

Many organisations now offer informal training and because it's not a defined certificate course you need to drill down into what exactly is on offer. Something to look out for is hands-on experience with the bees – you should actually get the chance to manipulate frames and handle bees to help build your confidence. If the course doesn't offer hands on then in my opinion, it's not a bee course, it's an information session. When Vicky and I started running courses in our business we placed emphasis on hands on as I felt that I could always read more books; today of course there are many sources of information, but I still train people who don't know what a J-style hive tool is for when we show them how to use it.

To find the right course, a good place to start is your fellow beekeepers – many will have done some training. Many clubs also offer training.

A simple google search is a good way of finding a local provider as well. Try "certificate III in beekeeping" if you're looking for formal training and "beekeeping course Sydney" for informal training. Of course you can insert another location such as "Gold Coast" if you're not in Sydney. There are now many options for Cert III across Australia – some even have mobile classrooms.

Swarms and the Varroa Intrusion by Fiona Fernie

In 2001, there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK. Pedigree cattle herds were euthanized, long established bloodlines were lost and farmers were traumatized. I drove down the M6 through Dumfries and Cumbria, past burning funeral pyres and the whole country wondered what would become of our cattle industry. The eradication of the disease from the herds was a huge sacrifice for the farmers but the UK is F&M disease free and no F&M vaccines are in the home grown beef cattle.

Does any of this scenario sound familiar? The sacrifices of all the beekeepers in the eradication zone of the Varroa Intrusion are traumatized. The whole beekeeping industry has made a huge sacrifice to rid Australia of Varroa Destructor. We are currently in the midst of a baiting programme to eradicate the feral colonies. Whilst eradication is still possible, the red zone has to be free of managed and feral colonies – and that includes swarms.

The DPI is quite clear – any swarms in the Red and Purple zone MUST be euthanized. No beekeeper wants to kill bees, managed colonies, feral colonies or swarms. Beekeepers have diversified their bloodlines capturing swarms and after a suitable quarantine period, included them in their managed apiaries. Once again, a sacrifice is called for – swarms are to be euthanized. The locations of all feral colonies are to be reported to the DPI and the honey bee colonies will then be euthanized. If you do not want to take part in euthanizing swarms in the red and purple zones, then please remove yourself from the swarm register.

This report is an education update. All of our members are being asked to understand why eradication has to be complete. No exceptions! If the sacrifices that have already been made are not to be in vain, then, the eradication zone must be western honey bee free – free of all colonies. A honey bee colony is a superorganism – they all work for the good of the colony. With the Varroa intrusion, we must all work for the greater good. If we all play by the DPI regulations, and no-one flouts them, we will have a Varroa free country, once again. It would only take one beekeeper to flout the regulations and all the sacrifices will have been for nothing. If you find a swarm in the red or purple zones, euthanizing is the only realistic remedy. The information concerning the location of the swarm should be passed to the DPI, as this is an adjunct to the baiting programme.

Beekeeping Field Day



The Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers are delighted to invite you to the ABA Beekeeping Field Day. All beekeepers and people interested in beekeeping are welcome.

Saturday November 4, 2023

9:00am to 3:00pm

18 Leagues Club Drive, Nerang 4211

Gold coin admission

Trade suppliers on site
Beekeeping equipment sales
Beekeeping equipment demonstrations
Industry updates
Specialist beekeeping presentations
Product demonstrations
Native bees
Tea, coffee and drinks
Barbecue



Trade Enquiries to Drew Maywald at gcrb.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au

Field Day site is 3 minutes from Nerang train station
Lots of parking within a couple of minutes of the site.

Tanging – Catching Swarms in Medieval Times by Drew Maywald

I had an interesting conversation recently with several of the more experienced beekeepers in our club. We were talking about swarms and how to catch them, when one of the group mentioned that if a swarm is high up in a tree you can coax them down by banging pots and pans together.

Before you laugh yourself silly and think that I have lost my mind, you need to know that banging pots and pans together is an ancient beekeeping custom, perhaps as old as mediaeval times when beekeepers routinely promoted swarming. In those days you could not go out a buy a nuc so the only way to increase the number of hives in your apiary was to encourage the bees to swarm and then catch the swarm. Common Law in those days established the principle that if a swarm came from your hives, it became your property. As a result, if you were pursuing a swarm, and hoping to establish an ongoing claim to it, you needed a way to signal your intention without being able to send out a group text or email to nearby beekeepers and neighbours.

When a medieval beekeeper saw a swarm leave one of their hives, they would chase it to recapture it and return it to the apiary. While chasing it, the beekeeper typically crosses the property of several people, and by rhythmically beating on a pan while chasing the swarm, they were able to let property owners know that the swarm of bees is theirs, and the beekeeper is not there to trespass and offers no danger to the land owner.



In medieval times beekeepers also believed that banging pots and pans may convince the bees that a storm with thunder is approaching and that they need to find a place to land, and then the beekeeper could capture them and return them to their home.

It was also believed that the noise and rhythmic sound created by beating the pots and pans, would coax the bees down to settle in a new hive or 'skep', lined with honey, to further entice the bees into the skep.

Langstroth was not only a beekeeper in Oxford, but he did a lot of research on bees and swarming. He and his colleagues tried banging pots and pans, but could find no evidence that it actually worked. Interestingly, Langstroth found that in the UK June was the most popular month for bees to naturally swarm. He also discovered that bees like to swarm on warm, calm days, when there is less danger to them. He also suggested having an empty hive nearby under a tree, during the swarm season. The bees will then flock around the said tree and the scout bees should find the hive.



Maybe we haven't come too far from medieval times, because even now many beekeepers will keep a bait box near their apiary for just such an event, during the swarm season.

According to Langstroth swarming was a positive thing as there was always a possibility of creating another hive when the bees swarmed. In fact, it was the only way a beekeeper in medieval times could increase their number of hives.

Interestingly, banging pots and pans is still widely used in India and other countries around the world, including, apparently, some beekeepers here on the Gold Coast.

The technique is quite simple. When the bees start to swarm you need to run into the garden with pots and pans and bash them together rhythmically, making as much noise as possible. Apparently this causes the bees to settle down low and not fly away so that they can then be gathered up and put into a box. This technique is called Tanging.

So, the big question is does tanging work or is it merely an Old Wives tale? Unfortunately, I am unable to answer because I have never done it or seen it being used. However, there are a number of instances on Facebook and on the internet of beekeepers who have rhythmically banged pots and pans to successfully coax swarms of bees down low and into boxes.

Scientifically there is little foundation that 'Tanging' works but perhaps it is because bees don't have the same anatomical capacity to "hear" things that we do, although they can sense vibrations. So maybe it wasn't the infernal racket of the tanging, just the incessant vibrations which moved them to come down from their perch and slip into a hive, just to get away from it all. But who am I to question old wives and hundreds of years of beekeeping!





We need your help

The ABA needs volunteers to help with the following roles:

IT Support
Newsletter / Graphics
Accounting / Treasurer
Legal (tax, privacy, incorporation law)

If you can help with any of these roles please contact:
secretary@beekeepers.asn.au

Honey Cheesecake

Ingredients

Crust

- 1 1/2 cups gingernut biscuits smashed into crumbs
- 100g melted unsalted butter

Filling

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 x 300ml can condensed milk
- 2 x 125g packs Philly cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. grated lemon rind



Directions

Prepare the crust:

Coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray and line the sides with baking paper. Stir together biscuit crumbs and butter in a medium bowl until combined. Press into bottom of prepared springform pan. Bake at 180c for 15 to 20 mins; remove and set aside to fully cool.

Finish the cheesecake:

Beat cream cheese in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add lemon juice, rind, honey and half the condensed milk; beat until smooth, about 30 seconds. Add the remaining condensed milk and beat until well combined. Spoon mixture onto chilled crust in pan. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, at least 3 hours or over night. Remove from spring form pan and serve cold; drizzle with extra honey, if desired.