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Next ABACC Meeting

Tuesday 18th October at Erina Trust Community Hall

6:00pm: Beginning in Bees

7:00pm ABACC General Meeting

7:35pm Supper

7:50pm Educational Session:
Medicinal Applications of Honey. Dr Nural Cokcetin

Newsletter

Deadlines for submissions:

Classified Advertisements: 1st of the month.

Articles, photos and other contributions: 5th of the month – earlier if possible.

Editor: Dr Gavin Williams,

Email:

editor@centralcoastbees.org

Are we Winning?

For some of our members in the Red Zone, waiting for the DPI to follow through on the hive eradication and collection has been a most frustrating experience. I have spoken to members whose hives are yet to be euthanised. Others have had the dreaded visit by DPI teams to euthanise the bees, but now the black plastic wrapped boxes sit there awaiting pickup as a daily reminder of their loss.

On the other side of this coin are the teams of DPI staff and other government workers accompanied by volunteer beekeepers who have the unenviable task of euthanising hundreds of hives of bees. They face a range of responses from bee keepers whose hives they have come to destroy.

As I talk to people on both sides of the eradication process, there seems to be a growing sense of confidence that the mite has been contained. There have been few reports of further infected properties and those are within existing 'red' zones.

Whatever side of the fence you sit, one thing is for sure, we will only beat this pest by working together and supporting one another. In this newsletter you will find some helpful information that we hope will assist you in your part of that process.

This battle can be won. This mite can be defeated and driven from our shores yet again. Whatever the cost, it is worth it to protect our precious bees.

Editor





Dear Members,

Following our Annual General Meeting held last month, we step into a new year of the club's operation. Firstly, let me say thank you to those present at the AGM for their confidence in electing myself, other members of the committee and other appointees to serve our club for the year ahead. We count it a privilege and an honour to serve you and keep the club relevant to the needs of beekeepers on the Central Coast.

This is certainly a very different year for beekeepers in this region. Not only do we have the Varroa Emergency impacting many of our members, the weather conditions across the region are having varied impacts on all of us. This time last year some beekeepers were preparing for their first honey harvest of the new season. This year is a very different story. As I speak to members and others it is apparent that the nectar flow across much of the Coast is virtually non-existent.

My own bees located at Budgewoi and Doyalson are really struggling to bring in enough nectar and pollen to feed the developing larvae and brood and sustain the hive. Yet at the same time, the hives are breeding strongly as though they are anticipating good times ahead. One veteran beekeeper with whom I spoke commented, 'Maybe the bees know something great is coming and want to be ready.' I certainly hope he is right.

I see a strange phenomenon before us. In many areas there seems to be reasonable flowers on the trees and shrubs, yet our hives are struggling to bring in sufficient nectar to store and cap as ripe honey. Even when they manage to cap some honey, it is consumed by them to survive through the next days of protracted wet weather.

Could it be that the continuous wet weather has so impacted the trees and shrubs that even the nectar they produce is significantly diluted. Could it be that the nectar that is produced is also being diluted in the flowers by the constant rain? I am not a botanist so I do not have answers to these questions. But I cannot help wondering.

In closing, I want to encourage all our members to make attendance at our meetings a priority. The committee are working hard to ensure that we have worthwhile topics for both our General Discussion time and also the Educational Session. The visit of **Dr Nural Cokcetin** of Sydney University of Technology at our October meeting promises to be a highlight. You will find more details of Dr Cokcetin's areas of specialty inside the newsletter. I hope you can be there.

Happy Beekeeping.

Dr Gavin Williams LTh. DPMIn.

President





Varroa Mite Testing — Alcohol Wash

The Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Emergency Order 2022 (No 28) issued by the DPI on 15th September 2022 has significantly increased the requirements on all beekeepers in regard to testing for Varroa Mites. Previously we were required to conduct a 'sugar shake' test at least twice per year, usually in conjunction with our spring and autumn inspections.

The new regulations require all beekeepers to test their hives using the more reliable 'alcohol wash' treatment every 16 weeks or approximately three times each year.

Here is the full text of Item 12 in Emergency Order No 28:

12. Testing and surveillance by registered beekeepers:

- (1) A registered beekeeper must:
 - (a) at least once in every 16 week period, complete an alcohol wash on their hives and any bees housed in those hives in accordance with the alcohol washing requirements, and
 - (b) report the results of the alcohol wash to the Department by electronic communication, using the form at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/alcohol-wash.
- (2) In this clause: alcohol washing requirements means carrying out alcohol washing on the hives as follows:
 - (a) if the person owns or has control of less than 64 hives – alcohol washing of all hives,
 - (b) if the person owns or has control of more than 64 hives but less than 640 hives – alcohol washing of 64 hives, or
 - (c) if the person owns or has control of more than 640 hives – alcohol washing of 10% of hives."

This new requirement is not a guideline or suggestion but a **regulation that must be followed by all beekeepers**. Such diligence by all of us will play a significant role in the ongoing battle to keep Australia varroa mite free.

Early in October I determined to fulfil my responsibilities and do a full inspection of my

seven hives including alcohol wash, AFB test and other inspections. My only previous experience with an alcohol wash was on a swarm caught earlier in the season and subsequently destroyed. Once in the swing of things, I found the process was not as difficult as I first imagined. I hope that my experiences might help to demystify the task and encourage you to get on with the job.

Alcohol Wash Kit



Step one is assembling your alcohol wash kit. There are various approaches to this process. My kit included:

1. A large wide mouthed glass jar.
2. A sugar shake bottle.
3. A sheet of corflute (from an

election or real estate sign) partially cut to allow it to fold into a 'V'.

4. A bottle of Methylated Spirits.

Conducting an Alcohol Wash

On approaching the hive my first step was to check the honey super and record the stocks of honey and nectar. This also allowed me to be prepared in case I found the need to move some brood frames up into the honey super, replacing them with new frames or drawn comb as a swarm minimisation measure.

1. **Into the Brood Box:** Varroa Mite is primarily a problem in the brood box. The mite thrives in the warm environment of the brood box, is most at home on nurse bees and breeds in the maturing larvae. While mites may be found on field bees, the greater concentrations will be found in the brood box. For this reason, an alcohol wash test must be conducted on bees from the brood box.

2. **The Queen:** one of the challenges in conducting alcohol washes is to ensure that the queen is not in the sample we are washing. Since all bees in the sample will die instantly when the alcohol is introduced, we do not want to lose our queen as part of adhering to the regulations. Conducting a careful check on the frames in the brood box for the queen is of primary importance.

3. **Collect the sample of bees:** To conduct an alcohol wash correctly, we need approximately 300 bees or half a cup of bees in the sample to be washed. While bees from a single frame satisfies the requirements, to be especially thorough, I chose to take this sample from three brood frames spaced throughout the brood box. This means working quickly yet carefully to gather the required sample.

I chose to use a sheet of white corflute from an old election sign to gather the sample. Shaking a group of bees onto the corflute enabled me to do a further visual check to be sure I had not caught the queen by mistake. I then transferred the sample of bees to the wide mouthed glass jar and sat the lid in place. Once I had completed gathering my sample, I added the alcohol, gave the jar a good shake and set the jar aside while completing the inspection.

4. As part of the inspection I also checked for **American Foul Brood** using the 'rope test' on three or four cells on several frames throughout the brood box. In some hives the brood was so strong that I selected two frames of mature brood (no drone brood) to lift above the queen excluder and replaced those frames in the brood box with new frames with foundation wax or frames of drawn comb stored from last season. I hope that this process will ensure that the queen has plenty of space to lay and therefore minimise the likelihood of swarming. I then reassembled the hive and completed the inspection.
5. **Wash the Bees:** Now it is time to 'wash' the bees in the alcohol thoroughly. You will need approximately one and a half cups of methylated spirits in the jar. Shake the bees in the alcohol vigorously for minimum of four minutes to dislodge any mites clinging to the bees. Since the

bees in the jar are already dead, they cannot be harmed by vigorous shaking. Set the jar aside and leave the mixture of bees and methylated spirits to soak for a few minutes and shake again.

6. **Observe for Mites:** Now pour the alcohol/bees solution into a container with a strainer in the lid. A clean sugar shake bottle works just fine. Pour the alcohol through the strainer back into the original jar and observe for mites in the clear liquid. Some beekeepers then pour this mixture through a paper towel so that any mites in the solution are captured on the towel and are easily seen.
7. **Keep a Record:** If you find varroa mites in the solution or on the paper towel, take a photo of what you see. If there are mites in your alcohol wash, keep a portion of the liquid with all the mites for the DPI to conduct further testing. Thankfully I did not find mites in any of my hives.
8. **Report your findings to the DPI.** Even if the results of your testing show no mites in your hives, we are required to report the results of the alcohol wash to the DPI by calling 1800 084 881 or by completing the form at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/alcohol-wash. A negative result is as important to the DPI as a positive test.

While these new testing requirements place considerable pressure on beekeepers, the benefits of keeping this pest under control outweigh the personal cost. If possible, it is good to work together with another beekeeper and help each other conduct these demanding tests. Once I had completed the first hive or two, I worked into a routine and found the process simple enough.

Deciding not to comply with new regulation is not an option. We are all required to carry out our role as registered beekeepers. If you have further questions, search the DPI website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Varroa and look for Frequently Asked Questions. You will find many answers to your questions on that page.

Remember: if you want to keep bees, you must be a beekeeper. Inspections and tests such as the alcohol wash are part of our responsibility as beekeepers.

Gavin Williams



Have you lost all your hives in the Varroa Mite eradication?

Thinking about giving up?

Well, don't!

We want to encourage you to keep your hopes alive and look forward to a forward journey with bees. Here's how!

There are members of our club in the Purple zone who want to help you get back into bees. They are willing to do splits and nurture new hives specifically for the purpose of helping those who have lost their hives keep their interest in bees. They will make those splits available for absolute minimum cost of materials to set up the hive.

Just like when you purchase a NUC from the club, you bring your own box and replace the frames and foundation wax used with new frames and wax. The donor will guide you through a full inspection and alcohol wash and you will walk away with a new hive subject to permissions from the DPI.

Would you like bees?

1. Register your interest for this program with our club apiarist, Michael Graham

(mgbees53@gmail.com) and he will place your name on the list.

2. Look for a new site for your apiary in the purple zone.
3. Prepare a new hive with frames and foundation wax and have these ready for the exchange.
4. Wait for the call from the donor apiarist.

Remember: this program is specifically for those who have lost all their hives.

Are you willing to give bees?

If you would like to be part of this program by donating a split so that someone can begin again, here's what to do:

1. Register your willingness to participate in this program by contacting Michael Graham.
2. Look for an opportunity to split your hive and prepare a new colony.
3. Let Michael know when the hive is ready.

Generosity is good for all of us. Let's be part of the program and help as many as possible keep hope for a way forward with bees.

Michael Graham



**October General Meeting:****TUESDAY 18 October at 8:00pm****Special Guest Speaker:****Dr Nural Cokcetin**

Dr Nural Cokcetin is a research scientist specialising in the field of microbiology at the iThree Institute, University of Technology Sydney. Dr Cokcetin's research focuses on understanding the antimicrobial properties of honey, with a drive to use this knowledge to develop new treatments for infections caused by multi-drug resistant superbugs.



Dr Cokcetin's PhD focused on investigating the use of honey as a prebiotic to improve human gut health. She was one of the first researchers to show a positive impact of eating honey on the beneficial gut populations.

Dr Cokcetin is an engaging speaker with a wealth of knowledge about medicinal applications of honey.

Spouses and Partners are welcome to attend this meeting and benefit from Dr Cokcetin's practical expertise.

Beginning in Bees continues at our October meeting. These valuable introductions to beekeeping commence at 6:00pm on our meeting nights.

At our October club meeting, the following sessions will be offered:

Beginning in Bees 101, *An Introducing to Beekeeping* with Bruce Main.

Beginning in Bees 102, *The Beekeepers Toolkit* with Michael Graham.

If you have friends or colleagues who are thinking about commencing a beekeeping journey, this is a great place to start.

Club Loan Equipment:

Due to the current DPI restrictions on the movement of beekeeping equipment, the clubs loan equipment is not available for use by members. We regret this situation but we have no option but to follow the DPI regulations.

Morisset Show. With the cancellation of the Morisset Lake Macquarie Agricultural Show scheduled for 22 & 23 October, the annual honey competition will not be going ahead.

Total Beekeeper's Field Day: Saturday 15th October

The 43rd Annual Total Beekeepers' Field Day will be held on Saturday 15 October 2022 **online from 9am to 12pm**. Hear from some experts in beekeeping and ask your questions in a live Q&A session.

Speakers (more TBA):

- Dr Chris Anderson - NSW DPI Biosecurity
- Danny LeFeuvre - AHBIC
- Professor Andrew Barron - Macquarie University

For updates, follow us on Facebook at [www.fb.me/TocalBees](https://www.facebook.com/TocalBees)

Register for this free event at: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/43rd-annual-total-beekeepers-field-day-2022-tickets-412575252687>

Natural and Native Beekeeping discussion group meets at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month at Mingara Recreational Club.

November General Meeting: TUESDAY 18th November

December Christmas Party: Tuesday 13th December

No meeting in January

Club Membership:

The ABA membership portal is open and functioning. Members who have not yet renewed their membership of the ABACC should look for an email from the ABA entitled, Membership Renewal Invitation and follow the links to renew your membership.

Those wishing to join our membership should visit www://amateurbeekeepers.asn.au and look for 'Take Action' at the bottom of the page. Follow the links to join the Central Coast Club. As of the end of September, club communications are only available to members who have renewed their membership thorough the ABA membership portal.

ABACC Club Photo Competition

Remember those stunning photos we have published each year in the club Calendar?



With the use of paper calendars in decline, we have decided not to publish a printed calendar for 2023. However, we do want to see your photos.

The Committee has determined to publish one of these remarkable photographs each month in the Newsletter along with a brief story about the photographer and the photo.

Please bring your photo printed in colour on an A4 sheet of paper to the December Christmas party on Tuesday 13th December.

The photos will be displayed and those in attendance invited to vote for the photos they like most. The top 11 photos will be published in the newsletters throughout 2023.

Notes from our Bio Security Officer — Max Rae

I have received enquiries from members requesting clarification on the **new Alcohol Wash requirements**. The DPI specification is that these tests must be carried out no more than 16 weeks apart. Results either positive or negative must be notified to the DPI via the Varroa Mite Hotline (1800 084 881) or the internet form found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/alcohol-wash. (see the lead article on page 3 of this newsletter for further information.)

Swarms in the Red and Purple zones are to be notified to the DPI via the hotline. All swarms must be euthanised. The DPI are not sending teams to euthanise swarms at the moment. Householders are responsible to contact pest exterminators and bear the cost of the eradication.

Hive Movements: Under certain circumstances, a permit can be obtained to move hives within the same zone. This is on a case by case approval basis. If you need to move a hive, contact the DPI on the hotline number (1800 084 881) and they will advise you of the information required for the permit to be assessed.

If the permit is approved, the DPI will advise you on what needs to be completed before the hive movement is allowed. These requirements will vary on a case by case basis. It is important to fill all the requirements set by the DPI permit.

Total College — Online Varroa Mite Training.

Total College has a free 'Online Varroa Mite Training Course' available free of charge to all interested parties.

This course has been developed to provide online Varroa mite training in line with the eligibility requirements of a movement permit for beekeepers in NSW. On successful completion of this course you will receive a certificate which is a step required to complete your application for a movement permit.

The course may be accessed at www://courses.tocal.nsw.edu.au and search for 'Varroa Mite Online Training'.

This course will take approximately 30-45minutes to complete and is a valuable resource for all beekeepers.



ABACC Christmas Party

After a challenging year it will be good to relax together and share a time of social interaction.

Our Christmas Party will be held on **Tuesday 13th December** (a week earlier than our normal meeting night to avoid the rush of Christmas week. Plan to come along and enjoy a relaxed evening of fun, food and fellowship. The evening will begin at 7:00pm.

This will be a bring and share evening.



OFFICE	NAME	Email Address
Voting Positions		
President	Gavin WILLIAMS	president@centralcoastbees.org
Vice President	Jack DUNN	membership@centralcoastbees.org
Secretary	Hart PETERS	secretary@centralcoastbees.org
Treasurer	Gordon FOSTER	treasurer@centralcoastbees.org
Assistant Secretary	Nickole MARSDEN	nicole.marsden@gmail.com
Bio Security Officer	Max RAE	biosecurity@centralcoastbees.org
Club Apiary Officer	Michael GRAHAM	mgbeyes53@gmail.com
Other Appointments		
Membership Officer	Jack DUNN	membership@centralcoastbees.org
Assistant Apiary Officer	Marleen BAETEN	baetenmarleen@gmail.com
Quartermaster	Bruce MAIN	bhv.main@gmail.com
Librarian	Barry ESLICK	gipsyrobaz@hotmail.com
Catering Officer	Michelle ARNOT	williamarnot@yahoo.com
Events Co-ordinator	Len VERRENKAMP	len@totalfitting.com.au
Equipment Officer	Kim McTERNAN	jillibeez725@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Gavin WILLIAMS	editor@centralcoastbees.org
Public Officer	Hart PETERS	hartmut.peters@bigpond.com
Publicity Officer		



From time to time, all beekeepers need access to a new queen. Perhaps your queen has mysteriously disappeared and left your hive's future in jeopardy. Perhaps you feel it is time to re-queen a hive or split a hive in order to expand your apiary or prepare a hive to give away. Whatever the reason, access to a quality young queen is crucial to the future of that hive.

The current Varroa Mite Emergency has had a devastating impact on many queen breeders. Breeders in the purple zone are unable to supply queens. The strange season has also meant that some breeders are well behind previous schedules. Most are suggesting that they will not have queens to ship before late October or even well into November.

The matter of posting of queens may also be an issue. Queen breeders whose postage track comes through the Newcastle Mail Exchange may not be able to send queens via mail.

Do your best to anticipate your queen requirements in advance and speak to your chosen queen breeder ahead of your required date. If you know of other breeders who may be happy to have their name added to this list, please send their details to the editor at editor@centralcoastbees.org.

Name	Email /Phone	Variety	Price + Postage
Jamie Baggs ABACC Club Member	0410 508 939	Italians	\$37.50 +P&H To ABACC Members
Charlie & Brenda Casido	0434 353 301 info@australianqueenbeeline.com.au	Italians & Carniolans	\$32 + P&H
Patrick Carroll	0427 018 850	Italians	\$35 +\$10
David Vial	0424 064 737	Italians & Carniolans	\$35 + P&H
Ross Woods	0421 817 710	Italians	\$30 + P&H



The Club Quartermaster, **Bruce Main**, carries a stock of basic beekeeping supplies available to Club members. **This service continues to be available despite Varroa restrictions as all items for sale are new and have not been in touch with bees.**

Hives		
Boxes – 8 Frame (Unassembled) – Full Depth	Each	\$29.50
Boxes – 8 Frame (Unassembled – WSP	Each	\$24.50
Boxes – 8 Frame (Unassembled) – Ideal	Each	\$22.00
Boxes – 10 Frame (Unassembled) – Full Depth	Each	\$31.00
Migratory Lids - 8 Frame (Unassembled)	Each	\$26.50
Migratory Lids - 10 Frame (Unassembled)	Each	\$24.00
Bottom Boards - 8 Frame (Unassembled)	Each	\$25.50
Bottom Boards - 10 Frame (Unassembled)	Each	\$23.00
Metal Queen Excluder - 8 Frame	Each	\$24.50
Metal Queen Excluder - 10 Frame	Each	\$25.00
Frames		
Frames (unassembled) - Full Depth	Bundle of 10	\$18.00
Frames (unassembled) - WSP	Bundle of 10	\$20.00
Frames (unassembled) - Ideal	Bundle of 10	\$20.00
Foundation Wax		
Foundation Wax - Full Depth	per sheet	\$3.50
Foundation Wax - WSP	per sheet	\$2.55
Foundation Wax - Ideal	per sheet	\$2.00

Tools and Accessories		
Apithor (hive beetle trap)	Each	\$8.50
Bee Brush	Each	\$16.00
Cover End Vents (metal)	per set of 4	\$2.50
Emlocks (Hive Straps)	Each	\$11.50
Escape Boards (complete) - 8 Frame	Each	\$29.00
Eyelet Tool	Each	\$8.50
Eyelets - (Brass)	Pack of 500	\$13.00
Frame Lifter	Each	\$20.00
Framing Wire - (Stainless Steel)	500gm roll	\$21.50
Hive Tool	Each	\$19.00
Queen Catcher Clips - (Stainless Steel)	Each	\$8.50
Containers and Labels		
Glass Jars with Lids – (500gms)	Carton of 24	\$21.00
Honey Squeeze Bottles with caps – (500gms)	Pack of 12	\$10.20
Honey Tubs with Lids - (1kg)	Each	\$1.70
Labels - Club Honey Container Labels	Each label	\$0.65
Labels - 'Made in Australia'	Sheet of 126 labels	\$5.00

We have a **Wire Framing Jig and a Wax Embedder** (electric) available for club members to use on new equipment. Due to the current DPI restrictions on the movement of beekeeping equipment, Bruce is willing to assist members who are able to come to his home with **NEW AND UNUSED FRAMES AND FOUNDATION WAX** at a small cost of \$3.00 per use. Please email Bruce to arrange an appointment. Unfortunately, the equipment cannot leave Bruce's workshop.

To order items or arrange an appointment email Bruce at bhv.main@gmail.com. Bruce will either prepare the order for pick up at Narara at a mutually, pre-arranged day and time or he can bring your order along to the next monthly club meeting. (address available on request) ALL ORDERS LODGED will be responded to on the same day providing the request is placed before 4:30pm. Orders placed after this time will be responded to the following day.

All sales are CASH ONLY. There is no Eftpos available for any purchases.

NOTE: Please be aware, prices shown are to be used as a guide only and may vary without notice depending on Supplier cost variations.



The following members of the ABACC are willing to assist those who are less experienced in beekeeping:

Name	Contact No	Area
Ray Isaacs	0433 393 901	Saratoga, Davistown
Barbara Elkins	0419 742 388	Bateau Bay, Long Jetty
Martin Roberts	0409 361 905	Mountain Plateau
Peter Annabel	0413 331 544	Terrigal to Norah Head
Jon King	0419 995 158	Empire Bay, Kincumber, MacMasters Beach Copacabana, Kilcare
Marleen Baeten	0421 175 892	Empire Bay and Surrounds
Brian Sawyer	0418 965 630	Avoca, Copacabana, Macmasters Beach, Kincumber
Bruce Main	4324 6284	Narara to Ourimbah, Erina, Greenpoint,
Graham Bolton	0434 199 125	Bateau Bay, The Entrance, Wamberal.

The following guidelines need to be kept in mind when requesting the assistance of the mentors:

1. It is the personal responsibility of all beekeepers to develop a growing understanding of the art of beekeeping and the management of our hives. This will include:
 - Attending club meetings, educational sessions, training workshops and field days.
 - Reading books from the club library and our club Newsletter.
 - Viewing some of the many hours of helpful instructional material available on YouTube and related sites.
 - Enrolling in courses offered by the DPI or the Club outside of club meetings.
2. Club mentors are not personal beekeeping assistants who can drop everything and come to your immediate aid or be available on an ongoing basis. They are available for an occasional chat or perhaps a site visit by prior arrangement. Any involvement beyond the above is at the discretion of the mentor.
3. Our mentors have private lives that may include family and work commitments, their own apiary requirements and other responsibilities. They offer their assistance as mentors in addition to these commitments. Anyone wishing to avail themselves of a mentor's knowledge and skill needs to respect those personal commitments.
4. There may be times when personal or other commitments are such that a mentor cannot give the assistance you seek or in a time when you need that assistance. Please respect their decision. Remember that they have the right to say 'No!'
5. When seeking the assistance of a mentor, send them an SMS first to seek a good time to call. This shows a respect for their personal commitments. They may not be in a position to return your call for a day or two.
6. If the mentor you have called is unable to assist, there are other names on the mentor list. Try another mentor.