

FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB NEWSLETTER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011

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President's report

Since our AGM in March there have been some events that caused several difficulties. The secretary/treasurer elected at the AGM has had to stand down and I am most grateful that Graham Wheeler has offered to fill the role till at least the next AGM in April 2012.

By and large we have addressed the issues and some normality may now follow.

This newsletter is the last that will be received by those whose club records show have not renewed their membership, as was invoiced back in March. The subscription as decided at the last AGM is \$40.00 to March 2012. Those wishing to continue with the club should now pay their sub to Graham, or by direct credit to 020404 0090129 00 (BNZ Pukekohe). Remember to advise the secretary.

I would like to welcome those new members who have joined us this year and hope that they find things interesting and informative. Pukekohe High School is again this year running a third-term evening class for new beekeepers, presented by the Franklin Beekeepers Club and which by the time this newsletter goes out will have been advertised in the *Franklin County News*. Numbers are limited.

The present site is set out below, but may change.

<https://sites.google.com/site/franklinbeekeepersclub/>

Peter

From the Secretary

Hi All

Just a quick note from me to introduce myself, After buying my first hive off Craig Tunzelman about 2 years ago, I realised that I knew nothing about beekeeping, so enrolled in the beekeeping night classes that this club holds at Pukekohe High School, VERY good value and learned a lot, thanks guys.

Moving on from there, my focus has veered off a little to sustainable beekeeping in Top-bar hives of which I have 2 going at the moment.

The club had a field day on the 8th of May at my place and were able to see the Top-Bar hives for themselves, I hope you all enjoyed it, as I must say there was a big turnout and I received a lot of very positive remarks, which is very encouraging.

We have another 2 members building hives at the moment and if anyone else would like to build one, I have a workshop and we could get together and build some more ,please let me know.

I hope your bees are all tucked safely away for winter
cheers
Graham Wheeler

Hive Master's Report:

In the hives over winter, we have placed our varroa strips to control varroa. There has also been a lot of honey stored from the summer due to our early extraction, of which the bees are working through quite well. At the last meeting, some members saw the stores (Honey) both crystallised and liquid. This is due to the honey getting cold inside the hive. If you notice this, there is no problem, as the bees will still eat it.

We have had a few months that the bee numbers have been diminishing, and looks like the hive could be failing. If you notice this in your hive also, you should keep a close eye on it, as it could be for many reasons. If your hive does die out, make sure your equipment does not get robbed out by other bees/hives.

Another problem that you could be facing with your hive is mice. Try to reduce your entrance as this will make it a lot harder for mice to enter, and also it will keep your hive warmer.

Matt

Hives wanted

A lady from **Patumahoe** living on 6 acres of land that includes about 2 acres of native bush is interested in having beehives on her property. There is also additional native bush locally. If anyone is interested please phone: Helen Watson, 09 236 3601 (evenings 6.00 – 8.00) or 021 774620.

Also, on one acre in **Waiuku** is Jocelyn who is interested in having hives on her property. Phone number is 235 5378 if anyone is interested in placing and managing hives there.

There is a dairy-farmer at **Waiau Pa** who used to have bees on his 460 acre property and is keen for a beekeeper to again place and manage some hives. There is easy access to a site and diverse pastures include clover and sundry natives within a bee's foraging area; so if anyone is interested contact Bob Thom on 09 232 1944, or email- snichols.rthom@xtra.co.nz.

Books

Information in a book "Health and Honey" written by Dr Laurie Croft published by Thorsons Publishing Group 1987, mentions that the honey sac of a bee contains around 50 milligrams of nectar. If one assumes one to two mile foraging distance, about 250,000 miles will need to be flown to produce 1kg honey.

Bees add enzymes, particularly invertase that break down the sucrose in the nectar to glucose and fructose, often in equal proportions. Nectar in the cells is evaporated to about 18% moisture and when capped the bee injects a small amount of venom to further ensure against decomposition.

Rape honey contains more glucose than fructose and so granulates very quickly after extraction because of the lower water solubility of sucrose.

This explains why some honeys eg clover, crystallize quickly while others like sage or borage are slow.

It is interesting to note that toxic honey is referred to in the Old Testament while beekeeping is recorded on a relief from a Fifth Dynasty temple at Abusir, built round 2500BC and depicts cylindrical pipes piled up in horizontal rows.

The club will shortly have available the latest fully revised 4th Edition of Andrew Matherson's *Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand*. This book has been and still is regarded as the definitive guide for beekeepers, and is strongly recommended.

The price is expected to be at least \$10.00 cheaper than the likely shop price and considerably cheaper than out-of-print / out-of-date earlier editions sometimes available off the Internet.

If you want a copy contact the secretary.

Beekeeping in Switzerland

While overseas I met a beekeeper who has hives in a purpose built period house (see photos- front views) in a built-up area in Switzerland.



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He has been a beekeeper for 3 years and though not yet mandatory, there is a 2 year beekeeping course that new beekeepers need to complete.

His hives are two-level, about 600 deep, 300 wide each with mesh bases, an inspection board underneath and placed side by side in the house (see photo).



Frames are 400 x 300 with 12 per box and produce about 1.5 kg honey each which may be extracted twice per season. He treats for varroa with Thymol, Oxalic and Formic acid, no synthetics. Formic acid in August using an evaporation frame (see photo) twice for 2 weeks and oxalic acid in October in the form of a tablet.



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The evaporation frame contains wood shavings between two sheets of pierced plastic.

His hives are broodless for 2 ½ to 3 months and requeens 3-yearly and now does his own queen rearing. Formic acid is placed above the brood box in a 'honey' box using just the one evaporation frame. He does not use synthetics. To manage AFB the bees are destroyed but the woodware is sterilised.

His bees are very dark which looked to be to *A melifera carnica*, but I was assured they were *melifera melifera*. Not sure about that however.

It is a pity that it was dark at the time and that there was not enough time to talk to him at greater length and get a better understanding of his methods and processes. Peter Biland.

Dates to Remember

Sunday August 14th, 2011

Venue: At the club hives.

Program: 10.00 am Cuppa and discussion, 10.30 open the hives.

Sunday September 11th 2011

Venue: At the club hives.

Program: 10.00 am Cuppa and discussion, 10.30 open the hives.

Venue at Cub Hives: Rapid Rural 733 on State Highway 22, Paerata. Travelling east along SH22 (from Drury), it is on the left hand side: travelling west (from Puke), it's on the right.

At 733 there is a red letterbox and a driveway that forks- left goes to a house, take the right that travels 100m past old sheds and terminates at a turntable by a disused concrete-block cow-shed. Adjacent to this shed is the apiary site. When visiting the site, please ensure you park on the old turntable, taking care that the driveway is kept clear. **WHEN LEAVING THE SITE, TAKE GREAT CARE JOINING THE TRAFFIC, VEHICLES APPROACHING FROM THE RIGHT ARE NOT THAT EASY TO SEE.**