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FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

President: Graham Dyche
1 Northvale Place, Pukekohe 2120
☎ 09 238 9854
@ president@franklinbees.co.nz

Treasurer: Graham Wheeler
PO Box 1082, Pukekohe 2340
☎ 09 239 1177
@ treasurer@franklinbees.co.nz

Editor: John Burns
@ editor@franklinbees.co.nz

Secretary: Joan Leitch
@ secretary@franklinbees.co.nz

Website:  www.franklinbees.co.nz

President's Report

Springtime for the senses

Spring is here, the lengthening days and incoming nectar stimulate the queen to increase egg-laying swelling the population of the hive. Ensure she has space to lay and the workers have areas outside the brood nest to store the honey as congestion fuels the swarming instinct.

The hive in winter is more compact and easier to work. As the population explodes the sheer size of the hive can become quite disorientating, even intimidating. Thirty thousand bees or more hurrying in every direction can lead to an overload of our dominant visual sense. Slow down and take the time to use your other senses. Remember there are examples of blind or partially sighted beekeepers being successful. Sounds, smells, taste and touch enrich our experience.

Of course an angry bee makes a higher pitched buzz as it comes for you, when they are bouncing off your veil that is another sign! If they are behaving like those in this video clip it is time to give them some calming smoke. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IAPWRY00uI>

Hives have other audio cues. From first cracking the seal on the crown board we can hear the state of the hive. A queenless hive emits a "roar", a sound like a distant football crowd, hear this and share their unease as this hive may need your help. Check for eggs to see if there is a queen in residence. Open a "queen right" hive and they are quieter. It's great to open a hive and be ignored by contented bees that continue in their work.

This clip is from Greece. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLuOz37IIMs>

A virgin queen will "pipe". I once had the good fortune to experience this. I heard her on the other side of the comb before I saw her: a princess with a voice. It is thought they pipe as a challenge to

other queens which may be in the hive. This clip from Scotland captures it beautifully: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xK8fEPsAc6U>

Male bees are bigger than the workers and the pitch of their buzz is a deeper 'drone'. It is not often we can hear it above the more numerous workers. Once I released a group of drones which had become trapped above a queen excluder and for a while the apiary had a deeper masculine almost eerie drone as they orientated. It is hard to find a good clip of this but this one comes close: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MbYluXzjrY>

While exercising your beekeeping ears don't forget the other senses. One of the pleasures of beekeeping is when you remove the crownboard to the smell of a thriving healthy hive. New wax, propolis, nectar and brood combine to give that happy odour. Struggling hives have different odours. A weak hive in winter smells like a shut up spare room, damp and mouldy as there is too much space for the bees to keep dry. The worst case of an unhealthy hive is one with American Foul Brood. Luckily I have never smelt the foul smell associated with advanced AFB. Then there is the acrid smell when you accidentally squash a bee, a signal for her sisters to tickle your pain senses with their displeasure. On a cool day take off your gloves and feel the warmth of the brood frames, as warm as your hands at 34C.

Our tour of the senses brings us finally to taste and the sweet joy of honey in all its complexity. As beekeepers we are privileged to be able to taste the honey from the comb, your tongue squeezing the honey cells yielding a liquid burst of sweetness. Just close your eyes to experience the maximum taste sensation. Eating comb honey is an unforgettable experience best done with spring honey to avoid the risk of tutin.

The honey bee uses its eyes to navigate outside of the hive but inside of the hive is normally dark. Here the bees use their other senses to organise their social utopia. So next time you beekeep don't just "look" in your hive, become absorbed in the total sensory experience.

Cheers
Dr Graham Dyche (FBC President)

Land to place hives

The following people have contacted the club offering land to put hives on. Please contact the people directly if you are interested.

Paerata - Community orchard. Council land fenced and locked. Call Stuart 027 220 7705

Whangarata – Manuka block. Call Jan 0274 981 080 or 09 236 8707



DECA Holders

Contact the newsletter Editor (editor@franklinbees.co.nz) if you are a DECA holder and available to perform hive inspections. We will be adding a list of club members who are DECA holders to the club website. This list will also be published in the next newsletter so let us know if you would like to be included.

Secretary's Report

Our club is like our springtime hives – healthy and growing strongly, with membership at 106 and attendance at club days of more than 50 people.

Thank you for signing in to the Attendance Book when you do come to club days. It helps us to know how many members are coming, how many visitors we have, and is useful for health & safety monitoring (and hive health). Thank you to all who help to welcome the visitors and new members, and who are willing to share their knowledge and experience. We hope that the club is fulfilling its purpose of promoting and educating about beekeeping at all levels, so if there is something further you would like to learn through club days please let one of the committee members know.

There have been a lot of enquiries about beekeeping after a recent Country Calendar programme. Plenty of people willing to host a hive or two, in exchange for the bees and a little bit of honey. If you are interested in providing a service like this, please let me know.

Swarming season has started, earlier than usual. We maintain a list of members willing to collect swarms and try to ring people who are close to the area. I was lucky enough to capture a swarm on my neighbour's land, which may have come from my own hives. Let your neighbours know to call you!

Of course, one of the ways to reduce the tendency to swarm is to make sure the bees aren't cramped. Check that they have space to expand into and consider doing a split, as shown at the last club day. Details on splitting a hive are available on our website.

Happy new bee season! Joan

Top Bar Hive Workshop

Sunday 2nd November 1.30pm to 4pm ish

Due to popular demand Graham Wheeler will run a Top Bar Hive workshop.

Topics will include the following:

- How to build a Top Bar hive yourself.
- How to build nucs and swarm catching boxes.
- Pros and cons of different styles of bars.
- Honey extraction and collection and processing of wax.
- Comb management.
- Methods of varroa control.
- Question and answer session.

This will be a hands-on workshop and hives will be opened so bring your bee-keeping suits.

Location: 33 Needham Road, Paerata 2578.

Cost: \$20.00

Afternoon tea will provided so please rsvp by 30th October.

Ph: 092391177 or email: graham@thewheelers.co.nz

Revolutionary Beekeeping Group Membership

Any members interested in trying out a group membership in the Revolutionary Beekeepers harvesting system, as demonstrated by Grant Engel at the September club day, should let Joan know: joanleitch@iconz.co.nz

<http://www.revolutionarybeekeeping.co.nz>

Bees in the News

Research into Manuka Plantations for Honey Production

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has called for submissions on a proposal to reduce maximum levels for tutin in honey and comb honey. The closing date for submissions on the tutin proposal is 21 August 2014

Full Story: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/agribusiness/10512530/More-to-honey-than-money>

No bees, no food, no people

Without the incredible honeybee, two-thirds of the food we take for granted would almost vanish, making life as we know it impossible.

“The reality is that no bees mean no food and no people. That’s no joke because bees make civilisation possible,” says John Hartnell, Federated Farmers Bees Chairperson and a Christchurch based exporter of bee products.

Full Story <http://www.fedfarm.org.nz/publications/media-releases/article.asp?id=1801#.VCol2RYa5ek>

NZ - Bees to combat varroa

Details of VSH breeding programme

Full Story: <http://www.plantandfood.co.nz/growingfutures/case-studies/bees-to-combat-varroa>

Update from the VSH breeding programme managed by Rainbow Honey

Full Story: <http://us4.campaign-archive1.com/?u=8c24ef283f8adcc1c6443e4fa&id=622c9d37e5&e=6ee4b168b7>

Scientists hit the honeypot with promising antibiotic alternative

Scientists have shown that a unique group of bacteria found in the stomach of bees can fight antibiotic-resistant superbugs.

Full Story: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/09/11/scientists-hit-honeypot-promising-antibiotic-alternative>

Bees the key to mine site rehab

International mining giant Vale has improved mine site re-vegetation in Canada by starting a beekeeping program.

Full Story: <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/bees-the-key-to-mine-site-rehab>

Bees and Ants on How to Make Decisions

When it comes to making decisions, bees and ants can act against stereotype

Full Story: <http://online.wsj.com/articles/bees-and-ants-on-how-to-make-decisions-1411134831>

Bees in Paris (part 1) by Graham Dyche



It's the last weekend in September and the weather in Paris is perfect, too good to spend in a museum or gallery, so I head off to Le Jardin du Luxembourg (Luxembourg garden). Turmoil and tranquillity cohabit in Paris, and that has always been so. These beautiful gardens began in 1611, commissioned by Marie de Medici the widow of Good King Henry (Henry IV of France). Henry was a popular king but he was assassinated by a religious fanatic when his coach got delayed in a traffic jam on his way home from work! I decided to skip the traffic and walked to the gardens. Once inside I soon found myself in front of a splendid apiary.

Some 20 hives each with a single box ready for the winter stand in a semi-circle facing away from a majestic equipment store which could never be called a mere shed. The hives (les ruches in French) are of a peculiar design.

On a concrete pad, a steel stand, supports a plastic floor. The box is wood, I think cedar. There is a telescopic lid of wood covered with zinc or aluminium sheet and above that there is a second roof made in copper with an unusual hexagonal design.

The apiary belongs to the SCA (Société Centrale d'Apiculture) which roughly translates as the central beekeeping club or the FBC of Paris! The club was established in 1856 because back then honeybees were in trouble. 158 years ago the threat was from the beekeepers themselves. Each autumn beekeepers would kill their best hives by suffocation in order to remove the honey. This killed a proportion of the hives each year and also meant that it was the poorer hives which continued so degrading the stock. The SCA was established to oppose these antiquated practices and educate beekeepers in the modern methods using hives with removable frames. Every year the SCA runs a year-long apiary school starting in February. The course for 2015 is already fully subscribed.

In the Luxemburg Park when I visited school children were providing the turmoil competing in an interschool running competition around the park. The bees from the SCA apiary did not let the races disturb their tranquillity as they took advantage of the calm, sunny, 23C day to get in some nectar before the winter. A notice by the apiary said they would be feeding on the Sophora japonica trees, but the bees, a mixture of Italian and dark European honeybees, had not read that either and were busy feeding on the salvias flowering in the formal summer bedding.



New Members

We welcome the following new members to our club.

- Alex Blom
- Trevor Long
- Yzelle Mans
- Chris McKay
- Charmaine Petereit
- Peter Thornton
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We look forward to seeing you at the next club day.

In the Kitchen

Honey yogurt cheesecake

Ingredients

100g amaretti biscuits (or ginger or digestive biscuits)
85g toasted, flaked almonds
85g butter, melted
250ml Greek yogurt
750g mascarpone
2 eggs
zest 1 lemon
zest 1 orange
250ml honey (orange blossom is particularly good)
Fresh fruit, to serve



Method

- 1 Preheat oven to 160°C.
- 2 Crush the biscuits and most of the almonds inside a plastic food bag using a rolling pin.
- 3 Mix with the butter, then press into the bottom of a deep, oval, 23cm dish (or something similar in size – a roasting tin, baking dish or cake tin will work).
- 4 Bake for 10 mins until crisp.
- 5 Stir or mash together the yogurt and mascarpone, then whisk in the eggs, one at a time.
- 6 Stir in the lemon and orange zests, then stir in most of the honey, reserving about 3 tbsp.
- 7 Spread over the biscuit base, cover loosely with foil and cook for 1 hr. Remove the foil and cook for 15 mins more until lightly golden and the top is firm with just the slightest wobble in the middle.
- 8 Leave to cool. Can be kept in the fridge for up to 2 days.

From: <http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/711651/honey-yogurt-cheesecake>



Did you know that old newsletters are published 'an issue late' on our website at <http://www.franklinbees.co.nz/newsletters>

Book Review

The Buzz about Bees: Biology of a Superorganism

By: Jurgen Tautz Photographs by Helga R. Heilmann

ISBN-10: 3540787275

Review by club member Tony Hamblyn

I was in Italy recently and met a beekeeper at a local farmers market who had a copy of this fascinating book on her stand. Unfortunately it was in Italian, so I couldn't read any of it, but the photographs alone were enough for me to search out a copy of it. It transpired that this book has been translated into 10 languages and Amazon had an English version for sale.

This is not a book about beekeeping, so if you are looking for a "how to" book then this is not for you. If you want to know a whole lot more about the biology of the bees that we are so involved with, then this is a fascinating book filled with details that I had absolutely no idea about and I am sure that any beekeeper would be interested in. From a beekeeping perspective, I now have a much greater knowledge of how this incredible super organism goes about its work.

The author explores the notion that bees are not a bunch of individuals working at the direction of some force, but presents us with the reality of the colony as an integrated and independent being -a "superorganism"-with its own almost eerie, emergent group intelligence. The prologue title says it all "The Bee Colony- a mammal in many bodies".

The book covers a diverse range of topics in its 270 pages: flowers, and how bees see them, reproduction, royal jelly, comb construction, heating, cooling, communication, cleaning, fighting, and genetics. The book is very detailed, yet easy to read. The photographs throughout are of superb quality, and clearly illustrate all the aspects of a hive that a beekeeper would like to know about. Equally it would appeal to a biology student who wants to get a more detailed knowledge of this amazing insect. Facts like the comb has a very thin coat of propolis around the opening to give it strength, the random gaps we see in the brood are there for heating the cells, and how the waggle dance works to indicate where food is, are all explained with accompanying photos. When discussing heating and cooling, thermo graphic photos are included.

Here is what one reviewer says about the book on Amazon: "I have been teaching beekeeping for the last 8 eight years. I search and search for reliable material to put into the class. I have found numerous books over the years that have been written by good beekeepers and professors but none write about the inside of the hive. This book is about the hive, the bees in the hive and how they interact with each other. The German's are renowned for their accuracy and research. I believe that they have outdone themselves this time. If you want to understand what happens in the hive this is the book for you. It is written clearly with lots of related pictures. I thank Juergen Tautz for his time and effort in writing this book."

If you wish to gain a greater understanding of the biology of bees, and bee behaviour then this is an excellent book to read. It is available through Amazon for approximately \$45 US, or slightly cheaper as a used copy.

If you would like to contribute articles, recipes, photos or any other content for the newsletter or website, please get in touch we would love to hear from you.

Email John Burns @ editor@franklinbees.co.nz

Dates to Remember

Club Day

Date: Sunday 12th October, 2014
Venue: At the club hives.
Program: 10:00 am Cuppa and discussion
10:30 am Open the hives

AFB Hive Inspections (For non DECA holders)

Date: 1st August – 30th November
If you don't hold a DECA, you must get a DECA holder to inspect your hives for you.

Top Bar Hive Workshop

Date: Saturday 2nd November, 2014 1.30pm – 4pm
Info: Afternoon tea will provided so please rsvp by 30th October.
Ph: 092391177 or email: graham@thewheelers.co.nz

Club Day

Date: Sunday 9th November, 2014
Venue: At the club hives.
Program: 10:00 am Cuppa and discussion
10:30 am Open the hives

View our online calendar at www.franklinbees.co.nz/calendar

Venue Directions

The club address is 733 Paerata Road (State Highway 22), Paerata 2676, New Zealand.

Traveling on SH22 towards Pukekohe, the club house is on the left hand side. Traveling towards Drury, 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. This 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, please take great care joining the traffic. Vehicles approaching from the right are not very easy to see.