



The Sting

The official newsletter of the Southside Beekeepers Club.



Southside
beekeepers
Club
ASN: A0047348Y

The Sting Issue No. 28 - March 2021

NEXT CLUB MEETING

Club meetings in person are cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak, however we are running a Teams meeting on Wednesday 24th March 2021, 7:30pm

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Beekeepers, I hope your hives have been productive and healthy. You should aim to have carried out your last honey harvest for the season no later than mid March. This is a guide only as the nectar flow will vary from region to region. This gives your bees at least a month or two to collect any more nectar before the colder weather sets in.

You may recall in last months edition of The Sting, that Ted Cottle, Angelo Pannacci and I were scheduled to meet with Michelle Osmer the head of STEM at Patterson River Secondary College. We met Michelle and Chris, the head of Horticulture on the 18th of March and had a great conversation.

Both Michelle and Chris are keen to enrol in the club's Introduction to Beekeeping course and want to run a number of hives in one of the school's nursery areas. The aim is to interest students from years 7-10 in beekeeping.

For those not familiar with the Patterson River Secondary College, the grounds are well covered with a gardens populated with a mix of Eucalypts and other natives, so bees should have a great time as should the students.

I envisage on-going talks between the club, Michelle and Chris, with the aim of getting some hives set up for the coming season this August. This looks like a very exciting and mutually beneficial relationship.

SOUTHSIDE BEEKEEPERS MISSION STATEMENT

To help our members make recognisable improvements in their beekeeping knowledge and performance, to work towards the preservation and conservation of bees and other pollinators and to provide a vibrant organisation that attracts new members and retains its existing members.

Seven club members along with Steve Rose, Ted Cottle, Elliott Yeomans and myself attended the Maintenance day at the club Apiary on the 28th of February. It was a lovely warm day with a light breeze, perfect weather for working on the hives.

Steve Rose brought some frames from his own Top Bar hive to colonise the club's empty Top Bar Hive. I bought a queen from Beeman Honey and as of Saturday 20th March, the queen and her sisters were doing fine. Attendees were able to get a great close up view of this different approach to bee keeping. See pictures of the day on page 5

Club members noticed that all three of the Langstroth hives were well filled with honey, especially the 10 frame hive, so much so that the bees had created burr comb in the lid and filled this with honey. Angelo Pannacci and I visited the apiary on Saturday the 20th of March around 2pm and removed the full capped frames. We took the frames back to my house in Aspendale and finished extracting around 6:30pm, collecting approx 37kg of honey.

It has been suggested that the honey can be donated to food banks servicing the Frankston areas, eg Salvos, Community Support Frankston etc. If you have any suggestions email mark@southsidebeekeepers.com.au.

continued on page 2

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Southside Beekeepers Meetings

We meet via scheduled on-line meeting noted in the newsletter.

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The Sting

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Copy for The Sting must be received by the 15th of each month.



<https://www.facebook.com/southsidebeekeepersclub/>

Web: www.southsidebeekeepers.com.au

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Our committee meetings are on the second Wednesday of each month however with the Covid-19 issue, they are conducted via Microsoft Teams. Members are always welcome but please call Ted Cottle on 0428 429 547 for Microsoft Teams set up details.

EXTRACTOR HIRE

Extractors are now available at 4 locations.

Dion Riches at Safety Beach 0417 292 269

Ted Cottle at Frankston South 0428 429 547

Steven Rose at Brighton 0416 120 170

Angelo Pannacci at Patterson Lakes
0423 094 087

Hire is \$70.00 for 2 days. This includes a \$50.00 deposit, refundable upon the return of the extractor in a clean condition.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *continued*

Ilaria Andreani is starting a new "Meet the Beekeepers" series to help club members get to know each other better.

Ilaria is also creating a social database so members who live close to each other can catch up, swap notes and share stories. See the article on page 6

On a more distressing note, I received a call from Cristian Ilyes, the ICT Manager at Monterey Secondary College on the 11th of February notifying the club that vandals had entered the apiary and kicked over the 3 super 8 frame hive. Luckily Ted Cottle was able to drop into the apiary later that day and reset the hive, although Ted noted that a fair degree of robbing had occurred.

This was followed up by another act of vandalism, this time on the 10 frame hive. The intrusion occurred sometime after Angelo and I had removed the frames for extraction on the 20th and when Angelo returned to the apiary to replace the stickies on and Sunday the 21st.

Mark Collier
President



*Clockwise from top left:
The 8 frame hive after vandals kick it over.
A closer view.
The hive having been reassembled by Ted Cottle.*

Below: The 10 frame hive as Angelo Pannacci found it on the 21st March



Winter Shut Down - by Ted Cottle

Preparing a hive for winter is a very important task as if it is not done correctly, you can run the risk of the colony dying or coming out of winter in very poor shape.

The biggest risk for a colony over winter is starvation / running out of food both pollen and nectar/honey. Winter pack downs consist of consolidating the hive in a way that perhaps reduces space in the hive and consolidates food for the bees so they have enough to survive the winter.

Having said that, colonies will tend to reduce their numbers over winter so you may already be seeing this with Drones being ejected from the hive and not as many eggs and larva present, as the queen also slows down. This is one of the colony's natural ways to ensure that they survive winter.

Prior to packing down a hive you need to get in and have a look to see how strong the colony is. If it is particularly weak, you may consider merging it with another hive so there are sufficient bees for the colony to keep warm and survive the winter.

From a food perspective you need to go through the brood boxes and make a rough tally of what honey stores are in the hive. As a rough guide, an 8 frame hive will need approx. 4 frames of honey and 10 frame approx. 5 frames, this could be increased by one frame if you lived in a particular cold area or if there are not many winter flowering plants around.

Consolidation of the hive can also help the Bees to get through winter if you are running say a full depth double brood box and full depth honey super then this can be consolidated down to two boxes by taking full or part full frames of honey and move them down to the brood box to replace any empty frames in the brood box.

If you can't do this and are still left with a few part full frames you can return the honey in them to the hive by uncapping them and placing them upside down on top of the brood box (place them to the side of the hive, above honey frames, so you don't soak brood frames

or do one or two at a time if they are particularly full then put a spare super over them and lid) , the bees will take this quickly down into the brood box and fill any empty frames with honey. They will do this very quickly and clean up a few frames of honey within a 1-2 days so repeat the process if necessary or just remove them when they are empty.

Any excess frames should be put in a deep freeze for 48 hrs to kill off any hive beetle or wax moth eggs and then stored in an airtight container over winter prevent attack from ants , wax moth etc.

If your hive looks like it doesn't have enough food then feeding will be required. To encourage the bees to quickly convert sugar syrup to storable honey feed them at a ratio of 2:1, 2kgs of sugar to 1 ltr of water. There are plenty of low cost feeders available from bee keeping supply company's that you can use to put the sugar syrup in or you can use a zip-lock lunch bag by filling it with syrup and placing it inside the hive on top of the frames, make a couple of 1" cuts in the bag with a sharp utility knife, the tension of the bag keeps it together despite the cuts or use a pin to make multiple holes.

Aim is to avoid feeding over winter but if you must do this then consider an entrance feeder or using a crown board and an internal feeder so you can top up with feed without opening the hive in cold weather.

Another tip for winter shutdowns is to reduce the entrance size to the hive, although the bees will still be flying through winter, on good days, there aren't as many and reducing the hive entrance size allows them to better defend the hive and also decrease drafts in the hive.

We hope this information helps and feel free to contact any of our committee should you have any questions.

Ted Cottle,
Club Secretary

This article first appeared in edition 18 of The Sting, April 2020





Maintenance day 28th February 2021



Steve Rose adding Top Bar Hive frames from his hive to the club's TBH



Elliott Yeaomans with club members cleaning up the 10 frame hive



Social database - by *Ilaria Andreani*

Hi all, we have had quite a few requests from club members who are keen to find out if there are other members located close to them, and in general to connect with like-minded individuals to share beekeeping stories, experiences and tips. As privacy rules prevent us from sharing our members contact details unless we have received prior written permission, we are now facilitating the creation of a 'Social database' where club members who are keen to be contacted for the above-mentioned social purposes can choose to add their details.

This social database will be shared with participating members via email. If you are interested in being included, please email the following details to iandreani@southsidebeekeepers.com.au by **Monday 5th April**

- Your first and last name (your last name is needed for identification purposes but won't be included in the database)
- The suburb you live in
- Type of hive you have/are keen to have
- Preferred method of contact and contact details (provide mobile number, email or both)
- Any specific message

Example:

- Ilaria Andreani
- Aspendale
- One Langstroth hive
- Email:
iandreani@southsidebeekeepers.com.au
- Message: keen to connect with club members in the area!

Have a great day

Ilaria (Ila)

FAQ

Feel free to email your questions to the committee via admin@southsidebeekeepers.com.au.

Question

I'm contacting you for advice. I checked my hive last Friday and 5.5 frames are fully capped, the other are full of honey. I have been advised to extract 3 frames. What do you recommend? I would like to do the extraction during the day.

One more practical question, I take 3 frames in the middle to be extracted. Can I leave the box like this for few hours or do I need to reorganise the box, move frames with honey to the middle? And where do I replace the extracted frames, in the middle or on the edges?

Thank you and regards
Aurélie

Answer

Hi Aurélie, I presume you are working with a langstroth hive?

Only extract from the frames that are fully capped, and at this late stage of the season, I would "err on the side of caution" and leave a couple of full capped frames for the coming winter. So perhaps extract 3 frames. Last thing you want is to remove too much honey and starve your bees.

It is hard to be definitive as I don't know what the nectar flow is like around your area. Local natives plants such as banksias are coming into flower.

I would move the outer frames inwards, so that the partially filled frames are in the centre of the honey super. Once you have extracted the honey from the 3 frames, place these in the edges. The bees will clean these up and will remove any traces of honey and re-deposit it on the central frames.

Definitely remove the queen excluder. You should be removing the honey super & packing the hive down to either one brood box if you are using a 10 frame box or two 8 frame brood boxes. If your hive is strong you may find that you can keep two 8 frame brood boxes, if it is weak, you may have to reduce it to one 8 frame brood box and look at feeding with a 2:1 sugar to water syrup over the winter.

Meet the beekeeper - by Ilaria Andreani

Over the past few months, Southside Beekeepers Club welcomed over a dozen new members. To help us get to know each other better until face-to-face meetings can resume, we're introducing a "Meet the beekeeper" interview in each new edition of The Sting. Enjoy!

To get us started, let's meet the club's President!



How long have you belonged to Southside Beekeepers club?

I have been a member since June 2018.

When did you become interested in beekeeping?

*I've always been interested in insects and did an Honours degree in Entomology at Monash University, studying reproductive hormones in sheep blowflies. Unfortunately back in the early 90's there was not a great deal of work for entomologists and after a short stint working for CSIRO's Division of Entomology in Canberra, and some work at Latrobe University on a native Reed bees (*Exoneura bicolor*) found myself employed doing graphic design and printing.*

My brother-in-law is a keen beekeeper, however around April 2018 his partner developed an allergy to bee stings and they had to get rid of their hives. I said I would take one.

The next issue was then a question of what do I do with this hive and how do I look after it, hence joining the club

How many hives do you have and what type?

I have two 8 frame Langstroth hives, one at the front of the house (see picture to the left) and one at the back of the house. The NUC is a split I took for my sister.



What does Southside Beekeepers Club mean to you?

Not only has the club and more to the point its members been a fantastic source of knowledge, I have also made some great friendships. It has also given me the opportunity to develop & explore a world that was totally outside of my previous interests.

How can club members contact you?

I can be contacted on my mobile 0407 553 022 or emailed at mark@southsidebeekeepers.com.au

Book Review – For the Love of Bees, Ben Moore *Review written by Graeme Lyell.*

Firstly, a word on my experience with bees. I have been keeping bees now for the last 18 months, and have been a member of the club for all that time. I now consider myself to be an amateur beekeeper, with a moderate level of experience.

Now to the book, recently published by Ben Moore. Many readers would know Ben because of his beekeeping supplies business, as well as his regular appearances on ABC Melbourne radio. I would describe his new book as a collection of writings, with a connection to bees and beekeeping, but I would add that sometimes that connection is not that obvious. There is quite a bit of coverage on beekeeping, but also much on the history side, and things like the association between religions and bees. There is even coverage on the importance of community, something very important in Ben's life. Some of this information about subject areas that fall around the edge of beekeeping (rather than at

the core of beekeeping) may not be of great interest to "hands-on" types, that just want to get down and manage their bees in the best way they can. Ben's book is certainly not what I would call a reference book, in the ilk of Robert Owen's "the Australian Beekeeping Manual".

The book has no index, so a reader is unable to look directly into a particular area of interest.

Given the above comments, I am unclear what the target audience for the book is. I don't think it meets the needs of a beginner entering the world of beekeeping, because it does not cover all aspects for someone in this position. On the other hand, the experienced beekeeper is likely to find it light on detail, in many of the subject areas that are part of beekeeping.



The Extraction



Left: Angelo de-capping a frame of honey. Right: Angelo testing the honey to make sure it is fit for human consumption.

Biosecurity Manual for Beekeepers now available



Dr Jenny Shanks from Plant Health Australia has given the club permission to print copies of the Biosecurity Manual for Beekeepers v1.1 (©Plant Health Australia 2016) for members. Jenny kindly informed us that there are no royalty payments required.

Copies of this 64 page full colour publication can be ordered through the club and will cost members \$15.00 or a free pdf copy can be downloaded from the club's website.

Order or purchase copies at monthly meetings.

As you may be aware the honey bee industry, represented by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, (AHBIC), in consultation with all beekeepers and governments, has worked to develop the Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice (Code). In July 2016, AHBIC endorsed the Code and its gradual adoption across Australia.

The Code provides a clear framework for all beekeepers to engage in best-practice biosecurity. Its purpose is to help improve the management of established pests and diseases, as well as increase preparedness and surveillance for exotic pests and diseases that threaten our honey bee industry, such as the Varroa mite.

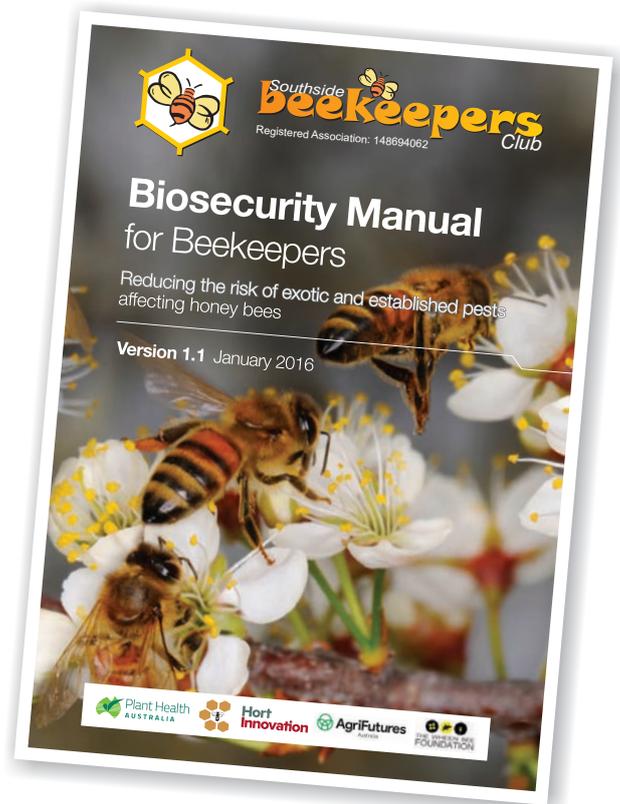
A copy of the Code can be downloaded from <http://honeybee.org.au/programs/code-of-practice-and-national-bee-biosecurity-program/>

The new Livestock Disease Control Regulations 2017 incorporating the Code came into effect on 12 June 2019. **The new regulations cover activities that all beekeepers should already be undertaking to minimise the impact of pests and diseases on their own hives and those of their fellow beekeepers.**

Some new regulations apply to all beekeepers ; others apply only to beekeepers with 50 or more hives.

There are consequences for failing to comply with all apiary legislation in Victoria which may include being issued with an infringement notice or court action for more serious or repeat offences. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the requirements that relate to you or seek assistance if you are not sure.

A copy of the Regulations can be downloaded from the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>. At the site, click on Victorian Law Today to search for the Regulations.



Biosecurity Signs

A4 Biosecurity signs can be purchased from the club for **\$10.00** each. Contact Mark Collier on 0407 553 022, email mark@southsidebeekeepers.com.au.

These are small enough to fit into a padded satchel so can be posted.



Business BUZZ

Shane from Langwarrin South has a property approx 3 hectares in size and is happy to house 3-5 hives for some honey.

If you are interested in taking up Shane's offer, call him on 0431 332 271

Darko is a furniture maker and he rang the club's phone enquiring if any members had beeswax to sell for turning into furniture polish.

He initially is after 250g.

Call him on 0477 357 755

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