

Whangarei Bee Club INC

Newsletter



December 2017, Issue 156

Plant-of-the-Month *Contributed by John Beauregard*

Short articles of interest to Northland beekeepers, especially non-commercial beekeepers.

Cabbage trees seem to have bounced back from a decimating die-off ten years ago and are flourishing again in many places in Northland, particularly along bush margins and swampy ground. They will withstand the harshest conditions.



The small whitish flowers, borne on long panicles, are perfectly scented and very attractive to honey bees. Walsh advises that about every third year flowering will be profuse, and can yield a surplus of medium amber honey of moderate flavour.

<http://www.terrain.net.nz/friends-of-te-henui-group/table-1/cabbage-tree.html> "Nectar and Pollen Sources of New Zealand," RS Walsh, published by ApiNZ, is a principal source of information. The club's library holds a copy of this very useful booklet. The web references provide excellent photographs, some of which are from proprietary sources such as plant shops". Image above from www.doc.govt.nz

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Upcoming Events and Notices

This Club Day - 2 December is Christmas Club Day: Same place, same time (*check out p. 4*) As it is the last club day of the year, we ask you all to please bring a plate of something nice to nibble on so we can have a collective feast after the chat has finished. Finger-food works well and cleanup is easy. Suggestions: sandwiches, savouries, biscuits, cakes, fruit and cheese platters.

Next Club Day - 6 January - See you there 😊

For Sale Queen bees for sale; Italian stock and mated - \$50 + GST; Contact Mark Laybourn at (BushRoadBees): 09 4355392; 027 228 3890; bushroadbees@xtra.co.nz

For Sale

Hives and Nucs for sale. Full depth only; Full hive is complete top to bottom with bees at \$500 plus GST. Nucs are as above, but 5 frames of bees and 5 empty frames to grow into, a really good start for newbies to learn with and it's the beginning of the nectar flow so they will grow like triffids. At \$400 plus GST. Delivery available for bulk orders* Back up after sales advice included via email. Ph Mike Fox on 021 165 1283 anytime or 09 439 6001 in the evening.

News from last Club Day

Club Meeting on Saturday 4 November 2017

Guest Speaker – John Beauregard

Paul gave a welcome to members and new members and introduced the guest speaker John Beauregard. John writes the articles on plants for bees that feature in our monthly newsletters.

John opened his talk with an acknowledgement to the late Terry Gavin and the knowledge and foresight he had. He mentioned that Terry had known about mitigation of tutin and the benefits of Manuka honey well before these were becoming common knowledge. He was a very good botanist and very knowledgeable of the local area and the honey flows around the Whangarei District.

John discussed how a change in land use can have a dramatic effect on the honey flow. Changes such as forestry, kiwifruit and avocado plantations will affect the timing and availability of both pollen and nectar in an area.

He discussed plants that are good for bees, from low growing plants to tall trees, with a main focus on native trees. For shelter belt planting he suggested looking at those that provide a source of food over winter, preferably ones with foliage to the ground. These will provide protection from the wind for the bees while foraging. Don't discount the value of ornamental shrubs and annual flower gardens as these also provide a good source of pollen for bees. Original varieties are usually better than hybrids as they often have more open flowers which are easier for the bees to work. He also advised that you should check plants are not on the Regional Council's list of pest species before planting. A printed copy of "Plant me instead" can be picked up from the Regional Council.

Another good reference book suggested by John is a booklet called 'Nectar and Pollen Sources of New Zealand' by R S Walsh.

John provided a handout of plants for the landscape that help bees. The handout included a list of resources available which members may find interesting.

General Discussion

There was discussion on the Apiculture New Zealand GIA survey received by many beekeepers. Apiculture New Zealand is asking for feedback from the industry on the biosecurity and government industry agreement. This survey closes 30 November.

There was quite a bit of discussion on what this involves, the pros and cons and the potential levies that

may result from this. It was suggested that members take this opportunity to have their say. There is information about the GIA on the Apiculture New Zealand website.

The David and Mike Session (as David Pullen was away)

With the weather having been windy and wet, check your hives. Some beekeepers still have to feed their bees. The situation is quite varied with some hives needing to be fed while others have nearly a full box of honey. There is some swarming occurring so be vigilant.

Mike discussed the use of pollen substitute. He is using this from late August, put into the hive as a pollen patty. It is put on top of the frames wrapped in baking paper but with holes poked through the paper so bees can access this. It gives the hives a good start in building up numbers for the new season.

You need to watch the queens as some are failing. Mike has seen chalkbrood in his hives for the first time in a number of years. If this is happening it is best to re-queen and clean the floorboards of the hive. Watch for nosema, indications are a weak hive and bees huddled in a group in the front of the hive. Treat with cider vinegar at a rate of 1 tablespoon of vinegar to a litre of syrup. If you have sacbrood in the hive it is best to re-queen as well.

Varroa strips will need to be taken out shortly, if not already done, in preparation for the honey flow. Discussion was had on the use of drone frames to manage varroa around Christmas time.

Updates

Paul Martin advised that the Whangarei District Council had been receptive to the suggested changes put to it in the submission. The council are happy to work with Apiculture NZ and the Whangarei Bee Club to ensure there is a system in place that will work well.

The AFB refresher course and Spring Training courses have been completed and there is likely to be a DECA course held in the New Year. More information will be provided closer to the time.

The Club hives for sale will be available in about a months' time. If interested give your name to Paul Martin or Barbara Collinson. There are other hives for sale by some of the Club members so keep an eye out for these in the Club newsletter. (*Continues on page 4*)

Yay, the nectar flow has started. Swarming has slowed, if not stopped. Varroa treatments should now be out if you got them in early enough.

Ideally, bee populations will still be building up, this is nearing the end of the build up period for useful honey gathering bees for the honey we will take off for ourselves. Eggs laid now will be emerging in 3 weeks, then a couple of weeks as nurse bees and finally out to gather honey by early January for 3-4 weeks and they will be dead by February. So, we want lots of eggs for about 3 more weeks, then it can slow down a bit to rear the Autumn / Winter bees. As Nature would have it, you will notice that after the longest day, around Dec 21st, the bees will change their whole outlook on life, from rearing brood to gathering stores for winter. You can give them all the brood rearing stimulation you want and they won't boost brood production. They know the seasons are changing and they don't have a calendar. They noticed the days were 6 minutes shorter than the one before, you can't fool the bees.

If you have had a hive swarm this season, it would pay to check the parent colony has a good laying queen at the helm. It has been a shocking spring, again, to get queens mated and mated well. I normally get about 80-90% from cell to mated queen, but this year in Sept and Oct I was at 10%. The weather was so cold, wet and windy. Queens were getting blown off course on return from mating and end up in the wrong mating nuc, and then be slaughtered by that nuc. Breaks my heart. Back up to the usual levels again now, but some catching up to do now. I will bank more queens through winter this year coming.

It would be wise to start doing some Varroa monitoring. Back before Varroa, Beekeeping was so easy. If you got your hives through to now, you were set for a great year, but the world has changed. Varroa themselves are not the problem, it's the Viruses they carry that can wipe a hive out in no time, and its the strongest hives that seem to crash the most often. Of the Viruses, Deformed Wing Virus (DWV) is the worst of all and has been suggested a name change to "HIVE KILLER #1". I would agree with that. It has been found that an apparently healthy hive with no visual symptoms can in fact be at epidemic levels of this virus, then suddenly collapse with it. The only way to keep it down is to control the vector of the Virus. It's like the Mosquito and Malaria. Kill the Mosquito and the disease level drops too.

The most reliable monitoring method is the Alcohol wash. Veto-pharma have come up with the "EASY CHECK" tool, available from NZBeeswax in Hamilton or South Island for about \$30. Easy to use. It does kill 300 nurse bees but that's a small loss compared to a whole colony. Take a brood frame WITHOUT the queen on. Sake them into an upturned lid or large bowl, the forager bees will fly immediately and you are left with nurse bees. Give the lid or bowl a sharp bang on the ground to shake the bees to the bottom corner and then scoop up a half cup with a kitchen measure for the test. Tip them into the test jar with the alcohol and shake for a minute or 2. allow to settle and count the Varroa.

Ideally do this to at least a quarter of the hives at each apiary, mark which hives you test, test the same hives each month to create a trend. Less than 4 is good, 5-6 means treat within a month, 7 or more treat NOW.

It's a good idea to get your Autumn Varroa treatments ordered or delivered now, so that when you need them you aren't going to be caught up with supply delays as seems to happen with at least one product every year.

Happy Beekeeping . See you at Club day for our Christmas feast.

NPH Service Offering 2017/18

- The Extraction Plant Manager is Karl Butler. If you have any queries about extraction for the coming season feel free to give him a call on 027-394-0571
 - Extraction bookings can be made either: by logging onto the Whangarei Bee Club site and clicking on 'Book Honey Extraction', or by contacting Karl on 027-394-0571.
 - The price for extraction is \$15.75 +GST per super. As always, every extraction MUST be accompanied by a completed Harvest Declaration form. MPI strictly audits our compliance with this.
 - Additional use of the pricker is available if you want your honey frames pricked. There are two options available upon discussion with Karl:
 - o Following induction and training to cover our Health & Safety obligations you may personally operate the pricker during the extraction of your honey, at no additional cost.
 - o If unable to assist in pricking of your honey frames, an additional \$1 +GST per super will be charged for use of the pricker.
 - If you wish to clearly label / number each honey box and each frame from that box with the same label / number then Karl will happily ensure each frame goes back into the same box once extracted.
 - Every honey extraction is tutin tested. The cost price of \$16 +GST per extraction for this testing will be invoiced to you with your extraction invoice. (The cost of the tutin test is minimised by being tested in composite batches. In the unlikely event of a positive result then there are additional lab costs in isolating which individual sample from a batch has tested positive. We have not had a positive test in the last 3 seasons, however in the event of a positive test then additional charges will be passed onto the owner of the tutin positive honey.)
 - For commercial honey –extracted into drums- a 1kg sample will be collected per drum (taken at start, middle and end of drum filling), as arranged when booking your extraction.
- This will allow you to undertake further laboratory testing. Heavily discounted lab testing rates are offered to WBC club members through Hills Laboratories.
- Export honey requires an Eligibility Document (ecert) prior to departure from our RMP premises. These are charged at \$200 +GST per ecert. Every sale consignment requires a separate ecert. For example: If you have 4 extractions into 6 drums, but all these drums are sold together then you will only need one ecert. However, if you sell 1 drum to one buyer, and your remaining drums to a separate buyer then two ecerts will be required. This is a legal requirement enforced by MPI, and audited twice yearly.
 - Following extraction, honey drums will be securely placed and stored in the new locked RMP shed. Storage of drums will be free until two weeks following the receipt of tutin testing results. From this point onwards, drum storage will be charged at \$5 +GST/ drum/ week.
 - The RMP storage shed for honey drums is locked with restricted access, to satisfy our Health & Safety obligations. Under our Health & Safety policy, Karl is the only authorised driver of the forklift, but will be available by prior arrangement between 8 and 12 every Wednesday to assist with transportation of drums.
 - For the Christmas/ New Year period, the last honey for extraction prior to Christmas will be accepted into the hotroom on Tuesday 19th December, and extractions will restart on Wednesday 3rd January.

If you have any queries about extraction please feel free to give Karl a ring.



Club Day

**Whareora Hall
10.15am**

Call for contributions

If you would like to make a contribution to this newsletter, we invite you to email your submission to wbccommunication@gmail.com

Bring:

- Cash for the produce table
- Produce for the produce table
- Your loyalty card to show at the door
- Bee suits

Directions

From SH1, turn off to *Kensington*. Turn left into *Mill Road*, then right at *Whareora Rd*. Keep on *Whareora Rd* until it joins *Pataua North Rd* and carry on for a few more minutes. The hall is on the right. Park on hall side of road.

Financial Statement

Bank balances as at 20 Oct 2017		
Operating account		11,459.23
Savings account		18,149.23
Total funds at 20 Oct 2017		29,608.46
Plus income from		
Membership fees	724.00	
Book sales	90.00	
AFB refresher	310.00	
Nth Pure Honey receipts	235.00	
Interest received	23.13	
		1,382.13
		30,990.59
Less expenditure		
Bank fees	2.40	
Hall hire	65.00	
Licences	47.44	
Spring training costs	200.00	
Gift for guest speaker	19.99	
Club provisions	188.17	
Website	23.00	
RWT on interest	7.63	
		553.63
Total balance at 20 Nov 2017		30,436.96
Made up of		
Operating account	12,272.23	
Savings account	18,164.73	
		30,436.96

News from last Club Day

(continued from p. 2)

The new RMP shed is now finished and ready for use in the coming extraction season. Karl Butler, the new extraction manager, has been busy getting the extraction plant ready and the plant has just had its off season MPI audit completed.

Thanks to all those who have put their name forward on the job roster, your help is really appreciated. Remember the job roster is at the front of the hall at each meeting so please put your name down if you can help.

Next Meeting is the Christmas Meeting on 2nd December – bring a plate for a shared lunch.

There will be a meeting on 5th January 2018.



*Merry Christmas
& have a safe &
Happy New Year*