

Whangarei Bee Club INC

Newsletter



March 2017, Issue 147

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

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



Image from www.teara.govt.nz

Lacebark, houhere (*Hoheria populnea*) is a fast-growing native whose European name derives from the fibrous inner bark. It does best in good soils with adequate drainage and is an excellent garden specimen if you have the room. Lawrie Metcalf, NZ's premier native plant expert, states lacebark makes an excellent shelterbelt species, growing to about 8 metres.

Lacebark flowers profusely from about March to May, and in "good" years the mass of white flowers will entirely obscure the foliage. Honey bees love it and will produce a modest surplus of very runny honey to add to winter stores. The pollen is off-white in colour. At dawn silvereyes will be in quick for the nectar before the bees wake up and the giant bumblebees you see will be the new queens, bulking up for their winter hibernation.

<http://www.terrain.net.nz/friends-of-te-henui-group/trees-native-botanical-names-g-to-l/lacebark.html>

<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/silvereye>

"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.

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Upcoming Events

This Club Day 4 March

Same place, same time

Check out page 3

Next Club Day 1 April

See you there☺

News from Last Club Day

Whangarei Bee Club Meeting – 4 February 2017

Stolen Hives: Club members were advised that some club hives had been stolen and hive thefts are likely to rise due to the current bad season for bees and honey production. It is advisable to mark your boxes and frames. Be vigilant and note down any suspicious vehicles or behaviour around apiary sites.

General news: Current news items are clearly signalling a major reduction in Manuka honey production this year. Comvita has indicated a 60% shortfall this year due to the weather conditions and other honey production companies are also indicating similar honey production shortfalls.

A warning has been issued about tutin. Tutin has been found in honey extracted prior to Christmas. The risk of tutin content is higher this year due to the very dry conditions.

No price has been set for this year's honey yet. *Continued on page 2*

News from last Club Day

Continued from page 1

Whats happening in the hives

Honey flow is coming in but is patchy, some members reporting large variation between apiary sites with some apiaries having to be fed to keep the hive going.

The early hive splits were unsuccessful, put down to bad mating at the beginning of the season due to the weather conditions. The question was asked whether it would be better to re-queen now or leave until later. Suggested members check through the box to see how patchy the brood is. Some hives have patchy brood on many frames but have a couple of frames with good brood cover. If there is reasonable brood then re-queen early next season as the honey flow is nearly over. If the brood is poor throughout consider re-queening now.

Some members reported they have fully clogged pollen frames. Bees can use up a lot of pollen in the next two months but if it is a problem, you can move the frames into the honey box and the bees should clean it out. If they don't use the pollen it can be an area for disease harbouring so should be cleaned out of the frames after a while. Plastic frames can be water blasted to clean them.

Discussion on honey frames not being fully capped. Uncapped honey can still be extracted as long as the moisture content is low e.g. 17 – 18 %. Even if the moisture content is higher it can be extracted but suggested that the lid be left off the bucket and the bucket placed in a small room with a dehumidifier running until the moisture content has reduced. A quick test for moisture content when working the hives is to shake the frame, if uncapped honey does not run out then the moisture content is likely to be low. Bees may not be capping the honey as it's difficult to make wax in the current weather conditions.

When considering how much honey to leave on the hive you need to consider the location and whether there are any food sources available to the bees to bring in new honey before wintering off. If feeding sugar to bees at this time of the year it is better to use a syrup base mixture rather than dry sugar. Feeding dry sugar means the bees need access to water so they can process it.

Willow honey dew is causing problems due to the Australian willow aphid. It is hard to extract out of the frames and does not taste very nice.



Concerns raised by some members about the effect of commercial beekeepers bringing in large number of hives into Northland and therefore reducing food source available to existing beekeepers who live and work here permanently. There is also a risk of disease transmission. They would like some system in place to control numbers and placement of hives. The club needs to make the views of its members known. Chris advised that this matter should be referred to Paul Martin as he is the hobbyist representative on the Api NZ Board.

Varroa numbers are now starting to climb in some hives so keep an eye on this to ensure you treat before numbers get too high.

Weak hives may be due to queen bee problems – not good mating at the beginning of the season so reduced egg laying capacity to keep the hive going. Watch weak hives for starvation and disease, especially AFB. If you have AFB, you are required to burn the hive within seven days. Due to the fire bans at present, it is advisable to ring and discuss this with the Fire Brigade before you do this.

Brief discussion was had on queen grafting. As there was quite a bit of interest in this David Herbert will arrange for a grafting demonstration at the next club meeting.



**Thank you
John
for this month's
contribution**





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

Club Day

Whareora Hall

10.15am

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 Information

Whangarei Bee Club Incorporation

Bank balances as at 20 Jan 2017

Operating account	6,622.35
Savings account	15,014.56
Total funds at 20 Jan 2017	21,636.91

Plus income from

Membership fees	2,034.10
Book sales	135.00
Float rebanked	100.00
Interest received	21.91
	2,291.01
	23,927.92

Less expenditure

Bank fees	1.60
Hall hire	65.00
Licences	47.44
Club hive expenses	296.00
Club provisions	449.99
Website	23.00
RWT on interest	7.23
	890.26

Total balance at 20 Feb 2017	23,037.66
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Made up of

Operating account	5,008.42
Savings account	18,029.24
	23,037.66

News/sites to check out

Battle between Northland and Comvita:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/89293514/battle-of-the-bees-between-manuka-honey-giant-comvita-and-northland-beekeepers>

How drones and insects could join forces:

<http://www.newshub.co.nz/home/world/2017/02/pla-n-bee-how-drones-could-join-forces-with-insects.html>

Beekeeper busts his arse to get where he is today:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/88799901/young-beekeeper-busts-his-arse-to-get-where-he-is-today>

Bee education programme:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/news/89590597/bee-education-programme-a-first-for-southland>

Local product helps hard-hit beekeepers:

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=11804704

Beauty secrets of mānuka honey:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/beauty/89152342/the-beauty-secrets-of-manuka-honey>