

Whangarei Bee Club INC

Newsletter



November 2017, Issue 155

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

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



www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Flame tree or coral tree (*Erythrina x sykesii*) is a tall springtime-flowering tree that is a nectar source for honey bees. Tui are frequent visitors as well. This deciduous tree stands out clearly in the landscape because it flowers profusely before there is any seasonal foliage.

The most common form in Northland is a hybrid that produces no viable seed, nevertheless readily propagates wherever branches, or even short lengths of broken branches, touch bare ground. The roots also

send up suckers. The best location for this highly invasive species is on your neighbour's property!

<http://www.weedbusters.org.nz/weed-information/erythrina-x-sykesii/59/>

"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 title. The web references provide excellent photographs, some of which are from proprietary sources such as plant shops.

Thank you
John & Mike
for this
month's
contributions



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Upcoming Events

This Club Day
4 November

Same place, same time

Check out page 4

Next Club Day
2 December

See you there ☺

Notices

- 1) For novice beekeepers who need AFB checks, please contact Paul Martin who will arrange for someone in your area to check your hive
- 2) Please register your hives with AsureQuality at the following link:
<https://www.asurequality.com/ourindustries/apiculture/apiary-register/>
- 3) A roster for helping out on club day will be kept at the front of the hall, so if you are able to help please put your name down
- 4) Guest speaker for this Club Day - John Beauregard talking on Trees for Bees specific to Northland -planting options and utilising available trees to maximise the health and success of your hives
- 5) **Hives and Nucs for sale:** Single box hives, complete top to bottom with lots of bees inside at \$550 plus GST; Nucs, like a full single hive, but only 5 frames of bees, honey, pollen and brood and queen of course, with 5 foundation frames beside to fill the box at \$400 plus GST

News from last Club Day

Summary Whangarei Bee Club Meeting 7 October 2017

87 attendees including 10 guests.

Paul took time to answer a question which came up from the last meeting relating to 'integrated varroa control'. The question was 'how do organic acids – specifically oxalic acid – kill varroa mites'.

In the case of oxalic acid is it the acid or the oxalate crystals that affect the mite? To date the destructive mechanism is not known. Organic acids are generally used as a 'blunt instrument' for winter varroa treatment with a 60 – 90% kill rate. This is comparable to using chemical strips, such as Apistan, which can give a 90% + rate when used as directed.

As noted before, biological resistance is a potential issue for all types of mite control.

There was a brief discussion about 'drone trapping' as a way to knock down varroa numbers (see nicnac section).

Also breeding bees to tolerate varroa – Paul mentioned the South African experience where nothing was done to control varroa when it first appeared and after the big initial hit to bee numbers (first 3 or 4 years) varroa resistant bees then began to dominate and bee numbers came back to normal.

Proposed Bylaw Changes

There followed a discussion on the Whangarei District Council's proposed changes to 'Keeping of Animals, Poultry and Bees Bylaw'. It only affects urban bee keepers. The main proposed changes are:

- Section 9.1 suggests no more than 2 hives per urban section, with a possible exemption for sections bigger than 1 acre
- Section 9.1c asks for evidence of completion of an AFB course – why support this.
- Section 9.1d says to keep hives more than 10m from your boundary. We will submit that a hive on your boundary backing onto a 'solid' fence would be less of a nuisance to neighbours.
- Section 9.1e asks for a suitable fly way barrier within 2 metres of the hive(s), to get the bees above head height when they are coming in and out.

- Comply with AFB regulations
- Swarms must be removed asap

ApiNZ was asked to produce a draft submission for the proposed changes. Paul will finalise this submission. Due date is 15th October.

Upcoming Events

- Spring training day 14/10/17
- AFB Refresher Course 28/10/17

NicNac Section

Mike Fox demonstrated a modified wooden frame which favours drone brood production. Varroa prefer infesting drone brood rather than worker brood. Once the drone brood produced in this frame is capped it can be removed, along with any mite infestation, and destroyed. Mike suggested using this technique over the honey flow period (starting around New Years), if required, as a non-chemical way of controlling mite numbers. Two or three cycles lasting 3 weeks each should remove more than 90% of the mites.

David and David Hive Time

Bee numbers are increasing so keep the feed up to your hives in case they need it – either as dry white sugar or as a 50:50 sugar syrup solution. October can be an uncertain month if there is too much rain and wind keeping the bees from foraging.

A discussion on how to wax frames - plastic and wooden. Paint or dip or use a paint roller for plastic frames. You can use a battery to heat up the wires of wooden frames to allow the wax foundation sheet to melt onto the wires.

Swarms are beginning to happen now.

Notes

John Beauregard will be the guest speaker for the November meeting. He will be talking about 'trees for bees' and how beekeeping changes with changes in land use over time.

There will be Club hives for sale from splits later in the season. Let Barbara or Paul know if you are interested (*cont. next page*).



News from last Club Day (cont.)

A roster for helping out on club day will be kept at the front of the hall so if you are able to help please put your name down. As a reminder the names on next month's roster will be put in the newsletter.

November Club Day Roster

Setup hall from 9am – Karl Butler, Ann & Clive Roberts

Kitchen from 9-30am – Brian & Lyn, Richard, Karin

Wash up in kitchen from 12am – Bev Bristow

Pack up hall from 12-30am - Tim Cant & Karl Butler

Fox News *Contributed by Mike Fox*

The weather has finally changed and we are having more days without rain than rainy days. I can now get my ute right up beside some of my hives, but still need the quad bike for some apiaries.

There seems to be a wide variety of feed supplies out there, from needing supers a month ago to still starving now and needing sugar feeding.

If you start feeding sugar syrup, you have to keep feeding it until the nectar flow starts properly. If you feed a whole lot at once the bees will store it for use later, therefore running into the risk of C4 sugars in your honey, while feeding a little every few days will be used directly to feed the growing population of brood and lessen the risk of C4 sugars in the honey (export honey has a limit to the amount of this type of sugar....perfectly alright for the hobbyist though). There's an old theory that a bee needs 1 cell of honey and 1 cell of pollen to feed it as a larvae. That's a lot when you think of the hive population in peak flow of around 50-60000 bees. A brood nest of 5-6 frames of brood can rip through a couple of frames of honey in just a couple of days if the weather turns crappy and the foragers can't get out to gather more supplies. So keep your finger on the pulse at all times. Hives really do run hand

to mouth at this time of year.

Supplements are becoming very popular these days, especially with over-crowding of hives in areas near to manuka sites or sheltered wintering sites. There are 2 main protein supplements, Feedbee and Megabee. Both are excellent products, and strangely, the exact same price. Both are able to be fed as a patty or mixed into syrup. Patties are easier, as the mixing with syrup needs to be for like 2 hours to properly suspend the mixture so it doesn't settle out. Both are around 38 % protein, so that's up there with the best pollen in NZ.... Gorse. Both can have other additives put in like the seaweed mixes. I have tried Hive Alive, Agrisea, and a little KoBee. Hive alive is expensive and the bees love it and seem healthier the following spring after an Autumn feed. But, when I used it, and the supplier said they had never heard of the problem before, Hives using top feeders the lids went terribly rusty, and hives with frame feeders went rusty on the side the feeder was on. Different batches of lids, so it wasn't a bad batch of lids. Anyway. The bees loved it. Agrisea and KoBee are being used this season and so far look to be keeping things healthy. Though a few hives have got chalk brood that I haven't seen in years.

I have found that with sugar syrup at 1:1 and Megabee or Feedbee, bee populations can easily be triple or more the population of a hive next to it without any feeding at all after a 5-6 week period. I'd say it's worth its investment in both time and money. The idea is to build up a strong population FOR the flow, rather than ON the flow. So as the flow slows down, the foragers are becoming older and ready to die off, rather than having the flow end and the foragers are young and vibrant and able to extend the robbing season out too far.

One other thing...I see on Youtube the Americans are using Wheat flour as a pollen supplement. DON'T. It has STARCH in it. Starch is indigestible to bees and causes them gut problems. The bees will pick it up and use it being about 12% protein, but it's not good. They will collect any fine powder when there is a pollen shortage, eg Pine pollen...with a protein of about 8-9% and it lacks most of the essential amino acids required. These low grade pollens actually cost the bees energy to digest and provide no good. It's like us with lettuce, we burn more calories eating it than we gain from it.

That's all from me today. Happy Beekeeping and see you at Club day.



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

Whangarei Bee Club Incorporation		
Bank balances as at 20 Sept 2017		
Operating account		10,567.91
Savings account		18,134.26
Total funds at 20 Sept 2017		28,702.17
Plus income from		
Membership fees	680.00	
Book sales	135.00	
Training day	585.00	
Interest received	22.35	
		1,422.35
		30,124.52
Less expenditure		
Bank fees	2.00	
Hall hire	65.00	
Licences	47.44	
Post office box	175.00	
Batteries	18.98	
Club provisions	177.26	
Website	23.00	
RWT on interest	7.38	
		516.06
Total balance at 20 Oct 2017		29,608.46
Made up of		
Operating account	11,459.23	
Savings account	18,149.23	
		29,608.46

News/sites to check out

'Insane' discovery – 30000 bees and 18kg of honey:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/americas/97715678/insane-discovery-30000-bees-and-18kg-of-honey-inside-the-walls-of-a-us-house>

Pesticide traces in NZ honey:

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11934014

Miss Honey Bee's push for bee awareness:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/97955987/miss-honey-bees-push-for-bee-awareness>

Aussie hits back in mānuka honey standoff:

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/country/342503/australia-hits-back-in-manuka-honey-standoff>

Mānuka honey gold rush – beekeepers invade Golden Bay:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/97770570/bee-keepers-invade-golden-bay-to-cash-in-on-manuka-honey-gold-rush>

Bee awareness merits more than one month:

http://www2.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=11931429