APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND

June 2020

THE BUZZ

NON COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPER QUARTERLY UPDATE

PAUL MARTIN, NON COMMERCIAL BOARD MEMBER

Hi again,

I hope you all are keeping well. Since the last issue of The Buzz in March, life in New Zealand has changed significantly. We have all been impacted by Covid 19; some have lost jobs, many have been separated from loved ones, some have become temporary home-school teachers, some have had to learn a lot about technology very quickly. One thing that didn't change during this difficult time was that I could continue to care for my bees.

ApiNZ campaigned hard for beekeeping to be considered an essential service under Alert Level 4 and 3, which allowed all beekeepers to continue to treat hives for disease and feed as needed before winter. ApiNZ also produced protocols to clarify what beekeepers needed to do to operate under Alert Level 4 and 3, as well as an Essential Services travel card for beekeepers to use as proof when travelling between hive sites.

Despite these efforts, I'm aware that clubs and hobbyists still faced challenges over the last couple of months. ApiNZ is still working closely with government on issues affecting beekeepers, and I am keen to hear about your experiences so feel free to get in touch.

In April, the NZ Colony Loss Survey report for 2019 was released. This survey has been running since 2015, and this year involved 40.9% of all registered beekeepers. As well as revealing the overall winter colony loss rate in New Zealand the survey provides interesting insights into beekeeping in New Zealand over 2018/2019.

Some of the key findings, which were printed in the *NZ BeeKeeper Journal* show that the estimated overall winter loss rate has increased over five years from 8.4% in 2015 to 10.5% in 2019. The main cause of losses was due to queen problems (30.3%), with suspected varroa infestation close behind (28.1%). In 2018, varroa was the cause of 19.5% of losses, revealing this is a growing issue.

Another key finding from the report was that varroa monitoring methods are inconsistent, with many beekeepers (across regions and operation sizes) undertaking no monitoring or only carrying out visual inspections of adult bees only.

This is a worrying finding, as regular monitoring using a reliable method is an essential part of best practice beekeeping. I have included a table produced by Plant and Food Research at left which outlines their advice on the reliability of different varroa monitoring methods.

I've included a couple of interesting charts from the Colony Loss Survey on page 3 which reveal the main causes of winter colony losses and the varroa monitoring methods being used by beekeepers. To find out more, see the full report at: www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/readiness/bee-biosecurity/bee-colony-loss-survey

Until next time, happy beekeeping.

Paul

Method	Variable	% Extraction	Total time	Comments	Recommended
Alcohol wash	1 rinse	79.2	30 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
	2 rinses	92.1	45 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
	3 rinses	**97.5**	**60 sec**	**Sensitive & reliable, hard to do in apiary**	**Yes**
Apistan® strip	10 mins	42.2	15 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
	20 mins	**81.6**	**20 min**	**Works well if no chemical resistance**	**Yes**
	30 min	**93.8**	**30 min**	**Works well if no chemical resistance**	**Yes**
Detergent wash	1 rinse	79.5	30 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
	2 rinses	92.4	45 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
	3 rinses	**97.2**	**60 sec**	**Sensitive & reliable, hard to do in apiary**	**Yes**
Ether roll	Spray jar	42.4	10 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
	Jar + tray	66	20 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
Sugar shake	Shake 1	78.6	15 sec	Low sensitivity & unreliable	No
	Shake 2	**95.1**	**30 sec**	**Quick & easy method. Do no use in wet weather or the honey flow**	**Yes**
	Shake 3	96.9	45 sec	Only two shakes are needed	No
	Shake 4	98.4	60 sec	Only two shakes are needed	No
Tobacco leaves	Smoke jar	13.6	20 sec	Unreliable	No

Chart modified from RM Goodwin, MA Taylor, HM McByrdie, AJ McNaughton, & HM Cox. Development of integrated control programmes for varroa control in New Zealand. MAF

Making a hive wrap

by Eva Durrant, Wellington Beekeepers' Association

Last year, I wrapped my hives in building paper lined with corflute panels. This worked really well, protecting the hives from rain, providing insulation from the cold winds, but allowing airflow between the wrap and hive walls. The wrappings were easily stored after winter and are in excellent condition to use again.

The materials used were: building paper, corflute (old real estate signs are good), timber battens, glue or staple gun, tape and screws. The demo wrap is for a three-box hive (measurements for 3/4 depth boxes). I also made wraps for two box and four box hives, only the height changes otherwise the steps are the same.

The measurements for the building paper wrap are:
Circumference: 2000mm including a securing overlap
Height: two boxes 370mm, three boxes 550mm, four boxes 740mm.

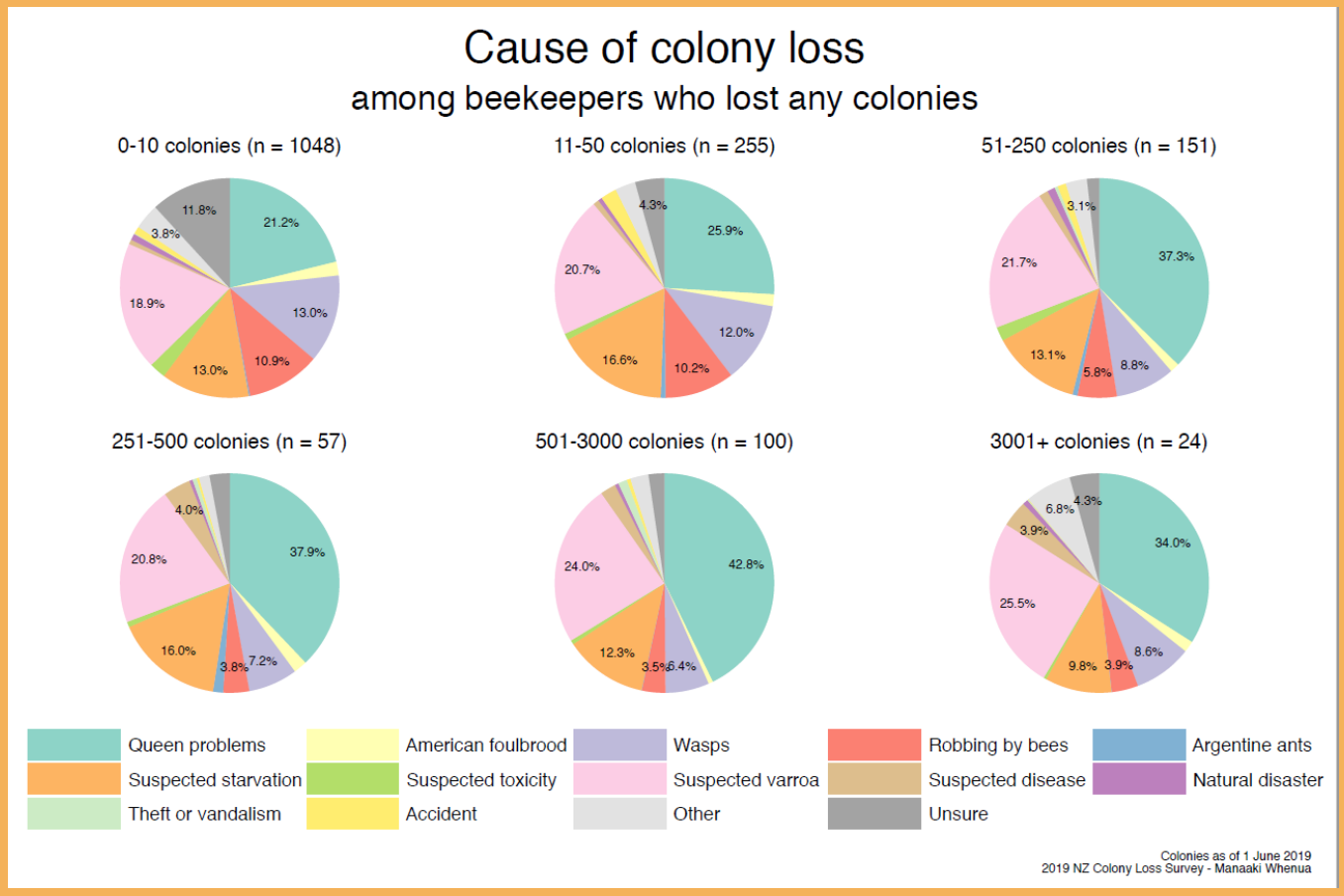
- Cut four pieces of corflute to fit on each side of the hive, then glue to the building paper, leaving about 20mm gaps for the corners.
- Tape some spacers, as shown, in the middle so there is an airspace between the corflute and hive when wrapped.
- Wrap it around the hive and use temporary tape to stick it down while working. Screw a baton of timber to secure the wrap to the front of the hive and make sure the entrance is not covered!
- Make sure the wrap fits snugly, and then secure the back.
- Add a long baton over the overlapping building paper so that the wind can't pull it apart.
- Cut the paper so that it sits just below the crown board. This will allow you to lift the board to check the hive's food stores without having to undo the wrap.
- Look from the crown board down the sides, there should be space for airflow between the hive and wrap. This ensures that there is no condensation build-up. I also recommend a matchstick in each corner of the crown board for the same reason.

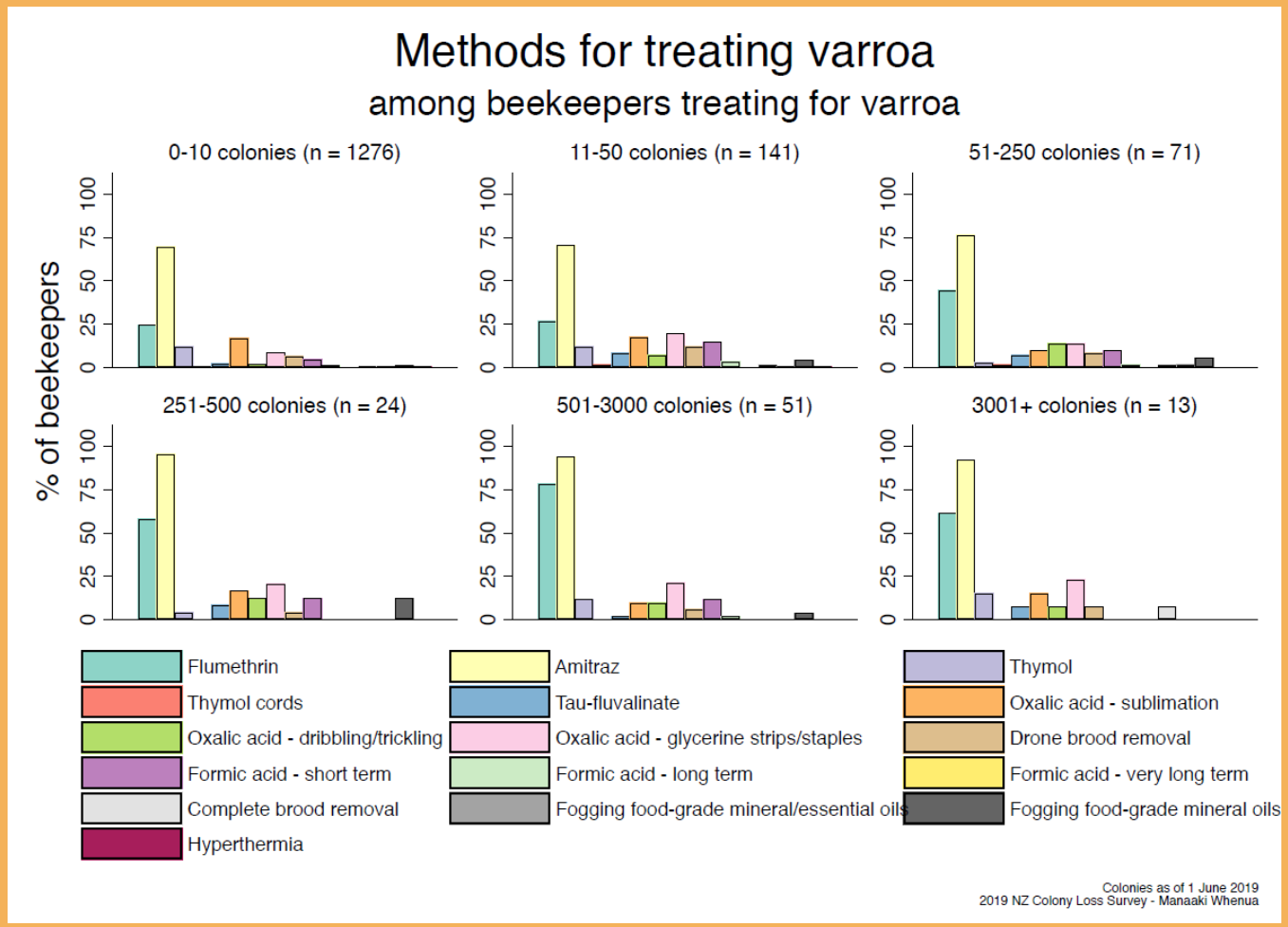
Cut corflute to fit the hive and glue to the building paper.

Tape down some spaces to ensure airspace between wrap and hive.

Check for airflow space betwen the wrap and hive..

The finished product - remember to leave the entrance uncovered.





Figures from the NZ Colony Loss Survey 2019 supplied by Manaaki Whenua/Landcare Research

---

If you have any queries or comments regarding this update or other non-commercial matters, please contact Paul directly at: paul4apinz@gmail.com