



TAR ANAKI BEEKEEPERS CLUB

March
2008

Newsletter

Greetings! I have just come inside after moving some hives! Not the easiest of beekeepers jobs to be done - but necessary. These late summer evenings are making the task even more difficult as the bees are gathered outside the hive fanning the moisture laden air from the honey supers into the evening breeze. People may have seen large clumps of bees clustered on the front of the two storey hive in commercial apiaries and this is because the honey has been removed and if all the colony were to crowd into the hive it would become too hot for the brood and other members of the colony. I am sure that you would treat your bees with a little more respect and give them another super. This would not only prolong their lives but would keep the wax moth out of your valuable comb even if there was no nectar coming into the hive demanding space. For those of you with hives in town there will still be some nectar coming into the hives from the autumn flowering plants and shrubs. One such is the brilliant orange or red flowers of the autumn flowering gum trees which are smothered in bees collecting the nectar these warm/hot summer days.

One big problem is now beginning to appear – robbing. Not only do the bees have to defend their hives from wasps but also other bees. Dead bees around the entrance may be an indication if you visit hives in the evening or during the day there will be a lot of bees hovering around the entrance and some fighting may be seen at the entrance. If the problem is robbing wasps, there is a great problem if the hive is small or weak but most types of robbing can usually be stopped by closing down the entrance to the width of two or three bee-widths, i.e. - to about 1 cm. If you can locate the home nest of the wasp colony then you will be doing sterling service to all your neighbors if you poison it. Not only will it help to solve your problems but you will be stopping the production of next year's potential robbers too. Be especially careful when taking off your honey, that you spill as little as possible and take any burr comb away with you. Cover all exposed honey at all times.

Having taken off your honey, dried off your cappings, examined your brood for disease, - this is the time to get your chosen Varroa control measures into place. For those of you that are using Organic methods, the sooner you can start - the better as the hive temperatures will be dropping markedly in the unoccupied sections of the hive and many organic treatments depend on the temperature of the hive for their effectiveness. If you are using strips – follow the advice on the product package for effective use but get them into the hive now! They don't work if you keep them in the packet.

Next meeting will be at our usual venue, the Plunket Rooms in New Plymouth, opposite the warehouse, on Monday 17th March at 6.30 p.m. where I think it would be a good idea to discuss the various methods for the "control of the Varroa Bee Mite".

Needless to say, if any of you are having any problems with your beekeeping, bring them to the meeting and we will probably be able to solve them for you. We aim to help you enjoy your beekeeping by keeping both the Beekeepers and the bees happy. See you at the meeting. Adrian.