



MARCH 2010

Taranaki Beekeeping Club



What's happening in Taranaki

Hi Fellow Beekeepers. Well it would seem that the end of the season is upon us and the weather has turned cooler and the nights are drawing in fast. The bees have brought into the hive most of their Winter stores by now, so it is time to collect your reward for giving them accommodation and freedom from the Varroa mite.

Choose a fine, sunny, warm day with little or no wind and start the operation after lunch. Most of the foragers will be in the field and therefore out of your way. Make sure you have all you need for the operation before you begin and be as quick as you can without being rough.

Don't forget to get your smoker going well before you take the lid off and don't be fooled into thinking that you can do the job just as well without smoke. Having the smoker on hand will clear the bees from the super faster and the neighbours are less likely to be attacked if they are in the vicinity.

Remove the lid of the hive and hardboard mat or bit of carpet. Gently blow smoke across the top of the frames and give a puff into the entrance. Take off the honey super and put it on the upturned lid to prevent any bees being squashed, cover with the hardboard cover or bit of carpet. Remove a couple of frames from the brood chamber and inspect for AFB. If none is found, remove the cover from the honey super and remove the first frame. Make sure that most of the cells are capped and shake or brush off the bees in front of the hive. Continue with the rest of the frames in like fashion, then remove the super to the boot of the car over a "drip tray" as there will be some leakage from broken cells and honey is very sticky and gets everywhere.

Extract as soon as you can after removal as the honey will flow well when warm and leave the cells more easily than after it has been in the garage for a few days. Don't attempt to extract outside however warm and sheltered the venue may be.

Your honey will granulate after a while but you can get a better granulation if you use a starter of a fine grain, creamed honey as a starter – about 8 to 10% stirred into your honey after it has been strained. Leave to mature in a cool place stirring occasionally.

When it begins to crystallise put into its storage containers – it will go very stiff or even rock hard if left in the bucket depending on the floral source of the honey.

Put your drained cappings and empty frames back on your hive at dusk to prevent robbing by other bees in the neighbourhood. It is much easier to prevent robbing than to try to stop it when it is underway.

If you only have a couple of hives, consider investing in a "Bee Escape" board, which you put under the super to be extracted on the day before and you should be able to take the super off with only half a dozen bees in it the following morning without disturbing the colony unduly.

Some yields this year have been very good, especially on the "sand country" but the bush was not up to expectations although there were some good yields from the Kamahi in some parts.

We will discuss this further and "Wintering Down" at our next meeting on Monday the 15th March in the Plunket Rooms opposite the Warehouse at 6.30 pm. C U there. Adrian.

Next club meeting

15th March 2010

In the PLUNKET ROOMS

6.30pm

Next to New World Supermarket

Third Monday of every month

Friday, February 12, 2010

Biologist Discovers 'Stop' Signal in Honey Bee Communication

ScienceDaily (Feb. 11, 2010) — A biologist at UC San Diego has discovered that honey bees warn their nest mates about dangers they encounter while feeding with a special signal that's akin to a "stop" sign for bees.

The discovery, detailed in a paper in the February 23 issue of the journal *Current Biology*, which appears online February 11, resulted from a series of experiments on honey bees foraging for food that were attacked by competitors from nearby colonies fighting for food at an experimental feeder. The bees that were attacked then produced a specific signal to stop nest mates who were recruiting others for this dangerous location. Honey bees use a waggle dance to communicate the location of food and other resources. Attacked bees directed "stop" signals at nest mates waggle dancing for the dangerous location...



Basic steps to making creamed honey

Making creamed honey is easier than many people think. Before we explain how to make creamed honey, it is important to understand what it actually is and what it is not. Creamed honey is not whipped honey. There shouldn't be any air in your creamed honey. Creamed honey is controlled granulation of honey which results in extremely small sugar crystals. The smaller the crystals the better the creamed honey. A good creamed honey should be smooth, not grainy, like velvet on the tongue.

Here are the basic steps to making creamed honey. The first rule of making creamed honey is to have a good starter. A starter is simply creamed honey that is added to the liquid honey and serves as a template for the granulation. Your final product will only be as good as what you start with, so start with a creamed honey you like. To begin, the liquid honey should be void of any prior granulation. It can be either freshly extracted or warmed slightly to be sure it is completely liquified. With the honey at room temperature, blend in the starter at a ratio of about 10 parts liquid honey to 1 part starter. Thoroughly mix until the starter is evenly distributed, but take care not to mix in air. Let this set overnight to allow any small amounts of air to rise to the surface. The following day bottle into containers of your choosing; however, a wide mouth container is preferred so the creamed honey can be scooped out easily. Once the mixture is in your containers, store in a cool place, ideally 14° C., until the honey has creamed. If it is too warm the honey will not cream properly. I have made some at home in my unheated garage in the fall when the temperature ranges from 14°-18° and had very good success.

That's it in a nutshell. Of course, the process can be more complicated, but a quality product can be produced by following the above steps. One last thing, be sure to save 1 or 2 containers to use as the starter for your next batch.

A useful tip! Sometimes when you buy creamed honey, it is too hard to use easily. This is because most of the crystallizing has happened after the jar was filled and it has "set:" hard. If you microwave the jar (around 30 seconds on high for 500 grams) it will soften - and it stays soft!

Average Composition of Honey

Average Amount in 100 grams Honey

Energy	312 kilocalories
Fructose	38.50gm
Glucose	31.00gm
Water	17.10gm
Maltose	7.20gm
Sucrose	1.50gm
Thiamin	< 0.006mg
Riboflavin	< 0.06mg
Niacin	< 0.36mg
Pantothenic acid	< 0.11mg
Pyridoxine	< 0.32mg
Ascorbic acid	2.2 - 2.4mg
Enzymes	Invertase, Diastase, Glucose oxidase
Calcium	4.40 - 9.20mg
Copper	0.003 - 0.10mg
Iron	0.06 - 1.50mg
Magnesium	1.20 - 3.50mg
Manganese	0.02 - 0.40mg
Phosphorus	1.90 - 6.30mg
Potassium	13.20 - 168.00mg
Sodium	0.00 - 7.60mg
Zinc	0.03 - 0.40mg
Trace elements, Nitrogen, Acids:	Present

Basic Lip Balm

- 2-1/2 tsp Beeswax
- 7 tsp Sweet Almond Oil
- 1 tsp Honey
- 1 capsule Vitamin E
- 5 drops of an essential oil

Melt the oil and beeswax together in a little pan over low heat until the beeswax is melted. Take off the stove and then add in the honey and whisk it all together. When the mixture is nearly cool add in your essential oil. Mix it up again and then pour into your lip balm container.

Varroa Strips

Supplies of Varroa strips for the Autumn treatment have arrived. If you need strips please contact me with amounts needed. I also have some Apivar strips left over from spring treatment

Depending on amount the strips ordered, they can be posted, picked up from the Saturday market or dropped off if you are near by

Stephen

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