



Taranaki Beekeeping Club



WHAT'S ON IN TARANAKI

Greetings Fellow Beekeepers. It appears that the Winter is upon us now with cooler temperatures and shorter days. Activity has slowed to a minimum with few bees coming and going from the hive. If there is a warm windless day, they will venture forth to see what nectar or pollen there is to be had but some will be out to collect water to dilute their honey stores to turn them into a digestive food from their concentrated state – a bit like Trampers needing a meal from their packets of dehydrated food. With the dampness comes trouble. Bees can withstand the cold if it is dry cold. The cluster will keep them in a semi comatose state, with low demands for food and oxygen. They still have to breath and this produces dampness which will condense on the walls of their hive in the cold weather. Moisture invites mould and fungi to proliferate and both are bad for their health. Make sure a constant flow of air removes this moisture. Put a hessian sack over the top super frames to adsorb moisture or if you have ply or hardboard crown boards, then make a small gap between the super rim and the crownboard rim by inserting a couple of matches between them. Air will gently drift in through the reduced hive entrance over the cluster and rise up through the stores to leave in a gentle drift from under the lid. Make sure that the hive baseboard is sloping downwards toward the entrance to stop the rain from driving in and keep the floor boards dry.

When there is a dry warm day and you are able to inspect the stores, you can now take out the Varroa treatments. Strips are effective for only 8 weeks and there will be very little brood in the hives now for the incubation of more Varroa from any invaders so it will give the bees a break from the chemical.

Mice are a real nuisance now and poison bait should be put in a plastic milk bottle (to stop other animals from getting to it) under the hive where it is warm and dry. Prevention is better than cure and it is annoying to see a perfectly good honey comb ruined by mice. Mice also are very good at creeping into the hive at night and will make a nest at the back of the lower super, destroying more than one comb and before long you will have more than one mouse to deal with.

Next Club Night will be "The Honey Competition". It would be good if everyone brought a sample of their honey to the meeting to see what Taranaki has to offer to the World. It will be interesting to see the variations in colour and consistency that we can produce. There will be 3 classes: (a) Crystallised, (b) Liquid and (c) Comb.

Classes (a) & (b) look better in glass jars but plastic jars will be accepted. The Judges will be looking for clean fine grained, debris free samples of crystallised honey, clear, debris free and 'dry' liquid honey that will keep for ever! (I hope to borrow a moisture meter to test samples) and comb honey will be judged on presentation and colour (no travel stain). See you on Mon. 21st at 6.30 in the Plunket rooms. Good Luck.

Next club meeting
Monday 21st May
In the PLUNKET ROOMS
6.30pm
 Next to New World Supermarket
Third Monday of every month

Beekeeping Protective Clothing.

It is a basic fact that bees will sting to protect their colony from attack and interference, and they will resent any intrusion in their hive. As the beekeepers experience and confidence grows so their resentment will reduce. It is necessary therefore to have certain protective clothing. Most beekeepers wear a bee suit which has an integral hood and veil. It is also necessary to purchase a pair of gloves, and most beekeepers tuck the trouser legs of their suit into wellington boots. The correct attire will give the novice beekeeper confidence when working with bees.

Beekeeping Equipment.

Bee Smoker.

The bee suit protects against stings. What is more important for both the beekeeper and bees is how to persuade the bees not to sting in the first place. The most important tool for this is the smoker. These are available from beekeeping equipment suppliers, or can sometimes be purchased secondhand. It is best to purchase one with a fairly large firebox, so you do not have to keep topping it up. The fuel for the smoker should be slow cool burning materials. Too much smoke upsets the bees, but a few puffs causes a large number of the bees to gorge themselves with honey, and this leads them to losing their aggression. They can then be kept under control during manipulations. Remember each bee that stings dies.

Siting a Bee Hive.

The main considerations when siting a hive are
 Easy access for the beekeeper.

A flight path that will not annoy or concern neighbours or other members of the public.

Protection from strong winds and driving rain.

Not in deep shade from overhanging trees.

Firm ground with good drainage.

Attracting bees to your garden

Wednesday, August 12, 2009

Nothing evokes the sense of an organic garden like the hum of honeybees toiling among sun-warmed summer flowers. Honey bees are important for pollination of all our fruits and berries and many of our vegetables crops. They don't need us but we certainly need them. World wide their numbers are on the decline and experts are not sure why this is. By maintaining a bee-friendly garden, you can play a small but important role in helping to restore hard-hit wild honeybee populations, and help insure healthy, hefty bee-pollinated crops summer after summer.

Bee Provisions

Thanks to beekeepers, honeybees aren't in danger of disappearing completely, even with the added problems of the Varroa mite. However, surviving wild populations of native bees and bumble bees do require help. You can help their recovery if you promote an environment that encourages bees to visit your garden. Here's what you need to provide.

Water

Bees need a reliable supply of water throughout the honey season. They use water to cool their hives and dilute the honey they feed to their larvae. On extremely hot days, bees might spend more time carrying water back to the hive than foraging for pollen and nectar. Provide a shallow pond in your garden where bees can land on the margins to collect water. Place rocks or grow water lilies in deeper water to provide bees with a safe drinking platform.

Pollen and nectar: Ornamental plants can direct bees to your garden, but not just any flower will do. If you aim to attract honeybees, you'll need bee lures that produce ample amounts of pollen and nectar. Foraging bees identify desirable flowers by color, shape, and smell. Interestingly, bees can clearly perceive only four colors: yellow, blue-green, blue, and ultraviolet. Yellow, the color of most pollen, is another bee favorite. Regardless of the color, if a blossom doesn't provide enough pollen or nectar, bees will totally ignore it. Interestingly, most modern ornamentals, such as hybrid roses, no longer produce enough pollen and nectar. For the best bee lures plant old-fashioned or heirloom varieties.

Protecting Bees: The most serious danger to foraging honeybees is the indiscriminate use of pesticides and other chemicals in the garden. This is just another reason to be organic and spray free. When it comes to controlling garden pests, simple home remedies can save the bees. For example, you can eliminate a variety of destructive insects, including aphids, by spraying infested plants with a fast jet of water from a hose. One organic spray, Pyrethrum, is very toxic to bees, if you must use it make sure it is late in the evening when the bees are back in the hive. Your Safety Rest assured that foraging honeybees rarely sting while away from the hive. If threat-

ened, they usually fly away. Even so, if you are buzzed by a curious bee, it's a bad idea to swat at her. Simply walk away. Interestingly, honeybees tend to fly in straight lines, so you can usually shake a pursuing bee by weaving or running around a tree. Just hope that your neighbours aren't watching. Avoid wearing perfumes when you're in the garden, bees will be attracted to you.

Best Blooms for Bees Because foraging honeybees (they are all girls) put in 12-hour shifts, they tend to visit only one type of flower at a time. So, they might find a solid mass of sunflowers more alluring than a bed filled with mixed flowers. For best results, make sure their favorite pollen and nectar producing blooms are continuously available in your garden throughout the year. Below is a smorgasbord of best bets. Check to see whether they will grow in your climate first.

SPRING Trees: Alders (*Alnus* spp.) Apples and crabapples (*Malus* spp.) Viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*) Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) Catalpas (*Catalpa* spp.) Cherries, peaches, plums (*Prunus* spp.) Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) Elms (*Ulmus* spp.) Hazelnuts (*Corylus* spp.) Maples (*Acer* spp.) Oaks (*Quercus* spp.) Persimmons (*Diospyros* spp.) Redbuds (*Cercis* spp.) Sycamores (*Platanus* spp.) Tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) Willows (*Salix* spp.) Shrubs: Blackberries (*Rubus* spp.) Blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.) Flowering quinces (*Chaenomeles* spp.) Perennials/annuals: Ajugas (*Ajuga* spp.) Creeping phlox (*Phlox subulata*) Crocuses (*Crocus* spp.)

SUMMER Trees: Lime (*Tilia* spp.) Orange (*Citrus sinensis*) Tupelos (*Nyssa* spp.) Shrubs: Abelias (*Abelia* spp.) Butterfly bushes (*Buddleia* spp.) Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) Elderberries (*Sambucus* spp.) Sumacs (*Rhus* spp.) Wild or old fashioned roses (*Rosa* spp.) Perennials/annuals: Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*) Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*) Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.) Basil, Borage (*Borago officinalis*) Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) Catmints (*Nepeta* spp.) Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) Cosmos (*Cosmos* spp.) Globe thistles (*Echinops* spp.) Lambs' ears (*Stachys byzantina*) Lavenders (*Lavandula* spp.) Milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) Oreganos (*Origanum* spp.) Pot marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) Sages and salvias (*Salvia* spp.) Summer phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) Thymes (*Thymus* spp.)

AUTUMN Shrubs: Butterfly bushes (*Buddleia* spp.) Spanish needles (*Yucca* spp.) Wild or old fashioned roses (*Rosa* spp.) Perennials/annuals: Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)

Asters (*Aster* spp.) Borages (*Borago* spp.) Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) Goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.) Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) Mexican sage (*Salvia leucantha*) Mexican pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans* 'Scarlet Pineapple') Sedum (*Sedum spectabile*) Sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.) Verbenas (*Verbena* spp.) Wild carrot (*Daucus carota*)

Article by www.greenurbanliving.co.nz



The importance of bees

Bees - the one insect scientists have somewhat belatedly realised that humanity simply cannot do without. The disappearance of many of the world's species of bees has seen governments scrambling in Europe to ban a variety of pesticides and with this in mind, now is a good time to look at how to not only attract bees to your garden, but also to keep them there. More than half of the food we eat requires pollination via bees and in particular, the European honeybee has done a fabulous job over the years. Although with its recent scarcity, Mason bees, which are incidentally stingless, have been cultured all over the world to try and help. Considering that 40 billion tonnes of food a year are a direct result of what the bees achieve, it tells you the importance of these industrious little insects simply cannot be overestimated. So, how to do get them into our own gardens?

In recent years, I have always kept tubs of lavender close to my gardens and this was because I'd noticed that it is one of the plants bees drool over when it comes to collecting pollen. Lavender is a good companion plant for cabbage, cauliflower and rue and is also useful in deterring codling moths from around fruit trees. Bees also love yellow-flowered plants, of which pansies and marigolds reign right up there with sunflowers and gerberas.

The idea with flower planting is to make sure that you plant, or put pots of, close together, rather than spreading singular plants. The more flowers, the more likely to attract the bees - and they can tell the difference colour and species wise.

Herbs can also play a really good part in attracting bees:

Some of these include: Basil, Fennel, Marjoram, Mint, Oregano, Rosemary and Sage.

Before I forget, lavender which is of course also a herb, is good for deterring some butterflies and moths and having the big pots there, I have noticed my brassicas don't get attacked by the white butterflies as much.

I haven't forgotten the humble bumblebee either - these are the best pollinators for all cucurbits (cucumbers etc) so try and have plants available for them; sunflower and again, the humble lavender particularly, are great for them. Bumblebees require much more flowering plants than honeybees and they need plants that have both pollen supplying the proteins and

nectar provides the sugar necessary for energy. It is a great thing to have a nest of bumblebees - these will only last one season, unlike a beehive as a new hive is built every year. In the above picture, you'll see a tree-hanging small hive for Mason bees. These are excellent ideas and there is a real move towards ensuring our bee populations are kept safe by doing just this.

Do remember that many pesticides are lethal to bees and in particular, pyrethrum. Try not to use this if at all possible and some of the recipes we gave you last week for natural sprays will go a long way in ensuring better yields and production in your garden, simply because the bee has been made to welcome there.

Finally, a list of the kinds of flowers that bees really like outside of those we have talked about, pinched from the Veggie Gardener website: Agastache

Aster
Butterfly Bush
Black-eyed Susan
Caltrop
Coreopsis
Cosmos
Creosote bush
Currant
Daisy
Elder
Goldenrod
Joe Pye Weed
Lilac
Lupine
Mexican Sunflower
Penstemon
Pincushion Flower
Purple Coneflower
Rhododendron
Scorpion-weed
Snowberry
Stonecrop (Sedum)
Sunflower
Wild buckwheat
Wild-lilac
Willow
Zinnia



<http://www.thegardenpantry.co.nz>

NEED A NEW QUEEN?

I have queens and queen cells for sale
Queens \$30 Cells \$4 each can be picked up
from Adrian's place or Saturday market. Must
be ordered 3 days in advance

Stephen & Fiona
Bees-R-Us
06 752 6860

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