



SEPTEMBER 2009

# Taranaki Beekeeping Club



## DID YOU KNOW?

1. Subs are now due.
2. There are some library books well overdue and they need to be returned so that others can read them too.
3. Anyone doing the AFB Recognition & Competency Course / test Saturday 26th September and wanting the books to study can buy them from Sue Billing for \$25 each. Contact Sue on (06) 751 4337
4. Stephen Black will need **ALL** your information of who is attending the course and doing the test, bee keeping registration number etc no later than **19th September 2009**. Contact Stephen on (06) 752 6860  
Email: bees@beesrus.co.nz

### Next club meeting

**21st September 2009**

**In the PLUNKET ROOMS**

**6.45pm**

Next to New World Supermarket

**Third Monday of every month**

## September, Spring

Your Beekeeping season has started and you should be looking at your hives at least once a fortnight to see that all is in order. You are looking for disease, stores, accommodation requirements, laying pattern, quantity of pollen, number of drone cells, evidence of varroa, etc.

Between now and Christmas is most important to do the best you can for your bees so they will be in top order to do the best they can for you in the coming months.

### Dead bees around your hives?

A few can be expected at this time of the year as some of the old bees don't quite make it back to the warmth of the brood nest and fall into the wet grass at the entrance to be chilled by the night air. Others may have died in the hive and the house keepers have dragged them out of the entrance and tried to fly off with them but the corpse may have been too heavy and

has fallen but can't be retrieved as it has tangled in the damp grass.

Another possible cause of bee deaths especially at this time of the year, is the risk of poisoning due to chemical insecticide sprays. If you live in an area where there are fruit trees around make sure that spraying takes place in the mornings or evenings when there is minimal bee activity. Educate the neighbours if you have to!

Great to see the sun again after the Winter storms – but you shouldn't be too complacent as there is a lot of Spring left. The willow trees are now in favour and there is nectar coming into the hives, stimulating the queen to lay faster. Most hives seem to have come through the Winter in reasonable condition and have enough stores in house for the immediate future.

## Wednesday, September 09, 2009

### New Manuka Honey Standards to be Announced

#### Progress on Manuka Honey Standards

Radio New Zealand, 9/8/2009

A group set up to resolve arguments over labelling and testing standards in the manuka honey industry plans to have a proposal ready within two or three months.

Manuka sells for a premium over other types of honey because of its unique antibacterial properties, but the industry is divided over how that antibacterial activity should be measured and described on honey products.

The steering group of honey exporters was formed after a meeting called at Parliament earlier this year to address the conflict...

Meanwhile, Waikato University will launch a new consumer standard for manuka honey this month, which it says will update and improve what is currently used...



## What is so important about bees?

Bees play a vital role in nature and in the production of many of our most valued foods. They have co-evolved with flowering plants and so are perfectly adapted to live on their nectar and provide a pollination service in return.

Without bees, we would find it difficult or impossible to grow a wide range of crops.

## What is special about the honeybee?

Honeybees are unique in that they over-winter in colonies rather than singly, as do most bee species.

They rapidly grow in numbers in the spring, which means that by the time early-flowering crops appear, there are many thousands of them per colony available for pollination. This makes them particularly important to fruit growers and to growers of seed-bearing crops, such as almonds, mustard, oilseed rape and sunflowers.

## Why are people saying that bees are in danger?

Bees of all species are under threat from agricultural insecticides, pollution and urbanization.

Even apparently 'green' spaces, such as golf courses and public parks, are often treated with insecticides that are lethal to bees.

Parasitic mites and viruses have taken advantage of their weakened state to cause them additional stress.

Intensive beekeeping methods may have also contributed to their problems, which is why the growing 'natural beekeeping' movement is developing better ways to keep bees without chemicals or medications.

## What is Friends of the Bees?

It is a charity founded to conserve and protect bees, to educate people about bees and to research and promote more natural beekeeping methods.

## What does Friends of the Bees do?

- we aim to work with other groups

to help restore the natural balance between honeybees and other insect pollinators.

- we are establishing sites for small teaching apiaries, where people can learn about bees and natural beekeeping
- we publish educational material about bees and natural beekeeping
- we raise money for research into beekeeping and bee conservation

## What can I do to help?

- copy and distribute this leaflet – you can download it from our web site or photocopy as required
  - read, copy and distribute any of the free material on our web site
  - **make a donation** to help us do more (see web site)
- Friends of the Bees is Registered in England and Wales 6931807  
[www.friendsofthebees.org](http://www.friendsofthebees.org)



## 10 Things You Can Do To Help Save The Bees

Bees are in trouble, and it is mostly because of us. We have destroyed much of their natural habitat, we have poisoned their food and in the case of honeybees, we have used and abused them for our own purposes while not giving enough attention to their needs and welfare.

Honeybees have been evolving for a very long time – the fossil record goes back at least 100 million years – and they became remarkably successful due to their adaptability to different climates, varied flora and their tolerance of many shapes and sizes of living accommodation.

They became attractive to humans because of their unique ability to produce useful things, apparently out of thin air: honey, wax and propolis.

Until the nineteenth century, they were kept in pots, skeps, baskets and a variety of wooden boxes intended more-or-less to imitate their natural habitat of choice, the hollow tree.



### Club Contacts

<b>Adrian King</b>	7534681	President
<b>Stephen Black</b>	7526860	Secretary
<b>Sue Billing</b>	7514337	Treasurer

With the invention of the 'movable frame' hive, the second half of that century saw an exponential growth in commercial-scale beekeeping, and by the time motor vehicles became widely available, beekeeping on a widespread and industrial scale became a practical possibility.

Since then, bees have been treated in rather the same way as battery hens: routinely dosed with antibiotics and miticides in an effort to keep them producing, despite the growing problems of diseases and parasites and insecticide-treated plants that have led to the emergence of so-called 'Colony Collapse Disorder', especially in the massive beefarming operations in the USA.

It doesn't have to be like this. Some beekeepers have realized that, if bees are to become healthy enough to develop resistance to disease and the ability to adapt to pests, then they have to be treated differently – and not just by beekeepers.

Here are some things you can do to help the bees:

**1. Stop using insecticides - especially for 'cosmetic' gardening.**

There are better ways of dealing with pests - especially biological controls. Modern pesticides are extremely powerful and many are long-lasting and very toxic to bees and other insects. *Removing all unnecessary pesticides from the environment is probably the single most important thing we can do to help save the bees.*

**2. Avoid seeds coated with systemic insecticides.**

Beware - many farm seeds are now coated with Clothianidin and related systemic insecticides, which cause the entire plant to become toxic to bees and all other insects that may feed on it.

The same coatings may soon appear on garden seeds. Check your seed packets carefully - and if in doubt, ask the manufacturer for full information.

**3. Read the labels on garden compost - beware hidden killers!**

Some garden and potting composts are on sale that contain Imidacloprid - a deadly insecticide manufactured by Bayer. It is often disguised as 'vine weevil protection' or similar, but it is highly toxic to all insects and all soil life, including beneficial earthworms. The insecticide is taken up by plants, and if you use this compost in hanging baskets, bees seeking water from the moist compost may be killed.

**4. Create natural habitat.**

If you have space in your garden, let some of it go wild to create a safe haven for bees and other insects and small mammals. Gardens that are too tidy are not so wild life friendly.

**5. Plant bee-friendly flowers.**

You can buy wildflower seeds from many seed mer-

chants, and they can be sown in any spare patch of ground - even on waste ground that is not being cultivated. Some 'guerilla gardeners' even plant them in public parks and waste ground.

**6. Provide a site for beehives.**

If you have some space to spare, you could offer a corner of your garden to a local beekeeper as a place to keep a hive or two. They will need to have regular access, so bear this in mind when considering a site.

**7. Make a wild bee house.**

Providing a simple box as a place for feral bees to set up home is one step short of taking up beekeeping, but may appeal to those who want to have bees around but don't want to get involved with looking after them. Ideas for such boxes will be available at [www.friendsofthebees.org](http://www.friendsofthebees.org)

**8. Support your local beekeepers.**

Many people believe that local honey can help to reduce the effects of hayfever and similar allergies, which is one good reason to buy honey from a local beekeeper rather than from supermarkets, most of which source honey from thousands of miles away. If you can, find a beekeeper who does not use any chemicals in their hives and ask for pure comb honey for a real treat.

**9. Learn about bees - and tell others.**

Bees are fascinating creatures that relatively few people take the trouble to understand. Read a good book about bees and beekeeping, and who knows - you might decide to -

**10. Become a beekeeper.**

It is easier than you might imagine to become a beekeeper - and you don't need any of the expensive equipment in the glossy catalogues! Everything you need to keep bees successfully can be made by anyone with a few simple tools: if you can put up a shelf, you can probably build a beehive! For details, see <http://www.biobees.com>

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Phil Chandler is author of *The Barefoot Beekeeper* and has a busy discussion forum for natural beekeeping on his web site at <http://www.biobees.com>

*A new charity – Friends of the Bees – has been created to raise awareness of the bees' health problems and to promote more natural methods of beekeeping. See their web site at [www.FriendsOfTheBees.org](http://www.FriendsOfTheBees.org)*

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