

DECEMBER 2025



NEWSLETTER



Spring finally made an appearance (at least for a day) for workshop 5 as we were joined by STBA committee member and Brown Bees Daughter business owner, Samantha Brown showing us how to split a hive to expand an apiary and assist with swarm prevention. Sam generously shared all the tips and tricks she successfully uses to make splits, including a swarm excluder below the split box to ensure the queen stays with the original hive and we also had a chance to check out her split boards which conveniently double as clearer boards. We then transferred what we had learned in the classroom out into the field, where we broke into 2 groups - beginners opened a small hive, while Sam demonstrated a split with more advanced beekeepers. Thank you Sam for joining us and sharing your knowledge

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HONEY MASTERS



It was a weekend of honey adventures when Australia's only Honey Sommelier travelled to Tasmania to deliver 3 unique experiences.. The first was designed specifically with the Bee Queens in mind and was hosted at Willie Smith's Apple Shed in the Huon Valley. Participants brought along their own honey to the masterclass, where Jess walked us through how to taste and describe flavour as well as how to tap into our own unique experiences and memories. At the end of the session we had a chance to try the 22 different honeys that were on the table to put our new found skills to the test.

Event #2 was at the stunning Premaydena Hill Winery on the Tasman Peninsula, where a room full of keen (mostly non beekeepers) experienced honey tasting and food pairing, as well as a glass of wine or two! It was wonderful to see a couple of our Bee Queens there as well.

Event #3 was hosted by Libraries Tasmania and was both in person and online. and was all about what makes a good honey? After a quick trip up to Bicheno and into the Kunzea apiary, Jess was able to include some beekeeping footage and live tasting of Kunzea honey directly from the comb - a first for many people in the room.

It is always such a joy to spend time with Jess and to learn from the depth of her local and international experiences and looking forward to the adventures ahead.



BEE SWARMS



Have your hives swarmed this year?

You are not alone. Due to the extensive cool weather we have been having, we have all been struggling to get into hives and take action to prevent swarming. Ideally, swarm management begins as the colony starts to expand in size during Spring. But what does swarm management mean?



Swarming is a natural instinct for bees to reproduce, and just as bees dance to communicate with each other, beekeepers need to dance with bees to prevent swarms. Simple methods include placing clean drawn comb in the middle of the brood chamber and then shifting edge frames either up or out of the colony altogether. Or, by making a split which is also called a nuc or an artificial swarm. This can then be used to either expand an apiary or to requeen a colony.

Manipulating frames or removing bees and brood from a strong hive as mentioned above will assist in preventing swarms, but it is something beekeepers need to monitor during Spring and Summer and continue to 'dance' with bees to prevent swarming.



Let's start with what it is not. Swarm management is not adding a box to the top of your hive. Beekeepers do this, thinking they are 'making room' in the colony and therefore, preventing swarms. Adding a box is perfect for when bees are on a flow to collect honey, but will do very little (if anything) to prevent swarms.

To prevent swarms you must make room in the brood chamber for the queen to lay eggs.



#IDWBK

On January 13 we celebrate International Day of Women in Beekeeping. Women across the globe are invited to take a picture of themselves beekeeping or in a beekeeping related activity and to share this image on social media platforms with the hashtag #IDWBK. In a male led industry, this is a chance to connect with women beekeepers and to inspire the next generation of girls. This years theme is 'Bee Connected' - we do this through our Bee Queens community and this is a chance for us to share that connection. Start getting your photos ready and encourage your friends to join us too.



ELECTRIC EXTRACTOR

Through our collective fundraising efforts, we have now purchased an electric extractor for Bee Queens community use. The extractor is being managed by Deirdre for this season and I will email Deidre's contact details out to our BQ community. This second hand extractor will need care as it will be moved around and we ask users to follow the care instructions that will travel with the extractor. We have some funds left over to purchase sieves, a settling tank and other extracting equipment. - if you come across any suitable equipment you think we should have, please contact beequeensinfo@gmail.com

LUCIFER BEE

A new native bee species, *Megachile (Hackeriapis) lucifer*, has been discovered in Western Australia's Goldfields, which has been nicknamed the "Lucifer bee" due to the female's devil-like horns. The discovery was made by Dr. Kit Prendergast while surveying a critically endangered wildflower, and it highlights the need for more research and conservation efforts for Australia's largely unknown native pollinator.

"The female has these incredible little horns on her face. When writing up the new species description I was watching the Netflix show Lucifer at the time, and the name just fit perfectly. I am also a huge fan of the Netflix character Lucifer so it was a no-brainer," Dr Prendergast said. Read more about the Lucifer Bee [here](#).

