

FEBRUARY 2026



NEWSLETTER



International Day of Women in Beekeeping on January 13 this year, was the first time we have celebrated this day in person, since achieving the World Records in 2023. And what a great turn out we had! 30 New and familiar faces met at the Sustainable Learning Centre at Mt Nelson to hear from experienced beekeepers, drink tea, eat morning tea, (arguably a beekeepers favourite pass time!) peruse some market stalls and explore the internal working of a beehive. We managed to grab most people before they left for this photograph - thank you to all of the expertise in the room - President Bob Newton, Vice President Ross Gordon, Apiary Officer Julie Lupia and Secretary Dawn Hendrick, for suggesting the get together. Also a big thank you to Kristen, Catriona and Deb for setting up market stalls and a big welcome to all of the new faces, we are looking forward to working with you.

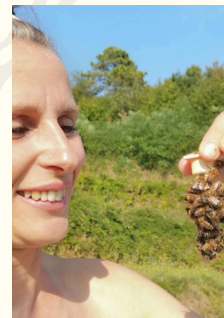
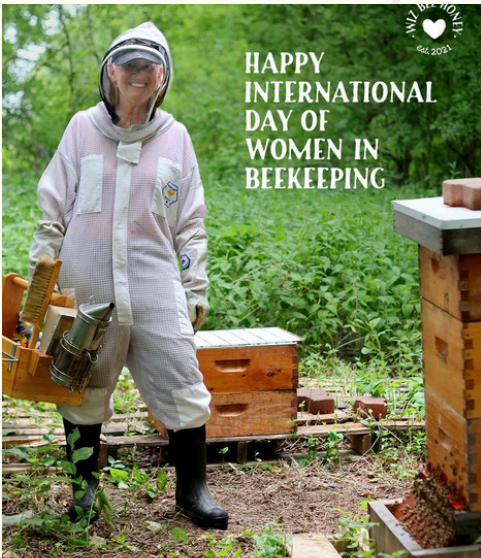
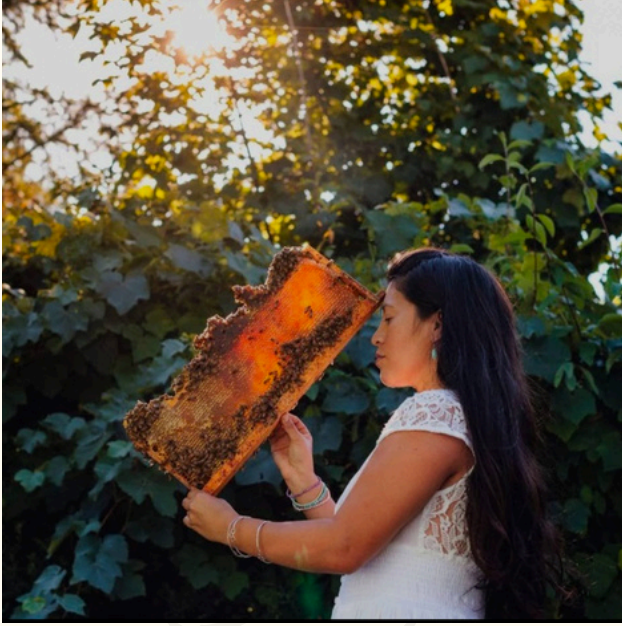
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IDWBK 2026



Our International Day is well represented all over the world - here are some takes you might have missed, from women everywhere. Bee Connected. Search #idwbk on instagram to see more.



UNCAPPING TOOLS



Last month we talked about harvesting honey, this month we are taking a closer look at the tools that will help you to uncap honey for extraction. As a backyard beekeeper there are plenty of options you can explore, for the purpose of brevity, I will focus on some simple solutions.

The first tool is a **serrated bread knife**. If you are new to beekeeping this is something most people will have in their kitchen - it is effective in removing the cappings without needing to invest in any extra equipment. you can also use a **kitchen fork** to scrape open any uncapped wax cells.

If you are ready to invest in some equipment, a **hot knife** may be what you are looking for. It is an electric knife that shaves the honey capping from the honey frame. Hot knives are efficient, but have a couple of draw backs - they can be slow to use and expensive. It is important to follow the care instructions as dunking the knife in water will break it.

If sharp knives or hot things are not appealing, a **pineapple roller** can be run over the front of the frame for a quick uncap. These rollers are also useful to 'double extract' frames where the honey is proving difficult to remove. They can be difficult to clean, but I find putting it in a bucket of hot water and rolling it around in there, effective.

My personal favourite is a combination of **uncapping tool** and **uncapping fork**. I find these efficient and safe to use. The uncapping tool can be dragged across the face of the comb to remove wax and the uncapping fork scratches any uncapped cells open. The fork can also be used for drone uncapping when testing for the presence of varroa mite.

And, if any of these methods still don't float your boat, you can always crush and strain the combs straight from the hive and through a sieve.

Happy uncapping!



TASTE OF THE HUON

The Bee Queens have been invited to have our own stall space at the upcoming Taste of the Huon event on March 8 and 9. This is an opportunity for YOU to showcase and sell your handmade products on a shared stall site - at this stage I am negotiating a free/low cost site in exchange for guest speaking and promoting our work to build a women friendly bee community. This opportunity is for long term market queens and those new to the scene. We are taking EOIs for this opportunity, please email me before the end of February if you would like to participate.



LW RESEARCH

A long-term study of Tasmania's leatherwood honey has, for the first time, identified 12 previously unknown natural compounds. This discovery highlights not only the honey's unique health benefits but could also help to protect the product from brand imitation. The study investigated the make-up of leatherwood honey in incredible detail, exploring what gives it a distinctive aroma, flavour and health related properties. It's the first time leatherwood honey has been examined so comprehensively. Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) PhD graduate Dr Katharina Schmidt started her research to prove the unique characteristics of the honey in 2019. Read more [here](#).

BIG T UPDATE

Do you keep bees on the South Arm Peninsula, south of Lauderdale? If so, the Big T program wants to hear from you! For the past year, the program has been raising queens grafted from artificially Inseminated (AI) queens with the aim of getting a jump start on varroa mite when it does eventually enter Tasmania. Project Chair, Ross Gordon, has set up drone mother colonies at South Arm - our geographic isolation and warmer east coast weather perfectly set the program for success. The program is now requeening recreational beehives on the peninsula, with 24 successfully requeened in early February. This is just the start and if you fall into the geographic region picture, please contact Ross via email rossgordon9@gmail.com

