

FEBRUARY 2024



NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY WORKSHOP

Nothing is quite as sweet as the smell of honey being extracted. This month was all about how to extract honey and the different ways beekeepers can do this. We had 2 stations set up in Calverton Hall- an analogue (manual) and electric station giving all of us a chance to uncap frames and to try our hands at extraction. The analogue station is the equipment available to all STBA members, check the STBA Bee News for contact details. A few favourite tools were discovered (hello pineapple roller and hot knife!) and tips from the group shared with everyone. A normally long and sticky clean up was shared amongst the team and over 40 kgs of honey extraction - a mighty effort!

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ROBBING

Although robbing can happen at any time of the year, the end of Summer and Autumn are when your bees are most likely to experience robbing behaviour. Robbing occurs when;

- bees are on dearth.
- Putting stickies back on hives.
- Syrup or honey is spilled outside.
- Beekeeping equipment with honey is left outside.

Bees will rob weaker colonies, tearing open honey cells with such haste that the smell of honey then attracts other invaders (like European wasps) who will then finish the job off, often killing what's left of the hive.

Robbing spreads disease and kills colonies. Beekeepers need to know the signs and how to mitigate the behaviour.



Robbing looks like:

- Bees fighting on landing boards or in front of the hive.
- Bees trying to get into vents and seams of the hive.
- Black shiny bees that have lost their fluff in fights.
- Dead bees inside and outside the hive (pic above)
- A lot of activity and louder than usual humming.

What to do:

- Reduce the entrance of the hive.
- Use robber screens (pic left).
- Throw a wet sheet over the hive and keep wetting it. (bees inside can still come and go)
- Lean a piece of metal or wood against the front of the hive (same principle as above)
- In your backyard, use a sprinkler - it will scare away the invading bees and wash away any honey spills.
- Smear the entrance with vicks vapour rub to mask the smell of honey.

If none of these methods work, consider moving your hive to another location until the behaviour stops (days-weeks). The best prevention for robbing is to keep strong colonies, clean up honey spills and do not leave anything in the yard to attract bees in.



FUNDRAISING UPDATE



Each month, we raise funds for different causes nominated by our participants. This has led to us donating:

- \$127 to Friends of the Theatre Royal.
- \$175 to Save the Bees Australia
- \$155 to the Huon She Shed

This month - and next, we will be donating to the Hobart Women's Shelter - we raised \$92 in our February raffle and will run another raffle in March to raise more for this service that saves women's lives..

For a small group of women, we pack a powerful punch with participants bringing donations every month for our fundraisers. Everyone is so generous, we often all end up going home with something - whether it is blueberries from @oldbeachberries or Dahlia's from @fig_tree_farm_tas (see pic).

Our raffles are successful because of the kindness and generosity within our group of Bee Queens - we support each other and we support the community. Thank you everyone.



NEW BEES

Congratulations to Bee Queen, Suzanne Betts, for successfully relocating her bees to their new home. Bee Queens workshops aim to provide all participants with the fundamental skills to become confident beekeepers, including the skills to move bees from one place to another and Suzanne has demonstrated this in spades. Suzanne worked for the Antarctic Division and uses those skills to provide logistical support to our workshops, helping to make our get-togethers a success, thank you Suzanne for all that you do..



TASWATER BEES

TasWater recently reported they worked with a local apiarist to successfully relocate a colony of bees in a water meter. By contacting an apiarist, TasWater is applying environmental principles to prevent bee colonies from being euthanised. Water meter removal is perhaps the easiest, and safest, removal for a beekeeper. This type of removal is called a 'cut out' and is one of the many techniques covered in the Bee Queens program. This is a small colony of bees - what would you do to ensure these bees survive a removal and relocation?

QUEENS

As we finish extracting honey for this season and start preparing to winter down our hives, the next Bee Queens program is in planning phase. The program will start in June - as existing Bee Queens know, this is the time to start learning about beekeeping and to prepare for the season ahead.. Every year of the program, we learn new skills, meet new people and add to our growing community of beekeepers - could this be(e) you? Reach out via email (below) to find out more and become part of a growing number of women+ beekeepers.

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