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# BUZZWORD

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**Beekeepers' Society of South Australia Inc.**

**[www.bees.org.au](http://www.bees.org.au)**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**Edition 116**

**January 2023**



**Correspondence to:**

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**Many thanks to those who provide articles for the newsletter.**

**Contributors:**

Bob Beer  
 Susan Speck

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**BUZZWORD**

(The Beekeepers' Society Newsletter)  
 Articles are always being sought by the editor for inclusion in the newsletter. Please feel free to email or write in and provide any interesting experiences about the management of your hives.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the newsletter please contact:  
 Barbara Horwood, editor, on 8296 8478  
 email: [horwoodmb@internode.on.net](mailto:horwoodmb@internode.on.net)

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**WEBSITE:**

[www.bees.org.au](http://www.bees.org.au)



See us on **FACEBOOK**. Go to [www.facebook.com/beekeeperssa/](http://www.facebook.com/beekeeperssa/)

**You can view a host of interesting material, photos and comments - you can "like" us and leave a comment of your own.**

**Equipment/Extractor Officers:**

Eugene McEwen	(North)	8261 0514
Susan Lonie	(South)	0417 811 067
Trisha Blanks	(Central)	0437 713 790

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**2022-2023 Office Bearers:**

President:	Paul van Eyk
Vice-President	Trisha Blanks
Treasurer:	Richard Martin

**Secretary:** Adrian Makarowsky 0432952659  
[office@bees.org.au](mailto:office@bees.org.au)

**Education Committee Members:**

Trevor Greenfield  
 Aphrodite Noikou  
 Ulrich Schade  
 John Silverblade  
 Monica Du Plessis  
 Gavin Pearce

**Co-ordinators:**

Website:	James Field
Social Media:	Ulrich Schade

**Librarian:** Sue Speck

### **Committee Meetings**

Third Monday of each month, 7 pm, at Kensington.

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### **General Meetings**

General meetings are held at Burnside Civic Centre Hall, 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore on the **SECOND MONDAY** of each month at **7.30 pm**

Supper is available (gold coin donation).

**General meetings are held in person at the Burnside Civic Centre under current COVID-19 restrictions.**

**Livestream meetings from past months can still be viewed via the BSSA website or Facebook.**

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**Beginners And Intermediates Education Starts at 6.30 pm  
(Before the start of monthly General Meeting)**

**Teaching sessions commence at 6.30 pm for beginner beekeepers to participate in an hour of question-and-information exchange prior to the start of the main monthly general meeting. Participants need to register in advance. More information later in this newsletter.**

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### **BSSA Apiary Site**

The BSSA hives are located at:  
**Selgar Avenue, Clovelly Park** - about 200 metres west off South Road and behind the Tonsley Hotel.

Department of Primary Industries (PIRSA)  
Project Coordinator, Apiaries:  
Michael Stedman - 8429 0872

Samantha Grund – PIRSA Bee Biosecurity Officer

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### **Subscriptions**

Subscriptions are due as from 1st July each year. The membership fee for the financial year commencing 1 July 2022 is:

\$65 single

\$30 junior

\$100 family (2 adults + 2 children or 1 adult + 3 children). Any additional child/member costs \$20.

Membership application and renewal forms can be downloaded from the link found on the Beekeepers' Society of SA website ([www.bees.org.au](http://www.bees.org.au))

***NOTE: BSSA's bank (Commonwealth) will not accept cheques presented from end of June 2023, so the treasurer will not accept payment this way from the end of the financial year.***

***As cheques are rarely used to make payments these days the cheque book(s) will not be replaced when the last cheque is used.***

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### **Queen colours**

Last digit of the year

0 or 5: Blue

1 or 6: white

2 or 7: yellow

3 or 8: red

4 or 9: green

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### **Field Days**

Practical aspects of beekeeping will be demonstrated on a number of occasions during the year. Please refer to Buzzword Field Days page and the BSSA website for details. ***The field days are a must for all new beekeepers.***

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## MENTOR LIST

A mentoring service is available to our new beekeepers who would like assistance at home. Please contact the BSSA secretary for more information.

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## **BSSA SWARM LIST**

If any BSSA member is interested in having their name as a swarm collector listed on the BSSA website please contact Trisha Blanks (BSSA Vice-President).

## EXTRACTORS AVAILABLE FOR USE BY MEMBERS

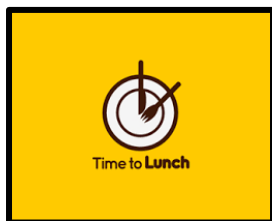
A reminder that three extractors, uncapping trays and wiring gigs are available for use on loan to financial members.

Contacts:

Eugene McEwen     (North)       8261 0514  
Susan Lonie        (South)  
0417 811 067  
Trisha Blanks     (Central)  
0437 713 790

They must be returned in a clean and undamaged state. Please report any concerns/damage

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## MEMBERS' LUNCH

All members are welcome to join the regular lunch group which will meet at the Rising Sun Hotel, Bridge Street, Kensington on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each new season, ie Summer, Autumn, Winter

and Spring. The next lunch is scheduled for **Thursday, 9 March**.

**It is imperative that intending participants contact Bob Beer in advance (0413 208 835)**

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## **FIELD DAYS**

*(Practical Beekeeping)*

## **HIVE INSPECTIONS**

### **PROGRAM OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE BSSA HIVES**

#### **Honey extraction as required**

The BSSA hives are located at **Selgar Avenue, Clovelly Park** – about 200 metres west off South Road and behind the Tonsley Hotel

Wednesday	15 February Time: 1 pm
Saturday	18 February Time: 1 pm
Wednesday	15 March Time: 1 pm
Saturday S	18 March Time: 1 pm
Saturday	15 April Time: 1 pm
Wednesday	19 April Time: 1 pm
Saturday	13 May Time: 1 pm

**Information is available on the BSSA website**

**All participants must have at least long sleeves, long-leg trousers and a head veil. Attendance is limited to 15 persons. Sessions run for approximately 2 to 2-1/2 hours.**

Bookings can be made only through the BSSA secretary or Bob Beer at [beersbees@bigpond.com](mailto:beersbees@bigpond.com)

or mobile 0413 208 835. Cost - \$10 (members); \$20 (non-members).

**VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED to assist new beekeepers on field days. Contact BSSA secretary if you are interested.**

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### **President's Report**



Dear BSSA members,

I write to you at the beginning of a new year, hoping that you are all safe and well and have successfully navigated the holiday season - whether it be the opportunity to

catch up with family and friends, take a break, get away, trying not to over indulge (it's hard), even getting a chance to check on your bees and possibly even extract a little honey.

With a spring and early summer that most beekeepers would like to forget, it has finally warmed up, so good flying weather for the girls. In the suburbs there always seems to be something flowering, jacaranda's being one of the better, producing a nice nectar flow.

It has been a season of contrasts with some beekeepers feeding since spring and others doing just fine. Feeding swarms, poorly mated queens, supersedures, queenless hives, aggressive behaviour due to lack of nectar or its stop/start nature - if you have

experienced any of these you are not alone. If you haven't, then I would like to know where your hives are so that I can put mine next door!

It has been a busy time. Rossi von der Borch organised a day at Douglas Scrub Girl Guide Camp for the removal of parrot/possum boxes which had become home to bees. 12 boxes of bees were removed with the bees given a new home. Thank you to everyone who took part, especially Rossi for organising the day, and Richard and Michael for providing climbing equipment and expertise.

As a society managed by volunteers, simple things like keeping your information up-to-date makes a big difference. I would like to ask all members to go to the society web page, login to the member area, and go to "view my profile". Please check and update your HIC, number of hives, physical address, phone, email. Ensure that all members of the family and spouses with different names are in your profile. This will help to reduce the workload of administration trying to reconcile payments made by a spouse or family member when they have different names to the members profile. Thank you for helping us to focus on the things that matter.

Also a reminder that we are in the fire danger season. After a long, wet spring there is a lot of fuel around, so please take extra caution when lighting and using your smoker - not using it on fire ban days is stating the obvious. Hot windy weather is not a great time to be checking your bees, no fun for the bees who are trying to keep cool as well as the beekeeper trying to do the same.

As President of the Beekeepers' Society I often ask myself what type of society I would like to be a member of. What is it that makes the Beekeepers' Society? I would like each and every member to ask themselves the same question. We are a volunteer society, with members giving up their time to help manage and run the society for the benefit of all members.

Excellent examples of this are Roy Frisby-Smith, John Silverblade and Monica du Plessis who run the beginners and intermediate classes before our monthly meetings. I myself have benefited greatly from these classes. And Bob Beer with the field days at Clovelly Park is invaluable, especially for those starting out. Some of these members have been donating their time to the society for years.

What will we do when Roy, Bob, John, and Monica wish to retire or should I say spend their time differently in their retirement? I know that Roy is looking to Monica to take over the intermediate classes, John has offered to stay as long as we will have him and Bob is looking to Ulrich Schade and myself when he decides to call it a day.

There will have to be decisions made in the not-too-distant future as to how the society will continue to be run for our members. An example of this would be: do we pay members to run education classes? To do this we would need to change the society constitution as at present we cannot pay members for services.

I believe this would fundamentally change the society and not for the better. We would go from a position of members donating their time for the benefit of all members to a situation of members providing a service to the society for a fee.

Once we go down this path where does it end, who do we pay, and for what? Who decides? Does this open us up to a situation where a person who is placed in a decision-making position will only employ people they like or are associated with and build their own little empire? Does everything become financially driven at the expense of the members so that a few can subsidise their income? I am told this is the only way to do things as there are very few members willing to volunteer.

However, I believe this is not the case, as members need to feel welcome as part of something. They will volunteer their time if we as a society provide the opportunity. That is my job: to provide the opportunity

for members to help, whether it is mentoring, training less experienced members, building and maintaining equipment for the society, helping to manage the society's apiaries, running field days or arranging supper after our meetings.

I understand we don't all have large amounts of time to volunteer, especially with all the other demands in our lives. We can't all be like Roy and Bob but a few more members willing to give their time would be greatly appreciated by the society as a whole. And don't be concerned if you feel you don't have enough experience. Bob asked me to help out at Clovelly Park at a time when I had less than a season of experience. Under Bob's supervision and expert tutelage I continue to help out with the field days. I know it is a cliché but in giving my time at the field days and on the committee I have received so much more in return.

So you see my point: what type of society do you wish to be a part of?

I look forward to seeing everyone at the February meeting.

Kind regards,

Paul van Eyk  
President BSSA



**BEGINNERS AND INTERMEDIATE  
EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**6.30 PM TO 7.30 PM  
(BEFORE THE START OF MONTHLY  
GENERAL MEETING)**

Planned structured Week 1 – 5 classes will commence on 13 February 2023 and will be repeated from July. Participants need to register for each session. Please contact the BSSA Secretary.

Members may attend five sessions. Non-members will be permitted to attend two sessions before being required to join BSSA. Further information is available on the BSSA website.

## RECENT EVENTS

### CHRISTMAS EVENT AT ASHTON OVAL HALL 10 DECEMBER 2022



*Attendees at BSSA Christmas bbq at Ashton*

*A perfect summer's day heralded the end of 2022 for BSSA members and their families at the Christmas bbq lunch at Ashton Oval hall. It was a great opportunity to view the new training facilities for upcoming beekeeping courses.*

*A big "thank you" goes to Eddie Dai of Bee Plaza SA who sponsored the raffle prizes on the day.*

*It was also a special time to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of our beloved and hard-working Bob Beer – guru extraordinaire – who has provided invaluable support to BSSA through mentoring, instruction, honey judging and friendship to many past, present and continuing members. We all wish Bob many more years of good health and happiness.*



*Inside the Ashton Oval Hall*



*BSSA patron, Sophie Thomson*



*Prize winner with Eddie Dai*



Prize winner with Eddie Dai



Birthday cake for Bob Beer's 80<sup>th</sup>



Bob Beer

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

### Kangaroo Island Ligurian beekeepers struggling to produce honey three years on from bushfires

ABC Radio Adelaide by Dixie Sulda  
6 January 2023

Kangaroo Island beekeepers are continuing their fight to produce the world's purest honey with little improvement three years on from destructive bushfires.



Peter Davis sold his Ligurian bee and honey business to his son, Brenton. (Supplied by Brenton Davis.)

### Key points:

- Beekeepers on Kangaroo Island are still struggling three years on from destructive bushfires
- The destruction of vegetation left what was left of their Ligurian bees with little food for pollination
- Many beekeepers say they have produced very little honey since the Black Summer bushfires

Brenton Davis bought his business, Island Beehive, about two-and-a-half years ago from his father, Peter.

The KI bushfires that sparked at the end of 2019 burnt through about 500 of the



family's hives. He said this season had been the worst for honey production in the business's history, with virtually no honey collected six months in.

"It's going to take years to recover," Brenton Davis said. "It's already coming up to the third year [from the bushfire] and this is probably one of the lowest production years we've ever had."

Kangaroo Island is home to the world's purest strain of Ligurian honey bees, which were imported from Italy. It was declared a sanctuary in 1884 and strict penalties remained for anybody who risked contaminating the species with disease. But KI beekeepers said a combination of variables had made for the worst years of honey collection on record, including unusually cold temperatures in summer and a lack of vegetation after fires.

Mr Davis said the vegetation loss in the Black Summer bushfires was equally as damaging for honey production as hive loss. "And it's also the high rainfall area as well, which is more productive normally." Part of the island also remains in drought, with a lack of groundwater meaning there is no nectar in the trees for the bees to feed on.

### **Down, but not out**

Parndana's Stephen Heatley is beekeeper at KI Ligurian Queen Bees and said the fires were a second loss for his business after a pollen drought during 2015 wiped out half his stock of 425 bee boxes. "I thought people were stealing my bees, because I'd go to a hive and it still had comb," he said. "It was nicely built out and I thought, 'But I've got no bees'."

Mr Heatley said he had less than a quarter of hives left compared to 2014 levels. "I was

probably down to about 70 hives and at that stage after the fires] I sort of thought, 'How do you build back up?'," he said. "I had this feeling that my mission's not finished yet; it's all I know. "I can't do anything else, and if I retire, I just die."



*Stephen Heatley is among Kangaroo Island beekeepers still trying to recover from bushfires. (Supplied: Stephen Heatley)*

Mr Heatley is continuing his beekeeping work and is optimistic for a better next season.



*Stephen Heatley owns Kangaroo Island Ligurian Queen Bees. (Supplied: Stephen Heatley )*

### **Not 'one drop of honey'**

Kangaroo Island Living Honey owner Shawn Hinves has also felt the pinch since the fires. "We actually haven't taken honey off our bees for about 13 months," he said. "We've

taken not one drop of honey since December 2021."



*Shawn and Anthea Hinves have diversified their business into a "beekeeping experience" for tourists. (ABC News: Lincoln Rothall)*

Mr Hinves, who is also the Beekeeping Association of KI president, was lucky not to lose any hives in the fire. "Although all the sites that I normally move the bees out to, all of them were completely devastated and are still struggling to be productive," he said.

"The annuals are flowering, but the trees that we rely on for large honey flows, they're still not at the flowering stage." He said it was hard for people to understand how much beekeepers were still struggling. "For those on the Island that lost their farms, their houses, it was absolutely devastating," Mr Hinves said.

"But they're getting their houses built. They've got new cars and new farm machinery and new fences and farm machinery. "As a beekeeper, and we're probably one of only a few areas, we are still really, really suffering because of the fires.

"It's a lot tougher than what people might be thinking." He tries to keep his business ticking by limiting honey supply to shops, and providing experiences at the farmgate.

"Everyone's on rations [of honey] but it's better than selling out completely and not having any income," Mr Hinves said.



*Many of Stephen Heatley's hives were destroyed during 2019 in the Kangaroo Island bushfires. (Supplied: Stephen Heatley )*



*Article by Arthur Garske  
The Australasian Beekeeper, January 2022*

## **HIVE MANAGEMENT**

Depending on the time of season and what is connected by way of seasonal change, like amount of rain at critical times, what floral sources are available and a knowledge and understanding of all things botanical, particularly what flowers and when it yields – in relation to temperature, whether it is windy or still, how it reacts to rainy weather – different floral sources react differently to different seasonal conditions.

It is so important to have a variety of pollen producing plants so that you can breed lots of long-lived bees. If there are only one or two sources of pollen then the bees do not get a balanced diet with **all** the amino acid groups that are needed. The old proverb “you are only as good as what you eat” is never more true.

Not all honey producing trees also produce pollen. Some are poor, and lacking in the essential amino acid groups; some produce very little pollen, so you need to be in an area that produces lots of ground flora, such as thistles, cat-head burrs, shrubs and native plants.

Variety is the spice of life. *When* you are looking at – reading your bees – in conjunction with *what* you are looking at – reading the trees – as well as watching the birds and with the knowledge you have gained on ties and conditions then it is time you practise hive manipulation in the brood nest.

If bees are left to their own devices, they will only produce enough bees to maintain the colony's strength. But you as the beekeeper, reading all the signs, can determine what **you** are going to do in relation to your bees. All things being equal, you start to prepare for the next honey flow. Take out 3 to 4 frames of sealed brood from the bottom box and move them up into the second box. Interleave 3 to 4 frames of either drawn comb or foundation between the frames of brood.

This creates abnormal hive conditions and the bees either polish the cells or draw the foundation and the queen is fed up with more royal jelly. In a couple of days there are another four frames of brood which amounts to another 16,000 young bees which will be just right to work the next honey flow. So, you do not get a drop-off in numbers of old bees expiring through working the flow hard.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE NEW FLOW

Strip all the honey from the hive(s) whilst there is still honey coming in. This negates any **robbing**. Extract that honey and put the stickies back on and the bees then work flat-out because there is no honey store in the hive, which makes the bees work really hard.

If a hive has a lot of honey stored, the bees don't need to work half as hard. This is where you learn to read the bees, the conditions, and the honey flows so that what you do is productive. If any of the aforementioned conditions don't line up you have a disaster of lots of bees and no stores, and a hard lesson learned.

This is why I advise beekeepers to keep a diary by writing down all the aforementioned information that I have given you. This then becomes your beekeeping bible.

It takes several years to get to learn what flowers, when it flowers and when it yields. If you don't know what sort of trees are in flower, collect some leaves, buds, flowers and fruit. Press these between newspapers and heavy weights, write where you are and what sort of bark the tree has, the month it flowered and post it off to the Botanical Gardens in your state, and they will identify that specimen for you.

Knowing all about bees is only half the equation – the other half is being knowledgeable on trees: when they flower, for how long they hold their buds, are they short or long-budded, do they yield nectar and pollen or only one or the other?

Having this knowledge allows you to make decisions with your bees, making you a beekeeper and not a keeper of bees.

So, as I said at the beginning, beekeeping is not an exact science - as long as you have some knowledge you can try other methods that you hear about or are shown. It is up to

the individual to experiment. Try new ideas and develop your style of beekeeping.



*The positive electric charge on a bee's body pulls on pollen like a magnet pulls on iron filings*

## **Is this why bees buzz? When swarming they produce a storm-sized electric charge**

Oct 31, 2022

By John Elder, The New Daily

*When a bee zips around your garden, those little wings move at 230 beats per second.*

*Along the way, there are countless microscopic collisions with charged particles from dust and such. These collisions strip away electrons from the bee's fuzzy body, causing it to become positively charged with electricity.*

*Meanwhile, flowers are earthed but tier petals are negatively charged. Hence, while bees appear to face-plant into pollen, their hairy bodies attract pollen as a magnet attracts iron filings. This has been known for about 50 years.*

*About a dozen years ago, it was found that bees can recognise and interpret the electrical field that surrounds flowers. From this, they can tell if that flower has been visited and denuded of pollen by another bee.*

*All of this electrical activity happens at an admittedly small scale. But what happens when there is a swarm of positively charged bees?*

## **A cloud-sized zap**

*In a shocking **new study**, UK scientists have measured the electrical fields near swarming bees and discovered they can produce "as much atmospheric electric charge as a thunderstorm cloud". This type of electricity helps shape weather events, including the formation of clouds.*

*This phenomena isn't confined to bees. The researchers say it also aids insects in finding food, and explains how spiders are lifted into the air in order to travel long distances.*

*"We always looked at how physics influenced biology, but at some point, we realised that biology might also be influencing physics," said first author Dr Ellard Hunting, a biologist at the University of Bristol.*

## **Changing the atmosphere**

*The researchers found that honeybee hive swarms change the atmospheric electricity by 100 to 1000 volts per metre, "increasing the electric field force normally experienced at ground level". From this discovery, the team has developed a model that can predict the influence of other species of insects.*

*"How insect swarms influence atmospheric electricity depends on their density and size," said co-author Dr Liam O'Reilly, a postdoctoral researcher investigating electric ecology at the University of Bristol.*

*Locusts, for example, are much larger than bees and swarm on a biblical scale, and their influence on the atmosphere "is likely much greater than honeybees".*

*This is all new, but it raises an obvious question: If the electrical charge of insects has a collective influence on the weather, what is their impact on climate?*

*And what kind of impact comes from **insects so rapidly declining**?*



## THE BEE-FRIENDLY GARDEN

### Pollinator Attracting Plants

There are plenty of plants which will attract bees and other pollinators but here are some of the very best:

- Annuals – alyssum, cosmos, Queen Anne’s Lace, calendula, phacelia
- Perennials – daisies, salvias, penstemons
- Herbs (when in flower)  
– lavender, rosemary, oregano, borage, basil, yarrow, dill, parsley
- Trees & Shrubs – eucalypts, grevilleas, bottlebrushes, buddleia, abelia, tea trees

### Seed Mixes

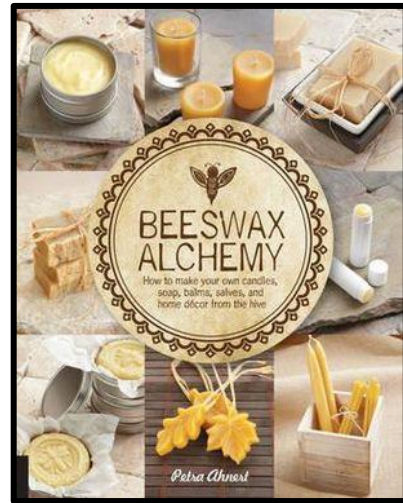
A few seed companies sell special mixes which contain a blend of annuals and perennials designed specifically to attract beneficial insects. They often include the abovementioned plants and the mix can be scattered around veggie patches, under fruit trees or grown in large pots.



## BOOK CORNER

The BSSA website includes a list of recommended books and new additions to the library, including the following:

### New to the BSSA Library



### **Beeswax Alchemy: How to Make Your Own Soap, Candles, Balms,**

### **Creams, and Salves from the Hive: How to Make Your Own Soap, Candles, Balms, Creams, and Salves from the Hive**

**Authors: Petra Ahnert**  
**Illustrated paperback (2015)**

This is a reference book for all things beeswax. It offers a basic introduction to extracting and purifying beeswax, as well as many items that can be made with it.

Modern beekeepers - take notice! Here we have the answer to one of the most common questions related to beekeeping: what do I do with all of this beeswax? In fact, the possibilities are seemingly endless! As beeswax has multiple holistic and decorative uses, projects can vary from beauty and health products to household items.

*Beeswax Alchemy* is your first step towards using excess beeswax to make beautiful, useful gifts for friends, family, and even yourself. It offers a basic introduction to the art of extracting and purifying beeswax, as well as countless ideas for what to make with it.

These include skin care creams, candles, and other home products like beeswax ornaments and wax fabric. So, get ready to suit up and collect some beeswax. There's so much that you can do with it - and now you know how! This is the book I've been waiting thirty years for. It has absolutely everything beeswax-candles (and bless you Petra for the info on wicks), balms (to make you pretty), creams (to heal both body and soul), soaps (so much on soap!), and many, many home products to make and use every day! Excellent instructions. Bountiful information. Beautifully done.

*(critique by Kim Flottum, beekeeper; author of The Backyard Beekeeper, Better Beekeeping, The Backyard Beekeeper's Honey Handbook; and editor of Bee Culture magazine)*



## RECIPES

### Raw Blueberry Cake



**Prep:** 20 mins + 3 hr soak

**Cook:** 5 mins

**Serves** 12

500g raw cashews

500g blueberries (save 125g to garnish)

¼ goji berries

2 tbs honey

300g raw macadamias

½ cup rolled oats

¼ cup desiccated coconut

125g fresh dates, seeded, chopped

½ cup coconut oil, melted

½ cup lemon juice

1 banana, frozen, chopped

1 tsp vanilla extract

3 mint sprigs, to serve

#### Method:

Place cashews into a bowl and cover with water. Leave to soak for 3 hours. Meanwhile, place blueberries, goji berries, honey and 2 tbs water into a small pan over medium heat. Simmer for 5 minutes until berries soften. Roughly mash with a fork to release their juice. Drain and cook juice and pulp.

Line base of a 21 cm round springform cake pan with baking paper. Process macadamias, oats and coconut in a food processor until finely chopped. Add chopped dates and process until combined. Press evenly over base of pan. Chill.

Drain cashews and process in food processor until finely chopped. Add coconut oil, lemon juice, banana and vanilla and process until creamy. Add blueberry juice and process until combined. Transfer to a bowl and stir through berry pulp.

Pour mixture over base and chill overnight until set. Remove from pan and decorate with extra blueberries and mint. Cut into wedges to serve.

*(from Woolworths Fresh Ideas, August 2022)*

## BEESWAX IDEAS



## Rural Aid bee campaign to help beekeepers

*From The Senior, 19 July 2022*

With Australia's beekeepers reeling at the spread of the hive-destroying Varroa mite, Rural Aid is encouraging the community to help. The rural charity has launched Buy a Bee campaign, with the support of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council.

Rural Aid chief executive John Warlters said the situation is volatile and distressing for beekeepers across the country. "Beekeepers are in an awful state right now as they anxiously wait for news on how far the Varroa destructor mite has spread," he said. Australia's littlest livestock, its precious European honey bees, are under siege from the hive-destroying varroa mite.

The parasite was first detected in hives at the Port of Newcastle but has quickly spread to multiple locations across NSW. Rural Aid is offering beekeepers and their families free counselling through its nationwide team of qualified counsellors.

"The Department of Primary Industries has identified mental health strain as the biggest issue currently facing these primary producers," Mr Warlters said. "Rural Aid is proud to be able to offer beekeepers immediate assistance in this area."

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council chairman Stephen Targett said the contribution of honey bees to agriculture through pollination services is estimated at up to \$20 billion - "and the start of the pollination season is just weeks away, which demonstrates

what an enormous threat this crisis poses to our industry". "Without urgent support, some of our beekeepers will struggle to survive financially," he said. "We are calling on the public to back our beekeepers now, not just for their sake, but for the sake of Australia's entire agricultural and food production industries."

Rural Aid is also supporting affected beekeepers with financial assistance in the form of \$500 prepaid Visa cards. Mr Warlters encourages people to show their support by donating to Buy a Bee. "Rural Aid has been supporting beekeepers for years through its HiveAid program, created during the Black Summer bushfires in partnership with Honey Bee Council and Hive + Wellness, the nation's largest honey packer, best known for its Capilano branded honey," he said.

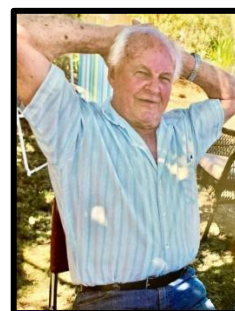
Buy a Bee campaign, under the HiveAid umbrella, will assist beekeepers as they take on the varroa mite.

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## VALE

**JOHN SIBLEY**

**31 May 1935 – 12 October 2022**



It is with sadness that BSSA advises of the loss of John Sibley, a very valued and long-time member. A summary from "A Beeline" in Buzzword No 5 newsletter of April 1993 summarises John as follows:

*“John’s wife Chris presented her husband with three daughters, who in turn have presented him with four grand-daughters and one “apprentice”. The four-year-old apprentice is Grandpa’s shadow, and he is earnestly acquiring his forebear’s skills. Grandpa started his apprenticeship as a fitter and turner with the South Australian Railways at Islington. He had the dubious honour of having Bob Beer, our Treasurer, as one of his workmates.*

*Steam locomotives became John’s forte. He could do everything from repairing punctures to a complete dismantling and overhaul. Men were men in those days. Muscle power was used to lift locomotive wheels, con rods, etc. The lure of the steam engine enticed John to Booleroo Centre recently where the Steam and Traction Society put on a working display weekend.*

*The skills he learned at work have been expanded and put to other uses - so much so that he is known in the Sibley family as Mr DIY. The backyard accommodates four sheds filled with a lifetime’s accumulation of tools and sundry hardware. If something’s unobtainable, John can make it in his workshop, especially if it is to do with another passion – motorbikes.*

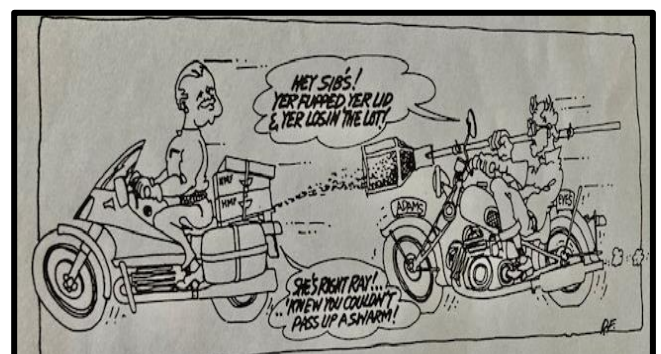
*John has two of his own. The BMW gets ridden to our meetings. Last meeting he introduced us to one of his daughters, Linda, who came as a pillion passenger. His second bike, a Vincent Rapide, was restored from not much more than a wheel and an engine. John has made up parts for Ray Adams’ (a BSSA former member) Harley Davidson. He has ridden the BMW around the west coast of Australia, returning via Alice Springs and camping along the way.*

*In between the backyard sheds are John’s garden plots. The produce (together with honey, of course), keeps the almost vegetarian Sibleys practically self-sufficient in food. While on food, here is John’s daily breakfast menu - 1<sup>st</sup> course, raw oats and millet with a sprinkling of powdered dolomite*

*(yes, dolomite?!), drowned in milk. 2<sup>nd</sup> course – toast with honey and grated garlic. This is shared with his three kelpie dogs to deter the fleas. It was not made clear whether the fleas belonged to the dogs, to John, or both. The dogs take their master for a walk after breakfast.*

*John keeps about 20 hives at Rosedale near Gawler. His association with bees started in the usual sort of way. Ten years ago a swarm settled on a tree branch in the backyard. What to do? Eventually the branch was gently sawn off and carefully placed with its contents in a box. A hive was acquired and the contents of the box transferred. John joined our Society with the misguided aspiration of learning something about beekeeping.*

*People like John are the backbone of societies like ours. He has gentle ways and a ready smile. Not looking for recognition, he just quietly and effectively goes about the task in hand. Whenever work is to be done, John’s there, one of the first to arrive and the last to leave. He is keeper of the Society’s hives at Hindmarsh Farm, and willingly gives practical instruction to members on many weekends of the year. Novice members have benefitted by John’s paying a visit to their hives and showing them what to do. He has been Sir Galahad to old ladies, ridding their homes of nuisance swarms and feral hives. There is much more to John than meets the eye - a man of many talents, and this is just a taste. Thank you, John, a well-liked member who gives generously of his time and knowledge.”*



*Sketch by Des Freeman, former member of BSSA*