

## Varroa mite

### Alert: Varroa mite detected in NSW

Varroa mites have been found in Newcastle, New South Wales.

All South Australian beekeepers are advised to be alert for signs of varroa mite in their bees.

If you suspect varroa mite, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline.

**Phone: 1800 084 881** (tel:1800084881)

Varroa mites (*Varroa jacobsoni* and *V. destructor*) are the most serious pest affecting honey bees worldwide.

The mites are tiny reddish brown external parasites of honey bees. Varroa mites are a notifiable pest, which means if you suspect you've found them, you must report it **immediately** to the PIRSA Apiary Unit.

Varroa mites have been found in biosecurity surveillance hives in Newcastle, New South Wales. As a result, all South Australian beekeepers are advised to be extra vigilant in their biosecurity measures.

### About varroa mites

## What do varroa mites look like, and what damage can they do?

On their own, individual mites can be easily seen on brood, but they are difficult to identify on adult bees. Left untreated, varroa mites will kill any bee hive they infect. All feral and untreated bee colonies left untreated will eventually die.



*Varroa mites partially hidden under honey bee abdominal segments (photo credit Dr M. Goodwin).*

## **How do they spread?**

Adult bees are able to carry varroa mites from hive to hive and even between apiaries including when drifting, swarming and absconding. They can also be spread via the beekeeper and equipment shared between hives and apiaries. Mites are agile, move into hives quickly and transfer through contact between bees.

There are strict quarantine requirements in place to protect the Australian honey bee industry.

## **Where has they been found?**

Varroa infects honey bees in every major beekeeping area of the world, except Australia.

Following the discovery of varroa mites in biosecurity surveillance hives in Newcastle, PIRSA is working closely with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) and the South Australian apiary industry, remaining alert to any developments

## **What do beekeepers need to do?**

Beekeepers are encouraged to inspect and sample their hives regularly for signs of varroa mites.

Information on how to sample hives can be found at [Varroa Mites – Bee Aware](https://beeaware.org.au/archive-pest/varroa-mites/#ad-image-0) (<https://beeaware.org.au/archive-pest/varroa-mites/#ad-image-0>) .

## How do I report it?

If you see anything suspicious, **immediately** notify the PIRSA Apiary Unit.

## More information

For more information, read the '[Notifiable honeybee pests and diseases](https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/341948/Notifiable_honeybee_pests_2020.pdf)' ( PDF 1.1 MB ([https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/341948/Notifiable\\_honeybee\\_pests\\_2020.pdf](https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/341948/Notifiable_honeybee_pests_2020.pdf)))' fact sheet.

## Contact

PIRSA Apiary Unit  
Michael Stedman  
Project Coordinator, Apiaries  
Phone: (08) 8429 0872  
Mobile: 0408 812 698  
Email: [michael.stedman@sa.gov.au](mailto:michael.stedman@sa.gov.au) (<mailto:michael.stedman@sa.gov.au>).

*Information based on the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries webpage: [Varroa Mite \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/seasonal-pests-and-diseases/spring/varroa-mite) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/seasonal-pests-and-diseases/spring/varroa-mite>).*

Page Last Reviewed: 28 Jun 2022



**Government of South Australia**  
Department of Primary Industries  
and Regions