

# BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

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FEBRUARY 1976 : No. 7





1. Those of you who still have a copy of my last newsletter will note that on Page 1 there was a Beekeeper's Hand (??) holding a bag of gold - maybe in this newsletter I should have a bee in gumboots and the beekeeper in a Frog Suit. Although the spring came in with conditions which were not too bad, it didn't last that way. Early flora was quite good but the "MET" people were certainly up against it. I can't remember a worse late spring and early summer period for many a long year. From early on the season was about 3 weeks late and remained so throughout most of the period and so at the present time it could be even 4 weeks behind. Apart from a 7 - 10 day spell early in December virtually no warm and settled conditions have been experienced - and what about our Christmas snow fall not far from these parts. Frosts were reported from many areas of the North Island during December and early January.

District reports are that bush areas have been a failure this year and pasture areas appear not too bad, but this varies from place to place. Clover has (and still is in some places) bloomed extensively this year - the best for many years in some places but the weather has been the nigger in the woodpile. By the time you get this newsletter the worst should be known. Fine weather over the next 2 - 3 weeks could mean some honey from pasture sources.



2.

Oh Boy! It just must clear up because I'm going on leave during February.

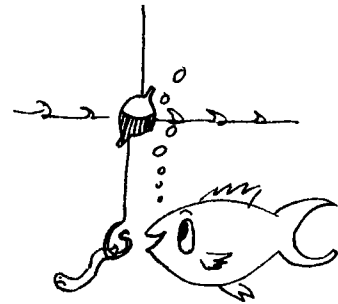
Overall prospects are below average crops in this district.



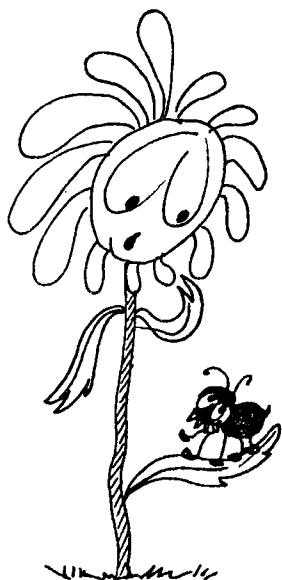
2. WINTER RESERVES

If my guess is correct, that is for a spell of hot, dry weather, you'll find your hives with large brood areas and little honey.

I would think that pastures would dry up quickly coming in and consequently the bees will get into any reserves of honey before the cooler autumn weather catches up with us. Keep your eye on this and don't get caught. When it does happen, it happens quickly.



### 3. POLLINATION



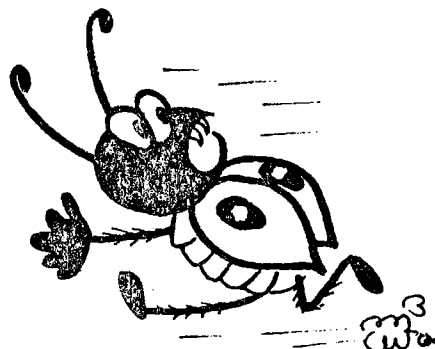
It beats me how anything could have been pollinated this year - did you dip out? I'm pleased to report to you however, that in spite of the weather, orchardists are very pleased with the way the bees worked the kiwifruit this year, and that they have a good setting of fruit.

Does this appear to contradict my earlier statement? I guess on the surface, it does.

What has emerged this year in connection with the pollination aspect is simply this - bees are usually placed in kiwifruit orchards at about 15% flowering so that they will immediately work the flowers in the orchard before they can orientate themselves to other (and sometimes much better) nectar sources.

This year we found that because of the cloudy and changeable weather conditions when the bees did (or could) come out they tended to work and concentrate on the area immediately adjacent to their hives, and had little time to forage further afield before another squally period hit. This has paid off handsomely. During the clear sunny days with little or no cloud, the bees became interested in areas more distant to the orchard.

For your information there were 1600 hives placed in orchards for pollination this year - an increase of 600 over last year. Only one minor case of mortality was reported during the past year. Thank you, Mr Fruit-grower for your co-operation but don't let up on your vigilance - and watch that neighbour.



My estimate for hives required for pollination for 1980 is approximately 3000 and if demand continues at the rate experienced in the past this figure will not be on the high side.



4. PASSION VINE HOPPER (Scollypopa Australis)

This year has been a difficult one to assess because of the changeable weather that we've had. This insect for density purposes, is rated on a scale of 1, 2 & 3 (one indicates a very small build up - two a medium infestation and three a heavy infestation. A three-plus indicates an extra heavy build up of the hopper.

This year it has varied from a 1 - 2 in the main and only once have I noticed a "3" rating. With February still to come (usually the hottest month) there could well be a big build up even yet. Those beekeepers in Tutu or suspect areas should get the honey off these hives as soon as possible.

5. HONEY HOUSES

It would pay you to give some thought to your honey house - both equipment wise and cleanliness. The new Hygiene Regulations are now in vogue and some local-body Health Inspectors are making visits to beekeepers honey houses.



## 6. CROP PROSPECTS

And what do you want me to say here ? - very patchy, in some areas a little bit but in most places one word would describe it - disastrous. Bush apiaries this year missed out completely and any honey gathered this season has come from pasture sources. The odd beekeeper has managed two boxes in some apiaries but by far the most, very definitely below average. That would be the picture for this district. Waikato, Taupo Taumarunui - all the same.

Would you believe it that the South Island has had quite a good year - almost drought conditions as well



## 7. BEESWAX

Prices being offered at the present time are as high as \$2.20 per kilo (that's over a dollar a pound). Have you remembered those top bars this season. It will at least augment to a small degree the loss of honey crop. These scrapings could be handled in a Solar Wax Extractor and so need not accumulate until the "off" season.



## 8. HONEY HANDLING

From time to time I receive letters from Colin Rope, Honey Grader, Auckland, about specks in honey that is forwarded to the H.M.A. What about having a second look (and be honest about it) at your straining technique. Don't look at it

from the point of view that it seems to be okay, but rather from the point "could it be improved". I'm paid a salary (and a mighty meagre one) but your income comes from the amount of honey you get and the condition of it. (The way you handle it from the time the bees bring it in to the time Colin Rope has a go at it in Auckland, determines to quite a degree what your payout will be.



## 9. SEMINAR

You might be aware that a Seminar is to be held at Flock House between 13 - 15 February 1976. The theme of this course is "Introduction to Beekeeping". I hope that some who missed out on the previous ones will be able to attend this one.



Another Queen Breeders' Seminar was held at Flock House during January and I would guess that it would have been as profitable as the last one. (Grape Vine

news hasn't yet reached me). There's a mighty lot of work organising these seminars and they are well worthy of your support.

All the best for those who attend.

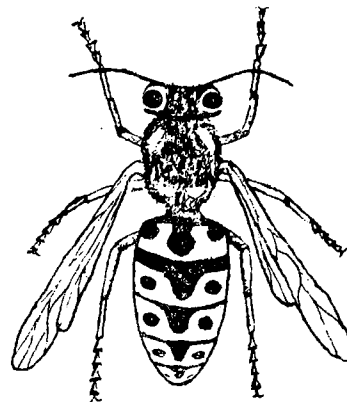


## 10. WASPS -

## And Arsenate of Lead!

Remember that last newsletter. I said I would make some enquiries from the master distributors re the availability of Arsenate of Lead.

Well, I have just phoned Arthur Yates and Co. who were the master distributors and I'm informed that it is definitely off the market and was withdrawn by the Agricultural Chemicals Board.



Now then, the sixty-four dollar question - what about trying another insecticide with icing sugar. I suggest that you try "Carbaryl" and icing sugar. Carbaryl is an insecticide in powder form and has no or little repelling smell with it. If any of you are prepared to give this one a go, I sure would be pleased to hear from you as to the results - good or bad.

## 11. BULLETIN 267 BEEKEEPING IN NEW ZEALAND

Latest news to hand is that this Publication is now off the press and we hope to have copies of it on hand in the near future. I believe that the price is to be substantially higher than the 50 cents for the last edition.



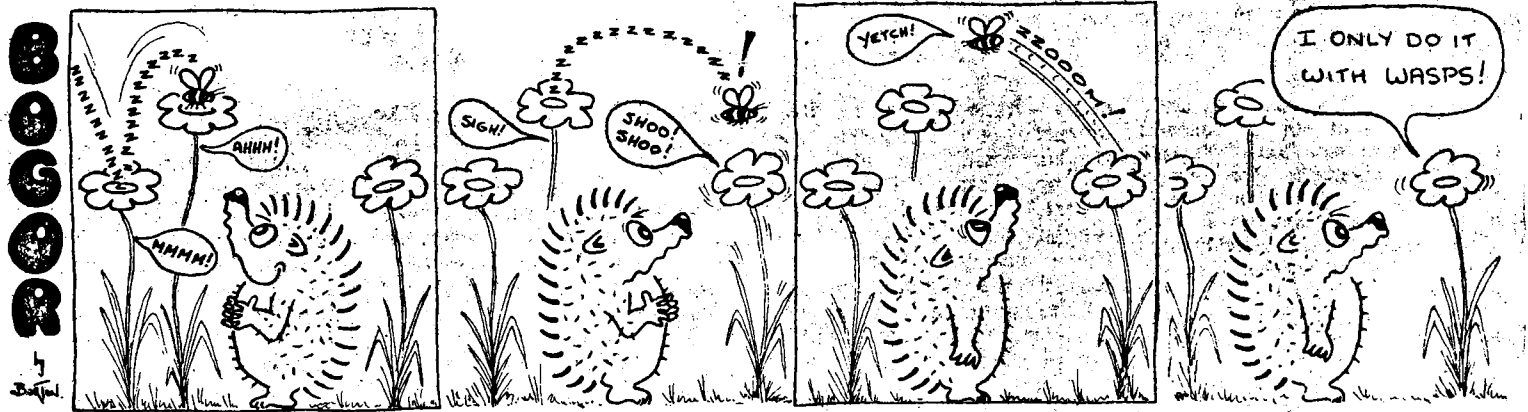




Well, with the price of petrol as it is and little or no honey, what can I say to cheer you up.

Anyway, I hope by the end of February there is some surplus in your hives.

All the best for 1976.



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