

## From the Bee House Winter 2017

### And that was Autumn.....

*Autumn did not start too well with little flowering and no honey. Without doubt, this was the result of the hailstorms which damaged flowers and buds in early December 2016 and insufficient rain.*

*We were lucky to get two decent rain-events (and some decent showers) during autumn and things picked up. Indeed May presented many of us with a lovely flow. I have to admit that I have no idea what plants provided the nectar (and plenty of pollen) but it was a welcome end to a pretty ordinary honey season. The 2016/2017 season yielded about 50% of the honey compared with 2015/2016 (an exceptional year).*

*Autumn finished off in our area with warm and clear days. The hives will be going into winter with plenty of stores. Some useful rain earlier in May could result in a good clover flow if we get some rain in the first 1/2 of June.*

*I hear that the last season has been pretty poor in other parts of Australia and honey is in short supply. Retail prices are on the up. The same can be said for bees-wax: rare and getting rarer. Australia seems to be following the trend in the US with more and more beekeepers producing bees for pollination rather than honey, I read that in the U.S. a couple million colonies are now required each year to pollinate a million acres of almonds. About 150,000 colonies are then moved onto about 70,000 acres of blueberries. The current acreage of almonds in Australia is about 74,000. A lot of bees are required early to keep those pollinated.*

*The demand for our nucs has been huge again. Spring is still a few months ahead but our book is pretty well full.*

*This spring we will change the way we sell nucs. Last few seasons we sold nuc's in our nuc boxes. These of course had to be returned as "potentially contaminated". We have to clean each box and "decontaminate" it by flaming the inside of the box. In some cases, we would also repaint each box which is quite a job!*

*This spring, we will make up nuc's in the customer's nuc box (thus no return) or will supply a new (but unpainted) nuc box as part of the deal. No return and the customer ends up with a new nuc box. We may take some boxes back for a fee.*

*We will see how this works out.*

*Make good use of the quiet winter time to assemble your gear. We have bottoms, supers, lids and frames available for sale and are well stocked. Have a look at our list here: [http://ecologicalsolutions.com.au/bees/?page\\_id=8](http://ecologicalsolutions.com.au/bees/?page_id=8)*

*We also have all sizes of bee suits and gloves in stock. Like in previous years we supply supers, bottoms, lids and frames fully assembled and painted. We only use the best paint we know of (Resene), the best glue we have come across (Titebond III) and stainless steel wire. We pre paint, glue and nail and paint bottoms, supers and lids and glue and nail our frames.*

*Please give us some warning for assembled gear.*

*Enjoy your bees!*

*Max and Trudi*

**P.S. Yes, we will be offering beekeeping workshops again starting in August.**

### **Keeping you busy over winter:**

Winter is an easy time even here in the Sub Tropics. Yes, I do check the hives but the SHB are generally not very active and you have to pick a nice warm day or your bees will be cranky.

This is a great time to do some catch-up reading and Googling.

I'm no expert in identifying plants. I know some but I'm definitely no expert.

There is an amazing resource here: <https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/report-request/species-list/>

I have used it to find out what is growing in the Conondale National Park and within a short time a long list was sent to me. All free and I guess automated.

I look at the species list with "The Honey Flora of Queensland" (Blake and Roff) at hand. Mine is the 1972 edition. The book is out of print but you may find it in second hand bookshops. I wish somebody would reprint the book.

Many trees are listed in this book with a clear description, a photo, distribution, flowering time, colour of the honey, importance as a source of honey and pollen and general remarks.

If you can't buy a copy check with your local Library.

## **BeeAware:**

Honey bee health is vital to ensure the future sustainability and viability of the honey bee industry as well as the plant industries that rely on pollination services. Keeping honey bees healthy relies on good biosecurity – minimising the risks posed by established pests, and keeping a look out and quickly responding to any exotic pests that enter Australia.

This website is one of the outcomes of a series of honey bee biosecurity initiatives undertaken to protect the health of Australia's honey bee population. It began with the release in May 2011 of the Varroa Continuity Strategy report by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, [A honey bee industry and pollination continuity strategy should Varroa become established in Australia](#). It was developed in conjunction with an expert steering group consisting of industry and government representatives in response to the House of Representatives 2008 inquiry report, *More than Honey: the future of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries*. To oversee the implementation of the Varroa Continuity Strategy outlined in the report, Plant Health Australia (PHA), the coordinators of the plant biosecurity partnership in Australia, was commissioned to promote, co-ordinate, implement and report on the progression of the strategy.

In October 2011, PHA formed the Varroa Continuity Strategy Management Committee (VCSMC) which comprised honey bee scientists, government representatives, R&D agencies and industry representatives from the honey bee industry and pollination-reliant industries.

Many countries around the world have found online Varroa awareness projects to be successful, so the VCSMC decided to develop the BeeAware website to boost preparedness for an incursion of Varroa mite or another exotic pest of bees. Subsequently the scope of the site was extended to include information on established pests already affecting honey bees in Australia, as well as pollination information for a range of plant industries.

Launched in July 2014, BeeAware was developed and is maintained by PHA. Funding for the site was provided by the [Australian Honey Bee Industry Council](#), the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Horticulture Innovation Australia.

Go to [www.beeaware.org.au](http://www.beeaware.org.au) for a lot of up-to date information. The videos (from NZ) are well worth having a look at.

## Some more videos:

Here are some very old videos which you may enjoy. I love them:

### From Holland:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo3I\\_MumbW4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo3I_MumbW4)

### From Germany – before Varroa and SHB:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2IjNBbLESY>

( I think there are 7 videos in this series)

### **The Fat Beeman:**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/fineshooter>

There are a lot of videos by this fellow. Lots of good ideas but remember this is information for the US – a much colder climate then here on the Sunshine Coast.

Remember – all beekeeping is local and some of the suggestions would not work here or are not appropriate.

## **The Australian Beekeeping Manual:**

This is probably the best book on the market for Australian beekeepers. Available from us here at Crystal Waters for \$ 40. It covers all aspects of beekeeping.

## **Getting some bees:**

Winter is an excellent time to plan for any increases in hive numbers you may plan for.

Let's have a look at some of the possibilities to this, the advantages and disadvantages of each ( inspired by Patrick Dwyer)

## **Package bees:**

A “ package” of bees is about one to two kg's of bees in a ventilated box with a new queen.

This “ package” can be mailed long distances but is not common in Australia. Indeed I have never seen a package offered in Queensland. Are they available in other states? They are very common in the US.

I'm not sure if our post office would accept such a package?

I can see an advantage for people who are starting off with a non-standard hive – like a Top Bar Hive where the standard frames don't fit.

This may well be an opportunity for an enterprising beekeeper.

For an Australian supplier see here: <http://www.australianqueenbeeline.com/packaged-bees.html>

## Nuc's:

A nuc hive is basically a mini hive with 4 or 5 frames of brood, honey, pollen, some empty space and a new queen. This has been the only way we have been selling bees.

The **advantage** is that it is easy for a novice beekeeper to move the 5 frames into a 8 or 10 frame brood box.

In our climate, with some favourable weather and plenty of flowers around a nuc will expand very quickly and it is not un-common to harvest some honey in the first season.

The **disadvantage** is that it is indeed possible that you will transfer a disease into your new super. Nuc's are also quite costly with prices ranging up to \$ 250.

As a queen lays her eggs into old combs you will inherit some old combs which will need to be replaced rather sooner than later.



There have been stories circulating where beekeepers sold nuc's with only one brood frame. Check your source before you buy.

Often you may have to return the box the bees came in to the beekeeper – an extra trip.

## Established hive:

An established hive is what it says: a brood box with an extra super ( the honey super).

It should contain brood, honey, pollen and bees with a queen – a working hive.

The advantage is that you can expect to get some honey very quickly. If you need a hive for pollination an established hive will do this without delay.

The **advantage** is that the work has been done for you. You are an instant beekeeper with all the benefit and responsibilities which come with it.



The **disadvantage** is that in most cases the queen would be older and it is unlikely that a beekeeper would sell you his/her best hive.

You may find that the equipment is in need of repair or replacement.

You will have to learn to deal with Small Hive Beetles quickly – we all have them along the coast here.

You may find a retiring beekeeper ( or from an estate) a real bargain: working hives at a reasonable price.

### **A split ( if you Google “ split” – Google “ Split bees”):**

A split is the result of dividing a hive into two or more parts. It is a method I use to increase hive numbers or to lighten a hive which needs the brood box or bottom board replaced. A split only works with a hive which is strong and has a good queen. Any splits from the original hive will either receive a new queen or a queen cell or is allowed to make their own queen. It is a matter of timing.

Splits have a number of **advantages**: there is a fun factor in making them and the cost is low. A split can really take off with a good queen – often performing even better than the original hive. By splitting a hive it is a lot less likely that she will swarm as what you are doing is an artificial swarm.

A really good split may very well produce some surplus honey if done early in the Spring.

The **disadvantage** is that should start with poor genetics you will spread these into your split.



There is maybe a 20% chance that a new queen will not be accepted by the split. The rejection rate for cells is even higher. Keep a close watch on the queens!

### Catching a swarm:

Swarm capture involves catching a swarm most likely close to other hives or setting up a “ trap hive”.

Catching a swarm is probably the oldest method used to increase hive numbers and many beekeepers probably starting beekeeping after catching a swarm. Swarms can turn-up anywhere and if you are looking at catching swarms I suggest you leave your name with the local police and fire brigade and on notice boards. I don't try to catch a swarm further away than 1 hr as too often there is a false alarm or the bees have left by the time you arrive at the site.

Swarms are generally free – a great **advantage** over most other methods. The bees are likely local and adapted to your conditions. The chance of picking-up a disease with a swarms is low. Catching swarms is also great fun.

There is some skill required to catch a swarm – possibly a **disadvantage**. Try to catch your first swarms with a mentor. Most primary swarms will leave with an old queen and you should replace her if she does not perform. Books will tell you that you must feed a swarm – not so in our mild climate as most swarms will be captured during Spring when lots of flowers are available for the bees to forage. I'm generally not interested in very small or very late swarms as they rarely will survive.

link to video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aenMhQ44imU>

### Summary:

There is one item which applies to all methods of hive increases: you have to be ready.

Often I get phone calls from beekeepers which require an assembled and painted super and assembled frames because they need it NOW – there is a swarm waiting

to be captured. Generally I can obliged but may I suggest that you purchase the equipment NOW (and assemble and paint your equipment and let it all air properly ready for Spring.

I can tell you that I have about 25 nuc boxes just itching for Spring!!

Nothing to do other than waiting for Spring?

Have a look here – from the US.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3mjpM6Av4bxbxps\\_Gh5YPw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3mjpM6Av4bxbxps_Gh5YPw) - To the reading page.

### **Bee suits:**

We have beesuits, jackets and gloves in pretty well all sizes available – some quite small suits and up to 4 X

**Still only \$110 for jackets and \$ 140 for full suits.**

These are vented suits and jackets - pretty well sting proof and so much cooler than the old type. Zips are YKK

**Give us a call and come and try one on!**

**BeeKeeping Workshops:** We will be offering beekeeping workshops for beginners from August onwards (as it is getting warmer). Let us know if you are interested and let your friends know too!

Max and Trudi  
59/65 Kilcoy Lane,  
Crystal Waters  
Conondale QLD 4552

# Beekeeping Pricelist: 2017

All wood used is Hoop pine, sourced from plantations. All wood-ware is A grade timber.

The smoker we sell is made in Australia from heavy gauge stainless steel. Tools and other equipment we mostly import from the USA. Sadly, few tools (if any) are still made in Australia. The lemongrass oil we sell we buy from a Non-government Organisation in Cambodia. The equipment we sell is the equipment we use.

*Please note that prices quoted are for pick-up from our Bee House and prices are subject to change.*

## Assembled Bee Gear for Sale:

For our assembled bee gear, we use A grade hoop pine supers, galvanised nails, *Titebond III* glue, *Resene* professional paint, stainless steel wire, brass eyelets, and thick foundation.

Full Size Supers: painted, glued, assembled:	\$60.00
Half Size Supers: painted, glued, assembled:	\$55.00
Full Size Frames: assembled, wired, with foundation:	\$8.00
Half Size Frames: assembled, wired, with foundation:	Please inquire about price
Lids: painted and assembled:	\$60.00
Bottom boards: painted and assembled:	\$45.00
Made up Nuc's (Box, Lid, Bottom):	\$110.00

## Beekeeping Components:

Please note that models may change.

### Supers:



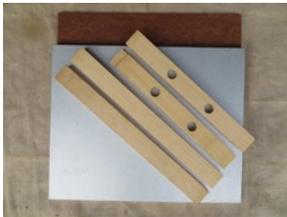
10 Frame, full depth A grade	\$32.00
8 Frame, full depth A grade	\$30.00
10 Frame, 1/2 depth A grade	\$22.00



**Nucleus (5 Frame, complete, A grade)  
unassembled Hoop Pine: \$60.00  
(includes super, lid and botttom)**



**Bottom Board  
(Weathertex, Cypress Pine Cleats, Hoop Pine Risers) \$ 18.00**



**10 Frame Lids  
(Rims, 6 mm Weathertex, Metal Cover, Metal 4 Vents) \$ 26.00**



**Frames, Full Depth, Hoop pine: each \$ 1.50  
Frames, Half Depth, Hoop pine: each \$ 1.30**



**Thick Foundation, full Depth each      \$2.20**  
**13 sheets per kg**



**Diatomaceous Earth for SHB traps-Small bag   \$ 2.00**



**Beetle Blaster Traps (for SHB) single      \$ 2.50**

### **Hive Tools**



**American Style                      \$ 8.00**



**Australian style      \$ 17.00**



**Bee Brush \$ 10.00**



**Frame Grip \$ 15.00**



**Emlock Hive fasteners \$ 12.00 ( includes metal strap)**

Still the best way to strap a hive together ready for shifting. Works best with Migratory lids.



**Frame Perch \$ 15.00**

Excellent when you are doing inspections or splits. The Frame Perch fits perfectly over the hive body and hold up to 4 frames securely. Minimises the likely hood of squashing bees and gives you plenty of room in the hive to manipulate the frames. Made from Stainless Steel.

**Bee Suits:**



**Vented Bee Jacket with veil \$ 110.00 Special!!**

The best way to stay cool while working with the bees. Rubberized netting between woven netting allows excellent ventilation even on the hottest days yet will keep you sting free. Generous cut to allow loose fit. With self-supporting, collapsible veil. Quality zips. And elastic at the wrist and waist.

**Sizes: Please note: Sizes marked \*\* IN STOCK. Others available as back orders.**

<b>Size</b>	<b>Waist Size:</b>	<b>Chest round:</b>	<b>Sleeve:</b>
XS	25 inches	51.5 inches	23.5 inches
S	25.5 inches	53 inches	24.5 inches
**M	27 inches	56 inches	24.5 inches
**L	28 inches	58 inches	27.0 inches
XL	29 inches	61 inches	28.5 inches
**2XL	30 inches	63 inches	30.0 inches
3XL	31.5 inches	65 inches	31.5 inches



**Vented Bee Suit \$ 140.00**

As above but full suit. Perfect for the serious bee keeper. **Please note items marked \*\* IN STOCK. Others available as back order.**

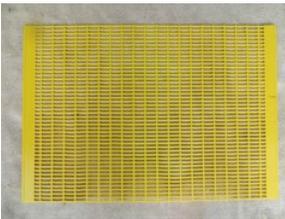
**Sizes: Length from shoulder to feet:**

XS	66 inches
S	67.50 inches
**M	69 inches
**L	70 inches
**XL	71 inches
**2XL	73 inches
**3XL	76 inches

**Accessories:**



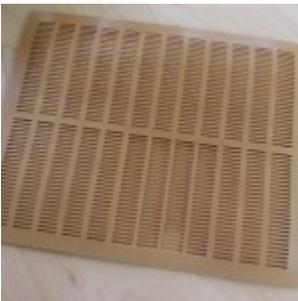
**Queen Excluders, moulded plastic 10 Frame \$ 10.00**



**Queen Excluders, 8 Frame \$10.00**



**Metal Queen Excluder: \$20.00**



**Propolis Trap: \$15.00**



**Eyelets (3 mm) Approx 250 \$5.00**  
**Approx 1000 \$ 18.00**



**Eyelet Punch \$ 8.00**



**Stainless Steel Wire 250gm: \$20.00**



**Frame cleaner \$ 10.00**



**Capping Scratcher \$10.00**



**Smoker (made in Australia) \$ 80.00**

**Smoker (made in China) \$40.00**

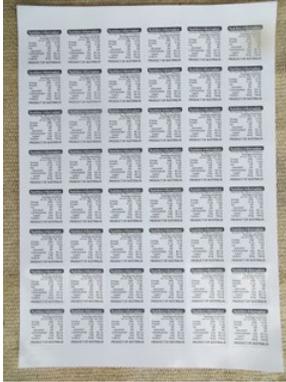


**Gloves: \$20.00**

Soft leather with ventilated gauntlet. Gives good protection from stings while not interfering with finger movement unduly Nominated Small, Medium or large.



**Lemon Grass Oil large \$ 10.00**



**Nutrition Labels, sheet of 48 \$3.00**



**US made, Electric Uncapping Knife \$200.00**



**Frame Wire Crimper \$16.00**



Small Embedder \$ 5.00  
Medium Embedder: \$15.00  
Electric Embedder: \$25.00



Jakel Tool (German) Introductory Price \$40.00 **SPECIAL!**



Refractometer: Aluminium construction: \$60.00



Honey Filter, stainless steel,  
two basket type: \$45.00



**Hive Entrance Closures: \$5.00 large**



**Entrance Closure: \$10.00**  
For 10 frame hives. To easily close the entrance to the hive when you have to move it.



**Honey Bucket: 20Litre, food grade \$12.00**



**Porter gates: Australian made \$27.50**



**Bottled Honey:** \$11 per kg jar and \$6.50 per 500g jar

*We sell our honey from our Beehouse at 59/65 Kilcoy Lane Conondale and at the Witta and Crystal Waters markets. We also sell bulk honey – \$ 8.00 per kg ( min orders apply). Our honey is also available at Maleny IGA. The following establishment serves food made with our honey.*

[www.mantlegroup.com](http://www.mantlegroup.com)

Bees available spring & early summer from our own splits and queens.

**Nuc's 4 or 5 frames**

**Please inquire**

*\* Prices subject to change without notice\**