

TOPIC: AUSTRALIAN NATIVE BEES

GUEST SPEAKER : DIANE CLARK

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 24 November 2015

- Australia has 1600 named and recorded species of bees (2000 all up)
- 25,000 species world wide – 2mm to 24mm in length
- USA has 400; UK 250; SEQ 311 species from Brisbane to Maryborough to Dalby
- Jeremy Coleby- Williams identified in his garden a new species of Halictidae
- There are 5 groups in Australia with gaps in the population in Central Australia –
- APIDAE (164) stingless, long tongued for sipping nectar and honey
- COLLETIDAE (871) large, hairy and short tongued
- HALICTIDAE (353) small to medium size and dark in colour
- MEGACHILIDAE (175) small to very large, long tongued leaf cutter bees
- STENORITIDAE in Western Australia only
- Native Social Stingless Bees are the easiest pets to keep. They live in colonies, store pollen and honey, are found in trees and unusual places eg meter boxes, block walls, witches hats
- 3 species in SEQ won't fly until temperature reaches 15°C and stop flying and die at 40°C
- In hot conditions they must be kept cool. They fly in a 500metre radius and are low maintenance to keep. Hive entrance should face North East. 3 types of hives
- When land is cleared bee rescue groups endeavour to save bees in their logs
- If a log or tree splits after a storm, wrap in a blanket to keep predators out
- If insect predators intrude, guard bees daub them with black resin from hive to suffocate
- Worker bees make pods, queen bee inspects them and if satisfied lays eggs in them. Pods are then sealed by worker bees. Pollen pods can be kept in freezer indefinitely
- Bees are attracted by perfume and deodorant odours and won't leave you alone in bush
- 25 species of blue banded bees which sleep at night on a thin twig
- Teddy bear bees are furry and brown and noisier than blue banded bees
- Solitary bees make nests in hollow bamboo poles
- Leaf cutter bees make round holes in Vietnamese mint. Will roll leaves to build cells inside
- Cuckoo bees are colourful fluorescent and use nests of other bees
- Redland bees stick sash windows with resin
- Solitary bees make single mud nests with one entrance as wide as end of chopstick and a number of chambers inside. Some bees carry pollen in their crops and mix with nectar
- To attract native bees to your garden, make a nest – 1. Drill holes 15cm (6 inches) deep in a thick piece of wood. Holes can be lined with baking paper – roll around knitting needle, insert in hole and withdraw needle. If holes are too big/wide, wasps will be attracted and bees will avoid. 2. Cut bamboo stakes, tie together, insert in piece of downpipe and place close to ground. Can also be placed in a tree with nesting chambers at each end and paper straws can be inserted into holes
- Don't use Confidor as is harmful to colonies. They love the perennial hydrangea flower
- Small amounts of honey can be extracted - ½ kg out of 200cm² box

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT : THE AUSTRALIAN NATIVE BEE RESEARCH CENTRE
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