

## **EDITORIAL FOR *THE NZ BEEKEEPER JOURNAL*, AUGUST 2018**

### **EDUCATION**

#### **QUEEN CELL PRODUCTION TUTORIAL: MAGGIE JAMES**

**Auckland Beekeepers' Club committee member Kim Kneijber reports on a queen cell production tutorial presented by Maggie James, Sunday 1 July at the Auckland Beekeepers' Club, Unitec Campus, Mount Albert.**

I had met Maggie briefly a couple of times over the years at the annual beekeepers' conferences and had heard of her years of experience related to being an apiarist, with education a strong focus. Maggie's passion for bees has included assisting in educational programmes and the exotics programme, with a major focus on queens. So, when I heard Maggie had created a course on queen cell production and was invited to present the course in Auckland, I realised it would be an opportunity to hear from someone I knew had the history related to this area of beekeeping.

The course was attended by half a dozen keen hobby beekeepers from the Auckland Beekeepers Club. Most of those attending were commercial beekeepers, some of whom had travelled long distances including from the Far North, Great Barrier Island, New Plymouth and Tauranga.

Maggie's PowerPoint presentation was wide ranging and energetic, and she had put together a huge amount of information. We started with the queen substance, moving to looking at queen rearing impulses and what happens. Starter hives and finisher hives were explained, followed by how to get a successful grafting yard ready, including plant relationships, important stock and the rationale for hive selection.

Maggie shared her experiences of equipment and which accessories work for her. This section included grafting tools, cell-raising frames, cups, queen cell carriers, queen banking (Maggie's way) and other equipment, including maintenance, and how it makes for a smooth and successful rate of queen production. Maggie commented throughout the course on her method of working with her customers, from pick-up dates to what their shared objectives were.

We were introduced to Maggie's mating nuc system and her ideal conditions and environments for successful matings.

The relationships with flowers and bees throughout our seasons, tried and true hints, and practical information kept flowing through the day. Maggie has gathered a huge amount of knowledge through her years of working with her passion. I am glad she is sharing this information and I hope Maggie will continue passing on her knowledge to us all.