Ollscoil na Gaillimhe University of Galway
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
ATU
UCD Dublin
DCU Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University
Galway Honey Bee Research Centre
Teagasc Agriculture and Food Development Authority
McGill University
Universidad de Alcalá

# NATIONAL APICULTURE PROGRAMME NEWSLETTER


## Welcome to Our Summer Edition

This season we have been busy working with the bees visiting many apiaries up and down the country taking samples and making notes. See what we have all been doing here at the National Apiculture Programme.

## Have your say!

Want to get in touch or share some information?
What would you like to see in the next edition?

Contact us

website:
nationalapiculturepprogramme.com

Instagram:
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Come visit us and have a chat
Find us at the
Teagasc Marquee
Stand 10

## University of Galway

University of Galway have been busy monitoring treatment free and treated colonies. With our highly experienced panel of beekeepers with apiaries out across the country: Eoghan MacGiollaCoda, Colm O'Neill, Alan Forskitt, Ciaran Geoghegan, Dr Sheila Faherty, Peter Neary, Dr Helen Mooney and Mick Verspuij. Weekly inspections assessed the following traits, handling, docility, steadiness on the comb, brood pattern, pollen and propolis collection, swarminess, supercedure tendencies. Brood samples and bees were collected from all the colonies during the season and analysed by Mary Coffey at DAFM for: Tracheal mite, Nosema, American Foul Brood, European Foul Brood, Chalkbrood, Tropilaelaps and Small hive Beetle. *Varroa destructor* load was assessed by alcohol washes and bottom board drops. Combined with honey yield from these colonies this data will inform how treatment free colonies compare to treated over this season.



## Book your place on these workshops Limited spaces!

Just Added

Friday, 5 September

**Understanding treatment free beekeeping**

By Grace McCormack

Come learn about the science of varroa resistance and how an experienced beekeeper manages his colonies and apiaries in a treatment free way

Free
Sep 5 · 19:30 GMT+1

Get tickets

eventbrite.com

Just Added

Saturday, 6 September

**Monitoring colony health in treatment free beekeeping**

By Grace McCormack

Learn how to keep your bee colonies healthy without treatments in this hands-on workshop!

**Date and time**

Free
Sep 6 · 10:00 GMT+1

Get tickets

eventbrite.com

Pictures below show Vickie Henshaw and Dr Sheila Faherty from ATU during the sampling procedures on an apiary visit.

Left picture collecting foragers from the front entrance and 300 bees alcohol wash.

Visiting one of the apiaries, sample of a bottom board.


Dr Sheila Faherty analysing bottom boards and looking for Varroa.

Selection of completed samples.

Prof Grace McCormack & Vickie Henshaw at Coole Park to raise awareness of the National Apiculture Programme among other projects at the bio blitz day organised by the National parks and Wildlife.


The University of Galway Apiary Team
Pictured Prof Grace McCormack and Vickie Henshaw, second picture Eoin McLoughlin.

# Mean while at University of Dublin

**Alternative strategies for combating *Varroa* in the field**

*Varroa destructor* is an ectoparasite that attacks bees and feeds on their protein and fat, this mite also transmits several harmful bee viruses. *Varroa* is considered to be the major reason for honey bee colony losses worldwide. To try and avoid such losses, beekeepers commonly treat colonies with synthetic chemicals. While synthetic chemicals show high efficiency, they also have a lot of risks for honey bees, such as being toxic for bees, resistance to the chemicals evolving in the mite, and persistence of these chemicals in honey, pollen and beeswax. In contrast, alternative strategies for combating the *Varroa* mite, such as drone brood trapping, applying organic acid, and breeding resistant honey bee queens, are generally safe for honey bees, do not cause resistance, and do not cause the accumulation of harmful chemicals in honey, pollen and beeswax. And importantly these strategies may still reduce the mite population effectively, but further rigorous testing is required.

Egehan Onat Özfen pictured at his colonies.

Investigating alternative control strategies for combating the *Varroa* mite is crucial for improving honey bee health. To do this, we are conducting a field experiment in Teagasc, Oak Park. We are employing 75 research colonies to robustly compare the effectiveness of key alternative strategies for combating the *Varroa* mite, with the most commonly used synthetic chemical, Amitraz. In the 2024 and 2025 beekeeping seasons, we will monitor all colonies for *Varroa* mortality, the health of the bees, other honey bee pathogens, and also record internal colony conditions as well as external environmental conditions. Throughout the experiment, all of the major honey bee pathogens will be tested for using visual an molecular methods. Through this work we will compare different treatment strategies and identify effective and sustainable strategies for combating the global parasite, *Varroa destructor*.

## Native Species Festival of Ireland at Dublin Zoo

As a part of the National Apiculture Programme (NAP) of Ireland, at the Native Species Festival at Dublin Zoo we had the opportunity to engage with the public, share insights on the fascinating biology of honey bees, and highlight their vital role in the natural environment.

Egehan pictured with Maria Paoletti and Marcela Diaz Rivadeneira

Observation Hive

We also had the chance to discuss progress and plans of the NAP project with many members of the general public. Even more special—the event at Dublin Zoo was just one day before World Bee Day!