



Tasmanian Beekeepers Association



Media Release

22 July 2024

Leatherwood Honey Bees need lots of love and care during winter

Bees that produce Leatherwood honey in Tasmania need plenty of TLC from beekeepers during the coldest part of winter.

Tasmanian Beekeepers Association president Lindsay Bourke says keeping bees healthy during winter is crucial for ensuring the survival and productivity of the colony come springtime.

“Leatherwood trees are located on Tasmania’s rugged west coast and in the World Heritage Wilderness Area. Our bees spend the summers producing Leatherwood honey there.

Unfortunately, the winters in those locations are very harsh, and to keep the hives healthy, beekeepers move them into parts of northern Tasmania that are warmer.

Teena Blair from R. Stephens Honey in Mole Creek, Tasmania, said staff have been spending the past few weeks moving the hives to parts of the state that are not so cold.

“This time of year, the West Coast and World Heritage Wilderness Area can be extremely cold, and thus Leatherwood trees are not producing nectar.

“So we move the hives to farms in northern Tasmania where we can care for them to make sure they are ready for the coming spring and summer.

“At the moment, it’s so cold some of the hives have snow on them, so it certainly is time for them to be moved back to warmer areas,” Ms. Blair said.

She added that when the hives are returned back from the West Coast, critical maintenance is carried out.

She said some of the simple measures the staff take to help the bees survive winter include proper ventilation and trying to find sunny and sheltered locations.

Ms. Blair added that while the hives are in the north, staff conduct a thorough inspection to check the queen's health, brood pattern, and overall colony strength every 14 days.

“In late autumn, we also make sure the hives have enough honey on them for the bees to feed on during the winter.

“We also take the opportunity to update our hive management database records so the quality assurance data is current,” Ms. Blair concluded.

Ends...

Photos available at the link below:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/2gg0y5llslv99eg2dy8a5/WinterBees.zip?rlkey=1djslk8jnb4tbdcvqjxqawlbp&dl=0>

For more information contact Richard Gerathy on 0419 203 075.