

BEE AWARE MONTH

Arohaina ā tātou pī: loving our bees in 2023

Karen Allan

Associate Agriculture Minister, Hon Jo Luxton, officially launched Bee Aware Month 2023 with the help of the Te Aro School beekeepers and their mentors from the Wellington Beekeepers Association.

Minister Luxton inspected the school beehives and tasted a range of fine New Zealand honeys.

This year's Bee Aware Month focus was pollination and the importance of bee pollination to our environment and food chain. Minister Luxton told young beekeepers from Te Aro School that bees were one of the most important insects in the world and needed our protection.

"Bees are the unsung heroes of nature but also of our thriving agriculture economy. They are hard workers,



Visitors to the pollination presentation at Otago Museum feed sugar water to bumble bees with the help of Otago University masters' students Gina Mouat (left) of the Zoology Department and Winter Miller (right) from the Neuroscience Programme. Photo: Jenny Jandt.

performing the crucial job of pollinating our country's crops. They deserve our praise because without bees we wouldn't have much of the food we eat and export," Minister Luxton said.

Many ApiNZ members and Bee Aware Month supporters shared this year's message about the importance of honey bees to our environment with visits to schools as well as at stalls at garden centres, malls and trade shows around the country.

OTAGO POLLINATOR PRESENTATION

A team of enthusiastic and knowledgeable undergraduate and postgraduate students from the University of Otago's Zoology, Botany, Neuroscience, Food Science, and Ecology programmes helped get the word out on gardening and lifestyle practices to help bees, other pollinators, and plants in the backyard and community.

Over 1700 guests visited the various stalls set up around Tūhura Otago Museum on Saturday 16 September, featuring lots of material on bees including honey, bumble, and New Zealand native bees, and bee-friendly planting. A variety of engaging activities

including face-painting, bee-feeding and the "Is It A Bee?" game were available for visitors of all ages.

Organiser Connal McLean says the day went well and presenters received many inquiries on how to garden with bees in mind.

"So hopefully we spread the good word on helping our buzzy little friends," he says.

ROTORUA HONEY BEE CLUB

Visitors to Palmers Garden Centre in Rotorua were treated to a range of bee-focused activities provided by members of the Rotorua Honey Bee Club on Saturday 2 September. Club president Pauline Spear says it was an enjoyable morning spent meeting lots of young people keen on bees and several people went away with bee-friendly plants for their gardens.

SCHOOL VISITS

A number of clubs, including the Rotorua Honey Bee Club, also visited schools in their area to share about bees this Bee Aware Month. If your club is interested in or planning to do a school visit anytime and would like some resources or ideas, please email: info@apinz.org.nz or check out our educational resources: <https://apinz.org.nz/bee-aware-month-resources/>

THANK YOU TO OUR BEE AWARE MONTH PRIZE SPONSORS:

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AND OUR MAJOR BEE AWARE MONTH SPONSOR:

Wild Forage

Inspecting the beehives at Te Aro School, Wellington. From left to right: Associate Agriculture Minister Hon Jo Luxton, Wellington Beekeepers Association's Eva Durrant, Te Aro School student Kala Banas and Apiculture NZ Board Chair Nathan Guy. Photo credit: Simon Edwards.



Rotorua Honey Bee Club president Pauline Spear with year 2-4 students at Selwyn Primary School. "Along with their very enthusiastic teacher [they] already knew so much about bees, one of the first questions was on varroa!" says Pauline. The students later planted a pollinator garden with Wild Forage seeds. Photo supplied.

