

NZ Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Autumn Newsletter

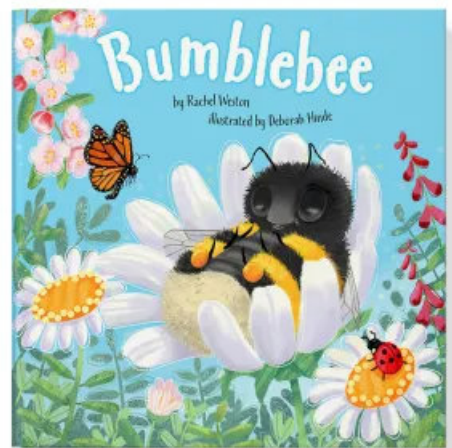
Bumblebee Book Project – Get Involved

We're so excited to launch a new initiative to bring Rachel Weston's beautiful children's book 'Bumblebee' into preschools across Aotearoa.

As part of this project, volunteers will visit preschools, read the book to the children, and leave a copy behind for them to enjoy. The books are currently being printed and are expected to arrive in late April.

If you're interested in taking part, please send a quick email to Anna - anna@nzbct.org.nz.

We're really looking forward to sharing this fun, engaging project with our community. Our grateful thanks go to The Wright Family Foundation for generously supplying these books to our Trust.



New Board Member

We are thrilled to announce that Connal McLean has come onto our Board of Trustees.

Connal is an ecology and entomology enthusiast based in Dunedin. He studied bumble bee learning and memory, earning a Master of Science with Distinction, and has since broadened his research to look at interactions between introduced and native bee species in NZ, and use of bees in science communication.

Connal is passionate about all living things, yet bumble bees will always hold a special place in his heart. He holds certifications in Science Communication and Plant Science alongside a background in Biological Psychology.

We have also welcomed Nelson Pomeroy, our Science Advisor, onto our Board.

To Catch a Queen – Project Update

Our motto “Saving the Sounds of Summer” became wonderfully literal for board members Connal McLean and Nelson Pomeroy during their visit to Tekapo in December. After an energetic day dancing around flowers with local kids — nets in hand and laughter everywhere — they managed to scoop up a lively collection of queen bumblebees from several species.

Nelson then transported the queens safely back to Christchurch, where his deep knowledge as a true bumblebee keeper came into its own. Some colonies thrived, others didn't, but every attempt added to a growing body of practical knowledge. The results have been exciting: new ways to present working display hives, insights into how to build a home hive, and a long list of innovations that will strengthen our outreach work.

Nelson has also created a new video showcasing this project — including a hive in full action — which is shared below.

Where to for the Tekapo/Twizel project? So much has been learnt as to what can be done for outreach to schools so we plan to be back there early next summer.



New Videos from Nelson Pomeroy

We're excited to share two fascinating new videos created by our board member Nelson Pomeroy.

1. Tekapo School – To Catch a Queen

Following the December visit to Lake Tekapo School as part of their “To Catch a Queen” project, Nelson took some of the queens back to Christchurch and reared colonies in his garage. This video shows how they were kept and details aspects of colony life.

2. Inside a Bumblebee Nest

Ever wondered what really happens inside a bumblebee nest? This video gives you a rare look into the inner workings of colony life — from nest structure to daily activity.

You can watch both videos on our website, and the direct links are included below.

You can find both videos on our website [here](#)

Direct links are also here.

1. [Bumblebees from Lake Tekapo](#)

2. [Bumblebee colony life](#)

Nelson's picture below shows a queen laying eggs with her bottom inside a cell.



☀️ Dunedin Outreach Visit – An Incredible Two Days

In March, Geoff, Liz and Connal were warmly hosted in Dunedin by Jennie and Megan from the Dunedin City Council EnviroSchools programme. Across just two days, we visited six schools and also spoke at the Food Network group meeting — and the response was nothing short of amazing.

The students were incredible. Their curiosity, enthusiasm and thoughtful questions showed just how engaged young people are with the world of pollinators. Our live see-into bumblebee hive was a huge hit, sparking excitement and wonder everywhere we went. The kids loved the fun facts they learned and were buzzing (literally!) with energy.

This visit highlighted just how powerful hands-on learning can be — and how eager tamariki are to protect and understand the creatures that help our ecosystems thrive.



Why are the first worker bumblebees small?

We often get asked why the first bumblebees emerging from a nest are small. There are many interesting reasons:

The queen has come out of winter hibernation and is working alone, using only the energy stored in her body plus whatever nectar and pollen she can gather.

- Because her resources are limited, the first batch of brood gets less food, so they emerge as small “micro-workers.”
- These early workers take over foraging, which lets the queen stay in the nest and lay more eggs.
- As food supply improves, later workers become larger and more robust, and the colony’s size ramps up.

What does this mean for colony health? Small early workers are actually a good sign — it means the queen successfully founded the nest and is moving into the growth phase.

How can you help? Sow flowers now to flower in the spring for hungry new bumblebees. Look at our Wildflower Seed Mix on our website. A 5-gram pack will cover 5 square metres - cost is just \$10 plus freight.

Wildflower Seeds- buy
here



Become a member of the NZ Bumblebee Trust and help by promoting the conservation of our bumblebees. An annual subscription will ensure you continue to help our very worthy cause. [JOIN](#) here

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