

Varroa destructor mite: FAQs

Who needs to register as a beekeeper?

Under the [Animal Diseases Act 2005](#) (Part 5A) you must register as a beekeeper if:

- you are a beekeeper; and
- your beehives are always located in the ACT.

You do not need to register as a beekeeper in the ACT if:

- you carry on the business of beekeeping, have an ABN and are registered for GST; and
- your beehives are sometimes located in NSW; and
- you are registered as a beekeeper under the [Biosecurity Act 2015](#).

Note: The [Animal Diseases Act 2005](#) requires individual beekeepers to be registered, not individual hives.

We strongly encourage you to register so that we can contact you directly to provide the latest information regarding the management of bees in the ACT.

How can I protect my hives?

Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility. As such, Governments, industry, and community are all vital to the success of the efforts to eradicate Varroa mite.

As part of the registration process, beekeepers registering in the ACT declare that they will comply with the [Animal Diseases Act 2005](#), [The Code of Practice for Beekeeping in Residential Areas in the ACT](#), and the requirement to examine their hives regularly for signs of notifiable bee diseases or pests.

Therefore, a hive inspection should always include a sugar shake or alcohol wash to check for external parasites such as Varroa mite. If you have not undertaken one of these tests during previous hive inspections, the equipment required, you can find more information on the [the BeeAware website](#) on how to do the test and how to make an [alcohol washing](#) or [sugar shake kit](#).

Beginner beekeepers can find information on keeping honeybees healthy through Plant Health Australia's bee biosecurity online training on the [Plant Health Australia website](#).

Beekeepers are generally very enthusiastic to share their experiences and knowledge. So, joining a local beekeeping club or a Facebook beekeeping group may provide access to a mentor.

How can I report unregistered or abandoned hives?

Unregistered and abandoned hives can be reported to the ACT Government at bees@act.gov.au.

How can I report Varroa mite?

If you suspect you have Varroa mite in your hive, phone the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Are native bees impacted by Varroa mite?

Native bees are not affected by Varroa mite.

Can I volunteer in the case of an incursion in the ACT?

The ACT Government has previously worked with ACT beekeepers as part of the previous iteration of the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program. These beekeepers have kindly volunteered their time and experience to help in the case of an incursion.

Please e-mail bees@act.gov.au with your name, contact details and beekeeping experience to enable us to contact you if in the case of an outbreak additional inspection team members are required.

What is being done by government to manage Varroa mite?

To reduce the risk of Varroa entering the ACT, the ACT Government has established restrictions on the movement of honeybees, used hives and used bee equipment from NSW into the ACT. Information on these restrictions can be found on the [ACT Legislation website](#).

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is working to protect the NSW honeybee industry by ensuring Varroa mite is eradicated. For information and updates on the NSW Varroa mite emergency response, visit [the DPI website](#).

Currently, the movement of hives within the ACT is permitted. However, you must keep a record of who moved the hives, the date and number of hives moved, and the location they were moved to and from.

How do Varroa mite spread?

Information on the varroa mite life cycle can be found on [the BeeAware website](#).

Varroa mites require a honeybee to survive and reproduce. An adult Varroa mite may live and feed on an adult bee for up to around 3 months. Adult female Varroa mites can live for up to 5-6 days without food.

Varroa mites have very specific requirements for reproduction, so other insects are unlikely to be suitable hosts for the mite.

Unfortunately, it would only take a single mated female mite in the phoretic phase to escape eradication measures to continue the establishment of Varroa.

How do I find out what other states are doing to address Varroa mite?

Each state and territory may have different restrictions in place regarding the entry of bees, beehives, bee keeping equipment and bee products coming from NSW.

To keep up to date on what each state and territory has in place, you can visit outbreak.gov.au.

The Outbreak website is a good resource on all biosecurity outbreaks and emerging risks across Australia, including within the ACT.

