



Biosecurity alert: Varroa Mite



Varroa Mite
(*Varroa destructor*)

Photo: Gilles San Martin

What to look for

Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) is an external parasite of honey bees and is considered the greatest threat to Australia's honey and pollination industries.



Varroa mites are small, oval, reddish-brown and are around 1.1mm long and 1.5mm wide (slightly larger than a poppy seed).

Photos: Madlen Kratz, NSW
Department of Primary Industries



While they are easily identifiable to the naked eye, varroa mites spend most of the time under capped brood or attached to the underside of bees.

Photo: Madlen Kratz, NSW Department of Primary Industries



The mites weaken honey bees by feeding on fat bodies of adult bees and reproducing on developing larvae and pupae. They cause adult bee malformation as well as transmitting other deadly honey bee viruses.

Check your hive

Under the National Bee Biosecurity Code of Practice, beekeepers are required to check at least one hive per apiary for external parasites, twice a year, i.e. in autumn and spring.

Mites are best sampled for using proven surveillance techniques like:

1. Drone uncapping

2. Alcohol washes

3. Sugar Shakes

Bee keepers are required by law to report suspected varroa mites.



Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au

Pest and Disease Information Service
(08) 9368 3080
padis@dpird.wa.gov.au

