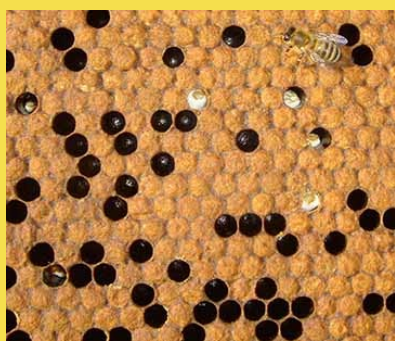




Chalkbrood

Ascosphaera apis

A fungal disease affecting brood



ABOUT

Chalkbrood is a fungal disease caused by the fungus *Ascosphaera apis* which affects brood. Dead honeybee brood is characterised by the larvae turning white, grey or black and becoming mummified.

Larvae at age 3-4 days which ingest spores of *Ascosphaera apis* are most vulnerable. The spores germinate in their gut. When the larvae is sealed in its cell, the mycelium break out and the larvae dies.

The larvae is transformed into white chalklike mummies with a yellowy head and are initially coated in a fluffy white fungal growth. Dead larvae turn grey/black and become hard and shrunken. A colony will usually remove the mummies within around 10 days and deposit them on the bottom board or at the entrance to the hive.

A heavily infested colony will present with a scattered brood pattern, which can initially be misdiagnosed, but is unmistakable by the appearance of the mummified larvae.

Spores remain present on the comb and can reinfect the colony. The spores remain infective for more than 15 years. Spores also remain on beekeeping equipment, in honey and pollen.

Spread of the disease can be by drifting bees, transferring infected comb to another hive, using infected equipment and hive components, contaminated hive tool as well as feeding bees with infected honey and/or pollen.

Chalkbrood is a disease that is associated with stress factors such as high and low temperatures, excessively dry or wet conditions, poor nutrition, pesticide damage, failing queen or movement of hives.

Control of Chalkbrood is largely through beekeeping management practices. Selecting hygienic bees with a high ability to uncap and remove diseased brood is also another management practice.



Above: Mummified larvae. Image: Rob Snyder
www.beeinformed.org

Top Left: Brood of infected hive. Image: Rob Snyder
www.beeinformed.org

TAKE ACTION

If you see or suspect the presence of Chalkbrood, take action to reduce spread.

CONTACT

For support and advice on pests and disease management, contact the Qld Bee Biosecurity Officer (BBO) on: 0436 858 838.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Scan the QR Code or click here for more information about Chalkbrood from the BeeAware website.

