



Varroa mites

Varroa destructor, *V. jacobsoni*
Honey bee enemy #1



ABOUT

Varroa mites are one of the most serious problems threatening the health of honey bees around the world.

The impact of Varroa mites around the world has caused mass disruption to crop pollination and honey production.

Varroa mites are tiny red-brown external parasites of honey bees and measure around 1.1mm long and 1.5mm wide. They can feed and live on adult honey bees but mainly feed and reproduce on larvae and pupae in the developing brood, causing malformation and weakening of honey bees and transmits numerous viruses. Parasitic mite syndrome (PMS) is also found in hives affected with Varroa mites.

This ultimately causes a reduction in the honey bee population, supersedure of queen bees and eventual colony breakdown and death.

There are 2 species of Varroa mite, *Varroa destructor* and *Varroa jacobsoni*.

Varroa destructor affects Asian honey bees and European honey bees. They have been found in much of Asia, Europe, the USA, South America and New Zealand. *Varroa destructor* is responsible for the collapse and death of European honey bee colonies wherever it is present.

Varroa jacobsoni has a wide distribution on Asian honey bees, *Apis cerana*, throughout Asia and Asian honey bees are the natural host of *Varroa jacobsoni*. These mites do not normally reproduce on European honey bees, however they have recently been observed reproducing on European honey bees at some overseas locations raising concerns that the same may happen in Australia.

The Varroa mite is listed as prohibited matter under the Biosecurity Act 2014.



Above: Varroa mite on a honey bee pupae. CSIRO. Image: BeeAware.org.au. Top Left: *Apis mellifera* carrying Varroa mite. Image: Stephen Ausmus, USDA Agricultural Research Service, bugwood.org, BeeAware.org.au.

TAKE ACTION

If you see or suspect the presence of Varroa mites in Australia, report the pest IMMEDIATELY.

CONTACT

Report all suspect sightings to: Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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



Early detection is essential to ensure any exotic bees entering Australia are contained

**Information provided in this fact sheet was accurate as at 17/12/21*