Varroa mites suck the blood of adult honey bees and spread viruses, leaving them more prone to infections.

Inspect hives regularly (about once a month for hobby beekeepers) from Spring to Autumn.

Know how to identify Varroa mite and parasitic mite syndrome (PMS).

Report any sightings of Varroa mite or PMS immediately to 1800 084 881.

IDENTIFYING VARROA MITE

The presence of mites feeding on the drone brood is very obvious; the brown sesame seed-sized pests are very distinct against the white of the drone pupae. However, even if mites are not visible, they will be present in any hive with symptoms of ‘parasitic mite syndrome’ (PMS).

These include:
- rapid decline in population
- sick bees crawling at the entrance
- bees with deformed wings
- supersedure of queen
- brood appears to have multiple diseases eg early stages of EFB, AFB and Sacbrood.
  - spotty brood pattern
  - larva do not rope out
  - scale is not brittle
  - scale is easier to remove than typical AFB scale
  - no distinctive smell

The Varroa mite is expected to decimate bee populations when it reaches our shores — something experts say is inevitable.

However, with early detection and good hive management, Australia’s honey and pollination industries can continue to prosper.

Regular inspections are a key part of maintaining hive health. Unless identified early Varroa could spread quickly, making it almost impossible to eradicate.

It’s therefore vital that all beekeepers are aware of Varroa and its symptoms and immediately report any sightings by calling 1800 084 881.

Early detection will provide an opportunity for an eradication program to be carried out by state government apiary officers.

REPORT ANY SIGHTINGS OF VARROA MITE IMMEDIATELY TO 1800 084 881