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# Beekeepers' Varroa monitoring toolkit gets a major boost

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📷 The horticulture sector is being equipped innovative methods to detect and control Varroa mite. Picture supplied

THE horticulture sector is being equipped with more innovative methods to detect and control Varroa mite as Australia moves into a management phase for the major insect pest.

Delivered through [Hort Innovation](#) and led by [Macquarie University](#), the research builds on the pairing on the current alcohol and soapy



cameras, vibration detection and DNA testing as options to assist beekeepers.

Hort Innovation chief executive officer, Brett Fifield, said scientists had reviewed new and innovative tools and methods that were being used across the globe and were evaluating how effective they would be in Australia.

"As we move into the management phase for Varroa mite, it is essential that the horticulture sector has a multi-pronged approach to safeguarding our pollination," Mr Fifield said.

"Learning from other countries about their experience with managing Varroa mite will accelerate Australia's response and improve our ability to navigate this transition."

[Hort Innovation has produced a comprehensive list of available monitoring techniques and tools.](#)

The list includes the suitability and effectiveness of different detection methods, including materials required, percentage of Varroa mite recovered, costs, time required, repeats required and any restrictions to use.

There is also a list under development of new monitoring techniques and technologies.

[NSW DPI has also developed a factsheet about Varroa mite and integrated pest management.](#)

Macquarie University senior research scientist, Dr Mary Whitehouse, said the focus was now on international research into

Varroa mite control.

"From this base, our ongoing efforts are centered on active collaboration with researchers and industry people, staying current with global research on Varroa management, and ensuring our findings benefit the wider beekeeping community across Australia," Dr Whitehouse said.

"In the first phase we have advanced our knowledge of available detection techniques, and now our focus is on reviewing control methods, with an emphasis on non-chemical approaches."

A Varroa mite workshop will be held at Macquarie University in late January bringing together the research team, overseas Varroa mite experts, and a range of industry stakeholders including beekeepers and industry leaders from around Australia, to review the non-chemical control methods that have been identified as potentially useful for Australia.

"We will discuss how they could be modified both to better suit Australian conditions, and to be a practical fit given Australian beekeeping demands," Dr Whitehouse said.

Beekeeper Steve Fuller said the findings will help prepare beekeepers for their future living with Varroa mite.

"Varroa mite is here to stay, so research like this is invaluable in expanding our management toolkit and keeping us up-to-date with what tools and technology are out there," Mr Fuller said.

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