

Hive beetle problems in Southern Africa

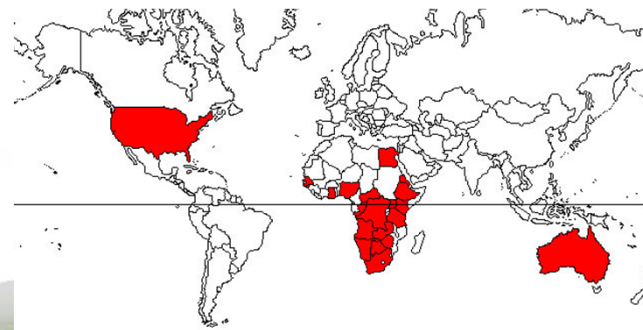
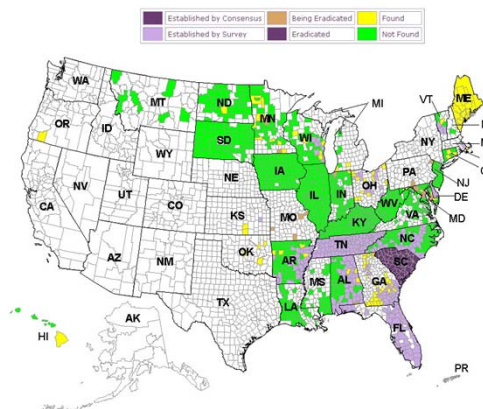
Mike Allsopp
ARC-PPRI, Stellenbosch



Small hive beetle



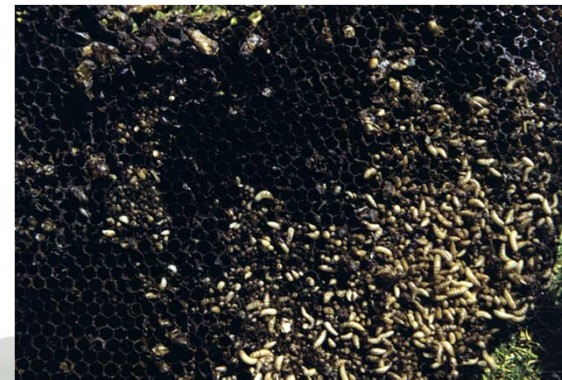
- *Nitidulidae*; all over sub-Saharan Africa
- *Aethina tumida* is a common presence in hives; parasite of honeybees; feeds on honey, pollen and brood
- Recent serious problems in the USA (1996), Australia (2001) and Egypt; killing large numbers of colonies; actively consume brood; seemingly little active defence.



Small hive beetle



- Minor impact on wild and managed African honeybees
- Not a problem for healthy bees, but keep the numbers down
- Bees corral the beetles; keep them in corners and cracks; keep them away from the brood, and actively hunt them in the colony
- Occasionally take over colonies, forcing the bees to abscond



Small hive beetle

- Mustn't allow refuges in the hives; almost always lots of small hive beetles in wild colonies, and in colonies in log hives, and in colonies in old boxes
- To control small hive beetles, use modern hives and decent equipment
- Can put soapy water dishes at the front of colonies to catch wandering larvae, to keep numbers down
- Straws & traps



Small hive beetle

- But is a problem in honey-houses and stored comb where it feeds on brood and pollen
- NEVER take pollen or brood into a honey house; process honey very quickly, or keep in a coldroom
- Can totally wreck a honey crop





Large hive beetle

- *Cetoniidae* beetles; fruit/flower beetles
- Periodic visitors to colonies, sometimes in large numbers (100 and more)
- A number of species, the common one is *Hoplostoma fuligenius*; a bushveld species
- Others are *Pachnoda rufa* and *Diplognatha gagates*

Large hive beetle



- Eat the brood, pollen and honey
- Bees can do little to them; can kill colonies or force the bees to abscond
- Easily controlled by keeping them out of colonies; by having small entrances; 8mm or less