

Beginning Beekeeping Talk/Consulting

1. Introduction to Beekeeping

****Understanding Bees****: This section introduces you to the fantastic world of bees, focusing on different types of bees in the hive, including worker bees, drones, and the queen bee. Each type has a unique job to do. You will also learn how bees communicate using scents and special dances, how they keep their hive warm, and how bees make honey.

****Bee Behaviour****: Knowing how bees behave is key to successful beekeeping. We will cover the life stages of a bee—from egg to adult—as well as how bees gather food (pollen and nectar) and how their lives change throughout the year. You will also learn about their defensive behaviour and safe ways to work around bees.

****The Beekeeper's Year****: This part outlines what a beekeeper will do throughout the seasons. You will learn about preparing the hive in spring, enjoying honey harvests in summer, getting ready for winter in the fall, and caring for the hives through the cold months.

2. Setting Up Your Bee Yard

****Choosing the Right Spot****: Picking the perfect location for your bee hives is crucial. We will discuss what makes a good spot, such as:

- ****Sunlight****: Hives should get morning sun but might need shade during the hottest times of the day.
- ****Wind Protection****: A location sheltered from strong winds helps keep the bees active and healthy.
- ****Water Availability****: Bees need a nearby water source, and we will share tips for creating one if needed.
- ****Food Sources****: The location of your hive must have a source of flowers with nectar and pollen close by.
- ****Easy Access****: Ensure you can easily reach the hives for maintenance.
- ****Local Rules and Neighbours****: Understanding local regulations and considering your neighbours will help avoid any issues.

****Hive Arrangement****: We will discuss the best way to arrange your hives in the yard to ensure they are easily accessible and well-distributed.

3. Equipment and Supplies

****Types of Hives**:** We will explore different kinds of bee hives—like Langstroth, Top Bar, and Warre—and discuss each type of hive's good and bad aspects. You will learn about the different parts of a hive, including frames and boxes. What are the specific advantages and disadvantages of each type of hive? How do the different parts of a hive function in relation to bee behaviour? Which type of hive is best for beginner beekeepers?

****Protective Gear**:** Safety comes first! We will cover the essential clothing and gear you will need to keep safe while working with bees. What specific clothing items are essential for working safely with bees? What type of gear should I invest in for bee protection? And any additional safety tips for beginners working with bees.

****Using a Smoker**:** You will find out why a smoker is helpful in calming the bees and how to use it correctly. How does smoke actually calm bees? What is the correct technique for using a smoker? What kind of fuels can be used in a smoker?

****Tools You Will Need**:** We will examine essential tools for working hives, such as hive tools, scrapers, and smokers, and how to use them.

****Honey Harvesting Equipment**:** If you want to collect honey, we will discuss the equipment you need, such as honey extractors, uncapping tools, or Flow Hives.

****Where to Buy Supplies**:** We will also point you to where you can find good quality beekeeping equipment. What specifications or features should I look for in beekeeping equipment? Are there specific brands or suppliers that are recommended for beekeeping gear? Are there any local or online resources for purchasing beekeeping gear? What factors should I consider when choosing a specific brand of beekeeping equipment? How to source used equipment with tips on what questions you should be asked and how much each item should cost. For DIY students, how can you save money by building home equipment.

4. Getting Bees

****Nucleus Colonies (Nucs)**:** We will discuss the pros and cons of starting with a small established colony called a nuc. The different sizes and costs of Nucs, and when to order your colony. The questions to ask before you purchase. What should be

expected and agreed upon before closing the deal. What time of day to pick up your colony and how to transport safely for the bees and how to transfer the Nuc into full-sized equipment. Preparations before receiving your Nuc.

****Packages of Bees****: You will learn how to install a package of bees into a new hive. The proper way to introduce a package. How to "hang" and release a queen. The steps required before receiving the package.

****Capturing a Swarm****: We will discuss the benefits and challenges of catching a wild swarm of bees and provide tips for doing it safely. We will also cover some of the techniques to make catching the swarm go more smoothly.

****Splitting Colonies****: We will discuss the different strategies and techniques for splitting a hive and when it is possible. We will also consider what preparations need to be considered, what time of season and conditions are conducive to optimizing results, the do's and don't, how big to make the split and common problems that inexperienced beekeepers make.

****Inspecting Your Bees****: It is crucial to inspect any bees you get to ensure they are healthy. We will teach you what to look for when analyzing the strength, health and resources of a colony at differing times of the year and what some of the actions you can take to keep your hive strong, prevent swarming and manage health concerns.

5. Basic Hive Management

****Hive Inspections****: We will cover how to check your hives, focusing on:

- ****Bee Behaviour****: Observing normal and unusual activities of the bees.
 - ****Finding the Queen****: How to locate the queen bee or look for signs that she's nearby.
 - ****Brood Inspection****: Checking the health and development of the baby bees.
 - ****Honey Storage****: Assessing how much honey the bees have stored up and whether they need more space and when honey is ripe enough to harvest
 - ****Pests and Diseases****: Identifying common pests and illnesses that may affect your bees, such as mites..
- Feeding Bees: Learn when and how to feed your bees, including the types of food they need. How to prepare sugar water at different strengths for different times of year, different types of pollen substitutes and how to apply and when.
- ****Mite Control****: Learning effective methods to monitor and manage Varroa mites, a major threat to bees.
 - ****Record Keeping****: It is important to keep detailed records of your hive inspections and treatments—some easy techniques to keep basic information and what is most important to know.

- ****Preventing Swarms****: Techniques to avoid swarming, opportunities such as splitting hives to increase numbers or techniques to increase honey production using different methods.

This guide will provide a friendly introduction to the world of beekeeping for beginners, making it accessible and understandable. It will also offer answers to those interested in getting their first hive but unsure of the costs of time and money before they make the decision.