



Beekeeping: Is it right for you?

Presented by the Blackwater Beekeepers Association





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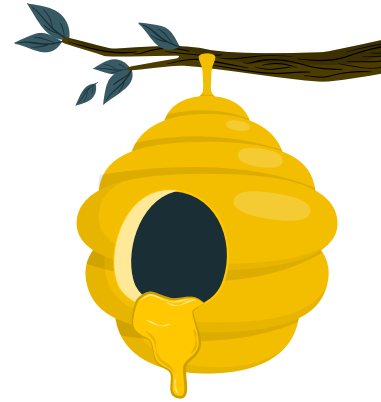
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Introduction

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Building a Bee Hive

The bottom board



Image Source: George Baker




The Good, the Bad & the Ugly



Here's a Bee Fact



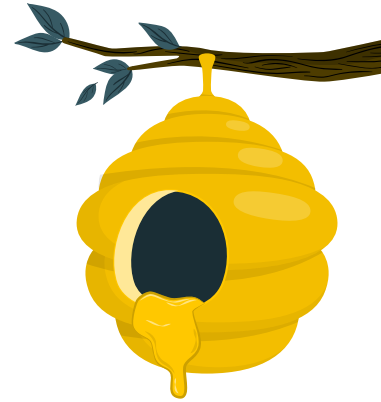


How long do honeybees live?

	Spring & Summer	Winter
Drone	3 – 5 Weeks	N/A
Worker	4 – 6 Weeks	4 – 5 Months
Queen	2 -3 Years +-	

Source: Hive and the Honey Bee, P. 80





What is Beekeeping?





Beekeeping is:

- Fun and has lots of advantages.
- Understanding how your bees live.
- Taking care of your bees like you would a family pet or a herd of cows.
- Knowing how to keep your bees alive and healthy.



Image Source: George Baker






Bees



- Are considered livestock.
- Are something you need to work at understanding.
- Require an ongoing commitment. Contrary to popular belief you can't just set up a hive and forget it.

Image Source: George Baker



**You should strive
to be a beekeeper,
not a bee haver!**



Building a Bee Hive

The brood box (deep)



Image Source: George Baker



Here's a Bee Fact





~20,000

Species of Bees throughout the world.

3600

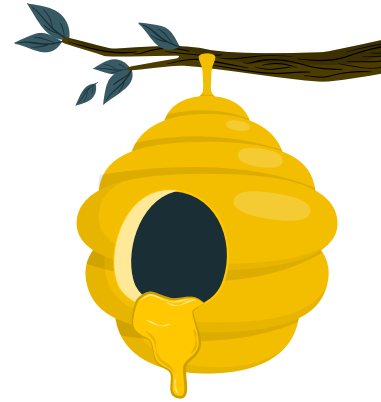
Species of Bees in North America and Mexico

8

Species of Honey bees

Sources: <https://www.xerces.org/endangered-species/wild-bees>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honey_bee





Getting Started





What will you need?

1. A Mentor
2. Two Bee Hives
3. Bees
4. Protective Gear
5. Other Items



Image Source: George Baker





What is a Mentor?



Image Source: George Baker generated
at Gemini.google.com

A Mentor:

1. is your best friend.
2. is someone who can mean the difference between your bees living and dying.
3. will save you a lot of money and time.
4. helps make bee keeping fun.
5. will only charge you a smile and a thank you.





Why do you need a Mentor?



1. Beekeeping is an art as well as a science.
2. Local knowledge is a necessity.
3. They have already made the mistakes, so you don't have to.



*Image Source: George Baker generated
at Gemini.google.com*



YouTube is not a mentor

Starting out you'll want to learn all you can as fast as you can. YouTube can be a great resource for that, but you need to be careful.

1. Remember, beekeeping is hyper-local.
2. What works in one area might not work in yours.
3. For at least your first year or longer, follow your mentor's lead rather than YouTube.



What is a bee hive?



Image Source: George Baker

Starter hive kit – \$209

Full Hive - \$130





Bees

1. Package - \$155
 2. Nucleus - \$199
 3. Full Hive - \$\$\$\$
 4. Swarm - Free
- (Not beginner friendly)*



Image Source: George Baker



Building a Bee Hive

The queen excluder



Image Source: George Baker





Break





Protective Gear



Image Source: George Baker

1. Minimum of a jacket and veil at \$135 and up
2. Full Suit - Optional
3. Pants
4. Gloves – Leather vs Others
5. Veil





Other Items

1. Hive Tool
2. Smoker
3. Feed & Feeder
4. Varroa Treatment
5. SHB Traps
6. EpiPen - Optional
7. First Aid Kit
8. Hive Stands
9. Books
10. And More

Total approx \$800




Image Source: Cyndi Baker generated by ChatGPT





Cost??




~\$1000 - \$1500

For the first year

Image Source:

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/seedling-coins-jar-glass-pant-grow-8810123/>





Ongoing Yearly Expenses



1. Hives
 2. Supers
 3. Feed
 4. Treatment
 5. Replacement Bees
 6. Etc.
- 
- 
- 



Here's a Bee Fact





1/12 Teaspoon

Amount of honey a bee makes in their lifetime.

64

Number of teaspoons in a pound of honey

Only one

The honeybee is the only insect that makes food for humans.



Sources: <https://www.honeyassociation.com/about-honey/honey-trivia>
<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/manateeco/2023/07/11/honey-bees-of-the-world/>





4

Benefits of Keeping Bees





Pollination



Image Source: <https://pixabay.com/photos/bee-honey-bee-insect-fauna-bloom-7413333/>

1. Commercial pollination – (almonds & more).
2. Your garden.
3. Honeybees can't pollinate everything. (*Eggplant and tomatoes for example*)
4. Without pollination, many foods that we have today would not be available.





Honey

1. Sell it
2. Give it away
3. Can help you cover your costs
4. Won't make you rich



Image Source: Cyndi Baker





Beeswax



Image Source: Cyndi Baker

1. Candles
2. Lotion
3. Lip Balm
4. Soap
5. Salve
6. Use it in your hive



Building a Bee Hive

The super (medium)



Image Source: George Baker





Raise Bees

1. Expand your apiary
2. Sell them
3. Replace dead outs



Image Source: George Baker





Raise Queens



Image Source: George Baker

1. Expand your apiary
2. Sell
3. Replace failing queens





Improve your mental well-being

1. It's relaxing
2. Teaches patience



*Image Source: George Baker generated
at Gemini.google.com*








Here's a Bee Fact





Honey Bees in US

1. 2.5 million colonies in US.
 2. Estimated 125,000 to 150,000 beekeepers.
 3. Commercial Beekeepers lost 62% of their bees over the winter of 2024.
- 



Sources: <https://honey.com/newsroom/presskit/honey-industry-facts>,
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/755263/bee-colonies-us/#:~:text=This%20statistic%20shows%20the%20number,decrease%20from%20the%20previous%20year>



Break

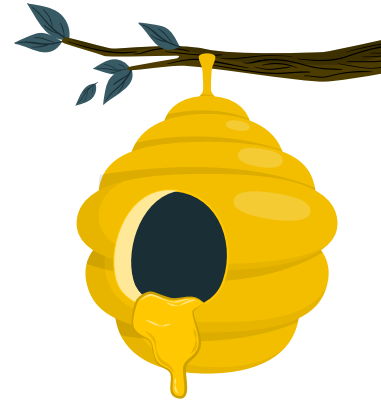
Building a Bee Hive

Top feeder



Image Source: George Baker






Pests and Diseases





The Big 4 Pests

1. Varroa Destructor
 2. Small Hive Beetle
 3. Wax Moth
 4. Yellow-Legged
Hornet
- 





Varroa Mite



Image Source: By Gilles San Martin from Namur, Belgium - Female Varroa destructor on the head of a bee nymph Uploaded by Jacopo Werther, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=24610951>

1. First in US – 1987.
2. It's not the mites that kill; it's the viruses they vector.
3. Currently the Bees worse enemy in the US.
4. Best way to control is to have a care plan, including monitoring and treatment.





Small Hive Beetle (SHB)

1. Is a scavenger.
2. A strong healthy hive can control.
3. Not as prevalent as Varroa.
4. Generally, does not kill a hive but is a symptom of bigger problems .



Image Source: Kroll, G. eagle. (2024, May 31). CC BY 4.0 Small hive beetle (*aethina tumida*). iNaturalist. <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/219443552>





Wax Moth



Image Source: By Sarefo - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2891248>

1. Like the SHB, it is also a scavenger.
2. A strong healthy hive can control.
3. Generally, does not kill a hive but is a symptom of bigger problems.
4. Can destroy your wax if not controlled.



Yellow-Legged Hornet (YLH)

1. A Bee Predator
2. Not in this area yet but are in SC
3. Need to stay vigilant
4. They starve out your colonies



Source: Allan Smith-Pardo, Invasive Hornets, USDA
APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org



Other Pests



Bears

Raccoons

Mice

Yellowjackets



Here's a Bee Fact





Bees are very local

1. Bees only travel up to three miles for pollen and nectar.
2. Your bees may be in a dearth while your friend's bees across town have plenty to eat.
3. What works in one area doesn't always work in another.



Building a Bee Hive

Inner Cover & Telescopic Cover



Image Source: George Baker





A Beekeeper's Year

Adapted from: <https://scstatebeekeepers.com/beekeepers-calendar/>





Late Summer

August – Mid September



Image Source: George Baker

1. Your year really starts in August.
2. Check mites and treat if necessary.
3. Feed colonies that need it.
4. Balance hives.
5. Requeen if necessary.
6. Inspect hives.





Fall

Late September – Mid November

1. Feed If needed.
2. Add empty supers if needed.
3. Continue inspections.
4. Combine weak colonies.
5. Check mites and treat if necessary.



Image Source: George Baker





Early Winter

Late November – December



*Image Source: George Baker generated
at Gemini.google.com*

1. Repair, purchase and build equipment.
2. Feed colonies that need it.
3. Read and learn about bees.
4. Treat for mites
5. Order bees & queens.





Late Winter

January – Early February



*Image Source: George Baker generated
at Gemini.google.com*

1. Assemble Equipment.
2. Keep close watch on resources - Most likely to starve from early February till end of March
3. Clean up dead outs.
4. Start planning for season.
5. Keep an eye out for early blooming.





Early Spring

Late February - March



1. Monitor for and handle swarms.
2. Check for and treat for mites.
3. Monitor blooms.
4. Watch resources
5. Inspect hives.
6. Requeen, if necessary.



Image Source: George Baker generated at Gemini.google.com





Late Spring

April – Mid June

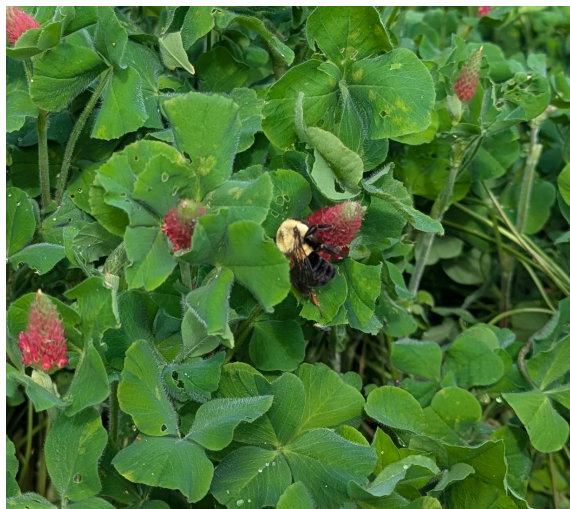


Image Source: George Baker

1. Continue monitoring for swarms.
2. Add supers as needed.
3. Inspect hives.
4. Bees are making honey.





Early Summer

Mid June - July



1. Pull supers and extract honey. Leave some for them to eat later.
2. Inspect hives.
3. Requeen if necessary.



Image Source: Cyndi Baker





Next Steps

1. Join a Beekeeping Association.
2. Sign up for a Basic Bee Keeping Course.
3. Find a mentor.
4. Read as much as you can.
5. With mentor's help, order bees and equipment.



Image Source: George Baker generated at ChatGPT.com





How to have a successful first year as a beekeeper



1. Keep your bees alive.
2. Don't fret if you loose bees, everybody does.
3. Have fun.





RESOURCES

Where to find more information

- [SC State Beekeeper Association](#)
- [SC State Beekeeper Association Local Association Lookup Page](#)
- [Bee Culture Magazine](#)
- [The American Bee Journal Magazine](#)
- [Georgia State Beekeepers Association](#)
- [North Carolina State Beekeepers Association](#)
- [American Beekeeping Association](#)
- [Clemson Apiculture](#)
- [Blackwater Beekeeping Association](#)






QUESTIONS?



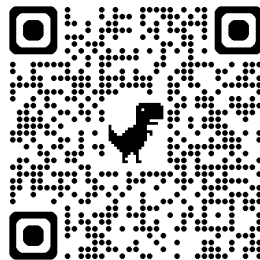
Download this presentation



<https://www.threeriveroaksfarm.com/honeybees/>



Complete the survey

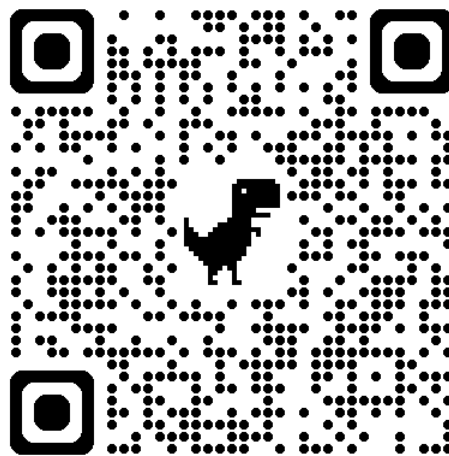


<https://www.blackwaterbeekeepers.org/rightforyou11082025>





2025 Certified Course Registration



<https://www.blackwaterbeekeepers.org/2026CertCourse>



References

1. By Gilles San Martin from Namur, Belgium - Female Varroa destructor on the head of a bee nymph Uploaded by Jacopo Werther, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=24610951>
2. Kroll, G. eagle. (2024, May 31). *Small hive beetle (aethina tumida)*. iNaturalist. <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/219443552>
3. By Sarefo - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2891248>
4. Gemini – <https://gemini.google.com/>
5. ChatGpt - <https://chatgpt.com/>
6. Pixabay - <https://pixabay.com/>
7. Allan Smith-Pardo, Invasive Hornets, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org <https://www.insectimages.org/browse/image/5571274>

