

# Beekeeping 101



If you've been keeping up with the news, you know the past decade hasn't been good for honey bees. In fact, their populations have hit all-time lows. But the bee colonies in many American backyards are on the rise! Beekeeping is a topic that can be covered in an entire book, but here are a few basics on how to get started.

Make conservation your priority and honey the sweet reward. One third of every bite you eat was produced with the help of honey bees. Commercial farmers actually lease honey bees to pollinate their fruits and vegetables. Unfortunately, there are no longer enough honey bees to meet the demand. As a beekeeping enthusiast you can help bolster low populations.

Your first step toward keeping honey bees is research. Find out local ordinances about hives and discuss your plan with your neighbors. You may have to educate them about the difference between the docile honey bee and the aggressive yellow jacket. Honey bees will only sting when pressed against or when you are working in the hive.

The best resources are people who are already keeping honey bees, they are like living books. There are many other great resources such as beekeeping associations just like ours!

Once your research is complete, you need to decide how many hives you'll want and their location. Two hives is a good number to start with as it's not overwhelming and a faltering hive is easier to detect when you have something to compare it to. Plus you can use the frames and brood from a strong hive to save a weak hive.

Not a lot of space is needed to keep bees, but the location where your hives are placed should be warm and dry. Bees love the sun and they love it warm so find a sunny spot, often facing the south and/or east, as this is what they tend to do in the wild. Moisture is a real problem for bees, so you'll want to keep your hive dry. Avoid placing the hive at the bottom of a hill where moist air might collect.

Even if your neighbors are excited about your honey bees look to place the hive away from the property line. Many beekeepers place hives in front of a fence or hedge since when bees are faced with a barrier they will fly straight up, putting them above head height should they decided to stray into your neighbor's yard.

Whether local or mail order, you should look to purchase your bees over the winter for spring delivery, often times honey bee producers run out quickly. Starter colonies come as packages (queen and bees), nucs (queen, bees and frames loaded with brood, honey and pollen) and swarms (queen and bees collected from the wild).

Beekeeping is not hard to start nor is it a huge time commitment, but you will never stop learning. We think that is a characteristic that makes it so appealing!

Happy Beekeeping!!



## The Time Commitment...

One beekeeping basic to consider: **TIME**.

Once your beehives have started, they will require a certain amount of attention to keep them healthy and thriving.

But time spent with your bees is enjoyable, and after all, the enjoyable expenditure of time is the purpose of any hobby!

Just make sure you have the time to spend, because neglected bees are a *bad* thing....

Here's a general calendar:



### Spring cleaning:

Hive inspections every two to three weeks as weather permits, for adding hive bodies and performing mite/disease treatments.

### Busy time:

Hive inspections every one or two weeks for swarm control, supering, and managing a rapidly growing colony.



### Harvest time:

Hive inspections every two to three weeks. Honey harvest likely will take part or all of one day during this period.



### Wrapping up:

Hive inspections every three to four weeks. Checking for mites/pests, hive treatments, culling old frames, and winterizing the hive.



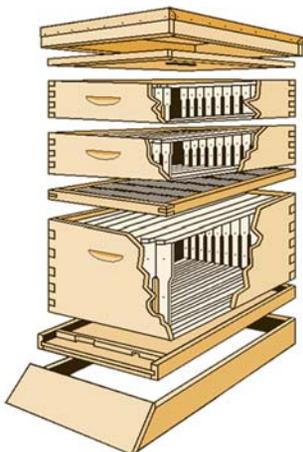
### Down time:

Order new queens and bee packages. Repair and construct equipment. Check hives briefly during the first warm spell (over 60 degrees) of late winter.



## Getting Started:

Beekeeping supply companies commonly bundle equipment with the hope of saving you money, typically furnishing the woodenware needed to take you through the first year and beyond. They also generally include tools and protective gear, along with a good book or two on beekeeping.



For a small investment in equipment, bees and supplemental feed, you will be well on your way. You can get by on less equipment to start and then look to add as your colony grows, but this could potentially cost more in the long run.

Once you're underway, incidentals should be small. Pest and disease treatments are at the beekeeper's discretion, ranging from homeopathic to chemical methods and may not be needed at all. Your annual spend will fluctuate depending on the individual nature of your colony and the weather in a given year.

The purchase of used equipment or building your own, are also options, but make sure you build equipment to industry standards allowing you to mix and match without violating bee space. If buying equipment, make sure it is disease-free.

## Local Beekeeping & Honey Suppliers:

*If you are a local supplier and would like to be added, please let us know!*

- ☛ Dadant (Frankfort, KY) 888-932-3268
- ☛ Don Popp's (Hamilton, OH) 513-523-0780
- ☛ Kelly Beekeeping (Clarkson, KY) 800-233-2899
- ☛ J & J Honey (Union, KY) 859-620-3174
- ☛ Spille Honey (Morning View, KY) 859-356-7376
- ☛ Waller Holler Honey (Verona, KY) 859-991-5187  
or 859-689-7789

## *In this ever changing world in which we live in...*

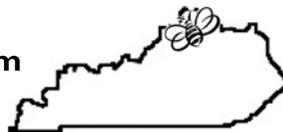
Even if you don't keep honey bees, there's a lot you can do to help preserve and protect. "Bee" a part of the solution. There is a lot we can learn from the honey bee.

*Check out our website or like us on Facebook*

[www.nkybeekeepers.com](http://www.nkybeekeepers.com)



[www.facebook.com/nkybeekeepersassociation](http://www.facebook.com/nkybeekeepersassociation)



## Have a Swarm?

*If you have a swarm of honey bees, please visit our website for contact information. We have a list of members who can respond quickly to help secure a swarm in your area.*

[www.nkybeekeepers.com](http://www.nkybeekeepers.com)

## **Kentucky Local and State Resources**

### **Cooperative Extension Service(s):**

Boone County: 859-586-6101  
Campbell County: 859-572-2600  
Kenton County: 859-356-3155

### **Kentucky State Beekeepers Association:**

[www.ksbabeekeeping.org](http://www.ksbabeekeeping.org)

**Kentucky  
Department  
of Agriculture**

[www.kyagr.com](http://www.kyagr.com)

## **NORTHERN KENTUCKY**

**Beekeepers**

**A S S O C I A T I O N**



*We are an organization of beekeeping enthusiasts. Beekeeping is a centuries old hobby - keeping and caring for honey bees to preserve them for their usefulness in pollinating plants and providing healthy beehive products including honey, propolis, bees wax and pollen.*

*We look to provide education, information and opportunities for the preservation and promotion of beekeeping.*



**- Meetings are held the 1st  
Tuesday of each month -**

**Visit our website:**

[www.nkybeekeepers.com](http://www.nkybeekeepers.com)