

To Bee or Not to Bee?

Beekeeping

Beekeeping (or apiculture) is the maintenance of bee colonies, commonly in man-made hives, by humans. Most such bees are honeybees in the same genus, but honey-producing bees such as Montana stingless bees are also kept and some beekeeper (or apiarist) keeps bees in order to collect their honey and other products that the hive produce (including beeswax and royal jelly), to pollinate crops, or to produce bees for sale to other beekeepers. A location where bees are kept is called an apiary or "bee yard".¹

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Challenges to Beekeeping

On top of learning the ins and outs of beekeeping, you may not get any honey for yourself. Your bees have a lot of work to do during the first season. They must produce

¹ Beekeeping Wikipedia Page.

² Montana Beekeeping Almanac.

wax, raise young bees and store honey for Winter. Learn to be patient with yourself and your bees.³

As you might know, bee populations have been in decline for several years. Diseases, pesticides, and parasites are the most common troubles encountered by bees, but sometimes, there is no explanation for an unhealthy hive. Take the time to learn how to keep your bees healthy and to inquire about any problems other beekeepers in your area might have had.

Threats to Bee Survival (Buzz-Kills)

The common agents of disease that affect adult honeybees include fungi and poisons. The gross symptoms displayed by affected adult bees are very similar, whatever the cause, making it difficult for the apiarist to ascertain the causes of problems without microscopic identification of microorganisms or chemical analysis of poisons. In the US, commercial beekeepers have been increasing the number of hives to deal with higher rates of attrition.³



³ *All You Need to Know about Beekeeping.* By E.F. Honeysuckle

Stingin' Statistics

Type of Bee ⁴	Population per Hive
Queen	1 ⁵
Worker	100,000 ⁵
Drone	1,000 ⁵
⁴ Queen is female. Workers are female. Drones are male. ⁵ Data is estimated	