

# Bee Newsletter

Ashe County Center

January 2017



## Inside This Issue

Introduction to  
Beekeeping Course

Beekeepers Meeting

Ashe County  
Beekeepers  
Association

How to Become a  
Beekeeper in  
North Carolina



## Contact Us

North Carolina Cooperative  
Extension, Ashe County Center  
134 Government Circle, Suite 202  
Jefferson, NC 28640

Phone: (336) 846-5850  
Fax: (336) 846-5882

<http://ashe.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension agent.

## Introduction to Beekeeping Course

The Ashe County Beekeepers Association (ACBA) will be hosting an introduction to beekeeping course. The course will be taught by Randy Baldwin, Journeyman Beekeeper and ACBA President (*Greg Fariss, Apiary Inspector, will conduct the class on February 21*). Classes will be fun and informative, so consider this course whether you think you already know enough about bees or even if you don't have bees yet. Classes will include hands on opportunities, including assembly of hardware (*hive boxes and frames*), extraction, and working with hives. Participants will be able to purchase hive hardware and nucs at a discounted price.

Classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Agriculture Service Center (134 Government Circle, Jefferson, NC 28640) beginning February 2, 2017 until February 28, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. with refreshments provided. There will also be a hands on meeting in a bee yard (*date to be determined*). The cost of the class is \$45.00 which includes text, *First Lessons in Beekeeping*, and 2017 Ashe County Beekeepers Association membership fee (*if membership has already been paid, cost will be \$35.00*).

At the conclusion of the course, students will have the option of taking the state test for Certified Beekeeper, the first level of the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association's Master Beekeeper Program. Anyone who takes the test (*free*) must be a member of the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association (*annual dues are \$15.00 and may be paid at the class*).

To register or for more information, contact Randy or Helen Baldwin at (336) 982-8289 or (336) 977-9167. In order to have enough textbooks on hand by the first class, please register by January 23, 2017; however, registration will be accepted at the door.

## Beekeepers Meeting

April 22, 2017 at Southern States

12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. - Lunch Provided (no charge)

**Speaker:** Greg Fariss, Apiary Inspector

### Meeting Topics:

- \* Updates On Caring For Bees
- \* Summer Beekeeping



Please RSVP by April 19, 2017 (336-846-5850) so there will be adequate materials, seating and meals available for participants.

Ashe County Beekeepers Association  
PO Box 223, Jefferson, NC 28640  
[www.ashebeekeepers.org](http://www.ashebeekeepers.org)

Randy Baldwin, President \* Helen Baldwin, Vice-President  
Doug Ehrhardt, Secretary \* Bill Naser, Treasurer  
Maggie McClelland, Program Chair \* Harry Galer, Past-President

Sincerely,

Micah Orfield

Extension Agent, Agriculture

State University  
A&T State University

**NC COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

Empowering People • Providing Solutions

# How to Become a Beekeeper in North Carolina

David Tarpy, Professor and Extension Apiculturist Entomology and Jennifer Keller, Ag. Research Technician II Entomology

Beekeeping is a very enjoyable and rewarding pastime that is relatively inexpensive to get started. Moreover, it's a hobby that can eventually make you money! The following is a primer on how to start your first hive and begin keeping bees.

The minimum amount of equipment needed to become a beekeeper is one complete starter hive, which consists of a bottom board (*floor*), a hive body (*main box*) with 10 frames (*where the bees build wax comb*), an inner cover (*ceiling*), and a lid (*roof*). A colony of bees can live very successfully in such a hive and can store enough honey for its own needs. They may quickly out grow this space, and produce a swarm (*where approximately half of the bees will fly away to start a new colony*). To keep the bees from swarming, and to harvest surplus honey, you will need additional hive equipment. But if you don't want to collect honey, then a starter hive is all the equipment you will ever need.

Most beekeepers are not content with watching half of their bees fly away, so they will try to prevent this from happening by furnishing more hive space in the form of additional boxes, called '*supers*', on top of the original box. This gives the colony more space to grow and the bees more room to store honey. If you wish to remove honey from the hive, adding supers is a necessity.

We recommend that a first-time beekeeper start with two full beehives. That way, you will have a minimal frame of reference to compare your new colonies and to develop your management techniques.

In addition to furnishing a beehive, some other equipment is needed. Three items are required to safely work a beehive: a smoker (*pacify bees and reduce defense response*), a hive tool (*pry apart hive equipment/frames*), and a veil (*protect head and face*). Beginners often feel more comfortable with the protection of a full-body beekeeping suit and gloves, but eventually they are not necessary if bees are handled properly.

Equipment is available from several beekeeping supply companies. Most companies have starter kits, which usually include a complete starter hive (*without bees*), smoker, hive tool, and veil. There are also deluxe kits, which include the mentioned items, as well as additional equipment to add to the hive as the colony population grows. The prices of these kits range from \$125.00 for the starter hive to \$325.00 for a deluxe kit. You can also buy the individual (*pre-cut*) parts of the hive and assemble it yourself.

Once a hive is assembled, it is ready to house bees. There are three main ways to acquire a honey bee colony. First, purchase a five frame nucleus colony (*nuc box*) from a local beekeeper registered to sell bees (*contact the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services for a current listing*). A nuc box usually contains five frames of 10,000 adult bees, wax comb (*with honey and pollen*), brood (*developing young*), and an egg laying queen. Starting a colony can cost between \$70-100, but it will become a mature hive very rapidly and be less likely to fail. Second, purchase a three-pound package of bees with a queen. Any number of beekeeping operations nationwide will send through the mail a screened wooden box with live bees, costing \$45-65. The bees can then be shaken out of the package, and they will establish themselves in the hive. Third, capture a swarm that escaped from another hive. Although not as common as they once were, wild swarms can be obtained in the early to mid-spring (*late March, April, and early May*). Local beekeeping clubs often have swarm call lists to assist beekeepers in capturing swarms reported in their area. Beginners usually need help with capturing their first swarm. These latter two approaches are more cost effective (*virtually free in the last case*), but the bees will need more time for the colony to develop and be productive.

Of course, honey bees have the potential to sting in defense of their hive. The frequency of being stung is much lower than what is commonly believed. Managed properly - using smoke, a hive tool, protective clothing, and gentle manipulation - stings are quite unlikely. If a beekeeper is stung, localized pain and swelling is a normal reaction and one that should not cause concern. Bee venom can be a serious allergen for certain people, with 1 in 200 persons having a true allergic reaction requiring immediate medical attention. Consult with a physician if you have any concerns about being stung.

## Beekeeping supply companies

- ♦ **Brushy Mountain Bee Farm**, 610 Bethany Church Rd Moravian Falls, NC 28654; Telephone: 800-233-7929; [www.brushymountainbeefarm.com](http://www.brushymountainbeefarm.com)
- ♦ **Miller Bee Supply**, 496 Yellow Banks Road North Wilkesboro, NC 28659; Toll Free: 888-848-5184; Phone 336-670-2249; [www.millerbeesupply.com](http://www.millerbeesupply.com)
- ♦ **Mann Lake Ltd.**, 501 1<sup>st</sup> Street South Hackensack, MN 56452; Telephone: 800-880-7694; [www.mannlakeltd.com](http://www.mannlakeltd.com)
- ♦ **Dadant & Sons Inc.**, 51 South 2nd Street Hamilton, IL 62341; Telephone: 888-922-1293; [www.dadant.com](http://www.dadant.com)
- ♦ **Kelley Beekeeping Company**, 807 West Main Street Clarkson, KY 42726; Telephone: 800-233-2899; [www.kelleybees.com](http://www.kelleybees.com)

## Contact information

- ♦ [North Carolina State Beekeepers Association](http://www.ncbeekeepers.org) - <http://www.ncbeekeepers.org>
- ♦ [North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Apiary](http://www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry/Plant/apiary/index.htm) - <http://www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry/Plant/apiary/index.htm>
- ♦ [North Carolina State University Apiculture Program](http://ncsuapiculture.net) - <http://ncsuapiculture.net>