

Checklist: Resources for a Prospective Beekeeper

**These slides accompany the recorded VBA
Zoom workshop held on January 23, 2024.**

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How can I learn what to do?

- ✓ **Vermont Beekeepers Association (VBA) Training Program**
<https://www.vermontbeekeepers.org/resources/for-beekeepers/vba-training-program>
 - ✓ **Recommended texts (listed below)**
 - ✓ **Take a class! More on this.**
 - ✓ **Join a club or association**
 - ✓ **Find a mentor (caution here) – VBA mentor program**
 - ✓ **VBA - Beekeeper Helpline (new)**
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Club & Association meetings and workshops

✓ VBA, NHBA, SABA, MBA

- ❑ VBA more than 20 Zoom & live meetings and workshops – check calendar on VBA web page – free to members

✓ Local club meetings – Windham, Bennington, Addison, Chittenden, Franklin counties

✓ In-hive workshops for hands-on experience

- ❑ VBA south yard – Windsor, VT
- ❑ Local club yards & outdoor workshops

Other sources

✓ Betterbee Field Day – June free to all

✓ “Betterbee Buzz” and website Information Center

✓ College classes – UVM, Cornell, Penn State

✓ Kirk Webster open House (2 per year) - <https://kirkwebster.com/>

✓ Mike Palmer YouTube – (Be really careful about other YouTube sites)

https://www.youtube.com/results?sp=mAEB&search_query=mike+palmer+beekeeper

Recommended texts

Most of these are free on Interlibrary Loan from VT libraries

- ✓ **Beekeeping For Dummies 5th edition** - Howland Blackist
- ✓ **The Beekeeper's Handbook 5th edition** - Diana Sammataro and Alphonse Avitabile
- ✓ **First Lessons in Beekeeping** - Dadant, Keith Delaplane 2007 version
- ✓ **Natural Beekeeping** - Ross Conrad
- ✓ **Honeybee Democracy** - Tom Seeley
- ✓ **Beekeeping Basics** – Maryann Frazer <https://extension.psu.edu/beekeeping-basics>

2024 Classes in Vermont

- ✓ **Organic Beekeeping for Beginners** – Ross Conrad – May 19&20
<https://mettaearth.org/metta-earth-institute-2/organic-beekeeping-programs/>
- ✓ **Betterbee - many** – <https://www.betterbee.com/classes-and-events/classes-and-events.asp>
- ✓ **Vermont Beekeeping Supply** – Sheri Englert - central VT
Send email for schedule - vtbee@live.com
- ✓ **Beekeeping Basics** – Bill Mares, Deborah Rubin – May 6, 13, 20, CVU, Hinesburg, VT. Register here: <https://cvsdvt.ce.eleyo.com/course/2263/winterspring-2024/beekeeping-basics>
- ✓ **Sudabee's** – Zach Suddaby – Lamoille County area
Call Sudabee's Honey" at (802) 595-5311 for times and locations

What about the bees?

Choice: Nūc (nucleus colony) or Package

Nuc: five deep frames in a portable box – a fully functional small colony with a laying queen and developing brood.

Package: About 3 lbs. (10,000) of bees in a screened cage and a queen caged in a separate container. No frames, no brood.

Queen is not yet laying.

Variety: Common in the northeast: Carniolan, Russian, Italian, Saskatraz. There are others. Most are actually “Heinz 57”!

Which Should I pick - Nūc or Package?

Which variety?

Nuc: Best if you have no drawn comb.

Package: Good if you already have drawn comb.

Variety: Don't be too concerned about variety in the beginning. Be concerned about getting bees from a reliable source.

Where to get bees

<https://www.vermontbeekeepers.org/services/northern-honeybee-providers>

A serious caution!

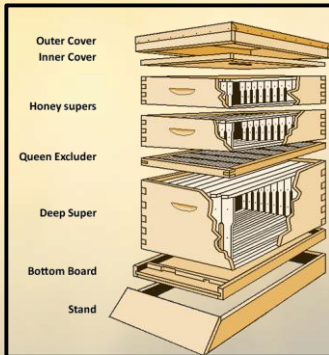
Avoid Uncle Jack and Aunt Mary's or your friend's old beekeeping equipment out in the barn unless you can for 100% certain be sure that the colonies in that used equipment did not have American foulbrood (AFB). AFB is deadly; you will lose you bees and your equipment from AFB (they must be burned!)

AFB spores remain viable for up to 70 years or more!

Optional basic kinds of hives

Langstroth

8 or 10 frame



There are other configurations

Long Langstroth



Warre



Top bar



Stick with standard
Langstroth in the
beginning – frames
with “foundation”

Recommend 8 frame – less
weight per box & better comb
building





Be safe!

Stick with new equipment.

Year 1 - What will I need and what will it cost?

Startup – First colony

- Electric fence system - \$250-\$410
- Beekeeping class – \$45-\$100
- Books - \$0 (all on ILL)
- Tools, PPE, smoker, varroa check, feeders, misc.
- \$125-\$300
- Extracting equipment (optional) - \$600-\$1,400
- Woodenware - \$275 (Basic starter)
- Bees (one colony) - ~\$200
- Winter hive prep - ~\$35

Total: \$930 - \$1,320

**Not including
extracting equipment**

@ \$600-\$1,400

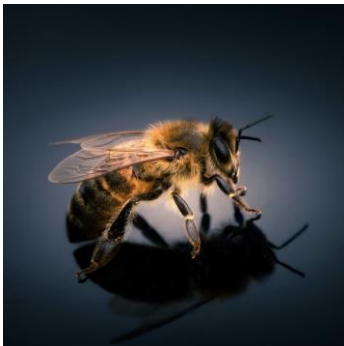
**Add ~\$510 for each
additional colony**

Lack of attention first year:

Lose all colonies – die or abscond.

Must buy new colonies.

Harm neighbor colonies & native species.



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