

## TIDBITS FOR NEW BEEKEEPERS

1. **Always** wear protective clothing when working with bees or near an apiary.
2. **Remain Calm.** When working bees, the best approach is calmness, slow movements, and confidence. Most beekeepers talk to their bees... even if it is a curse word when stung.
3. **When buying equipment, do your research.** Not all equipment is interchangeable. Envision your future apiary and ensure the initial equipment purchased fits with future plans. Size of the hive bodies, supers, frames, etc., vary from company to company as does quality. Consider 8 frames versus 10 frames. When you get your first honey flow, the frames can be very heavy. When moving a hive, the 10 frame weighs more than an 8 frame hive. To make your equipment last longer, paint it.
4. **We suggest starting with 2 hives/colonies.** If you lose one, at least your beekeeping adventure can continue. Also, two colonies allow a new beekeeper (New-Bee) to compare differences in development and production. One healthy, productive hive/colony should give you ample honey for personal use and some honey to give as gifts. Two hives should give you honey to sell. The first year you may not get a honey harvest. Usually, you start with smaller colonies which you build the first year.
5. **Where do I put my hive?** Beekeepers had had healthy hives in full sun and in partial shade. Light shade may be desirable for you to work your hives in July and August. Do not locate your hives in heavy shade, near your home, near walking paths to different buildings, or areas where people gather, e.g., a picnic table. Avoid placing hives where bee flight paths cross walkways or play areas. Locate off the road. Fencing/hedging is desirable for several reasons. Fencing and out of sight hives keep people from approaching the hives at the wrong time. Honey can be a trigger for a thief. Face your hive entrance to the south. A wind protection (hedging/ bush, woods) on the north side is preferable for Winter months. For urban hives the best thing you can do is put a 6 foot fence/hedge around your apiary. Provide water for your bees (they won't go to your neighbors for water). Free honey for the neighbors can help sweeten an uncertain situation.
6. **When can I work my hive?** A general guide is 50 degrees or above with little or no wind. Usually, you want to enter the hive from mid-morning to late afternoon. Forager bees will be out and about, gathering nectar and pollen during this time of the day. You will have fewer bees to work.
7. **When can I move my hive?** You can move your hive at any time. Think about bees being transported on semis to the almond groves in California. These hives are sealed to prevent the bees from escaping. The time of the day you relocate your hives will dictate what precautionary measures. The best time is usually in the early evening, after all of the foragers have returned, is the best time to move a hive. The rule of thumb is you need to move your hive more than three feet. You will want to close the hive up and when opening the hive before the next morning place a branch or some grass over the opening so the bees will take an orientation flight, otherwise they may try to return to the original location. Do your research.

8. **Add a second hive body**, to increase the size of the colony, when the majority of the frames in the first hive are near fully drawn out (80% or 8-9 frames), otherwise your colony may swarm. Add a second super, to increase honey production, when the first super is half full.
9. **A good hive has approximately 30,000 worker bees.** An abundant hive has up to 70,000 bees. There are three kinds of bees in the hive: one Queen Bee (QB), drone bees (males), and worker bees (females). The QB can lay up to 2000- eggs a day and usually lives 3-5 years. The only purpose of the drones is to mate with the queen. It takes 21 days from when the QB lays an egg to when a worker bee hatches, The younger bees are housekeepers for the first 10 days. After this, they fly to the fields collecting nectar and pollen. Worker bees live approximately 6 weeks in the Summer and 8 weeks in the Winter. The only bees in the hive over the Winter are female. The females kick the drones out of the hive after the Fall honey flow or if there is a shortage of honey any time during the year.
10. **The bees keep the brood temperature** at approximately 97 degrees
11. **Bees can not see the color white.** This is why bee suits are white.
12. **Drones do not sting.** Only the female bee sting. Bees sting when their home, brood, and/or food are threatened. The sting of the bee is sometimes used for medicinal purposes. Honey is an effective antimicrobial agent which inhibits growth of bacteria. Honey has successfully been used for burns, abrasions, and indigestion. The darker the honey, the more minerals and vitamins (antioxidant potential) it has. Honey should not be fed to children under the age of 1 year.
13. **How much honey do you leave on board?** One of the most common mistakes of a new beekeeper is starvation. Your colony needs honey to survive the Winter up till the first nectar flow in the Spring. If you take all the honey or do not leave enough honey on board, the bees will starve to death. The honey left in the hive is called “stores.” A general rule of thumb is to have a full super or second hive body and 20 to 30 pounds of honey in the brood nest. This is a total of 60 to 70 pounds of honey for Winter and early Spring consumption.
14. **Pre-think how you want to bottle your honey.** If going into business, how do you want to market it? Do you want to use glass or plastic? If selling to the public, regulations require special labeling.
15. **Hives moved into Illinois or across county lines** within Illinois must be inspected and a moving permit issued prior to moving. There is no cost for this inspection. Our website [www.stclairbees.com](http://www.stclairbees.com) has information on how to contact the State Inspector.