

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF BEEKEEPING

1. **Use only good beekeeping equipment.** Ensure you have standard equipment which you can easily interchange. Using mismatched equipment not only makes it more difficult to work hives, but it allows the bees to develop comb in odd ways and lay eggs in the wrong places.
2. **Protect your beekeeping equipment.** Equipment can last for years if maintained and stored properly. Consider using wood preservatives and/or a good paint and keep hives off the ground where they are subject to rotting and fall victim to pests such as carpenter ants and termites. Store your equipment/supplies in clean conditions.
3. **Control diseases and parasites.** Learn the diseases and parasites that affect bees in your area. Learn what signs you have to be aware of. Learn what actions and/or treatments are necessary/successful. Take appropriate action.
4. **Requeen when necessary.** Requeening can maximize both brood and honey production, and is helpful in suppressing swarming and certain diseases. Generally, it is considered best to requeen with local stock.
5. **Maximize colony populations before main nectar flow.** Requeening, disease/parasite control, and feeding sugar water and pollen can achieve this objective. Supply frames of brood to weak colonies. Don't tolerate marginal colonies.
6. **Super colonies according to their needs.** Provide plenty of space for bees to store nectar before the nectar flow starts. Remove supers in late summer so the bees will be encouraged to pack brood heavily with honey for the winter.
7. **Help the bees through the winter.** Use two brood chambers for wintering. Reduce hive entrances. Provide an upper entrance as an alternative access as a means for assisting with the discharge of excess water vapor. Protect hives from the wind. Ensure you have enough honey on board when winter starts. Check your hives during the winter (weather permitting). If you feel they are short on supplies, supplement by feeding.
8. **Follow State and Local Laws/Regulations.** Adhere to beekeeping laws regulating your area. Many states require registration of hives and inspections (annually and when the hives are moved across a county line). In most states, there is no cost to abide by these rules. Also, it is an opportunity to learn (ask questions) from the inspector when he/she is actually looking at the activity and condition of your hives/colonies.
9. **Take pride in honey and other hive products.** Keep your equipment clean and disease free. Strain extracted honey to remove particulate debris. Market your honey and other hive products with pride, confidence, and creativity.
10. **Join and participate in a beekeeping association.** Beekeeping organizations can be exceedingly helpful in your efforts as a novice beekeeper. Not only do they provide you access to knowledge and experienced beekeepers, they also discuss and teach practical beekeeping. Most importantly, beekeeping associations help defend the interest of bees, beekeepers, and beekeeping. There are three local clubs: (1) St. Clair Beekeepers Association; (2) tri-county Beekeepers Association; and (3) Kaskaskia County Beekeeper's Consortium. Each club meets on a regular basis in different locations. Go to www.isba.com (Illinois State Beekeepers' Association) to learn more and get information for each club.