



## Become a Beekeeper

### What do I need to get started?

#### Join a Beekeepers' Association

Contact the secretary of your local association. Find contact details for Wales at [www.wbka.com](http://www.wbka.com) and for England at [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk). Many associations run introductory days and beginners' courses.

#### Basic Beekeeping Book

Borrow a few titles from your association or public library before deciding on the best one for you.

#### Hive and Hive Equipment

There are many hive types available. Speak to members of your beekeepers' association BEFORE buying to get practical advice. Whatever you decide on it is easier if all your hives are the same design. You can buy hives from a retailer 'in the flat' or made up. Second-hand is available but ALWAYS take an experienced beekeeper with you and never buy second-hand brood frames. Scorch second-hand equipment to clean it before use.

Items of hive equipment that are essential in the first season are:

- **Smoker:** used to calm the bees. Large fuel box usually recommended.
- **Hive Tool:** Used to lever and scrape hive frames. J type usually recommended.
- **Feeder:** Used to feed colonies syrup

#### Protective Clothing

The most essential purchase you will make when starting beekeeping is your protective clothing. If you are confident in your clothing you will be a better beekeeper and the more you will enjoy your beekeeping. You will need a bee suit, veil and gloves. Gloves should be thick enough to protect you and thin enough allow you to carry out your beekeeping. They should be fully washable or disposable.



### How do I obtain bees?

**Complete Colonies:** require some skill to manage in a first season and can be expensive.

**Nucleus Colony:** is a small colony (4-5 frames) that will grow in the first year to full size.

**Swarm:** Free but needs some skill to catch - best obtained in May or June.

#### Health Inspection

If you purchase a nucleus or a full colony it is advisable to have the bees examined to ensure they are free from disease. Any beekeeper can ask the National Bee Unit for a free inspection - your regional bee inspector will give advice on husbandry and disease control (see [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)).

### Where can I keep my bees?

**Garden:** In a large garden this may be possible, but think about how your family (and neighbours) use the garden and whether your beekeeping will interfere with their enjoyment of it.

**Out Apiary:** Many local authorities, parks, nature reserves and farmers will allow you to site your bees in a quiet corner for a small rent, usually honey.

Always assess the suitability of the site. Consider:

- **Vehicle access** - a super of honey is heavy to carry.
- **Storage** - will the landowner offer you storage or can you erect a shed.
- **Forage** - are there suitable flowers in the area.
- **Water** - if not available provide a suitable supply.
- **Security** - unfortunately bee colonies are being stolen all over the UK.
- **Suitable fencing** - livestock may rub up against a hive and push it over.

### Why join a beekeepers' association?

You will find friendly like-minded people who are prepared to offer advice, guidance and help. Associations provide beekeepers with the most up to date information on disease control and husbandry techniques, helping them to care for and manage their bees for a better crop and healthier bees. We also have lots of fun, share our experiences and learn from each other!

Membership of an association includes:

- Insurance (3rd party, public liability & bee disease)
- Welsh Beekeepers' Association magazine
- Beginners and advanced beekeeping courses
- Monthly meetings with talks and demonstrations

Some associations may also have an apiary, library, newsletter and online shop for honey and equipment sales, or hold fetes or shows for honey and other hive products.

**Lampeter & District Beekeepers' Association**  
[lampeterbeekeepersassociation.co.uk](http://lampeterbeekeepersassociation.co.uk)

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