

**SPRING 2024 Bristol County Beekeepers Association  
Beginner's Beekeeping Course  
Tuesday evenings 7:00 – 9:00  
February 6 – April 2, 2024**

All classes are scheduled to be held in person at Bristol Aggie

This is the course you should take if you are thinking about keeping bees, or if you have tried beekeeping and want to learn more about it or if you are just curious about bees!

The cost is \$50 which includes lectures, handouts and a 1-year membership to Bristol County Beekeepers Association. Please note that the membership is for an individual, entitled to one vote at club meetings.

Subjects will include the biology of honeybees, how to acquire your first bees, buying or building a beehive, plants for the bees, diseases and how to treat them, and queens. Colony management and a review of what to do during the four seasons will give you an idea of what is involved. There will be lots of time for questions and answers, and a chance to talk to people who have just started as well as veterans with 100 hives who can talk about tons of honey.

Classes are held on Tuesdays evening, from 7 to 9 pm with a 15 minute break. There will be a general membership monthly meeting held during the course that students (as new members) are encouraged to attend. Classes are scheduled to end on April 2<sup>nd</sup> with the exception of a continued education class in October. If there are cancellations, Bee School will be pushed back a week. A makeup day is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>, if needed.

## **Week 1 –February 6th, 2024**

### **Introduction to Beekeeping** – Eric Pilotte

About this class

- Course overview/the “big picture”
- Introduction to Bristol County Beekeepers’ Association
- Why do you want to keep bees?
- Integrated and safe beekeeping education
- Bee Buddies
- Workshops
- Resource list (library, web, bibliography, organizations, equipment suppliers,)
- Basic equipment (smoker, hive tool, protective equipment, etc.)
- Basic hive parts (bottom boards, hive body, supers, frames, inner cover, lid)
- Making the decision to be a beekeeper: Time, cost, bee stings, when to order bees.

## **Week 2 – February 13, 2024** - Equipment and Assembly – Ed Lowe

Review of Bristol Bee recommended hive parts (bottom boards, hive body, supers, frames, inner cover, and outer cover)

- Other equipment (queen excluders, feeders, hive straps, moving frame, staples)
- Plans for making own hive bodies and supers.
- Demonstration of assembly

Required Reading: Chapter 3 – Beekeeping Equipment – pgs. 36-48

## **Week 3 –February 20, 2024** - Biology and Life Cycle of the Honey Bee- Tim Cummings

- Biology of the honey bee
- Individual caste life cycles, duties
- Hive life cycle (intro to what bees do in each season)
- Communication: pheromones, dancing
- Brief intro to races
- Colony Collapse Disorder

Required Reading: Appendix A – Anatomy of Honey Bees – pgs. 245-249

Chapter 1 – Understanding Bees – pgs. 3-19

Chapter 2 – Colony Activities – pgs. 20-35

## **Week 4 – February 27, 2024** - Regular Monthly Meeting (Speaker scheduled)

**Week 5 – March 5, 2024** - Starting a New Hive – John Grace

- Site considerations: location, neighbors, ordinances
- Getting your own: package bees, nucs, swarms, buying an existing colony or split
- Installing a nuc
- Installing packaged bees
- Feeding & caring for the bees (more to be covered in Colony Management)
- Question & Answer time

Required Reading: Chapter 4 – Obtaining and Preparing for Bees – pgs. 49-60

Chapter 5 – Working Bees – pgs. 61-72

Chapter 6 – Package Bees – pgs. 74 -85

Chapter 7 – Feeding Bees – pgs. 86-97

**Week 6 – March 12, 2024** - Colony Management – Jim Deterra

- Late winter/early spring
- Honey flow build-up; post honey flow
- Honey plants: nectar and pollen sources
- Summer management
- Fall and winter management

Required Reading: Chapter 8 – Winter/Spring Management – pgs. 109-108

Chapter 9 – Summer/Fall Management – pgs. 109-124

Chapter 11 – Special Management Problems – pgs. 148-167

**Week 7 – March 19, 2024** - Diseases, Pests & Common Threats – Paul Tessier

- Diseases: AFB, EFB, chalkbrood, sacbrood and nosema
- Pests: varroa mites, tracheal mites, SHB
- IPM strategies: resistant breeds, screened bottom boards, proper maintenance, checking population, proper use of pesticides, mechanical controls.

Required Reading: Chapter 13 – Pathogens and Parasites of Honey Bees – pgs. 189-209

Chapter 14 – Pests of Honey Bees – pgs. 210-202

**Week 8 - March 26, 2024** – Regular Monthly Meeting (Speaker scheduled)

**Week 9 – April 2, 2024** – Alternatives to Langstroth Hives - Ed Lowe

Swarm Catching for Beginners – Eric Pilotte

- Slovenian AZ Hives
- Top Bar Hives
- Hive Inspection Video
- Q&A time for all topics

**April 9, 2024** – Makeup Class (If needed)

Continuing education class:

**October 1- 2024-** Spring of Next Year – Ed Lowe

Early Spring is a critical time for the bees in this area. Their survival this time of year could depend on you. When next spring arrives, what should you do, how should you do it, when should you do it? We will explore those questions more. This class is focused on those crucial months between winters end and the nectar flow.

**The Woodenware Workshop-** Woodenware Assembly Workshop

Dates TBD