

**SPRING 2023 Bristol County Beekeepers Association  
Beginner's Beekeeping Course  
Tuesday evenings 7:00 – 9:00  
February 7 – April 4, 2023**

All classes are scheduled to be held virtually using Zoom

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 4<sup>th</sup>. If there are cancellations, Bee School will be pushed back a week. A makeup day is scheduled for April 11<sup>th</sup>, if needed.

## **Week 1 –February 7, 2023**

### **Introduction to Beekeeping**

- About this classroom
- 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 14, 2023 - Equipment and Assembly**

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

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

## **Week 3 – February 21, 2023 - Biology and Life Cycle of the Honey Bee**

- 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 28, 2023 - Regular Monthly Meeting (Speaker scheduled)**

## **Week 5 – March 7, 2023 - Starting a New Hive**

- 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 14, 2023** - Colony Management

- 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 21, 2023** - Alternatives to Langstroth Hives

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

**Week 8 - March 28, 2023** – Regular Monthly Meeting (Speaker scheduled)

**Week 9 – April 4, 2023** – Diseases, Pests & Common Threats

- 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

**April 11, 2023** – Makeup Class (If needed)