



Practical Beekeeping Syllabus

Winter / Spring 2026 v. c

SESSION 1

February 17

Meet the Bees

7:00 - 7:20 **Welcome** Charlie Donnelly Moran, Bee School Chair
Introduction, class logistics & announcements Pete Delaney, ECBA President

- Discussion of course curriculum and course materials
- Goal of Class
- Overview of class

7:20 – 7:45 Lesson 1-1: **Introduction to Honey Bees** Katherine Carlson

- Castes and their jobs
- Food sources (Pollen and Nectar)
- Communication

7:45 – 8:00 Lesson 1-2: **Mentor Introductions** Charlie Donnelly Moran

8:00 – 8:15 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:15 – 8:55 Lesson 1-3: **Understanding the Modern Beehive** Chris Delaney

- Components of the Modern Beehive
- Frame and Foundation Choices
- Introduction of Tools for Working with Bees
- Langstroth's discovery of Bee Space and removable frames

8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations

** If you haven't already, please read *Beekeeping Basics* Chapters 1: The Colony and Its Organization, and Chapter 2: Beekeeping Equipment **

** For next week's class please read *Beekeeping Basics* Chapter 3: Starting with Bees **



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SESSION 2

February 24

Getting Started

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements

7:05 – 7:25 Lesson 2-1: **Safely Working with Honey Bees**

Julie Crocker

- Protective Clothing Options
- Properly Fitting Clothing
- Clothing and Odors to Avoid

7:25 – 8:00 Lesson 2-2: **Where, When, and How to Buy Bees & Equipment**

Marc Fournier

- Shopping Locally
- Ordering from a distance
- Connecting with vendors at state meetings
- Timing arrival
- Dangers of used equipment
- Meet Local Vendors

8:00 – 8:15 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:15 – 8:35 Lesson 2-3: **Setting up an Apiary**

Geoff Neale

- Location, Location, Location!
- Shelter
- Solar and topographical concerns
- Human and animal habitation concerns
- Good neighbor policy
- Proximity to storage
- Perks of having hives visible from living space

8:35 – 8:55 Lesson 2-4: **Installing Package Bees (Days 1 through 14)**

Joe Gaglione

- Getting them home
- First-year beekeepers – end of April; second-year beekeepers – earlier
- Necessary tools and how to use them
- Hive preparation
- Transferring bees into the hive
- Installing the queen
- Feeding the newly installed bees – more info next week
- Removing the queen cage once the queen has been released

8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations

** For next week's class please read *Beekeeping Basics* Chapter 4: Colony Management **



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SESSION 3

March 3

The First Season

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements

7:05 – 8:00 Lesson 3-1: **Spring & Summer Mgmt. of a New Colony,
The First Year**

Marc Fournier
Sam Hamlin

- Preliminary planning
- Feeding the colony
- Approaching the colony
- Exterior bee activity

8:00 – 8:15 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:15 – 8:55 Lesson 3-2 **Spring & Summer Mgmt. of a New Colony,
The First Year Continued**

Marc Fournier
Sam Hamlin

- Opening hive
- Examining frames
- Closing up
- Adding boxes to the hive (supering)

8:55 - 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations

****For next week's class please review *Beekeeping Basics* Chapter 4: Colony Management ****



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SESSION 4

March 10

Making it Through a Year

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements

7:05 – 8:00 Lesson 4-1: **Fall and Winter Management
- It's Earlier Than You Think**

Joe Gaglione

- Bee seasons
- Changing practices as the season changes
- Necessary tools and how to use them
- Evaluating colony condition & population
- Reading and evaluating frames
- Evaluating food stores
- Feeding colonies
- Protecting colonies from the elements
- Preventing robbing

8:00 – 8:15 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:15 – 8:55 Lesson 4-2: **Management of Overwintered Hives**

Rick Reault

- Early spring inspection of food stores
- Spring evaluation and inspection
- Swarm prevention
- Adding honey supers
- Varroa management – Introduction of IPM

8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations

** For next week's class please read *Beekeeping Basics* Chapter 5: Managing Maladies **



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SESSION 5

March 17

Protecting Your Colony

7:00 - 7:05 Announcements
Mosquito spray opt-out

7:05 – 8:00 Lesson 5-1: **The Biggest Problem – Mites** Mike Garvey

- What Varroa Mites are and why they are bad
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Treatments: complex depending on temperature, season & colony status
- Effective treatment is key to colony survival
- Alcohol Wash Demonstration
- Protecting yourself, bees and honey

8:00 – 8:15 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:15 – 8:35 Lesson 5-2: **Other Hive Issues** Hillori Connors

- Tracheal Mites
- Animal pests
- Wax moths
- Minor insect pests
- Small hive beetles
- Symptoms of brood disease

8:35 - 8:55 Lesson 5-3: **Honey Bee Diseases** Hillori Connors

- Fungus diseases
- Non-infectious diseases
- Chilled brood
- Adult honey bee diseases
- Sac brood and chalk brood
- Foul Brood – American and European
- Proper Use of Medications

8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations

** No reading assignment this week due to optional Bee School Workshop. **

Optional Bee School Workshop: Learn how to assemble your hive and frames, and other hands-on learning activities for both in-person and online students on **Saturday March 21** from 9 AM to Noon at the Beekeeping Building.



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SESSION 6

March 24

The Beekeeping Community

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements

7:05 – 7:35 Lesson 6-1: **State Apiary Laws, Regulations and Inspections**

Rhys Willette
MDAR Apiary Inspector

- Apiary Inspections
- State Beekeeping Laws

7:35 – 8:00 Lesson 6-2: **Networking**

Charlie Donnelly Moran

- Peer group
- Mentors
- Organizations
- Club meetings, hive openings and workshops

8:00 – 8:30 **Extended Break** for both online and in person students to meet with Mentors and other club members to discuss hive openings: what to expect; what to bring; why they are beneficial; and weather considerations.

8:30 – 8:55 Lesson 6-3: **Record Keeping, Beekeepers Calendar & Internet Resources**

Kaitlyn Stanhope

- Note taking strategies and benefits. Find the style that works for you.
- A year in the life of a beekeeper
- Reliable sources of information

8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations

Weekend hive opening announcement and sign-up for Hive Openings on weekend of April 11 and 12. Hive openings are weather dependent.

Next week's class starts at 6:30 pm with a Smoker Lighting Demonstration.

** For next week's class please read *Beekeeping Basics* pages 2-9, 12-13, 72-82 & 94-98 **



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SESSION 7

March 31

Digging Deeper Into Bees

- 6:30 – 7:00 Pre-Class: **Lighting Your Smoker** Geoff Neale
- Fuel
 - Timing
- 7:00 – 7:05 Announcements
- 7:05 – 7:30 Lesson 7-1 **Reading a Frame** Mike Garvey
- What is normal, what is not, and what to do?
 - What you expect to find and where in the hive
 - Understanding brood, food and stores
 - Finding the queen
 - Pests, Diseases and other hive issues
- 7:30 - 7:55 Lesson 7-2: **Needs of Honey Bees** Kathy Balestrier
- Housing
 - Consider amount of sunlight and wind, access to dry and level ground
 - Nectar, pollen, propolis and water as life sustaining materials
 - Water
 - Forage plants
 - Nectar & pollen producing plants useful to honey bees
 - Evaluation of your apiary for honey bee forage
- 7:55 – 8:10 BREAK AND QUESTIONS (Also, sign up for Hive Openings)
- 8:10 – 8:55 Lesson 7-3: **Working with Honey Bees** Marc Fournier
Hands-On Practice Sam Hamlin
- Equipment
 - Purpose
 - Demonstrating how to work a hive
 - Procedures for tools, smokers, and clothing
 - Learning the weights of a super or deep full of honey
- 8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations

Next week's class starts at 6:30 with Smoker Lighting Practice. Bring your smoker and a metal can that your smoker can fit in. We'll supply wood shavings.

****For next week's class please read *Beekeeping Basics* Page 40 Smoker, Chapter 6: Honey Production and Processing, and Chapter 8: Handling Beeswax and Pollen Trapping****



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SESSION 8

April 7

The Products of Your Labor

6:30 – 7:00 **Smoker Lighting Practice**

Geoff Neale

Bring your smoker and a metal can that your smoker can fit in. We'll supply wood shavings, but you are welcome to bring a different fuel if you would prefer.

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements

7:05 – 7:25 Lesson 8-1: **Review of a Few Important Beekeeping Concepts** Sam Hamlin

7:25 – 8:00 Lesson 8-2: **Harvesting & Processing the Honey Crop** Hillori Connors

- Mechanical methods for removing bees from supers
- Chemical methods for removing bees from supers
- Equipment for extracted honey production
- Processing extracted honey
- Processing cut-comb honey
- Processing comb honey
- Cleaning and storage of extracted frames/supers

8:00 – 8:15 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:15 – 8:35 Lesson 8-3: **Products from the Hive & Other Reasons to Keep Honey Bees**

Kathy Ballestrier

- Beeswax
- Pollination
- Propolis
- Pollen
- Bee venom-apitherapy

8:35 – 8:55 Lesson 8-4: **Beekeeping Review - "Art of Observation"** Chris Burkinshaw

- Important things in and outside of a hive

8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations
Hive opening announcement

Next week's class starts at 6:30 with live bee package installation. Veil required!

Optional Hive Openings will be held at club members' apiaries on the weekend of April 11th and 12th. Students need to register in advance since space is limited. Hive openings will be moved to a later date if weather is not favorable.



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SESSION 9

April 14

Final Touches

6:30 – 7:00	Pre-Class: Live Bee Package Installation Bring protective veil.	Rick Reault
7:00 – 7:05	Announcements	
7:05 – 7:25	Lesson 9-1: Review of Package Installation	Rick Reault
7:25 – 8:00	Lesson 9-2: Review of Hive Openings	Geoff Neale
8:00 – 8:15	BREAK AND GRADUATION	
8:15 - 8:55	Lesson 9-3: Question and Answer Roundtable	Committee
8:55 – 9:00	Announcements, Raffle & Evaluations	