

**Essex County Beekeepers' Association  
Practical Beekeeping Syllabus  
Winter/Spring 2008**

**Session 1 - February 26– History/ Equipment and Clothing**

President's Welcome

Introductions, Logistics, and Announcements

Discussion of Course Syllabus and course materials 10 Minutes

**Lesson 1-1:**

History of Beekeeping 20 Minutes

- Primitive Beehives & Beekeeping
- Langstroth and his beehive

**Lesson 1-2: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapter 3)**

Modern Bee Hive Equipment 20 Minutes

- Various Equipment – Purchase, Assemble, and Paint
- Food & Feeders

Break

**Lesson 1-3: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 30-33)**

Tools of the Trade

- Protective clothing for working with bees 45 Minutes
- Tools for working with bees
- Try on bee suits & handle equipment

Announcements, Questions & Discussion 5 Minutes

**Session 2 – March 4 – Bee Biology/ Hive Location**

Special Interest Session: **Chris Sample Video** 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Announcements, Questions and Discussion about last week's lessons 5 Minutes

**Lesson 2-1: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapters 1-2)**

Understanding bee biology, and the life cycle of the honeybee and colony organization 70 Minutes

- Types of honeybees (castes)
- Development of honeybees (practical biology)
- Life cycle of honey bees
- Colony organization

Break (Approx. half-way through Session 2-1)

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**Lesson 2-2: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 35--39)**

Setting up an apiary 30 Minutes

- Shelter concerns
- Solar concerns
- Topographical concerns
- Human & Animal habitation concerns
- Animal Pests
- Good Neighbor Policy

Announcements, Questions & Discussion 5 Minutes

**Session 3 – March 11 – Equipment and Frame Night**

Announcements, Questions and Discussion about last week's lessons 5 Minutes

**Lesson 3-1: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapter 3)**

Hive Bodies, Frames & Foundation – An overview of options 30 Minutes

- Unassembled and Assembled Woodenware
- Wood & Plastic Frames
- Available Foundation Types
- Plastic vs. Wax Foundation
- Assembling of supers

**Lesson 3-2: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 34-35)**

Ordering/Acquiring your Bees – What are your options? 10 Minutes

- Packages, NUCS/nucleus colonies, swarms, old hive
- Club recommends Packages to start.

Break 5 minutes

**Lesson 3-3: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 27-29)**

Assembling Frames 60 Minutes

- Wax Foundation
- Plastic Foundation

Announcements, Questions & Discussion 5 Minutes

**Note: Meet the Suppliers next week... Think about your bee orders!**

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**Session 4 – March – 18 Meet The Supplier Night/ Spring and Summer Management**

Special Interest Session: **Microscope and Bees** 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Announcements, Questions and Discussion about last week's lessons 5 Minutes

**Lesson 4-1: Meet The Suppliers**

Crystal Bee Supply (Vinnie)	5 Minutes
Beekeepers Warehouse (Nancy)	5 Minutes
New England Beekeeping (Rick)	5 Minutes
Merrimack Valley Apriaries	5 Minutes

**Lesson 4-2 ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 169-180)**

Catalogues, Pick up during the break 10 Minutes

**Lesson 4-3: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapter 6)**

Installing package bees 30 minutes

- Procedure for the work
- Purpose for the work

Break 15 Minutes

**Lesson 4-4: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapters 8, 9)**

Spring/Summer Management of a new colony (**First Year**) 45 Minutes

- How to work the hive
- Evaluating colony condition/population
- Feeding
- Supering

Announcements, Questions & Discussion 5 Minutes

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**Session 5 – March 25 – Fall and Winter Management**

Special Interest Session: **Installing a Package Video** 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Announcements, Questions and Discussion about last week's lessons 5 Minutes

**Lesson 5-1: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapters 8,9)**

Fall/Winter Management of a new colony, **First Year** 45 Minutes

- How to work the hive
- Evaluating colony condition/population, and food reserves
- Feeding
- Medication
- Protecting colonies from the elements
- Guarding colonies against mice

Break 15 Minutes

**Lesson 5-2: Spring Management, Second Year ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapter 8)**

How to work the hive (Spring management) 45 Minutes

- Evaluating colony condition/population, and food reserves
- Feeding
- Swarm prevention

Announcements, Questions & Discussion 5 Minutes

**Session 6 – April 1 – Pests and Diseases**

Special Interest Session: **Inspecting a Hive Video** 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Announcements 5 Minutes

**Lesson 6-1: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapter 13)**

Bee Pests, Parasites, and Diseases 40 Minutes

- Tracheal Mite and Varroa Mites
- Comb-damaging moths
- Minor insect pests
- Symptoms of Brood Diseases

Break 15 minutes

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**Lesson 6-2: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 169-180)**

Learning through Organizations, Associations 20 Minutes

- Web Sites
- Organizations and sources of Information
- Associations, clubs, publications, etc.
- Essex County Beekeepers Association – Becoming a member

**Lesson 6-3: Student Feedback Session-Questions/Answers**

- How are you doing? 30 Minutes
- Questions, concerns
- Who ordered Bees
- Found a location for your hive

Announcements, Questions & Discussion 5 Minutes

**Session 7 – April 8 – Pollination and Nectar Sources**

Special Interest Session: **Brewing Mead** 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Announcements, Questions and Discussion about last week's lessons 5 Minutes

**Lesson 7-1: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapter 7, Pg. 122, Chapter 14)**

Needs of Honeybees 45 Minutes

- Nectar, Pollen, Propolis & water as a life sustaining material  
Forage Plants
- Nectar & Pollen producing plants useful to honeybees
- Evaluation of your apiary for honeybee forage

Break 15 minutes

**Lesson 7-2: Beekeepers Calendar – Review of Seasonal Management – Main Points  
(‘Beekeepers Handbook’, Chapters 8,9)** 40 Minutes

- Activity Timeline

Announcements, Questions & Discussion

5 Minutes

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**Session 8 - April 15 – Harvesting & Processing Honey**

Special Interest Session: **Lighting a Smoker** 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Announcements, Questions and Discussion about last week's lessons

5 Minutes

**Lesson 8-1: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 75-81)**

Removing the honey crop

15 Minutes

- Mechanical methods for removing bees from supers
- Chemical methods for removing bees from supers

**Lesson 8-2: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Chapter 12)**

Other products from the hive – other reasons to keep bees

20 Minutes

- Beeswax / How to process
- Uses of bees wax
- Propolis
- Pollen

Break / Sign up for Hive Openings

15 minutes

**Lesson 8-3: ('Beekeepers Handbook', Pages 75-81)**

Processing the honey crop

60 Minutes

- Equipment for extracted honey production
- Honey Extraction Demonstration

Announcements, Questions & Discussion

5 Minutes

**\*\*\* Bee Packages should arrive around April 18 \*\*\***

## WEEK-END HIVE OPENINGS

You will travel to a beekeepers apiary where you will participate in opening a hive. Bring you veil.

- Hive Openings – Saturday, April 19
- Rain Date Sunday April 20<sup>th</sup>
- Locations to be announced

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#### **Session 9 - April 22 – Wrap up** (Passover)

Announcements, Questions and Discussion about last weeks lessons	5 Minutes
<b>Lesson 9-1:</b> Review hive opening experience	Bee School Staff 20 Minutes
<b>Lesson 9-2:</b> Course review	20 Minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bee Biology &amp; life cycle</li><li>• Site</li><li>• Hive Equipment</li><li>• Personal Equipment</li><li>• Package installation procedures</li><li>• Inspections after installation</li><li>• Feeding</li></ul>	
Break	15 minutes
<b>Wrap up/ Questions</b> <b>Raffle of products donated by bee suppliers.</b>	School Committee

## GRADUATION

### **Student Alumni Meeting**

This is a special ECBA meeting devoted to the Bee School graduates and intended as a follow up lesson and held during an ECBA outdoor monthly meeting at a member's bee-yard. The date to be determined and announced during Bee School