



Kelley Bee News

ISSUE 32 • FEBRUARY 2013

Modern Beekeeping



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Forbes: a creatively painted hive of The Bee Lords of Bowling Green High School.

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The Buzz

Greetings Fellow Bee Lovers!

It's been a pleasure seeing so many of you at industry meetings and shows. We appreciate your enthusiasm for bees and for Kelley's products. Thanks for all your ideas and insights.

I share your enthusiasm, and have a new position that will help me leverage my passion for helping honeybees. Kelley's has strategically reorganized with the goal of promoting me to CEO Emeritus by June 30, 2013. While our manufacturing and operational excellence will continue under a new President, I'll have new responsibilities for industry outreach and innovation.

We have a plan in place while we have an industry-wide search for the right person, so it is business as usual.

That "usual" business is buzzing a bit louder each day. It is the beginning of the busy season—in your apiaries and for us as we strive to fully serve you. Thanks for your patience if we're not as quick to answer the phone. We will continue to turn to our excellent seasonal staffers to supplement the workload as the days lengthen. Remember, you can always order via the website as well.

We do enjoy hearing from you so please don't hesitate to email us. Sales@KelleyBees.com will get your questions answered if you can't get through to us during the day, and KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com connects you with the editor of this newsletter. Editor Camilla is very appreciative of your photos, questions and stories, so please keep them coming.

We look forward to being part of your beekeeping success in 2013.

Best regards—

Jane Burgess
Kelley's CEO

I Will Save You Money



Send me a list NOW of what you are going to need for next year, and I will be pleased to quote you **FREIGHT PRE-PAID** to your station.

My prices are very low
---but not too low to give you the very best quality.

5--CYPRESS standard 10-frame dovetailed hives complete with metal covers, inner covers, bottom boards and soft white pine frames - **\$10.95**
F. O. B. Houma

WRITE FOR FREE CATALOG

Gulf Coast Bee Co.
Houma, Louisiana



Bee Thinking About

For February, 2013

For most of us North American beekeepers, there isn't yet much to do IN the apiary. We covered those items in our January issue. Please continue to hope for breaks so the bees can buzz out to do their business as well as move their (hopefully large) cluster to food stores.

There's still plenty to do beyond the apiary—last month's three pages outline all sorts of things to keep you from missing your bees too much.

We turned to one of our favorite beekeepers, Cleo Hogan, to affirm that there isn't much most of us should be doing in the apiary. Cleo notes: "Unless you are talking about the Deep South, I can't think of ANY reason to open a hive in January, February, and first part of March. Perhaps there is one thing—you could look to make sure the entrance is clear, not plugged with snow or ice. Other than that, there is nothing you could do, even if you found a problem."



"By mid-March you could look to see if dead bees are clogging the entrance, evidence of deadout, and then plan as to how you want to replace it. You could possibly feed if you have several warm days, but in January and February you won't normally have very many warm days in a row. Just a day here and there, and still very cold nights. If you have a day or two of warm weather, bees probably won't break cluster, so feeding will do little or no good. Might as well wait until March."

Down south however, things are starting to stir. Dennis Brown, a Texas beekeeper, provides his insights below.

So, grab your new Kelley's catalog, plan, and continue to dream of the days soon to come.

As always, your comments and contributions welcome, email KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com or visit kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯

February Activities for Beekeepers in the South

February is a busy month here at Lone Star Farms in Bryan, Texas. This is the month that I put together all that equipment I ordered last month. It is time consuming to put together several boxes, frames, tops and bottoms. Then, when you finish all that, you still have to get all that equipment painted.

By working with a good plan I made in January, I am able to have all the parts I need to complete my February work load. I don't have to re-order anything which would only slow the process down.

I believe in keeping my bee yard in good order so February is a good time to perform that task. I make sure that all the hives are sitting level on their stands and that the grass and bushes are cut away from the hives. I like to have plenty of work space around each hive. The bees will need

unobstructed access into their hive entrance when the nectar sources become available to them.

February is a good time to inspect all my feeders to make sure they are clean, in good working order and ready to go in case they are needed when I perform my first hive inspection around the first of March. (In the Kelley newsletter for March, I will be discussing how to perform a good hive inspection and what you should be looking for.)

The start of the bee season will be exploding here in Texas by March 1st and if you have a passion for beekeeping like I do even after 50 years, you know how hard it is to contain your excitement. Are we there yet?

Dennis Brown of Lone Star Farms, www.lonestarfarms.net, author of "Beekeeping: A Personal Journey", of course available from Kelley's!

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯

Healthy Bees

Other Bee Species Assist Honeybees



Honeybees pollinating almonds. Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey.

While we're partial to the honeybee, a recent study found that they are more effective at pollinating almonds when other species of bees are present. These other bee species, such as blue orchard, sweat, carpenter, bumble and wild bees, when foraging almonds alongside honeybees, result in a change in honeybee' behavior such that they more effectively pollinate.

This study was conducted in the almond orchards of California, which grow over 80% of the world's almonds. Managed pollinators—honeybees—are essential. About 2.6 million colonies are annually trucked into California for almond pollination, starting mid-February.

More information, including photographs like the one used in this article, may be found at http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/News/Honey_Bees_Are_More_Effective_at_Pollinating_Almonds_When_Other_Species_of_Bees_Are_Present/

For a link to the research article:

<http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/280/1754/20122767.abstract>

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯

Bee-Havior

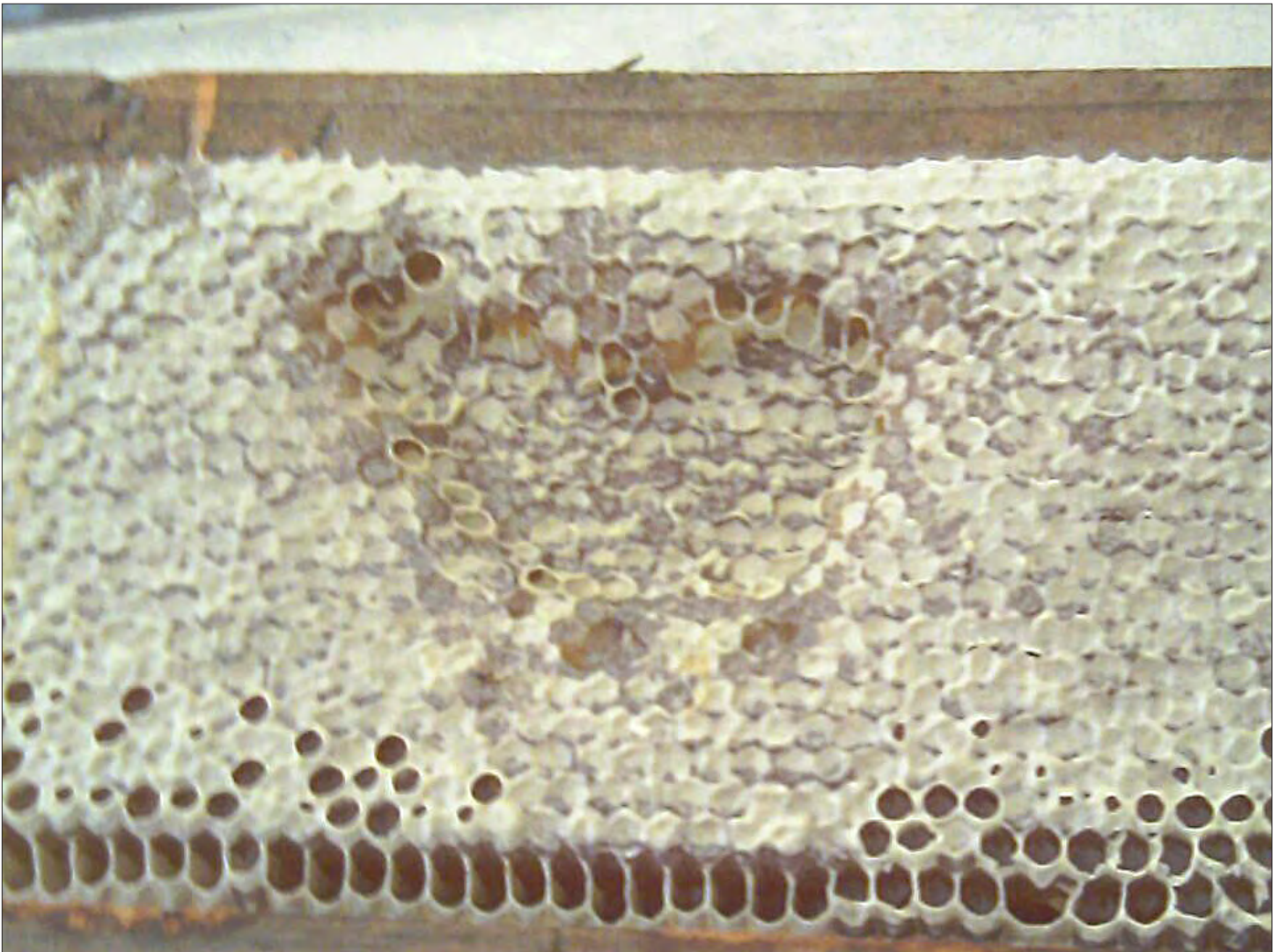
We Love Bees; They Love (Many of) Us

(We also love readers who send things like this!)

Brenda Kincaid of Ohio shared the following ...

Not sure you will think this is the most rewarding toward helping other beekeepers but it was a little amusing to us.

My husband Paul has been working with bees for 50 years and everyone knows how much he loves his bees. But we didn't know they felt the same way until he opened his supers to find a heart shaped into the comb. You can tell it was not formed after capping as the comb is not broken.



There's no denying it! Photo courtesy of Brenda Kincaid.

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯

Drone Congregation Areas

By Tom Webster, PhD

Editor's Note: Dr. Tom Webster spoke about the fascinating concept of Drone Congregation Areas (DCAs) at Kelley's Field Day, on June 2, of 2012. He gave us permission to share the hand-out he provided, covering both fundamentals and amazing insights into this behavior.



Drone Congregation Area? Photo by Baer Tirkel / CC-BY-2.0

Drones and queens fly to specific locations where they mate while flying. The drones that mate die soon afterward. The mated queens fly back to their hives.

The queens will mate with from 5 to 40 drones, during one or several mating flights. After their mating flights, the queens will develop large ovaries and not mate again. The semen from the mating is stored in the queen's spermatheca, where it will last for years if the queen remains healthy. The spermatheca is a tiny organ about 1/2 millimeter across. The queen releases a few sperm to fertilize each egg as it passes down her reproductive tract, except for the eggs destined to become drones which develop from unfertilized eggs.

Why does a queen mate with so many drones? Genetic diversity within the colony helps it function more effectively.

How do drones and queens find these congregation areas? The bees choose the same places each year, even though there can be no "memory" of these spots. New drones and queens find them quite reliably. Some studies suggest that differences in the earth's magnetic field lead bees to these places. Bees have magnetic tissue in their brains, like some other animals and people too.



Several drones mingling with their worker bee sisters.

Lines of trees or a ridge that ends abruptly may be an important indicator. There will be a cloud of drones circling about 50 ft above the ground. They will quickly chase any queen that passes into this area. Drones use their enormous eyes and also their ability to smell the queen's pheromone.

The congregation areas may be close to hives or miles away. Drones fly farther than queens to reach congregation areas. This promotes out-breeding. Inbreeding is very unhealthy for honeybees. Drones from one hive may fly to different congregation areas in different directions from the hive.

Mating flights are usually late afternoon. Watch your hive entrances 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. during the April to June peak mating period.

Most drones are unsuccessful at mating. Perhaps 1 or 2% of drones are successful. Drones that survive until fall are evicted from their hives, usually after frosty nights in October.

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯

Bee-Yond & Bee-Hind the Hives

Geograph-bee



Photo credit: justjoep.blogspot.com



Photo credit: facebook.com/BeeCityUSA



Photo credit: Tom Haroldson/Special to MLive

Thanks to all of our efforts, there are bees everywhere—including the history, monuments, charters and signage of many locations. Here are just a few readers have shared with us.

Utah: Readers let us know that there are hives on many of the state's road signs, so we sought an explanation for that, and found that the state is rich with a bee history.

According to the website takemytrip.com, "a pair of beehives stands guard over the steps that lead up to the capitol's front entrance. If you've made it this far into Utah, by now you know that the beehive symbol is everywhere—on the flag, the state seal, road signs, etc. The beehive is a symbol of industry, perseverance, thrift, stability, and self-reliance. It also has its roots in the LDS faith: the honeybee in the Book of Mormon was named Deseret, and the first name given to the territory now known as Utah was "the State of Deseret".¹

Bee City, USA—Asheville, North Carolina: Asheville officially became the first Bee City USA™ in June 2012. As the website² states "This is no surprise given the great number of beekeepers, pollinators and biodiversity in the beautiful Appalachian Mountains. We have some of the largest bee clubs and best winter and natural bee schools in the nation. To top it off, Asheville is home to The Center for Honeybee Research."

Any city may become a Bee City; we hope many more do. What makes a city a "Bee City?" As they state "it's a policy of planting bee-friendly plants on city and state right-of-ways, making recommendations to private developers, limiting the use of pesticides, and promoting a sustainable environment for the future of all our pollinators. What helps the bees, helps us all."

Schoolcraft, Michigan: This southwest Michigan village's first settler, Bazel Harrison, was a character in James Fenimore Cooper's 1848 frontier novel *The Oak Openings*, known as "The Bee Keeper". The village's logo features a hive because of that, and because it is a symbol reflecting this hard-working community's industriousness.

¹ takemytrip.com/10utco/08n_62a.htm

² ashevillage.org/program/bee-city-usa/

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯



Our booth, all dressed up and ready to go!

ABF & AHPA Annual Conventions

By Jane Burgess, Kelley CEO

Kelley's again was able to enjoy heading out to San Diego, CA and Hershey, PA to learn, laugh, and visit with the wonderful bee community.

Earl, Jennifer, and Eric attended the Hershey ABF's 71st annual convention, where the chocolate and seminars were flowing freely. From Honey Queen Activities, Bees & Kids, Serious Sideliners, and honey-related judging, there was a multitude of excellent topics. All who attended raved about the speakers and great information from Mike Palmer's "The nuc is the future" offered to sideliners, to Mark Carroll "Fungicides on Honey Bees" offered in via the Commercial SIG agenda, just to name a few. Larry Connor wowed the crowd as always with "The Importance of Drones" in the Honey Producer/Packer SIG Agenda. Always a great topic, David Tarpy presented "Better Queens, Better Colonies" in the Small Scale/Sideline SIG Agenda. For more ABF information visit <http://www.abfnet.org/index.cfm>.

I headed to San Diego for the 44th annual AHPA Convention & Tradeshow where the temperatures that are normally warm, sunny, and enjoyable took a (terrible) turn, and ended up to be 20 degrees cooler than those in Hershey! The talks were informative and ranged from Mr. David Fossland "Lake Thompson: 100 years of Beekeeping", and Dr. Robert Danko "Breeding for Varroa Resistance" to Monsanto and Bayer. I met with Veto-pharma and learned more about their company and the products we carry to combat Varroa mites. Research shows this to be a real winner. All the usual characters were present, Adees family, Smoots, Oliverez, Cowens, and many familiar faces from across the country. Also, some new beekeepers—good luck to young opera singer Wendy and her new endeavor to keep bees this spring. To follow AHPA information visit <http://ahpanet.site-ym.com/?page=2013Convention>.

Honey Crystallization

By Ol' Drone

Honey is a super saturated solution containing the simple sugars fructose and glucose. This means that it has far more solids than water and it is inherently unstable in liquid form. The sugar solids account for 82%, leaving the water content at 18%.



Photo by Patafisik / CC-BY-SA-3.0

Over a period of time all honey will granulate. But, the beekeeper can help to delay granulation by several methods. There is a wide variation in speed of granulation of honey depending on the floral source. Canola honey may granulate one day after collection and must be extracted immediately. Clover honey is less likely to granulate as fast. The most important attention needs to be given to ambient temperature while extracting and storing if good quality honey is to be produced.

Raw honey is defined as honey that has been processed with as little heat as possible. For example, substituting a non-heated fork to uncap the ripened honey, instead of the practice of using a heated knife, will maintain the best flavor and volatile components of raw honey. It is normal to warm the extracted honey to allow wax and

other particles to rise to the surface for skimming before packaging or filtering honey. Heating to below 120° F is considered still in the raw honey range. Raw honey tends to granulate on its own in a short period of time. Standard practice for store bought honey is to heat the honey much higher for two purposes.

Heating to about 170° F will change the nature of the sugars and will delay granulation for several months. Of course this process removes some of the natural, delicious flavor expected in raw honey. The other reason for heating honey to 170° F is to destroy any yeast spores that may cause fermentation in the honey. Overheating will darken the honey and will seriously damage the flavor.

When honey granulates, it is the glucose fraction that crystallizes rather than the fructose that stays in liquid form. The glucose solids are glucose oxalate, and during formation they will release water to the honey as they form. Any increase in water content above 18% will allow yeast to grow resulting in fermentation or spoilage of honey. During storage of honey, keep it in a closed container at room temperature. Do not keep honey in the refrigerator. For long-term storage, honey may be kept at any temperature below 120° F. Honey keeps liquid- and granulation-free in a freezer or even on the front porch for sale at 32° F.

Of course honey that has started to granulate can be easily re-liquefied by heating in a warm pan with water at 100-120° F. Leave it there for a few hours, as the time is more important than a high temperature. In summer honey in jars can be re-liquefied by laying them (tightly closed) on the dashboard of your car in bright sun. Be careful that they don't leak!

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 

A-Bee-Cs

Thinking About Keeping Bees?

Part 3: Hive Options, Hive Preparation

February's issue, **Part 3**, covers the variety of hive options available to help you determine the configuration of your first hive(s). Careful consideration is required, as after you've set a course on major components (like hive body size), changing direction will mean additional work and expense.

Because there are so many options, we start with a mini Table of Contents for the article. If you already have your equipment or know what you want, consider jumping ahead to the section on preparing the hive for its forthcoming occupants. There's much to be done before your bees arrive, it is essential to get it done before they're on their way.

Mini Table of Contents

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Photo by Lucas Beachler

Assumptions

Throughout this series, we've been operating under the following three assumptions. For an explanation of why, please check out the first article in the series, in our December '12 issue.¹

¹ All previous issues of the newsletter are available at www.kelleybees.com.

The assumptions are:

- Assumption 1: You will purchase equipment.
- Assumption 2: You will use a Langstroth hive.
- Assumption 3: You will purchase bees.

Hive Equipment Variables

While writing this article, we became a bit overwhelmed about all of the variables in selecting the equipment that will be the bedrock of your apiary ... and we're not newbees. It can be overwhelming. Please look for our recommendations throughout, noted with the symbol shown on the right:



If you don't want to even read about all these variables, there's a great recommendation following the explanation of all the options, called, appropriately, "A Great Recommendation."

Hive Bodies

A Langstroth hive is comprised of a stack of components, including multiple boxes. Each box is called a hive body.

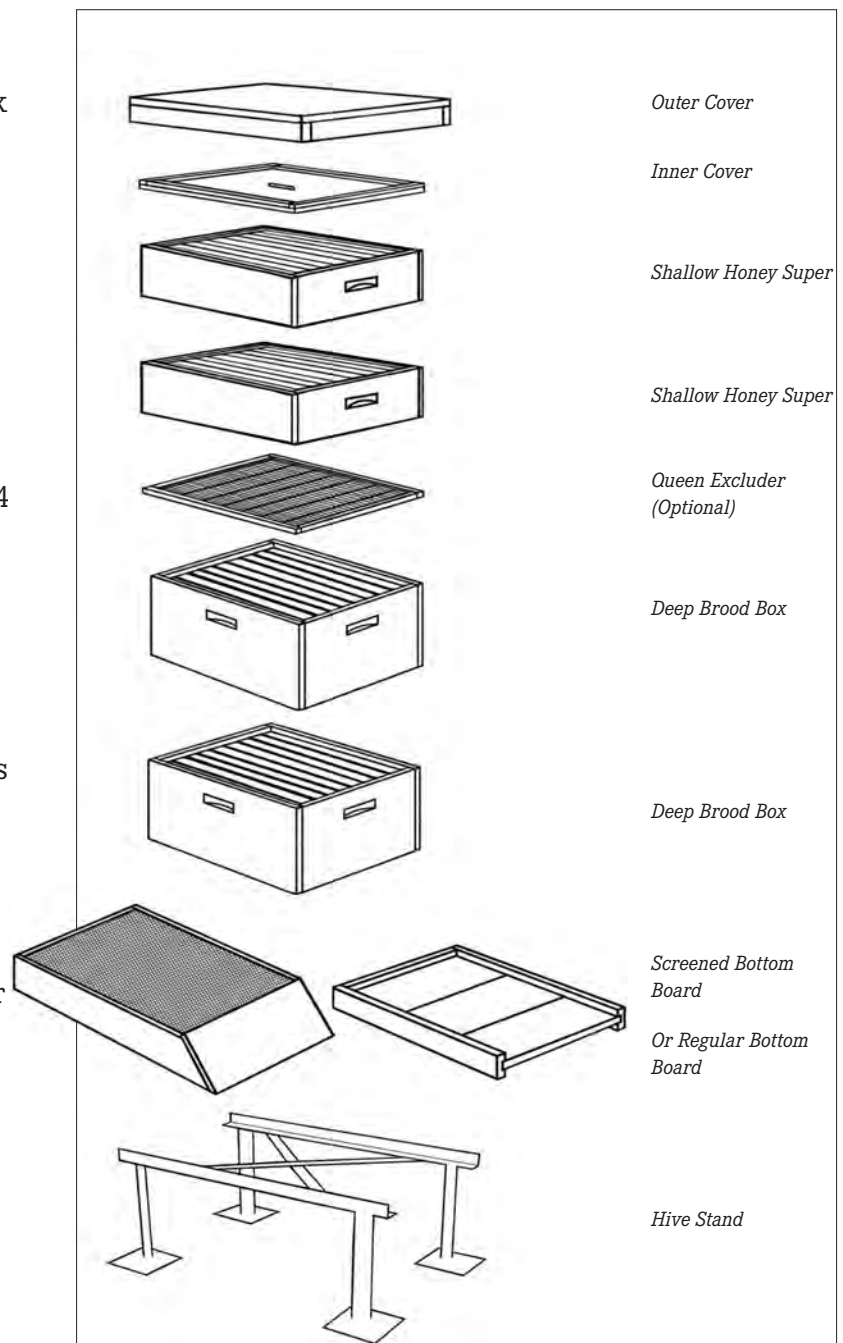
Hive bodies come in three different sizes:

- Standard deep: 19-13/16" x 16-1/4" x 9-9/16", usually just called "deeps"
- Medium or Illinois super: 19-13/16" x 16-1/4" x 6-5/8", usually just called "mediums"
- Shallow super: 19-13/16" x 16-1/4" x 5-3/4" often referred to as "honey supers" or "shallows"

What is Typical?

Arguably the most common type of hive is comprised of two deep bodies, with a varying number of honey supers on the top. That configuration is still probably the most common, although the number of deeps and honey supers will vary, depending upon geographic location, whether the hive is used for honey production or breeding, beekeeper preferences, time of year, etc.

While this basic configuration was mainstream for many decades, it is certainly on the decline. For many good reasons, it is becoming increasingly common to find hives comprised of just *medium* hive bodies.



Traditionally, two deep boxes were used for the brood chamber and the bee's winter stores, and less deep boxes (lighter!) were used for collecting the superfluous honey (the honey that the bees likely wouldn't need, thus the origin of the term "super").



This rooftop apiary shows various stages of the traditional configuration. Left is a first year hive that's just received it's second story, but is still being fed to help the colony get going. The middle hive is also a first year hive, not quite ready for the second deep box. The right most hive is a thriving second year hive consisting of two deep boxes on the bottom, and two shallow boxes.

All Mediums

A hive comprised of all medium hive bodies offers several advantages to the beekeeper, such as:

- Just one size of hive body needed—greater interchangeability (the box can be a brood box as well as a honey collection box) and requiring less storage room.
- Only one frame and one foundation size to ensure you have available.
- A medium is lighter than a deep body—easier on everyone's back, and easier for the not-so-muscular (or shorter) beekeeper.

Why Not All Shallows Then?

A logical question we often hear is "if I'd use mediums instead of deeps because of weight, shouldn't I go a step further and use all shallows?" The answer is no. Bees prefer the larger surface of a deep or medium frame for the brood nest.

8- or 10-Frame Boxes?

While 10-frame equipment has been the standard for decades, there probably isn't a really good reason for that with 8-frame now readily available. Eight-frame is not only easier for the beekeeper, it also works for bees. As many beekeepers have been puzzled by over the years, honeybees rarely fill all 10 frames with honey² or brood anyway, so why use 10-frame equipment?

Eight-frame hive body advantages include:

- Weight—less of it, saving wear and tear on our backs

2 Of course, if they do fill it with honey, that's a glorious problem to have, but nonetheless, a problem. Shared Shannon T.: "I wish I had known that a full 10-frame brood box has the potential to weigh 100 pounds and require heavy machinery to lift."

- Many beekeepers believe it is easier to expand a nuc into an 8-frame instead of a 10-frame box; the bees seem to like the smaller box better. As your apiary expands in future years, you'll be splitting successful hives into nuc boxes (typically five frames), and then will need to move them into larger boxes. Eight frames is an easier adjustment for them than 10.
- Pest minimization: A healthy hive without too much room to patrol will better keep small hive beetles and other undesirable pests under control. Danny G., from Tennessee, elaborated: "Small hive beetles, where I live, seem to be a real problem. Strong hives can manage them. Weaker hives battle and sometimes, even with vegetable oil pans, etc. the battle is lost; the bees leave. One thing I am going to try is utilizing a 5-frame nuc to start 3-pound packages, as they grow move them to 8-frame and then to 10-frame hives, thus reducing the area inside the hive required for the bees to patrol as they increase in number. This requires monitoring and frame movement and a few extra boxes."
- You'll need 20% less frames and foundation per box, a gain potentially offset by the need for perhaps more boxes. This point is certainly debatable, and filled with many variables, but we'll provide a bit of explanation...

A booming colony can quickly fill frames. If there are only eight in the box, they will be ready for the next box sooner. A good beekeeper, (not a bee haver) will be monitoring their expansion closely. You may need to put on the next box sooner than you would if you have 10-frame equipment; and over a significant number of hives, you may need a few more 8-frame boxes than you would 10-frame. In our opinion, this is not a significant advantage or disadvantage, but it is one we hear on occasion, so we wanted to cover it.

Regretfully ...

We asked thousands of beekeepers what they know now that they wished they'd known in the beginning. A predominant answer was to use all medium boxes, with many of them also wishing they'd gotten only 8-frame boxes. In their words:

"The deep boxes are very heavy and weigh about 90 pounds. So instead of using two deep boxes which has been the norm, one could use several medium-depth boxes. This makes it easier when you get older since the medium boxes weigh about half that."

—Ronald F., Illinois

"Use the same size for all woodenware—e.g. all medium. I have shallow and medium honey supers and it creates a mess. I'm gradually going to all mediums—even brood boxes! The deeps are almost impossible for me to lift."

—Jocelyn B.

"Medium boxes are lighter and 8 frames are even lighter. I would have got the all medium kit and 8 frames."

—D. Carter

"I wish I had gone with one size box instead of a mix of deep and mediums and gone with 8-frame instead of 10-frame. Those full 10-frame deep boxes are HEAVY! And, it would be so much easier if I only had to deal with one size frame and foundation. But, I guess my biggest mistake was taking up this hobby without first joining a club or acquiring a mentor so I could have learned and avoided the mistakes they made...and saved me a lot of money in the process."

—Ed C.



Box Size—What Does Kelley's Recommend?

All medium equipment, because that allows you to use the same size box for your entire apiary, and medium boxes are deep enough for brood and also great for use as honey supers.

Eight-frame versus 10? This decision doesn't have the future implication as significant perhaps as hive body size does. Thus, we don't have a strong recommendation here, other than whatever you choose, **be consistent**.

Another factor that might need to weigh into your decision is what your beekeeping buddies are using if you might share or someday gain their equipment. If there is a spectacular nectar flow and you have no spare equipment, you may need to borrow another box ... if a beekeeper you trust has one available.

Hive Body Materials of Construction

There are three predominant materials from which hive bodies are manufactured: wood (usually either pine or cypress), plastic, and Styrofoam. The latter two offer advantages of being lighter weight, and providing increased insulation against hot and cold extremes.



The Bee Lords of Bowling Green High School, featured in our December '12 issue, shared their creativity in hive painting. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Forbes. Please follow them on Facebook for updates on their fun.

The majority of hive bodies are still made of wood, although plastic and Styrofoam are gaining a foothold.

Wood

Properly protected and properly used, wooden hive bodies will weather well and last several years. Pine hive bodies are still the most prevalent, although cypress hives are widely used as well, especially in areas where humidity is an on-going issue.

Arguably, wood needs to be treated for protection against the elements. An advantage of this is that there are thus limitless options to having a hive that is aesthetically pleasing, from hive bodies painted in your team colors, to something fun and beautiful.

Styrofoam and Plastic

We've heard from beekeepers who don't like Styrofoam because they aren't as durable (and are tough to repair), and we've heard of two cases where ants built nests in the foam.

We've talked with major commercial beekeepers in China and Turkey who swear by the utility of plastic hives. There are some very sophisticated, well-engineered plastic hives designed to be particularly well-suited for commercial application, with interlocking components for adding pollen and propolis collectors, for example.

As this series of articles is directed toward beginning beekeepers, we'll conclude this discussion now.

Our Recommendation



Our recommendation is wooden hive bodies. Repairs to a crack in the side of a wood hive body, for example, are easier because a portion of the body may be replaced. Plastic or Styrofoam hive bodies are typically one piece. Also, many beekeepers feel wood, as it is more natural, is a better box in which to keep bees.

Bottom Board Options

Bottom boards are either screened or solid:

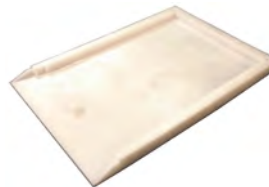
A **solid bottom board** is used by some beekeepers to assist with hive warmth, and for new installations. Because it reduces air flow in the hive, it helps the queen's pheromones more quickly permeate the hive. Kelley's is selling fewer and fewer solid bottom boards however, because of the advantages of screened bottom boards.

A **screened bottom board** assists in mite control. (See shaded box below.) Of equal importance—it enhances ventilation, which is especially critical in the winter to help keep the interior moisture level down. Thus, even in the north, many beekeepers use screened bottom boards year-round.

SOLID BOTTOM BOARDS



Cat # 54A



Cat # 53A

SCREENED BOTTOM BOARDS



Cat # 57



Cat # 57-OA



Cat # 57-TA

Mite Control with Screened Bottom Boards

Screened bottom boards allow mites to fall to the ground when they're removed by bees licking them off each other, known as hygienic behavior.

Once they get to the ground, it is generally too far for them to travel back to the bees.

A natural treatment for mites is to sift one cup of powdered sugar across the top of each hive body. Bees will lick off hopefully any mites and the sugar.



Our general recommendation is a screened bottom board.

Top Cover Options

There are two types of top covers—wooden and plastic / fiberglass. These days, either type of commercially manufactured cover is about the same when it comes to heating and cooling properties, and bearing the weight of, for example, a concrete block to hold it down. Following are some considerations to help you select which is best for you.

Wood

Wood covers are preferred by the appearance-minded beekeeper, among others. They provide a more natural look, and may be painted to match the hive bodies.

Other considerations include:

- Fit nicely over boxes
- Breath—assisting airflow in the hive
- They are more natural and therefore perhaps appealing to the bees than plastic / fiberglass covers
- May deteriorate more quickly than plastic / fiberglass, unless they have an aluminum cover, which Kelley's all do

If you're not purchasing your equipment from Kelley's, examine the bottom side of the top cover before purchase. Some manufacturers use slats of wood beneath the aluminum cover, providing small hive beetles a great place to hide. Because of that Kelley's now uses a solid board for the top cover interior. (Buy Kelley's.)



Cat # 49-CH

Plastic / Fiberglass

Another wood cover option is the attractive gable roof cover (left). Apiaries are beautiful anyway, hives with this top cover are even more charming. Woodland elves sold separately.

There are many reasons to select this type of top cover, including:

- Unbeatable durability
- Multiple uses—customers often request them because they're ideal for unloading honey supers onto—they are a form-fitting, leak-proof tray for a hive body of drippy honey frames
- They are not going to rot
- Ventilation: Our covers provide interior ventilation ridges. If you're not buying them from us, you may want to rethink that decision!



Our Recommendation

This isn't a critical decision. We prefer the plastic / fiberglass cover because of its utility, but also appreciate the look of all natural hives. This is one area where you can easily have both if you have multiple hives.

Inner Cover Options

There are some beekeepers who say you don't need inner covers. We generally disagree. They serve many purposes, including:

- Keep the outer cover from sticking to the box
- Provide another layer of insulation for temperature extremes
- Provide an easy method for ventilation and a top opening in colder climates by cutting a notch in the short end
- Some of us feel they allow a less threatening, more controlled approach to the hive—when you open the top cover you can often tell the temperament of the hive and either smoke (or walk away) if necessary
- Allow for less invasive hive checks if you're just doing a quick assessment of activity level or comb drawing or capping, for example. Those things may often be determined just by looking through the hole in the inner cover.



Cat # 51A

Cat # 15A

Inner covers come in many styles—wood, plastic, and one piece top and inner covers known as migratory covers, used predominantly by commercial beekeepers.



Our Recommendation: We do recommend the use of an inner cover. As the performance of wood and plastic is about the same, we have no strong recommendation as to which you should select.

Frame Options

A frame is exactly that, a four-sided structure that surrounds (once the bees build it) honeycomb. Frames are either made of wood, or plastic.

One of the most bewildering things for newbees and established beekeepers alike is the variety of frame styles, and Kelley's offers several.

If we were to describe the features and advantages of each type, it'd take about five pages. We know this, because we wrote that article over a year ago—please see our December, 2011 issue for the comprehensive article on frame styles.

Luckily, there are no bad decisions here; it comes down to preferences.



Our recommendation? If using medium boxes choose Kelley new style frames, 17-N, where the wax foundation (#624) drops in from the top and the foundation (bees love beeswax) is a bit deeper. If you live in the far south where hive beetles are an issue you may want to close the top with melted beeswax or paraffin to eliminate a beetle hiding place.



Cat # 17-N



Cat # SGX



Cat # 122-BFA

We also recommend the SGX frames, with a beeswax-coated plastic foundation. If you decide to use plastic frames, they come with a grooved top and bottom bar, making it easy to snap the foundation in place³. If you want a one-piece solution, check out the plastic frame foundation as seen above, Cat # 122-BFA. If you live in an area where hive beetles are a real problem, you may want to consider it as the frame molding has areas where those destructive beetles may hide.

Foundation Options

"Foundation" is a thin wax or plastic sheet imprinted with hexagonal cells. A sheet is inserted in to each frame to serve as a guide for bees to manufacture honeycomb, a process called "drawing out comb." Providing foundation also helps a hive get to the human's favorite stage more quickly, the stage of filling the comb with golden honey. Drawing out comb is so labor- and resource-intensive that most bees do not make excess honey beyond what they need the first year. As a reality check, don't expect honey the first year.

Foundation comes in two general types—wax and plastic. Additionally, there are a few different cell sizes of wax foundation, although not for plastic foundation as of this time.

Do You Even Need Foundation?



Like many other hive components, there are lots of options for foundation. Another option is to have no foundation—allow the bees to create their own. As this series is aimed toward the beginning beekeeper, we won't recommend this option. **Providing foundation** for the bees to work will help maximize their (and your) chances for first year success.

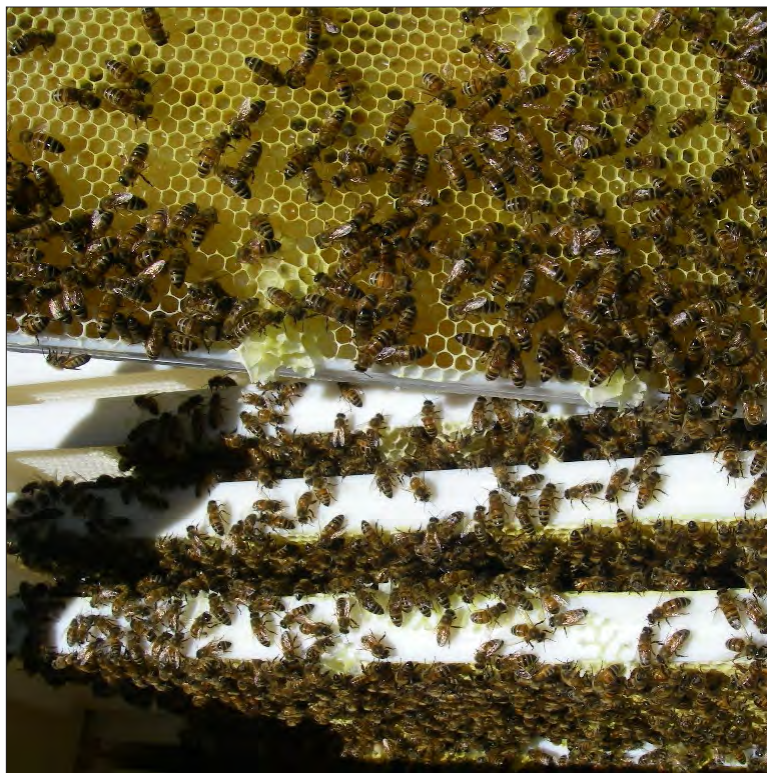
Wax

Wax foundation from Kelley's is all beeswax; other suppliers may mix paraffin with beeswax. Most of the foundation we sell has a 5.4mm cell size, although we also sell foundation with a smaller cell size. The smaller cell size may be helpful for minimizing Varroa mites, see our December, 2011 newsletter for an article explaining why.

³ Want foundation already installed? Call Customer Service. We can do that for an additional charge.

Plastic

Plastic foundation is more durable, and pops into an SGX frame, or if you choose a one-piece frame/foundation combo there is no frame to assemble. You can find plenty of beekeepers who tell you their bees don't like it and hesitated to use it; you can also find plenty of beekeepers who swear by it.



Bees merrily drawing out and filling plastic foundation, photo courtesy of V. Marek.

Plastic foundation comes in three colors—white, black, and lime green.

Black plastic is preferred by some beekeepers for use in the brood box. Against that black background it is easier to see the larvae with the sunlight pointing into the frame, helpful if you are grafting, or are a newbie challenged by finding eggs. (Which challenges we “old bees” also.)

Green has a larger, drone-suggested cell imprint. Frames of drones, when disposed of, may be helpful in controlling Varroa mites. See our June, 2012 newsletter for an article about why and how drone comb is used.



Our Recommendation

We **recommend beeswax foundation** as opposed to plastic—bees seem to prefer it and we like to keep things inside the hive as natural as practical.

What Cell Size?

Honeybees build honeycomb with different cell sizes. Generally speaking, if left to their druthers, or if they've never worked commercial comb, honeybees tend to generally build a smaller sized cell. This may be helpful in naturally minimizing Varroa mites.

There are plenty of beekeepers on both sides of this issue⁴. Kelley's CEO Jane Burgess uses the larger, 5.4mm size both commercially and personally. While there are compelling points about using small cell to combat Varroa, she has also witnessed bees ripping apart the 4.9mm size that was provided to them, and rebuilding it to the size cells they want.

If you want to use small cell, purchase it. However, if you want to assure the bees are building the best cell size for them, then alternate your frames between foundationless and those with foundation. Once bees have drawn straight comb, slowly move the frames with foundation to other hives or the outside of the box, and use all foundationless.

A Reader's Thoughts on Plastic vs Wood

"I figured the hive should be plain wood inside because that's what a hollow tree is like on the inside, to catch moisture and so forth.

And by same token, since wax is inert, much like plastic, it doesn't hurt to use plastic frames to start "wax works". And moth or mouse can't go right thru and you can spin it real fast to get ALL honey out.

Sometimes bees are slow to accept the plastic, but once they start it's just as quick.

The work you can save yourself, for \$2 a piece, can't beat the price.

The downside is it's hard to chew on the comb honey with the plastic in the middle but you get used to it.

Ha, ha ..."

—V. Marek

⁴ See our December, 2011 newsletter for an informative article on small cell.



A Great Recommendation

We've packaged all of this in **Cat # 45-KIT-8**, which answers other variable options by coming with a screened bottom board and a wood top cover.

Equipment Preparation

Whew! Still with us? Hopefully yes.

And hopefully, you've already got your bees on order (see last month's A-Bee-C article.) It is now time to order equipment.

Ordering Equipment

While you might not be obtaining your bees until April or May, now is the time to get your equipment and get it ready, for two reasons:

1. You'll have a bit of work to do to get it ready *before* the bees arrive. As Sherry D. of Texas shared with us "I received my hive just days before my bees—not knowing how long it took to put it together, paint and prepare. I made it by the skin of my teeth" and
2. You never want to order equipment once the "season" begins. Kelley's busy season is mid-March through August as we serve beekeepers in all climates. As M. Shaw of Louisiana wrote "Don't order in the middle of bee season if you need supplies is one of the things I wish I had known." We will still get them to you—we have one of the fastest shipping rates in the industry. But, naturally we can be more responsive when orders aren't swarming in.

Hopefully the information in this article has helped you decide what you want to order. If not, please check out our catalog for more information, or give the friendly phone-answering beekeepers at Kelley's a call.

Phone, fax, internet—whatever works for you. However, what DOES NOT work for your bees (and therefore, you) is to pick-up what you need when you also pick-up your bees. Bees should be installed in that equipment asap, and you don't want them watching you from their wire box while you're banging your thumb with a hammer.

Time Estimates for Equipment Preparation

When you obtain equipment from us, it comes with assembly instructions (where assembly is needed), so we won't repeat that information here. For details, please go to our website, and click on Education and then select Resources. There are all sorts of instructions there for all sorts of things.

How much time will you need?

1. Assembling the hive bodies—probably an hour the first time you do it
2. Protecting the hive from the weather (discussed below)—a couple hours per hive, depending upon what you decide to do ... and possibly over a couple of days.
3. Assembling frames—about an hour for 10 frames the first few times you do it. You'll only need 10 (or 8 if you're using 8-frame equipment) to get started, although we recommend you assemble all the first-season frames while you're in the groove. If you order plastic one-piece frames, you're ready to go as soon as you open the box from Kelley's.

Protecting the Hive from the Weather

Most beekeepers paint their hives. It is an inexpensive way to protect the exterior surfaces (never paint where the bees will be) from the weather.

Conversely, many beekeepers do not paint their hives. Other options include staining them, waxing them, or simply not painting them. Kentucky State Apiarist Sean Burgess addressed this issue for us in a newsletter, providing the options of:

1. Not painting, although the boxes will deteriorate more quickly.
2. A water based stain—rolled or brushed, like Kelley's ECO Wood, which is a powder mixed with water that makes a stain.
3. A dip—some people melt paraffin and beeswax and dip their equipment. I have never done this, it would require a lot of wax and paraffin as you have to have depth to cover the boxes.
4. Copper naphthenate.

Sean continued "All of these options seem a lot more labor intensive than applying two coats of good exterior latex, with the exception of maybe staining."



Cat # 115

ECO Wood Treatment

is an excellent alternative to paint! This wood treatment is non-toxic, made of natural elements, and is maintenance free. Apply once and you're finished. Will not peel, fade, or wear off. Creates a natural patina look that will vary in color depending on wood species.

Our Recommendation

We agree with **painting** them, and encourage you to use this opportunity to share your personality or personal preferences. While historically hives are white, there is no sound reason for that. Studies have shown that bees find their hive faster when it is readily distinguishable from other hives, either with color and / or markings. This may be a good opportunity to declare your love for your spouse, as when (not if) you catch "bee disease⁵" your spouse may miss you.



Regarding color—the general guideline is something lighter, because a dark color absorbs so much heat in the summer. However, it doesn't take much surfing of apiary photos on the internet to find that about any color and shade is being used in about every geographic climate.

Editor's Note: *I recommend maize and blue based on the many large checks I've written over the years to the University of Michigan. However, our Ohio customers may not want to pursue this option. Kelley's CEO, Jane Burgess suggests red/white for her beloved UW Badgers.*

Next Month's Article

Our March issue will take you through preparing the site and setting up the hive(s) in anticipation of the soon-to-arrive occupants, as well as what to have ready for them and how to handle them upon arrival.

We're sure we've forgotten something!

As always, your comments and contributions welcome, email KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com or visit kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯

⁵ Bee disease is an all-encompassing, no-known-cure ailment that leads you to want to spend all your time working with bees.

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 🍯



Kelley's Field Day

Mark your calendar.
Kelley's annual Field Day is June 1.

Hands-on demonstrations, numerous presentations for beginners through experienced beekeepers, well-known industry leaders sharing their expertise, a great lunch, an opportunity to meet folks enthused like you about beekeeping—don't miss it.

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY 2013 EVENTS

Allen County Beekeeping School
February 2
Scottsville, Kentucky

2013 Beekeeping Symposium
February 2
Auburn University, Auburn, AL

Honey Bee Expo 2013
February 2
West Virginia University, Parkersburg, WV

Georgia Beekeeper's Association Spring Meeting
February 8–9
Lake Blackshear Resort, Cordele, GA

SW Michigan Area Bee Schools Kalamazoo, Holland, Albion
Various dates, visit
www.kalamazoobeeclub.org.

Southeast Beekeeping School
February 9
Williamsburg, KY

Medina County Beekeepers 2013 Beginning Beekeepers Class
Wednesdays: February 13, 20 and 27, March 6 and 13
Saturdays: February 16 and 23
Combined Sessions: May 11 and July 17
Medina, OH

2013 Western Pennsylvania Beekeeping Seminar
February 15–16
Four Points Sheraton, Mars (Cranberry Twsp.), PA

Apitherapy Day in Ohio
February 16
Pittsfield Township Hall, State Road 303 at Ohio Route 58 between Oberlin and Wellington Ohio
For more information visit:
www.apitherapy.blogspot.com and
www.apitherapy.org

Beekeeping 101 Class
February 23
Walter T. Kelley Company, Clarkson, KY

Northeast Beekeeping School
February 23
Morehead, KY

MARCH 2013 EVENTS

Arkansas Beekeeper's Association Spring Conference
March 1–2
UA Cooperative Extension Service Auditorium, Little Rock, AR

North & South Carolina Beekeeper's Associations' Joint Conference
March 1–2
Baxter Hood Conference Center, SC

Tri-County Beekeeper's Association Spring Workshop
March 1–2
OARDC in Wooster, OH

Michigan Beekeeper's Association's 2013 Spring Conference
March 8–9
Kellogg Center, Michigan State University Campus, Lansing, MI

Bluegrass Beekeeping School
March 9
Frankfort, KY

75th Beekeeping Conference at Schoolcraft College
March 16
Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI
Check the posting at www.sembabees.org

Southwest Ohio Beekeeper School
March 23
Oasis Conference Center Loveland, OH

We'd love to share news of your upcoming events. Please send the event name, date and website or contact information to me by the 10th of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue. Thanks!
KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com.

Queen Bees and Package Bees from Kelley's

Queens & Nucleus Colonies (Nucs)



Queens (all types):

Ship (or pick-up): beginning **April 2, 2013**

Price: depends upon type, quantity, pick-up versus shipping and type of shipping as shown in chart.

Type	Cat #	Qty.	Price Ea.	Postage (US Priority Mail Insured) & Handling	Postage (1st Class US Mail Insured) & Handling
Italian	501Q-A	1 - 4	\$22.00	\$9.00	\$5.50
Italian	501Q-A	5 - 9	\$22.00	\$9.00	\$12.00
Italian	501Q-B	10 - 24	\$21.00	\$15.00 up to 10, call us for more than 10	\$12.00 up to 10, call us for more than 10
Italian	501Q-C	25 +	\$20.00	Call us!	Call us!
Russian/Hybrid	502Q-A	1 - 4	\$25.00	\$9.00	\$5.50
Russian/Hybrid	502Q-A	5 - 9	\$25.00	\$9.00	\$12.00
Russian/Hybrid	502Q-B	10 - 24	\$24.00	\$15.00 up to 10, call us for more than 10	\$12.00 up to 10, call us for more than 10
Russian/Hybrid	502Q-C	25 +	\$23.75	Call us! Quantity discounts	Call us! Quantity discounts
Cordovan	503	Each	\$27.00	Quantity discounts on postage & handling, call us	Quantity discounts on postage & handling, call us
Carniolan	507	Each	\$27.00	Quantity discounts on postage & handling, call us	Quantity discounts on postage & handling, call us

Marked queens: Add \$2/queen.

Clipped queens: Kelley's does not recommend clipping queen wings and therefore, that is no longer an option for 2013.

Nucs, 5-frame:

Price: \$137.50 any type

Pick-up ONLY — no shipping of Nucs.

Type	Catalog #	Pick-up Date
Italian queen, plastic Nuc box, deep frames	N4613	Saturday, April 6, 2013
Italian queen, plastic Nuc box, deep frames	N42013	Saturday, April 20, 2013
Southern Cross Kelley Hygienic Queen in plastic Nuc box, deep frames	NS41313	Saturday, April 13, 2013
Southern Cross Kelley Hygienic Queen in plastic Nuc box, medium frames- limited quantity	NM5413	Saturday, May 4, 2013

No queens are marked with Nucs: If you wish your queen to be marked you will need to do this yourself.

Package Bees

Packages:

Ship (or pick-up): beginning Saturday, April 6th, and every Saturday through May 18th.

Price = Cost of Package + Cost of Shipping (if shipped)

Cost of Package		
B(MD)-I(M)	Package with Italian Queen	\$89.00
B(MD)-R(M)	Package with Russian/Hybrid Queen	\$93.00

Cat # (MD)= Month/Day (M)= Marked Example: B406-IM

Marked queens: add \$2/package.

Clipped queens: Kelley's does not recommend clipping queen wings and therefore, that is no longer an option for 2013.

Cost of Shipping:

All package bee shipments are shipped through the United States Postal Service (USPS). Packages shipped to zone 1 through zone 4 destinations are insured. Zone 5 and beyond are UNINSURED, but can be shipped at customer's own risk.

# of Pkgs.	Zone 1 & 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
1	\$21.00	\$24.00	\$27.00
2	\$30.00	\$38.00	\$44.00
3	\$40.00	\$47.00	\$57.00
4	\$49.00	\$54.00	\$69.00
More than 4	Call for quote.		

If you do not know what zone you live in, use the first three digits of your zip code and the shipping zone chart in the back of this catalog.



Key Information for ALL orders of Live Bees

Ordering:

- Order early to ensure your desired receiving date. Only a limited number are available throughout the season.
- All sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

Payment:

- Payment is required when order is placed. Credit cards are charged at time of order entry.
- Checks are accepted, but due within one week of order placed.
- \$5.50 charge per order for cancellation or date changes.
- Outstanding balances greater than 14 days may be cancelled due to non-payment.

Pick-Ups:

- All pick-ups at our Clarkson Facility.
- Complimentary breakfast is served and installation demonstrations are performed every Saturday at our facility for those picking up their bees.
- Product orders may be placed in advance for pick up with your bees, to minimize wait times.
- All orders picked up at our Clarkson, KY facility are subject to KY sales tax of 6%.

Damages or Losses:

- We do not guarantee bees. We do not replace or refund money for packages that do not survive or are damaged in transit.
- Package and queen bees are covered during shipment through USPS insurance and any reimbursement will come from the USPS, zones 1-4 only.
- If your bees arrive in unsatisfactory condition, you must file a claim with the USPS for any loss. Have your postmaster begin the claim process by filling out Post Form 2856 (damage report) & PS Form 1000 (domestic claim).
- Loss or Damage Claims on dead/damaged bees must be filed the same day shipment is received.
- If you experience a problem with your bee package or queen, please notify us the day your package arrives so we can help you resolve your issue.
- Any problem with queen/queen performance, please contact Kelley between 10-21 days after hiving bees.

FAQs

Please note: Correspondence submitted to the Kelley Bee News Modern Beekeeping newsletter (or subsequent publications) becomes the property of the Walter T. Kelley Company. We reserve the right to print or not print any correspondence and it may be edited for length and/or clarity. It may be published or republished in any format or medium and/or licensed to others for publication. If we publish your correspondence, we may attribute it to you and may include your name and city, unless you expressly request that you remain anonymous.

Q: I'm so excited! My bees are coming from you at the end of April. What do I need to do to get ready for them? Cynthia

A: Our March issue will cover that with the next article in the series "Thinking About Keeping Bees?" Be sure to check out that article in this issue for guidance on getting your equipment ready.

One of our regular columnists, Ol' Drone, shared an observation / question that he hears frequently and provided an insightful answer. Thanks Ol' Drone!

Q: As the mercury dipped down to the single numbers and the blizzard blew snow all over the porch, the honey bears bravely sat there with snow on their spouts. The liquid honey resisted freezing. How can a "liquid" stay that way during the bitter cold?

A: The simple answer: there is not enough water in honey to freeze. Honey is a super saturated sugar solution. That means that there are more dissolved solids that can normally remain in the liquid phase. Honey is more sugar than water; it contains only 18% water and that is not enough to freeze.

Q: If a queen is clipped and swarms, will she crawl back in the hive or does she realize she can't fly? I have two hives that I am in question of whether to requeen or chance it. I have always had the thinking when in doubt do it to be safe. M. Ramsey

A: Kelley's beekeeping CEO, Jane Burgess answered this one for us: "You shouldn't clip the wings—if you do and they do need to swarm the new queen will leave instead of the old. If they feel the need to swarm because the colony has grown past the confines of the hive, it is inevitable—it will happen anyway."

Q: I just love your newsletter—so much good info—esp. for 'beginners'. Now I'm enjoying going back to old issues. The area I feel I need to learn the most is the area of "bee health." If there are any good websites that you know of please send them my way. I am also looking for a 'bee calendar,' something that tells us what to do—chronologically—to attend to our bees' needs. Have you seen one of these? I certainly appreciate any help. Thanks. Bob

A: Thanks Bob. We had similar requests for chronological information from readers last summer, when we asked how we could improve the newsletter. That's why we started "Bee Thinking About" at the front of each monthly issue.

As Spring arrives, there's much to do in the apiary. Look for more topical, seasonal articles in the newsletter. As always, any specific questions please email them and we will answer them via the newsletter or another means.

Readers: Bob asked about good websites to address seasonal activities. Since those seasonal activities vary widely by location, we'd love to share the link to any good resources you've found. Please let me know at KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com, thanks.

Q: I currently have two hives (with plans to expand to four) on my property (four acres) and am considering planting a small bee pasture of yellow sweet clover near the hives. The hives are located in my small (75' x 100') orchard and are bordered on two sides by open meadows.

I was wondering if it would be worth my effort to plant a patch of yellow sweet clover? I have the room to plant up to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre. That portion of the property has meadow type grass and I mow it like the rest of the 4-acre "yard".

The project would require me to hire someone to prepare the ground. I could seed it myself. Is $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre worth the effort?

The bee pasture would shorten some of the bees foraging trips and mellow out the wildflower honey taste somewhat. Besides, I would have less grass to mow in my yard. Alan C., West Virginia

A: We love bees, so anything you do to make their lives easier and sweeter (and they do love sweet clover) we support.

Another beekeeper had shared a similar project with us. We caught up with Tom Springer and asked his thoughts.

"I planted about a $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of buckwheat (an annual). If he/she has the money, I think it's "worth the effort" to plant a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre bee pasture. Unless you try these things, you'll never know how they work. And what with tilling and seed, I don't imagine he would have more than \$150-200 in the whole project. That said, there's no guarantee that bees will use the pasture even when it's that close to the hive. They have a mind of their own when it comes to pollen and nectar sources, and their ways are not always logical to us beekeepers!"

Q: I really loved the article you provided about all natural beekeeping by Lady Spirit Moon. I am interested in her claims that she has NO Varroa because she uses small cell beekeeping. Does she do alcohol washes or sugar rolls to count? The research is mixed at best about small cell beekeeping. I admit that I am a small cell beekeeper too, and NO Varroa seems like an amazing claim. Thank you, M. Feldman

A: Lady Spirit Moon answered: "What I wrote was, 'I don't have Varroa Mite destruction'. Bees will always have Varroa, ants, beetles, etc. I also wrote that I 'have about 4% Varroa,' according to the Beltsville lab. Bees don't count Varroa, so I don't. Truthfully, when it comes to Natural Beekeeping, if there are too many Varroa, (in which case I'm not managing well or the hive doesn't have enough diversity to be hygienic enough for grooming) the hive will take care itself by dying out. As for sugar rolls, I know how I'd feel if someone were to roll me in sugar or put something stinky in my house, so I don't do it to them."

Q: We love your news letter, keep it up. I would like a 2013 catalog from your business sent to me. How do I get one? D. Zank, Florida

A: Beekeeper Zank has hopefully long had his catalog; we're using his question because others of you may be wondering the same thing. You can call us and request we send one, or send your address to Sales@KelleyBees.com. Thanks Mr. Zank for the kudos; we're always glad to know we're giving you what you want to read.

Sweet as Honey

“ I like how the newsletter addresses both the positives AND the problems in beekeeping, along with wonderful photos to help explain.”

—Gail C., Missouri

Thanks Gail. Folks, we NEED your pictures—of things great, and things going or gone wrong. Please send them to KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com, thank you in advance.

“ I am a relatively new (old 73) beekeeper, I had 4 hives in Ohio in 1976. I got two 4-pound packages of bees last April; got about 60 pounds of honey this last fall. I have been doing a lot of reading to catch up on things, its kind of scary now with all the bugs.

I have not used any chemicals in my hives and don't intend to.

This summer I noticed one of my queens wasn't marked so I ordered a new Italian to replace her. But I didn't kill her; I put her along with some sealed brood and stores in a nuc. Now I have three hives and they are all booming with bees.

To get to the point: after reading Michael Bush's theory on frame spacing I have been cutting my end bars down to 1 1/4". And use a 9 frame spacer in the supers. I would buy your frames with the 1 1/4" end bars. But as you can see I wouldn't be a large purchaser but just one of hopefully many.”

—Larry S.

Larry must be catching up on reading; as it was many moons ago we asked readers if there was substantial interest in the thinner frames. There was, and we now offer them—catalog # 82T for deep frames, catalog #82IST for medium frames Thanks to all for reading, and for letting us know how we can better service your needs.

“ One of the most important things you can do is read, read, read. Gather as many opinions and tips as possible and use them to plan your own methodology. Everyone has their own style and the more info you have at your disposal the better you can proceed with your gut feelings. I'm always happy to get more articles and ideas from the newsletters.”

—Luke S.; Saint Louis, Missouri

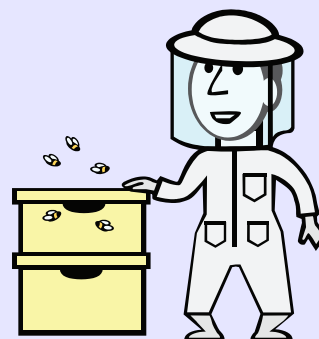
Thanks Luke. We agree. There are few absolutes in beekeeping. And folks, unfortunately what may work well for you one year may not the next year. Don't become discouraged though, we need bees; they need us.

Beek Hint

Beekeeper Kellita J modified a top bar hive to add a screen bottom, following the lead of professional beekeepers who had shared they were adding screen boards to the bottom of their hives to help combat hive beetles.

As a beginner, she grabbed what she could readily find—window screening. She later learned that insects can move it. Fabric screening is also an issue as hive beetles may hide from bees behind the edge of fabric.

The screen to use is soldered screen, which they found at Ace Hardware. Kelley's uses size 7.





Bulgarian Apiary: Dale C. of Chicago shared this photo, commenting: "I assume it is a retirement community for aged foragers with frayed wings. Thus, the wood boards act as ramps for those unable to fly to access the honey in the supers."

“ I have a story to tell. I started keeping bees two years ago. I had read several books before starting to keep bees. I thought after I get my bees I would join a bee association. I joined two [names withheld.]

To my dismay I have since stopped going. I am a woman and most of the beekeepers are men. The new men that started keeping bees found mentors, but me, none to be found. I finally decided to leave the associations and tackle this project on my own. I am doing well with my bees. I have honey and have had no problems with my bees. I love your newsletter which keeps me informed. I am very disappointed about the Association, but I am quite determined to carry on and learn what I can from written material.”

—Susan S.

We're sorry to hear about Susan's experience. We're a little surprised; we find beekeepers generally some of the most sharing and welcoming people anywhere. But, other women have shared similar stories about being unable to penetrate the "old boys' network" at bee meetings, like many other meetings in other areas.

Susan's experience is a good reminder to all of us to make sure we're welcoming to new-bees, even when we may be a bit shy (a trait that runs strong among many beekeepers.) We need more people to help nurture this vital insect.

“ Hello, we haven't had any snow yet; real nice weather so far. Hope it keeps it up all winter for my bees' sake and maybe they will make it thru the winter as it was awful dry here last summer and didn't make much honey. I have 12 stands of bees and just getting started again as I used to have 42 stands and lost them all in the winter of '76-'77 and gave up. But my brother got me back into it and glad he did because I JUST LOVE THEM. Have a nice good year.”

— Owen L.

Thanks Owen. Glad you're "back in the saddle."

“ Excellent issue!!!!!!
—Jose Ash

Thanks Jose! Remember folks, all back issues are found at www.kelleybees.com.

Foraging for Fun

Word Search Puzzle: Components of the Honey House

We've hidden several words related to things found in the extracting, refining, and containing processes. If any of them are unfamiliar, please refer to the Kelley's catalog, where you can find them as well.

We've also hidden "queenbee" in the puzzle. Hopefully she isn't in your honey house! We just figured we can all use a bit more practice trying to find the queen bee.

And, because of the way word search puzzles are built, right—there are two-word terms that are listed as one word. You understand ...

Enjoy!

X	P	T	C	L	F	S	E	O	C	R	A	E	B	Y
U	N	C	A	P	P	I	N	G	P	L	A	N	E	S
R	E	Q	O	B	Q	Y	V	S	S	X	O	N	T	G
L	E	L	U	N	M	E	M	T	D	G	O	E	X	N
M	A	H	T	E	T	O	J	R	I	H	A	X	L	I
E	S	B	C	T	E	A	C	A	L	M	R	T	T	P
L	E	M	E	T	O	N	I	I	K	A	F	R	E	P
T	T	N	U	L	A	B	B	N	J	B	F	A	K	A
E	A	U	U	R	S	R	I	E	E	A	L	C	C	C
R	G	N	O	K	D	F	C	R	E	R	R	T	U	S
K	N	I	F	E	E	T	I	S	K	E	S	I	B	E
E	F	I	N	K	D	L	O	C	T	T	A	N	K	A
H	O	T	K	N	I	F	E	L	N	Y	S	G	S	L
A	L	U	T	A	P	S	I	H	E	A	T	E	R	S
S	E	V	L	A	V	F	J	K	M	A	W	T	B	U

BEAR
BOTTLE
BUCKET
CAPPINGS
COLDKNIFE
COMB
CONTAINERS
DRUMS
EXTRACTING
FILTER
GATES
HEATER
HONEY
HOTKNIFE
JAR
KNIFE
LABELS
LIDS
MELTER
QUEENBEE
SEALS
SCRATCHER
SPATULA
STEAMKNIFE
STRAINER
TANK
UNCAPPINGPLANE
VALVES

Starting Beekeepers Early

Sean Burgess, State Apiarist from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and former Kelley's employee, recently visited with students at Boston School.

The students who participate in "Wild Activities Adventure Club" (a part of Boston's 21st Century after-school program) learned about the working parts of a hive, making honey, and supplementing income with beekeeping. We know because of the numerous classes he's conducted at Kelley's that Sean is a fabulous teacher. The smiles on these youngsters' faces show they feel the same.



From top left: Tom McGovern, 21st Century Teacher, and Sean Burgess, State Apiarist. Next row: Zach Martin, Rance Chapman, Camden Wooldridge, Lewis Ferguson, Dallas Cecil, Lane Hoyes, Jenna Faucett, Issac Cothorn, Grant Amshoff, Wyatt Brown and Khalid Al-Akil; Seated back row: Reese Peak, Dylan Moreno, Garrett Osborne, Jackson Wiseman and Bradley Douglas. Front row: Camden Wetzstein, Gavin McGovern, Luke Phelps and Cade Benningfield.

Dronings from a Queen Bee

Honey and Honeys

By Charlotte Hubbard

As another new year rushed in, I used the benchmark to update my “bucket list.” In reviewing what I want to do before kicking the bucket, I categorized some of the remaining items.



My fingers are crossed—again this year—that in perhaps just a few months I’ll be able to eliminate that last item on my bucket list. However, there is something I can cross off a bucket list; it just isn’t my bucket list. Last year I inadvertently helped someone achieve something on theirs.



A sweet remembrance gift, photo courtesy of Debbie T.

Spring of 2011, before I knew if my bees would ever make drop one of honey, a groom-to-be asked if I could sell him honey in jars for use as wedding favors.

I sell a bit of honey to raise money for my late husband’s two favorite charities—Loaves & Fishes, and Meals on Wheels. Optimistic, I said sure I could supply the wedding favors. It was Spring; and hope springs eternal for beekeepers when blossoms emerge.

I then wandered about the apiary, begging my dozen hives that if nothing else, would they make the 300 ounces needed for Zach’s wedding, still several months away? They buzzed in response. I took that as a “yes.”

The bees delivered, bless their tiny little hearts. June and July were filled with the beyond-words-glory of extra golden honey for Zach’s wedding and all my other friends and neighbors who have come to rely on me for nature’s perfect candy.

Zach’s parents dropped off their honey containers for filling in early August. When I met Zach’s Mom, the delightful Debbie, she asked many questions ... beyond the usual “so, you keep bees?”

I had planned a few hive checks that afternoon. Sensing a real interest, I asked if she’d like to put on a spare suit and meet the insects responsible for her son’s wedding favors.

Debbie got goosebumps, and then those goosebumps got goosebumps of their own. She said getting close with bees was something that had always, always, always been on her bucket list. She’d be thrilled.



Debbie T.

I'm an emotional sort, so I also got goosebumps. Plus, I love working bees. Doing so with someone who also really wanted to work bees? Wow. Deb and I were buzzing like all the other critters in the apiary with mutual excitement. I was probably doubly excited. It's always great to have an extra pair of willing hands when lifting hive bodies in August.

My extra bee suits are my sized (Amazon-esque), Debbie is not. Even with several layers of goosebumps, she was swimming in the bee suit, or rather—floating. Her smile was as broad as a 10-frame deep body.

As if sensing our fascination, the barely bothered bees hummed happy tunes while we popped the inner covers and admired them. “You are SO beautiful,” murmured Debbie, totally enthralled.

I will embarrassingly admit that it took me a couple of seconds to realize she wasn't talking to me.

Our hive checks went smoothly, with nothing unusual found—although, like most beekeepers who love bees and beekeeping, finding “the usual” in a hive is not only something to be relieved about, but is still absolutely marvelous. A happy hive in August is one of the most fragrant, vibrant, active, marvel-at-the-organization things you'll ever be blessed to witness.

But, there were even more blessings, like the August 11th wedding of Zach and Mary, and the generous contribution to Meals on Wheels I was able to make because of it. The wedding favors were beautiful ... almost as beautiful as the bride and groom.



Mary and Zach's wedding party, photo courtesy of Debbie T.

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to kelleybees.com/blog. 