



Practical Beekeeping Syllabus Winter / Spring 2025

SESSION 1 February 18 Honey Bee Basics, Mentoring, Apiary Location

7:00 - 7:25 Welcome
Mike Garvey, Bee School Chairman and Kathy Balestrier, ECBA President

Introduction, class logistics and announcements

- Discussion of course syllabus and course materials
- Mosquito Spraying Opt Out

7:25 – 8:00 Lesson 1-1: Honey Bee Basics Ellen Garvey
• Key details of honey bees

8:00 – 8:15 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:15 – 8:30 Lesson 1-2: Mentoring Charlie Donnelly Moran
• Importance of having a support team
• Range of support options
• Benefits of having a mentor
• Introduction of mentors

8:30 – 8:55 Lesson 1-3 Apiary Setup and Location Geoff Neale
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 51-63
• Location, Location, Location!
• Shelter concerns
• Solar concerns
• Topographical concerns
• Human & animal habitation concerns
• Good Neighbor Policy

8:55 – 9:00 Announcements, Q & A, Raffle & Evaluation

Next week's class starts at 7:00

**Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 91-107, 110-112, 123-128 and 131-141 for next week's class **



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SESSION 2 February 25--Beekeeping Supplies & Equipment, Bees, Hives.

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

7:05 – 7:35 Lesson 2-1: Understanding the Modern Beehive Chris Delaney
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 91-107, 123-128

- Components of the Modern Beehive

7:35 – 8:10 Lesson 2-2 Ordering & Assembling Equipment Pete Delaney
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 110-112

- Local and on-line order suppliers
- Assembling hive bodies

8:10 – 8:25 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:25 – 8:55 Lesson 2-3 Ordering Bees Pete Delaney
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 131-141

- Package Bees vs Nucleus Colonies

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

Next week's class starts at 7:00

****Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 100-106, 112-123, 125-126, 128-129, 142-150, 152 and 183-188 for next week's class****



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SESSION 3 March 4 Beekeeping Equipment, Installing & Handling Bees

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

7:05 – 7:35 Lesson 3-1 Equipment & Working With Honey Bees Julie Crocker
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 118-123, 125-126, 128-129

- Equipment for the work
- Procedure for the work
- Purpose for the work

7:35 – 8:10 Lesson 3-2 Installing Package Bees Joe Gaglione
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 112-117, 142-150, 152, 183-188

- When the package arrives
- Hive preparation
- Installing bees
- Installing the queen
- Feeding the newly installed bees

8:10 – 8:25 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:25 – 8:55 Lesson 3-3 Frames & Foundation Joe Gaglione
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 100-106

- Frames, wood & plastic
- Wax and wire; wax on plastic; BetterComb
- Wiring the frame
- Embedding the wire

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

Next week's class starts at 7:00

** Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 27-48, 155-158 and 188-196 for next week's class**



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SESSION 4: March 11 Bee Culture, Biology, Colony Organization

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

7:05 – 7:30 Lesson 4-1: Understanding Honey Bee Behavior Larry Connors
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 27-38

- Honey Bee Development
- Castes
- Communication- von Frisch but mainly pheromones & queen's role
- Division of labor

7:30 – 8:10 Lesson 4-2: Life Cycle & Organization (Bee Math) Geoff Neale
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 39-48

- Bee Math Review-Practical Applications
- Why we need to know these timing factors
- Queen and primary swarm emergence
- Brood presence (or not) for treatment efficacy
- Put in practice (I have capped brood, but no eggs....)
- Other stinging Insects

8:10 – 8:25 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:25 – 8:55 Lesson 4-3: Spring & Summer Management 1st yr Pete Delaney
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 155-158, 188-196

- Work as the season progresses

8:50 – 9:00 Announcements, Q & A, Raffle & Evaluations

Next week's class starts at 7:00pm

****Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 170, 210-212, 251-261, 277-284 and 378-382 for next week's class****



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SESSION 5: March 18 Bee Pests, Parasite Diseases & Needs; Calendar & Records

7:00 - 7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

7:05 – 7:35 Lesson 5-1: Bee Pests, Parasite and Diseases Katherine Carlson
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 277-284

- Animal pests
- Comb damaging moths
- Minor insect pests; yellow jackets
- Small hive beetles

7:35-8:05 Lesson 5-2: Identifying & Controlling Honey Bee Diseases Katherine Carlson
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 254-261

- Brood diseases
- Fungus diseases
- Viral diseases
- Non-infectious diseases
- Chilled brood
- Adult honey bee diseases
- Proper use of medications
- What do the numbers mean?

8:05 – 8:20 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:20 – 8:35 Lesson 5-3 Calendar & Recordkeeping Kaitlyn Stanhope
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 170, 210-212

- How to record your colonies' status and progress
- Find the style that works for you

8:35-8:55 Lesson 5-4: Needs of Honey Bees Kathy Balestrier.
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 251-253, 378-382

- Nectar, pollen, propolis and water as life sustaining materials
- Forage plants
- Nectar & pollen producing plants useful to honey bees
- Evaluation of your apiary for honey bee forage

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

Next week's class starts at 7:00

****Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 263-271, 417, 419 and 423 for next week's class****



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SESSION 6 March 25 Massachusetts MDAR, Ongoing Learning, Mites

7:00-7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

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 – 7:45 Lesson 6-2 Learning thru Organizations and Bee Assns Kathy Balestrier.
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 417, 419, 423

- Websites
- Organizations & sources of Information

7:45 – 8:00 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:00 – 8:55 Lesson 6-3 Mite Treatments Mike Garvey
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 263-271

- Varroa mites
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Treatments: complex depending on temperature, season & colony status
- Effective treatment is key to colony survival
- How to do an alcohol wash (Demonstration)

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

Next week's class starts at 7:00pm

****Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 196-207 and 215-233 for next week's class****



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SESSION 7: April 1: Colony Management thru the Seasons

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

7:05 – 7:50 Lesson 7-1 Fall and Winter Management Joe Gaglione.
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 196-203, 231-233

- Evaluating colony condition & population
- Evaluating food stores
- Feeding colonies
- Protecting colonies from the elements
- Requeening a colony

7:50 – 8:05 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:05 – 8:55 Lesson 7-2 Management of Overwintered Hives Rick Reault
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 203-207, 215-230

- Late winter inspection of food stores
- Early spring inspection of food stores
- Spring evaluation and inspection
- Swarm prevention

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

Next week's class starts at 6:15. Begins with demonstration of live bee package installation. Veil required.

****Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 142-150, 171-177, 181-183, 335-342 and 350-360 for next week's class****



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SESSION 8: April 8 Installing a Package of Live Bees, Frame Inspection, Harvesting

6:15 – 6:55 Lesson 8-1 Live Bee Package Installation Rick Reault
• Location on Fair Grounds. Bring protective veil or suit.

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

7:05 – 7:30 Lesson -8-2 Reading A Frame Mike Garvey
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 171-177, 181-183
• What is normal? what is not? and what to do?
• What you expect to find where in the hive
• Understanding brood, food and stores
• Finding the queen

7:30 – 7:55 Lesson 8-3: Review of Package Installation Rick Reault
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 142-150
• Storing and spraying bees before installing
• Opening package
• Shaking out bees
• Installing queen

7:55 – 8:10 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:10 – 8:15 Lesson 8-4 short demo TBD

8:15 – 8:55 Lesson 8-5 Harvesting & Processing the Honey Crop Hillori Connors
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 335-342, 350-360
• 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

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

Next week's class starts at 6:30

****Please read *Beekeeping for Dummies* pages 156-166, 175, 181-183 and 185-192 for next week's class****



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SESSION 9 April 15 Smoker Lighting, Hive Inspection, Questions & Answers

6:30 – 7:00 Lesson 9-1 Lighting Your Smoker Geoff Neale
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 159-166, 175

- Fuel
- Timing

7:00 – 7:05 Announcements, Questions & Discussion

7:05 – 7:55 Lesson 9-2 Virtual “Hive Inspection“ Geoff Neale
Beekeeping for Dummies pages 156-158, 161-166, 181-183, 185-192

- Opening a hive
- Removing supers
- Checking for eggs and brood
- Looking at queen cells
- Hunting for the queen

7:55 – 8:10 BREAK & QUESTIONS

8:10 – 8:55 Question and Answer Round Table Committee

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