

Information for people interested in beekeeping

By Steven Page

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The Coweta Beekeepers Association is an active and growing beekeeping association in Newnan, Georgia. We have more than 140 member families. Our monthly meetings are at 7:00 PM on the second Monday of each month at the Coweta County Extension Office, 255 Pine Road, Newnan, Georgia.

Visitors are always welcome.

Location: [Coweta County Extension Office, 255 Pine Road, Newnan, Georgia.](#)

The topics covered at meetings are beekeeping related and educational.

We have monthly and quarterly raffles. Quarterly raffles are for expensive items such as a nucleus colony (nuc) of bees or a gift certificate from a beekeeping supply company, and monthly raffles are for less expensive items.

### **Coweta Sustainable Beekeeping**

A new era of sustainable beekeeping started in 2015. We continue to teach and implement Coweta Sustainable Beekeeping. Teaching new beekeepers queen rearing and other aspects of Coweta Sustainable Beekeeping reduces costs and increases honey production. Too many hobby beekeepers with less than six hives lose all their colonies during winter and leave beekeeping forever.

More information [Coweta Sustainable Beekeeping.](#)

We offer an Introduction to Beekeeping class each year on the fourth Saturday of January.

**Even though you put your email address on your registration form, you must follow the instructions below to receive the newsletter and other emails from the Coweta Beekeepers Association. You may register multiple emails.**

**Click below to sign up for one or more of our three email updates;**

- **The Coweta Beekeepers Newsletter,**
- **Other notifications**
- **“It’s Time to...” mentoring of the Coweta Beekeeping Method,**

**all free and via email.**

<http://eepurl.com/-8onD>

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## **Becoming a beekeeper**

- Take a course
- Join a local association
- Get a mentor
- Get a good beekeeping book; I recommend ***The Beekeeper's Handbook*** 5<sup>th</sup> Edition [The Beekeeper's Handbook: Sammataro, Diana, Avitabile, Alphonse, Caron, Dewey M.: 9781501752612: Amazon.com: Books](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B075G4Y1RV/ref=db_s_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i0)

Or

- **Storey's Guide to Keeping Honey Bees**  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B075G4Y1RV/ref=db\\_s\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_bibl\\_vppi\\_i0](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B075G4Y1RV/ref=db_s_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i0)

The recommended advanced book is ***OTS Queen Rearing*** by Mel Disselkoen <http://www.mdasplitter.com/> This book teaches a simple way to raise queens and kill Varroa mites. It is part of the Coweta Sustainable Beekeeping.

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Start by ordering one or two nucs or packages, preferably in the fall for April or May pickup. By spring, most beekeepers are sold out, so order early.

New colonies will need to be fed syrup made from cane sugar and water. The nectar flow will end before a new colony can collect much nectar, plan on feeding until September to grow a strong colony that has stored enough honey for the winter. This honey contains cane sugar, not nectar, it's good for winter survival by not extracting. The nectar flow ends in late May.

Once a colony has six deep frames of brood, you can raise a few queens. The queens can then be used to start new colonies (splits), enabling you to increase the colonies and enter winter with a sustainable number of colonies. It requires an investment in woodenware. It will reduce the chance of all your colonies dying during winter and reduce the cost of replacing colonies because you will raise your own.

Honey production from one colony for one year can vary from none to 100 pounds of honey. Do not expect any honey production from a first year colony. The main nectar flow and all honey production in the Piedmont of Georgia is during April and May. There is no nectar flow of any consequence after June 1 each year. You will need to feed each colony gallons of syrup made from cane sugar and water during the summer and fall to grow the colony and prepare it for winter.

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Two facts of beekeeping

1. Colonies die.
  2. Beekeepers get stung.
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There are two beekeeping magazines, and both are excellent.

<http://www.beeculture.com/>

<http://www.americanbeejournal.com/>

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Beekeeping terms or slang. <http://www.bushfarms.com/beeterms.htm>

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## **Beekeeping Decisions**

### **“Stay ahead of your bees....”**

#### 1. Are you going to start beekeeping in the spring?

Spring is the best time to start beekeeping. Most beekeepers take delivery of their first colonies in April or May. Nucs start selling in September for spring delivery; order early if you can.

#### **Georgia bee suppliers**

[Bees: Nucs & Packages \(gabeekeeping.com\)](http://gabeekeeping.com)

#### 2. Make sure you have a suitable location for your beehives.

Beehives should be located away from people and pets, in the sun, facing east or south, on the north or west side of an open area. They need at least a half day of sun, preferably morning into early afternoon. Avoid low spots which could flood or be damp. Supers of honey are heavy; it is best to move them from the bee yard on a vehicle, such as a pickup truck, wheelbarrow, or golf cart.

#### 3. How many hives will you start?

The recommended number is two. One is OK; it just limits your ability to fix some problems. To become sustainable, I recommend growing your bee yard to at least six colonies consisting of four hives and two nucs in the fall. With proper preparation for winter, some, if not all, the colonies will survive winter. With only a few colonies, the risk is all the colonies die during the winter.

#### 4. Are you going to use 10-frame or 8-frame equipment?

10-frame - traditional size, heavier. I use 10-frame equipment but may transition to 8-frame equipment at some point.

8-frame – Gaining in popularity, less weight, easier to get the bees to build comb on all the frames, the same price as 10-frame equipment but will require more supers. There is some indication the 8-frame equipment makes stronger colonies.

5. Order your woodenware - bottom board, supers, frames, foundation, feeder, inner cover, and outer cover. Extra – nuc w/frames and foundation (a place to put a swarm) (I do not recommend Duragilt foundation.) **If you are not visiting the equipment supplier, call them to ensure all your woodenware will fit together.**

Assemble (glue and nails), prime, and paint your woodenware outside only. **All your woodenware needs to be ready when your nuc(s) or packages are ready to be picked up.**

Wood is heavy; try to avoid shipping charges by buying locally or using one of the suppliers with free shipping.

6. Order your equipment – order with your woodenware. **You may need additional help with ordering.**

Minimum – Veil, smoker, hive tool, bee brush.

I like this ventilated jacket and veil. [Vented Beekeeping Jacket w/Easy Access Veil | Guardian Bee Apparel | Beekeeper Suits, Veils, Jackets, Pants, Gloves](#)

Nice to have – Jacket or coveralls, gloves, frame grip, frame rest.

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## Beekeeping Supply Companies

Georgia – Rossman Apiaries [www.gabees.com](http://www.gabees.com) Moultrie, GA free shipping min order required

Florida and Illinois – Dadant & Sons [www.dadant.com/catalog/](http://www.dadant.com/catalog/) free shipping min order required

Minnesota - Mann Lake Ltd. [www.mannlakeltd.com](http://www.mannlakeltd.com) free shipping min order required

Most offer free email sign-up for news and sales.