

# **SPRING 2018 Bristol County Beekeepers Association, Inc. Beginner's Beekeeping Course**

**Tuesday evenings 7:00 pm - 9:00pm  
February 6 to April 3, 2018**

All classes are scheduled to be held in the Library (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) of the main building at the Bristol County Agricultural High School 135 Center St. Dighton, MA.

This is the course you should take if you are thinking about keeping bees, or if you have tried beekeeping and want to learn more about it or if you are just curious about bees!

The cost is \$50 per person which includes a textbook, handouts and a 1-year membership to Bristol County Beekeepers Association. Additional family members who wish to attend the class can do so for \$25.00 each. This lesser fee does not include a textbook.

Subjects will include the biology of honeybees, how to acquire your first bees, buying or building a beehive, plants for the bees, diseases and how to treat them, queens, extracting and bottling honey. Colony management and a review of what to do during the four seasons, will give you an idea of what is involved. There will be lots of time for questions and answers, and a chance to talk to people who have just started as well as veterans with 100 hives who can talk about tons of honey.

Classes are held on Tuesdays evening, from 7 to 9 pm with a 15 minute break. There will be a general membership monthly meeting held during the course that students (as new members) are encouraged to attend. If there are cancellations due to bad weather and Bristol Aggie closes, Bee School will be pushed back a week\*. The school may also host a field day hive opening on the weekend for a "hands on" demonstration so students can get comfortable working around bees. Scheduling of the field day is weather permitting and usually takes place following the completion of the classroom instruction.

Students will be given the option of being paired up with a "Bee Buddy". Which is a veteran beekeeper from the club, that can help them continue to learn and experience beekeeping after the course ends.

\*If Bristol County Agricultural High school is close due to bad weather, there will be no bee school that night and that class will be rescheduled before the end of the course. Students will be notified via email, the BrCBA website and/or Facebook.

\*Make-up day is scheduled for April 10, 2018 (if needed).

## **Week 1 – February 6, 2018** - Introduction to Beekeeping

The normal starting time for class is **7:00pm**, but on the first day, please arrive by **6:30pm** to allow time for check-in and distribution of course materials.

- About this classroom
- Course overview/the “big picture”
- Introduction to Bristol County Beekeepers’ Association
- Why do you want to keep bees?
- Integrated and safe beekeeping education
- Mentors
- Workshops
- Resource list (library, web, bibliography, organizations, equipment suppliers,)
- Basic equipment (smoker, hive tool, protective equipment, etc.)
- Basic hive parts (bottom boards, hive body, supers, frames, inner cover, lid)
- Making the decision to be a beekeeper: Time, cost, bee stings, when to order bees.

## **Week 2 – February 13, 2018** - Equipment and Assembly

Review of Bristol Bee recommended hive parts (bottom boards, hive body, supers, frames, inner cover, and outer cover)

- Other equipment (queen excluders, feeders, hive straps, moving frame, staples)
- Plans for making own hive bodies and supers
- Frame assembly (**Bring a small container of (indoor-outdoor) wood glue, utility knife, needle nose pliers and a hammer with you to class**)

Required Reading: Chapter 3 – Beekeeping Equipment – pgs. 36-48

## **Week 3 – February 20, 2018** - Biology and Life Cycle of the Honey Bee

- Biology of the honey bee
- Individual caste life cycles, duties
- Hive life cycle (intro to what bees do in each season)
- Communication: pheromones, dancing
- Brief intro to races

Required Reading: Appendix A – Anatomy of Honey Bees – pgs. 245-249  
Chapter 2 – Understanding Bees – pgs. 20-35  
Chapter 3 – Colony Activities – pgs. 20-35

## **Week 4 – February 27, 2018** - Regular Monthly Meeting (Speaker scheduled).

## **Week 5 – March 6, 2018** - Starting a New Hive

- Site considerations: location, neighbors, ordinances
- Getting your own: package bees, nucs, swarms, buying an existing colony or split
- Installing a nuc
- Installing packaged bees
- Feeding & caring for the bees (more to be covered in Colony Management)
- Question & Answer time

Required Reading: Chapter 4 – Obtaining and Preparing for Bees – pgs. 49-60  
Chapter 5 – Working Bees – pgs. 61-72  
Chapter 6 – Package Bees – pgs. 74 -85  
Chapter 7 – Feeding Bees – pgs. 86-97

## **Week 6 – March 13, 2018** - Colony Management

- Late winter/early spring
- Honey flow build-up; post honey flow
- Honey plants: nectar and pollen sources
- Summer management
- Fall and winter management

Required Reading: Chapter 8 – Winter/Spring Management – pgs. 109-108  
Chapter 9 –Summer/Fall Management – pgs. 109-124  
Chapter 11 – Special Management Problems – pgs. 148-167

## **Week 7 – March 20, 2018** - Diseases, Pests & Common Threats

- Diseases: AFB, EFB, chalkbrood, sacbrood and nosema
- Pests: varroa mites, tracheal mites, SHB
- IPM strategies: resistant breeds, screened bottom boards, proper maintenance, checking population, proper use of pesticides, mechanical controls
- Extraction and processing
- Marketing products from the hive (time available)

Required Reading: Chapter 13 – Pathogens and Parasites of Honey Bees – pgs. 189-209  
Chapter 14 – Pests of Honey Bees – pgs. 210-202

## **Week 8 - March 27, 2018** – Regular Monthly Meeting (Speaker scheduled)

## **Week 9 – April 3, 2018** – Alternatives to Langstroth Hives

Slovenian AZ Hives, Top Bar Hives and Q&A time for all topics  
Time will be allotted for end of class questions

## **Week 10 – April 10, 2018** – Make up class (if needed)