

Real Buzz Words: Beekeeping Sites for All Levels

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It's no surprise that beekeeping is a traditional farming activity. Bees provide a much-needed service by pollinating crops, and the honey they produce is a great product to offer at farmstands and farmers' markets. Whether you're just thinking about getting into beekeeping, or if you're an experienced apiarist looking for new ideas or suppliers, the Internet is swarming with information on the subject.

The following are several good general reference Web sites, but these will, in turn, lead you to more specific resources on beekeeping and honey sites around the world.

BeeSource.com (www.beesource.com) is a nicely designed site that provides new sources of bees, books, supplies, plans for constructing beehives, information on beekeeping laws, equipment and issues; there's also a page of links to other beekeeping Web sites.

If you're looking to share information with other beekeepers, this site provides its own bulletin board for discussion on various beekeeping topics, as well as links to other beekeeping discussion groups, news groups and more.

The Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium Beekeeping Information Index (<http://maarec.cas.psu.edu/Beeinfoindex.html>) is a simple Web site that provides all the basics of apiculture. This site is organized and reads more like a manual. It provides everything you need to know about beekeeping from honeybee biology to beekeeping equipment, and colony management to diseases, pests and parasites and pollination.

The Colony Management section includes information on managing for honey production and managing for pollination. Other management topics are organized by season. There's even advice on contracting with growers for pollination services.

The design of this site is not fancy, but links and information are presented in an easy to navigate format.

Only a small amount of the information here is specific to the Mid-Atlantic region. Most of it is applicable to beekeeping anywhere.

There's a page of additional resources, which provides names, addresses and phone numbers of organizations, industry journals and experts. The page is dated 1996 so you have to wonder if some of the information is out of date. The glossary of beekeeping terms is quite extensive.

The Beehive (www.xensei.com/users/alwine/), based in Massachusetts, is an electric mix of useful beekeeping information and games. In addition to practical resources such as bee anatomy, how to start beekeeping and how to store and use honey, there is also fun stuff here as well, such as a beehive crossword puzzle, a trivia quiz and a game called "Sting Me." There are articles on how bees were used as weapons of war and city beekeeping, as wells as frequently asked questions about bees.

The programs that you can download from this site also reflect the mix of serious information and fun. Included in the download section are an e-book on Beginning Beekeeping, and a beehive jigsaw puzzle program that is fun and easy to complete.

This light-hearted site would be a good resource for young people just getting into beekeeping.

National Honey Board (www.nhb.org) is a broad resource for honey producers including national news, business information, marketing resources, quality control information and statistics on national honey production and consumption. There are also numerous articles here on honey research, legislation, organic standards and the like.

All of these sites are great resources worth bookmarking, but don't stop there. Be sure to follow the many links to more resources that these sites provide to round out your research in apiculture.

