

The First-Year Beekeeping Guide

What to know before the bees arrive

Beekeeping is deeply rewarding and genuinely a commitment. This guide covers the first-year reality so you start with the right gear, expectations, and respect for the colony.

Before you buy bees

- Check local laws/HOA rules and tell your neighbors.
- Take a local beginner course and find a mentor or club — invaluable in year one.
- Order bees (a 'nuc' or package) in winter for spring delivery; they sell out.

Starter equipment

- Langstroth hive (most common): boxes, frames, foundation, bottom board, lid.
- Protective gear: veil/suit, gloves; a smoker and hive tool are non-negotiable.
- Beginners do best starting with TWO hives — you can compare and share resources.

The first season

- Inspect every 7-10 days in spring/summer: look for the queen, eggs, brood pattern, stores.
- Don't expect honey in year one — the colony is building itself.
- Watch for swarming (overcrowding) and Varroa mites (treat per local guidance).

Insider glossary

Nuc — A small starter colony with a laying queen — easier than a package.

Brood — Developing bees (eggs, larvae, pupae).

Supering — Adding boxes for honey storage as the colony grows.

Varroa — A parasitic mite; the top colony-health threat.

Starter checklist

- Local course/mentor
- Langstroth hive x2
- Smoker + hive tool
- Veil/suit + gloves

- Bees ordered (winter)
- Mite treatment plan

Local honey dealer? 'If You See Me Running, Try To Keep Up' at 15d0.com/shop/beekeeping/