

Will I get stung?

The simple answer is yes! All beekeepers will get stung occasionally, despite wearing full suits and veils. It certainly hurts, but most people recover quickly. Even those allergic to bee stings can sometimes keep bees subject to suitable medical advice.

How do I start?

Join a local beekeeping association affiliated to the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) such as the Fleet and District Beekeepers Association. We welcome all prospective members and can advise on suitable training courses held on a commercial basis or you can join our own “Beekeeping for Beginners” course starting in February each year.

This is a combined course of both theory and practical sessions where you will be able to handle bees under supervision from an experienced beekeeper. We also offer a “buddy” scheme for new beekeepers, pairing them up with a locally based beekeeping mentor who can be called on for advice and assistance when required.

We also encourage members to take the BBKA Basic Assessment and other courses to ensure continued learning and development.

Beekeeping is a fascinating hobby which, after purchase of the essential equipment need not cost a great deal - and if you choose to sell your honey, your new hobby could even pay for itself. It's also great to know that you are doing something practical to support the environment.

Our Aims and Objectives

The Fleet and District Beekeepers Association was founded in 1918 and is a member of the Hampshire Beekeepers Association, which in turn is affiliated to the national British Beekeepers Association (BBKA).

We now have almost 200 members in and around Fleet and the surrounding towns and villages including Crookham, Odiham, Hook, Hartley Wintney and Farnborough. Over the last few years with the growing interest in beekeeping, our numbers have continued to grow significantly. We are keen to encourage and support local beekeepers to maintain healthy, docile and productive honey bees in and around the area and hold regular meetings and other events to promote best practice.

We have our own shop to provide beekeeping equipment to members at discount prices and also have a number of key items of equipment available for hire by members. We also have a dedicated training apiary to provide hands-on experience to both prospective and existing members.

Our website at www.fleetbeekeepers.com has more information on all aspects of beekeeping along with details of our various activities and events. You can also send us an email with any queries to info@fleetbeekeepers.com.



Want to know more about Beekeeping?



Come and learn with the Fleet & District Beekeepers Association

Interested in becoming a Beekeeper?



Beekeepers come in all shapes and sizes...

Bees and other pollinating insects are a vital part of the natural world and over millions of years have evolved alongside flowering plants and trees to the point where they are dependant upon each other.

Honey bees are social animals that live in a colony of up to 80,000 bees at the peak of the season under ideal conditions. Each colony contains a single Queen bee that is mother to all the other individuals.

As beekeepers, we provide colonies of bees with a home in the form of a beehive and ensure that the colony remains healthy and productive through careful management.

If we have done our job correctly, we are usually rewarded with an annual harvest of honey from each beehive once we ensure the bees have enough stores for their own needs.

Beekeeping is a fascinating and challenging hobby that is very rewarding in many ways - it's even said that bees endow their beekeepers with a long life...

We at the Fleet and District Beekeepers Association always welcome new members and hold regular meetings and training sessions for both new and more experienced beekeepers.

How much time does it take?

Most amateur beekeepers inspect their bees every weekend between March and September which takes around 30 mins per beehive. During this time we are looking for signs of potential swarming, any disease, the amount of stores and general well-being of the colony. Between October and February the bees require very little attention as they are generally only active when there are flowering plants to forage from.



We hold regular teaching sessions throughout the year

Where can I keep bees?

Beehives can be kept in almost any sheltered area where they are away from the general public and can even be placed at the bottom of a large garden. Many local farmers welcome having colonies of bees placed near their flowering crops and the Association also has its own apiary for members' beehives.

What does it cost?

A new beehive can be purchased for about £150. To this you would need to add the cost of a beesuit and other equipment which probably costs another £150. Other items can be purchased through the Association's own shop which stocks all you need at greatly reduced prices. Bees can either be purchased separately or as a member you can join the list to receive a swarm collected by one of our more experienced beekeepers.

Remember - there is always a huge demand for local honey, so you could become self-financing quite quickly!



Honey straight from the comb - Delicious!

What else is required of me?

As a beekeeper you will be expected to ensure the well-being of your bees and therefore you need to have a certain amount of commitment to ensure that your beehives and their occupants remain healthy. We welcome people with disabilities and can help them to become beekeepers with appropriate support where required.