

Introduction to Urban Beekeeping



Presented by



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Interested In being a Beekeeper?

Honeybee importance is at its utmost highest. With the decline in populations throughout the past decades, urban beekeepers have taken the mantle as honeybee protectors and advocates. With the increased emphasis in urban greening and Chicago lacking agricultural monocultures, urban beekeepers can produce successful colonies and provide healthy bees that benefit all of Chicagoland.

How should I start?

As you begin your journey into beekeeping keep in mind a few things:

- 1) There is NO "right" way to keep bees. Beekeeping practices have been going on for tens of thousands of years, and throughout that time best practicing beekeeping methods have waxed and waned. Find what works for you, learn from mistakes and repeat successes.
- 2) As beekeeping is a learning process, learn with others. Join meet up groups, read beekeeping books and monthly publications, take classes, and find a mentor.
- 3) Become an advocate to friends and neighbors. Urban beekeeping is legal in Chicago. That said, inform your neighbors and be sure to register your hives with the state's Agricultural Department.
- 4) Know that starting beekeeping as a hobby will require a bit of capital. Depending on what materials you choose to purchase, beekeeping at a conservative estimate will have an upfront cost of \$500-700. However, once a colony or colonies have established themselves, they will produce anywhere between 45 and 120lbs. of honey per hive, which makes great gifts and is a delicious treat. Also, they provide additional benefits for pollination services for your flowers and garden.
- 5) Choose sustainable practices. It is the opinion of Westside Bee Boyz that the recent decline in the health of honeybees is due to unsustainable practices in the beekeeping industry. Specifically, buying honeybee colonies from outside the Midwest. So as you start beekeeping try to obtain bees from our region. These bees will be more adept to survival as they are more accustomed to our region. Only through increased genetic diversity and sustainable practices will we be able to "save the honeybees". Buy local, support local, bee local.

Want to know more about beekeeping?

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram and subscribe to our newsletter at westsidebeeboyz.com to learn about upcoming workshops.

Questions? Email us at thad@westsidebeeboyz.com

Suggested Beekeeping Tools:

Hive tool, Beekeeping Suit or Veil, Beekeeping gloves or comparable substitute, Smoker, Hive Bodies (either 3 Deeps or 6 Medium depth Hive Bodies), frames (wax or plasticell foundations)

Follow our beekeeping adventures on



Check out our Website & Blog at www.WestsideBeeBoyz.com

We can help you get started!

If you are ready to take the next step, Westside Bee Boyz can help whether you are interested in having us manage a hive or two on your property or if you are ready to try your own hand at beekeeping. With our management contracts, you can keep bees on your rooftop, building, property, etc and learn from us as we maintain the hives. If you're ready to start beekeeping on your own, we sell packaged bees that can be installed into your hive and entire nucs which include an established colony with a laying queen. We also sell beekeeping equipment. If you are interested or would like to discuss how we can meet your needs, email thad@westsidebeeboyz.com. Visit our website for beekeeping resources, www.westsidebeeboyz.com, and sign up for our newsletter at the bottom of our site to receive information on our future classes and workshops.



Our Story

Working side by side with one of Illinois' most revered beekeepers John Hansen, U-Turn Permitted graduate Thad Smith made a deep connection with a small but powerful part of the North Lawndale community - its honey bees. Starting in November 2014, after a year and a half of working as an apprentice and learning everything he could from John, Thad launched his own business, Westside Bee Boyz. In April, Naaman Gambill joined the team offering his beekeeping expertise gained from working as Garfield Park Conservatory's Head Beekeeper.

With over 50 years combined beekeeping experience, we are committed to keeping, educating, and promoting urban beekeeping and honeybees as well as other pollinators. Located in the heart of Chicago's Westside, it is our goal to serve the city's bees and beekeepers as stewards to both. We pride ourselves in taking the natural approach to beekeeping by avoiding potentially harmful chemicals and treatments. We manage hives across the Chicagoland area from Lincoln Park Zoo to Shedd Aquarium to Chicago's downtown rooftops as well as our own apiary.

Supporting Bees and their Friends

If you would like to support Chicago's bees, there are a few things you can do. Make your yard as pollinator-friendly as possible, not just for honey bees, but for all of our local pollinators. By helping local beekeepers, you are helping Chicago's environment and economy, so buy local! Purchase food and honey from local farmers markets. We sell our raw honey, honey products, and our new sparkling honey water beverage, Bella Beez, at the South Loop Farmers Market, The Plant's Back of the Yards Community Market, and the Garfield Park Neighborhood Market. We love keeping the community up-to-date on our latest happenings, so we'd greatly appreciate if you followed us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

Our Partners



Additional Resources

<http://www.westsidebeeboyz.com/>
<http://www.agr.state.il.us/bees-apiaries>
<http://www.chicagohoneycoop.com/>
<http://cookdupagebeekeepers.com/>
www.xerces.org
The Backyard Beekeeper by Kim Flottum

First Lessons in Beekeeping by Keith S. Delaplane
Attracting Native Pollinators by The Xerces Society
The ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture
Bee Culture Magazine
American Bee Journal

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