

Resources

Gulf Coast Beekeepers Association

Serving Charlotte, Lee & Collier counties
PO Box 100689, Cape Coral, FL
www.GulfCoastBees.com/join
(239) 558-1130



State of Florida FDACS Apiary Division

How to Register Your Hives

[https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/
Bees-Apiary/Beekeeper-Registration](https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Bees-Apiary/Beekeeper-Registration)

State Inspector Directory

District 14 - our local area

[https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/
Bees-Apiary/Apiary-Inspection/
Apiary-Inspector-Directory](https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Bees-Apiary/Apiary-Inspection/Apiary-Inspector-Directory)



University of Florida

Honey Bee Research & Extension Lab

Dr Jamie Ellis
1881 Natural Area Drive, Gainesville, FL
<https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/honey-bee/>
352-294-6927

Bee College
Master Beekeeper Program
Two Bees in a Podcast

Did You Know?

Honey bees can fly 15mph

Honey bees visit ~2,000,000 flowers
to forage 10#s of nectar
to produce 1# of honey

Amazing!

How to Become a Beekeeper

FLORIDA

Beekeeping in Florida

Everyone has their own reason/s for wanting to keep bees, from helping the environment, to producing their own honey/natural sweetener, to pollinating their gardens, to making homemade items from hive products or simply for the love of the bees, whether for a living or just for fun!

You will find the bees fascinating and just like gardening, beekeeping is very different in Florida than it is up north where it snows. In most Florida counties, our bees fly and actively forage all year round. Fortunately, on a hobby level the bees are not time intensive & need little maintenance. Pest-free shelter & food.

With ideal weather, we can also get multiple honey crops with many unique Florida floral varieties, such as mangrove, orange blossom, tupelo, palmetto, brazilian pepper to name just a few.



Steps to Success

Step 1 | Know your Zoning and Lot Size

Florida Statutes classify bees as livestock and as such managed colonies are registered and inspected in Florida by very friendly & knowledgeable state inspectors.

Agriculturally zoned property is exempt from the "Beekeeper Compliance Agreement"; which is required on residential property and contains guidelines for keeping bees in residential areas (see *Set Up Your Apiary* to the right)

Only if you live in an HOA or a COA, would their By-laws supersede State Statutes as to whether or not you can keep bees in that community. Board Approval may or may not be required.

Step 2 | Take a Bee 101 Workshop

Due to the complexities of bee colonies, the decline in overall honey bee health & genetics, as well as being responsible for the welfare of another living creature, **we highly encourage everyone to take some sort of LOCAL Bee 101 class or workshop BEFORE buying bees or bee equipment.**

Having the basics of beekeeping IN FLORIDA and bee lingo under your belt, greatly improves your chances of success as a beekeeper with healthy, robust colonies.

Where to find Bee 101 classes

- Your local UF/IFAS Extension may have a Bee 101
- Some bee clubs offer Bee 101,
- UF Bee College
- First level of UF's Master Beekeeper Program
- Local 2-day Hands-On Course at GVAfarm.com (Cape Coral & Port Charlotte) To register, go to <http://aquaponicsflorida.eventbrite.com>

Don't stop there...continue learning and get support by joining local beekeeper associations & FB groups, participating in UF Bee Lab programs. If possible, find a mentor or buddy to beekeep with.

Step 3 | Set Up Your Apiary

The below is from the current FDACS Apiary Division Beekeeper Compliance Agreement (BCA) and required for your residential apiary (where you keep your bees) has the following requirements:

- Bees must be on your property as a managed hive in a bee box (not in a tree, in the wall)
- You must have a convenient freshwater water source on your property, such as a bird bath or pond. (not your neighbors' pet bowl or swimming pool).
- You must either have a fenced yard or fence around the hives with gate controlled access.
- You must have a 6ft fly away barrier if bees are placed within 15 ft of the property line.
- **Do Not:** put bees within 150 ft of tethered animals nor public places frequented by people, nor where they will impede access by emergency personnel
- **Number of hives is dictated by the property's size:**
 - 1/4 acre or less = 3 hives
 - 1/4 - 1/2 acre = 6 hives,
 - 1/2 - 1 acre = 10 hives
 - 1 - 2 1/2 acres = 15 hives
 - 2.5 - 5 acres = 25 hives
 - 5 - 10 acres = 50 hives

Other considerations:

- Put hives on a hive stand to have them at a comfortable working height, bearing in mind, you have to lift off honey supers weight 40-60#s to do minimum monthly inspections
- Sunny location with minimal landscaping maintenance nearby needed is best

Step 4 | Order your Bees & Be a Keeper

You can order Live Bees in the following ways:

- Buy 8 or 10-frame hive
- Buy 3-5-frame NUC (recommended)
- Buy package bees

Minimum hive inspections = 1/month per BCA
Recommended = every 10-14 days

Make sure your new hive is assembled & painted as well as your apiary set up BEFORE bees are ready

Step 5 | Register with State Apiary Div

<https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Bees-Apiary/Beekeeper-Registration>