



How to become a Beekeeper

This course is ABKA's full competency based new beekeeper training programme. It has three key elements.

Please note: Only once you have completed and attended ABKA's Bees and Beekeeping and Meet the Bees will you be eligible to enroll on the programme.

The Elements

Bee Buddy Each new beekeeper will have a Bee Buddy. They are an experienced beekeeper who will help you gain the skills and confidence you need to manage your own bees. During your first season they will involve you in the management of their own bees and will guide you through the core competencies in the Workbook. They will provide you with a minimum of 6 opportunities to meet up and work with them and their bees.

Workbook This gives you loads of practical information to help you develop your beekeeping skills. It is competency based and so concentrates on developing the basic skills (things you can do) and knowledge (things you need to know) you require to become a competent and safe beekeeper. It also concentrates on practical tasks rather than theory alone to help your understanding.

Training modules In addition there will be three further training modules in your second year.

Module One

Safety during inspections and identifying anaphylaxis, how to make up frames, disease recognition, treatment and prevention.

Module Two

How to prepare for getting your own bees and your priorities for your first full season and swarming.

Module Three

How to prepare your bees for winter, common and exotic pests, robbing and the storage of equipment

The training is designed to take a practical but slow approach to the first year with the aim of building your confidence in handling bees and give you a good basic grounding in the day to day management of bees before you have to deal with your own colony. We strongly recommend that you do not get your own bees in the first season but spend it learning about bees by helping your Bee Buddy with theirs. At the end of the first season if the training has gone well you will be in a position to decide on an apiary site and buy appropriate equipment. At this point you will be in a good position to get and manage your own bees and work through the remaining competencies in the Workbook.

Course fee: £130

The cost of this course also includes a one year full membership of ABKA. This will run from the autumn and will therefore cover your first season of keeping your own bees. As well as being able to take part in all the activities the Association offers and borrow equipment it also includes public liability insurance, bee product and disease insurance.



As we are affiliated to the British beekeepers' Association you also get a copy of the monthly magazine BBKA News as part of your membership.

What equipment do I need to get before starting this programme?

Before you are able to start this part of your training you will need to buy the appropriate protective equipment. We recommend a full bee suit from a reputable supplier, gloves and suitable foot ware. You will have been given details of this in the equipment handout during the initial Bees and Beekeeping course.

You will also need to get a copy of a beginner's textbook on Beekeeping. We recommend The Haynes Bee Manual – The complete step-by-step guide to keeping bees.

Once you have completed your application and paid the course fee you will receive the following:

- A digital copy of your Workbook.

- A New Beekeeper Guide which describes the training programme and the roles and responsibilities of both you and your Bee Buddy.

- Contact from your Bee Buddy to arrange the start of your training.*

Please note that we will pair you up with your new Bee Buddy as soon as possible after you have submitted your forms and payment but we would rather take a little longer and get the right person for you rather than rush and pair you with someone unsuitable. Please be patient.

How do I apply?

Please register your interest for our next available course with our Education Officer. Email: education@airedalebka.org.uk.