Honey harvesting

For traditional and top-bar hives, harvest once or twice a year. For the Langstroth hive, harvest three or four times a year.

Steps in harvesting honey:

- Wear protective clothing: overall, veils, gloves, boots
- Light smoker
- Gently open the hive
- Select combs that are two-thirds sealed full of honey
- Avoid combs with brood
- Turn over the comb and repeat the above process
- Pack honey in clean, dry jars, with well-sealed lids. Label with date harvested and store in a cool place.

Keeping records

It is important to keep records during each hive inspection in order to follow the progress of each colony and monitor its condition. Hives should be inspected two to three-times a month. Entries may be made under the following headings: hive number, date hive occupied, date of inspection, observation, yield in kilogrammes.

What can go wrong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bees fly away</td>
<td>Ensure sufficient food: plant flowering plants near hive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance of hive e.g. by fire, people or animals</td>
<td>Provide water during droughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent attacks by pests</td>
<td>Reduce size of colony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place hive at least 30 metres from roads and public places and fence site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep hive area clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee sting</td>
<td>Keep calm, remove the sting and smoke the stung area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In case of severe reaction, report to nearest hospital or clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pests (safari ants, wax moth, honey badger)</td>
<td>Hang hives between trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If poles are used, treat poles with used engine oil or grease to keep out termites and ants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of insecticides or pesticides</td>
<td>Ensure adequate ventilation of hives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of chemical sprays near hives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take care to avoid the areas where bees are active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep hives away from the areas where bees activity is high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information:

Market contacts

National Apiculture Development Organisation (TUNADO)
PO Box 519, Kampala-Africa
Tel: +256-41-345160, Email: tunado@tel.co.ug
Phone: +256-41-349512
Email: info@honeyeurope.com; Website: www.honeyeurope.com
Africa Nova Kenya Limited
PO Box 24487-00502, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel/Fax: +254-20-3874448/50
Email: info@honeycareafrica.com, Website: www.honeycareafrica.com

Training contacts

Be Natural Products Uganda Ltd
PO Box 5318, Pan Africa House, Plot 3 Kimathi Avenue Kampala, Uganda.
Tel: +256-41-253844 or 234676; Fax: +256-41-259052
Website: www.beenaturalproducts.com
International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE)
P. O. Box 30772-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 (20) 8632000; Fax: +254 (20) 8632001/8632002
E-mail: icipe@icipe.org; Website: www.icipe.org
National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)
P. O. Box 25235, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256-41-345440/345065/345066; Fax: +256-41-347843
E-mail: naads@iwayafrica.com; Website: www.naads.or.ug
Sasakawa Global 2000 (MoA)
P. O. Box 62347, Addis Ababa Ethiopia
Tel: +251-115-518040; Fax: +251-115-512984
E-mail: moa@telecom.net.et

How to Keep Bees and Process Honey
How to Keep Bees and Process Honey

Asaf Ayatuhaire, from Bushenyi District in South Western Uganda, has more than 100 hives of different types. With an annual production of honey of around 2,000 kilograms, he earns more than US$ 2,200 a year and has recently registered a company, West Honeys Uganda.

But ten years ago, Asaf had just three traditional hives and produced only six kilograms of honey a year. Then he attended a national training programme, organized and sponsored by the Entomology Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. After completing his training, he became involved in training other beekeepers in his local community.

Asaf was also able to interact with NGOs and international and local funding agencies, such as USAID, FAO and the District Farmers Association. These agencies helped him to expand his apiary and acquire improved top-bar hives.

Today, thanks to beekeeping, Asaf has a permanent house, pays fees for his children in secondary and higher education and is able to save from his income.

Why keep bees?

• Bees pollinate crops and thus help increase yields
• High demand for honey exists in local, regional and international markets
• Propolis, collected from plants by bees to cover the inside of the hive, is thus quite suitable for children, sick people and those who perform heavy manual tasks.

Choosing the right hive

The table below lists the advantages and disadvantages of three different types of hive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of hive</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-bar hive</td>
<td>Can be made with locally available materials</td>
<td>Quality of honey can be monitored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy inspection and control of swarming</td>
<td>More propolis is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of honey can be monitored</td>
<td>Yields range between 50 and 60 kg per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bees can easily be separated from the combs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is difficult to prevent swarming or replace a queen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More wax is produced since the combs have to be cut from the frame during harvesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life span is about 9 years</td>
<td>Basic materials cost less than local hives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>More expensive than local hives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life span of the hive is up to 2 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local woven beehive</td>
<td>Made from locally available materials</td>
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<td>More propolis is produced than in other types of hive</td>
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<td>About 80% of honey consists of sugars that are readily absorbed by the body and honey</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Life span is about 5 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Langstroth hive</td>
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Populating the hive

There are two ways of populating a swarm:

1. Baiting a swarm
   - Use a small hive that has already been inhabited by bees and fill it with frames or top bars; two of the frames should contain combs and the others should have foundation sheets or strips of old comb.
   - Place the hive in a tree or on a roof in such a way that there is some protection from the wind.
   - Place the hive in its desired place the very day that the swarm has taken occupation of it.

2. Capturing a swarm
   - You may capture a newly settled swarm around a branch of a tree, but make sure you wear protective clothing.
   - First sprinkle cold water over the bees with a brush or spray bottle to stop them from moving away.
   - Hold a small hive without frames, a basket or a box under the swarm.
   - Drive the bees into the hive with a bee brush or smoke.
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<td>• More expensive than local hives&lt;br&gt;• More propolis is available&lt;br&gt;• More wax is produced&lt;br&gt;• Life span is about 10 years&lt;br&gt;• Quality of honey can be monitored</td>
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<td>Langstroth hive</td>
<td>• Can easily be separated from combs with honey&lt;br&gt;• Requires a special extractor to remove the honey from the combs</td>
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### Beekeeping Skills

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- Select combs that are two-thirds sealed full of honey
- Avoid combs with brood
- Turn over the comb and repeat the above process
- Pack honey in clean, dry jars with well-sealed lids. Label with data and store in a cool place.

Processing of honey
- Use a flat and long knife to de-cap the honeycomb (by passing it over the comb).
- Place the de-capped comb on a piece of fine white linen tied over the top of a plastic container. The de-capped side should face downwards.
- Let the honey drip through the cloth until the cells are empty.
- Turn over the comb and repeat the process.
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Bee sting
- Disturbance of bee
- People under bee stings, near comb (honey pockets)
- Pests
- Use of insecticides
- Use of chemical sprays nearby
- Fires

For more information:
- Market contacts
  - National Apiculture Development Organisation (TUNADO)
    - PO Box 5139 Kampala-Uganda
    - Tel: +256-41-343160; E-mail: tunadobee@yahoo.co.uk
  - Honey Care Kenya Limited
    - PO Box 24470-00502, Nairobi, Kenya.
    - Tel/Fax: +254-20-3874448/50
    - E-mail: info@honeycareafrica.com; Website: www.honeycareafrica.com
  - Africa Now Kenya Limited
    - PO Box 2514, Kisumu Kenya
    - Tel/Fax: +254-57-2021181
    - E-mail: kisumu@africanow.org, Website: www.africanow.org

- Training contacts
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    - PO Box 5318, Pan Africa House, Plot 3 Kimathi Avenue
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    - PO Box 30772-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
    - Tel: +254 (20) 8632000; Fax: +254 (20) 8632001/8632002
    - E-mail: icipe@icipe.org; Website: www.icipe.org
  - National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)
    - PO Box 25235, Kampala, Uganda
    - Tel: +256-41-345440/345065/345066; Fax: +256-41-347843
    - E-mail: naads@iwayafrica.com; Website: www.naads.or.ug
  - Sasakawa Global 2000 (MoA)
    - PO Box 62347, Addis Ababa Ethiopia
    - Tel: +251-115-518040; Fax: +251-115-512984
    - E-mail: moa@telecom.net.et
  - The ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
    - PO Box 380, 6700 AJ Wageningen, The Netherlands,
    - Tel: +31(0)317-467100, Fax: +31(0)317-460067, E-mail: cta@cta.int, Website: www.cta.int

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