

South Chilterns Beekeepers

We are a friendly bunch of beekeepers ranging from folk with many hives to some with just one. We have a steady flow of new beekeepers as well as some with a lifetime's experience. Beekeepers are generally keen to pass on their knowledge and will give advice and support to help encourage you with your first steps. Come along to a meeting before you join and before you get any bees.

In summer:

- "The Summer Experience" at our Association Apiary. A course to give you confidence to handle your own bees.
- Monthly members' apiaries meetings to look at their bees (as well as lovely gardens).

From Autumn through Spring:

- Monthly winter lectures in the warmth of the village hall in Woodcote (RG8 0QY), covering a range of beekeeping topics. (Tea and cake included!)
- Winter Workshop Sessions: Indoors and without bees we tackle some of the practical aspects of beekeeping.
- In November we have our Honey Show where members show the fruits of their labour!
- Our library has 150 books and DVDs

For further details of meetings and events visit our website: www.scbka.org

www.scbka.org

South Chilterns Contacts:

Chairman: Max Vine

chair@scbka.org

Membership secretary: Caroline Bushell

membership@scbka.org



Useful links:

British Beekeepers Association

www.bbka.org.uk

Try Graham Laws excellent Beginners site:

www.rotatingtechnology.co.uk/BeeginnersFAQ/index.htm

The Dave Cushman website has a wealth of information:

<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/newhome.html>

This is a portal for all things beekeeping.

<http://www.beekeepingforum.co.uk/>



South Chilterns
Beekeepers' Association



Beginner's Guide to taking up Beekeeping

Keeping bees:

- is a fascinating hobby
- helps the environment by increasing pollination of trees and plants
- helps to protect honey bees
- produces honey and beeswax
- introduces you to many friendly and helpful new people

This is a brief guide to help you get started

www.scbka.org

First Steps

Before you buy equipment or bees you might like to attend some of our beginner's sessions to learn some basics.

South Chilterns "Summer Experience"

At our Association Apiary you will have an opportunity to handle bees and equipment. We go through different aspects of beekeeping. After the course you will feel more confident looking after your own bees.

South Chilterns "Mentoring Scheme"

When you get your own bees we can assign an experienced beekeeper close by, who can help with practical techniques.

South Chilterns "Winter Workshops"

An opportunity to experience practical aspects of beekeeping. We concentrate on specific subjects in an indoor workshop setting and without bees!



What equipment do you need?

Protective Clothing

When you visit bees you will need protection clothing. To begin with you can borrow a bee suit from the club. You also need gloves (Marigolds) and Wellington boots. A bee suit costs about £60. And yes, we all get stung occasionally!

Buying Equipment

In the long term, it pays to buy the best equipment you can afford. Do ask for advice before buying. It is possible to get complete beekeeping starter kits for £250 upwards, which include the hive, clothing, smoker, beekeeping book and often other useful gadgets. Most beekeepers start with one hive but expand to two or more in the second year.

Once you know what you want, the cheapest place to buy kit can be at these annual events:

- BBKA annual conference
- Bee Tradex

Borrowing Equipment

We have a number of items of equipment for use by members.

Getting Bees

When you are ready for bees, we suggest the following:

- South Chilterns can provide you with your first bees (a Nucleus) at about half the market price.
- South Chilterns members may have bees for sale.
- South Chilterns members may have a complete hive of bees for sale.
- South Chilterns members collect swarms of bees.

Beware – Buy bees only from trusted sources. Ask one of our experienced members for advice.



How much time does it take up?

- Looking after a single hive takes about half an hour per week between April and October.
- Occasional external inspection of the hive and feeding is required over the winter
- That's it! Unless you want to take longer!