



# Essential Beekeeping Equipment Checklist

Lancaster Beekeepers advisory leaflet No 9

Many new beekeepers find the task of gathering together essential equipment rather daunting. This checklist should start you off in the right direction.

## ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

### Personal equipment

- Bee suit
- Gloves
- Wellingtons

### Bee hives

Two complete bee hives for each colony comprising:

- A varroa floor
- A brood box with frames and foundation
- A queen excluder
- Two supers with frames and foundation
- A crown board
- A roof
- Lifts (if using WBCs)

### Other essential equipment

- One smoker
- Smoker fuel
- Hive tool
- Rapid feeders
- Hive cloths

This should be regarded as the essential, basic equipment required to start successfully managing one colony of bees.

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

### Bee suit



Protection against bee stings is essential. A wide range of protective clothing is available ranging from hats and veils to protect the head, to one piece bee suits providing complete body cover. White is the traditional cover but olive green has become very popular. Any colour is acceptable – except blue! The material may, at first site, appear too thin but you will be wearing your suit at the hottest part of a summer day. Elasticated cuffs and legs are essential as bees love to travel upwards.

## Footwear

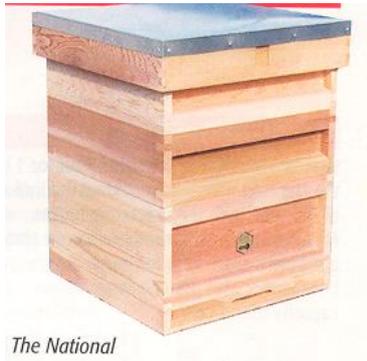
Any stout footwear will do but Wellingtons are by far the most popular. Easy to slip on, they seal the bottoms of trouser legs and prevent bees moving upwards.

## Gloves

Thick leather gauntlets are popular with beginners because they are completely bee proof. They are, however, rather clumsy to use. Latex gloves, although not sting proof, allow greater dexterity and are increasingly the choice of more experienced and confident beekeepers.

## GENERAL EQUIPMENT

### Hives



With conventional and Warré hives you will need two complete hives for every colony of bees. Alternative hives work on entirely different principles. Full information about the choices of hives is set out in Lancaster Beekeepers' Advisory Leaflets No 4 – Selecting a conventional beehive and No 5 – Selecting an alternative beehive

### Smoker



As its name suggests, a smoker is a tool for producing smoke! A *small* puff or two of smoke into the entrance of a hive usually has the effect of quietening the bees. Further small puffs can be used to direct bees away from your working area. There



are numerous designs of smoker and they can be expensive to buy new. However, a good quality smoker usually outlives its owner. They can get very hot so acquiring one with a guard is worth considering.

### **Smoker fuel**

Whilst equipment suppliers offer a wide range of smoker fuels such as compacted cardboard pellets, tobacco leaf, impregnated sisal etc, smokers will burn almost anything. Lighting a smoker is possibly the second most difficult task in beekeeping and is not made any easy by using cardboard treated with fire retardants!

### **Hive tools**

Bees have a tendency to stick everything together with a sticky red substance called propolis. This means that when you wish to inspect parts of the hive you have to first prize them apart using a hive tool. There are various designs of hive tool on offer, the most popular being illustrated here.

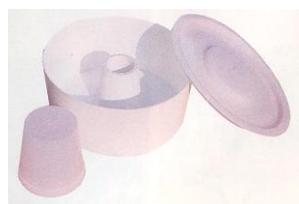


### **Hive cloths**

Whilst inspecting frames in a hive it is important not to let them get chilled. A hive cloth can be used to cover the frames to keep them warm and dark whilst awaiting inspection. There are several different designs of hive cloth but pieces of old carpet work just as well.



### **Feeders**



From time to time it might be necessary to feed your bees. Again there are various types of feeder but the most popular are the rapid feeder and the contact feeder, which between them cover all requirements. There are now jumbo rapid feeders available that will take up to one gallon of syrup. Make sure the one you buy will fit your type of hive.



## **EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS**

There are many small equipment suppliers, some of which offer excellent quality and value. The five largest suppliers, who offer everything you could possibly think of and more, are:

- **E H Thorne (beehives) Ltd**  
Beehive Works, Wragby, Market Rasen, LN8 5LA  
Tel: 01673 858555 [www.thorne.co.uk](http://www.thorne.co.uk)
- **Maisemore Apiaries**  
Old Road , Maisemore, Gloucester, GL12 8HT  
Tel: 01452 700289 [www.bees-online.co.uk](http://www.bees-online.co.uk)
- **Paynes**  
Southdown Bee Farms Ltd, Wickham Hill, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NP  
Tel: 01273 843388 [www.paynes-beefarm.com](http://www.paynes-beefarm.com)

- **Mann Lake UK**

The Pack House, Highland Court Farm, Coldharbour Lane Bridge, Canterbury  
Kent, CT4 5HN

Tel: 01227 833807 [www.mannlake.co.uk](http://www.mannlake.co.uk)

- **National Bee Supplies**

Merrivale Road, Exeter Industrial Estate, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1UD

Tel: 01837 54084 [www.beekeeping.co.uk](http://www.beekeeping.co.uk)

Thornes and Maisemore share a local agent:

- **Honeycomb Co Ltd**

Stoney Lane, Galgate, Lancaster, LA2 0QY

Tel: 01524 751347 [www.honeycombco.co.uk](http://www.honeycombco.co.uk)

## **PERSONAL SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

There are many makers of protective clothing offering varying designs and quality at competitive prices. The best known makers are:

- **B J Sherriff**

Carclew Road, Mylor, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 5UN

Tel: 01872 863304 [www.sheriff.int@btinternet.com](mailto:www.sheriff.int@btinternet.com)

- **BBwear**

1 Glyn Way, Threemilestone, Truro, Cornwall, TR3 6DT

Tel: 01872 273 693 [www.bbwear.co.uk](http://www.bbwear.co.uk)

## **USEFUL INTRODUCTORY BOOKS**

- *Bees at the bottom of the garden* by Alan Campion ISBN 0-907908-97-7
- *Teach yourself beekeeping* by Adrian Waring ISBN 978-0-340-92563-8

## **MAGAZINES**

Bee craft – monthly [www.bee-craft.com/shop](http://www.bee-craft.com/shop)