



Oregon Master Beekeeper Program

Apprentice Program Overview

The Apprentice Beekeeper is the first level of certification in the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program. This level is designed to give a solid foundation to those just starting in beekeeping. Information and support will hopefully increase retention of new beekeepers as they develop confidence in their ability to keep bees. Those with existing beekeeping experience may also benefit from the additional training and system for measuring their progress. The training, experience, and guidance given at the Apprentice Beekeeper level provide the student with:

- The knowledge and confidence to keep bees
- Hands-on experience working with bees, including use of tools and equipment
- Information about the costs and methods of obtaining bees to get started as a beekeeper
- Opportunities for training and mentorship
- Exposure to resources to improve skills and stay current in beekeeping

Apprentice Program Requirements
• Pass a written exam based on the course textbook with a score of 90% or better
• Submit colony log with minimum 4 entries
• Earn 6 education points
• Submit 4 field experience worksheets signed by a mentor
• Earn 10 classroom attendance points by completing a minimum of 5 OMB modules in-person or online
• Document your completed requirements on the OMB Reporting System, and notify program admin when you are ready to be certified
Students are now certified as an Apprentice and eligible to move to the Journey level

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

Enrollment in the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program at the Apprentice Beekeeper level begins with the submission of a completed application form. A student's acceptance to the program depends on the availability of mentors. The student will be notified when a match with a mentor is made. At that time, the student needs to submit the \$150 fee. A minimum of one year is required to satisfy certification requirements. Students must be 18 years or older to enroll.

Students are encouraged to have access to a bee colony while completing the Apprentice Beekeeper program. If the student does not have a colony, it may be possible to use a mentor's colony. The Master Beekeeper Committee will also be available to assist in such situations. The Apprentice Level of the OMB program teaches hive management using the Langstroth hive. While you may keep your own bees in any hive configuration (e.g., top bar, Warre, horizontal), management of these hives is not covered at the Apprentice level.

Students are required to drive up to 30 miles one way to visit their mentor. Every effort will be made to match you with a mentor as close to your home as possible. If we find it is not possible to match you with a mentor within 30 miles or your specified distance, you will be given the opportunity to agree to drive further or to be placed on the waiting list for the following year.

ASSIGNMENT TO THE 'GETTING STARTED' APPRENTICE PROGRAM

One indicator of potential success for Apprentice students is a demonstration of their commitment to beekeeping. If a student enters the program with zero to one year experience keeping bees, or has between 1 to 3 years' experience but does not have access to a hive, they will be assigned to the 'Getting Started' Program, which differs from our Traditional Apprentice Program in that students will not be working with a mentor their first year. Instead, they will work to complete a partial list of requirements their first year. Successful completion by the deadline enables them to have top priority for mentor assignment the following year.

Applicants who qualify for the Apprentice Program who are unable to be assigned a mentor will be offered the 'Getting Started' option.

TEXTBOOK

Students are responsible for purchasing the program textbook - *The Beekeeper's Handbook* by Diana Sammataro and Alphonse Avitabile, 4th edition, Cornell University Press. This text is available widely from both local and online booksellers. Please let us know if you have trouble obtaining the book. Supplemental material is available on the website under Apprentice Documents. Students are encouraged to read widely in honey bee literature and journals.

REPORTING YOUR PROGRESS

It is the student's responsibility to document their work on the Reporting System, and once the requirements have been met, to let program admin know they are ready to become certified. Your username is your first and last name combined, all lower case (ex: *jenholt*). A temporary password of *honeybees* has been set for you, and can be changed once you log in. Find the Reporting System here: <https://report.oregonmasterbeekeeper.org/>

We are constantly striving to improve our program. Students are requested to help us in our efforts by providing program feedback via a brief mid-year and end-of-year online survey. Thank you!

COMPUTER ACCESS

Access to email and the internet is essential for those participating in the program. Students are required to have access to a computer or other means to send/receive email and to access the internet. Each student account requires an email address as part of the setup process. Internet access allows students to access resources, exams, class videos, progress reports, etc. We also ask students to upload completed documents. If you do not have access to a computer or other means of communicating electronically, please let us know.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

To be certified as an Apprentice Beekeeper the student needs to satisfy the following requirements:

1. Pass a written exam based on The Beekeeper's Handbook and supplemental materials provided with a score of 90% or better.
2. Submit a log with a minimum of 4 entries regarding colony management activities that cover the 4 seasons.

3. Earn 6 Education Points by attending bee club meetings, viewing educational videos, etc.
4. Submit 4 Field Experience worksheets that have been checked off by a mentor.
5. Earn 10 classroom attendance points by completing a minimum of 5 OMB modules in-person or online. Points earned beyond the required 10 can be applied toward Education Points if needed.

WRITTEN EXAM

The written exam is based on The Beekeeper's Handbook. It may be taken at any time. The exam is open book and not timed. A passing grade of 90% is required. If not obtained, the student may take the exam again after 30 days.

CLASSES

Approximately 16 hours (8 modules) of classroom training are provided. 10 classroom attendance points need to be earned by completing a minimum of 5 OMB modules (at 2 points each) in-person or online. Oregon Master Beekeeper instructors offer classes at various locations throughout the state. Additionally, professionally recorded online classes are available on our website. Points earned beyond the required 10 can be applied toward Education Points if needed; however, you may also fulfill that requirement by attending other workshops, club meetings, etc. Class attendance is recorded by the student on the Reporting System.

LOG OF COLONY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Students will maintain a log documenting observations and managing procedures every time they work a colony of bees. This could be their own hive, the colony they work with their mentor, or any other hive they are allowed access to. Ideally the log covers 12 consecutive months, at a minimum one entry a season for four consecutive seasons. There are numerous ways to document maintenance activities. Although the student will choose the format for the log, the log should document specific information that includes the following:

- Date and time of day
- Weather conditions
- Observations: e.g., brood pattern, bees bringing in pollen
- Notes of actions taken: e.g., mite counts, medications given, and feeding (what and how)
- Notes about what needs to be checked, considered, or brought for the next visit
- Notes of anything unusual or unexpected: e.g., too many drones, aggressive bees, and so forth
- Questions to consider, research, or ask of mentor

The student is encouraged to bring his/her log to each meeting with the mentor to provide an opportunity for the mentor to review the log and provide additional guidance. The log needs to be submitted as part of program requirements. It will not be graded, but it will be checked for completion by an instructor or other Oregon Master Beekeeper Program committee member.

Mentors can assist with suggestions and examples of log entries. Students who are technologically inclined may keep a log online with Hive Tracks (www.hivetracks.com). Records from Hive Tracks may be printed out and submitted with other completed materials when applying for Apprentice Beekeeper certification.

EDUCATION POINTS (6)

Education points are earned by attending educational events such as Oregon Master Beekeeper classes, local bee schools, beekeeper conferences, and field days in which one learns through observation rather than through actually working colonies. Education points are assigned based on the number of hours dedicated to the activity.

- 1 (one) point is assigned for educational activities of four hours or less
- 2 (two) points are assigned for an educational activity that exceeds four hours in a day

Examples of bee-related activities that qualify for education points are as follows:

- Bee Schools
- Field days
- Workshops
- Beekeeper conferences
- Bee club meetings with a presentation on a bee-related topic
- Master Beekeeper workshops

It is the responsibility of the student to record his/her time involved in activities that qualify for education points on the Reporting System.

FIELD EXPERIENCE WORKSHEETS (4)

Field experience is active, hands-on experience working with bees, hives, and beekeeping equipment. The student demonstrates the ability to perform specific hands-on manipulation activities on his or her own under the supervision of a mentor.

These activities are organized by beekeeping season and documented on the Field Experience Worksheet. During each season, the student meets with a mentor at least once to work through the minimum hive activities listed on the checklist. The checklist also may contain discussion topics (required) or additional topics noted as optional. If the student does not have prior experience, the mentor will demonstrate an activity and then the student will be expected to perform the activity independently.

All 4 Field Experience Worksheets must be signed by a mentor and submitted to fulfill this requirement for the Apprentice Beekeeper certification. Students are encouraged to meet with their mentors more than once per season; repetition and the opportunity to ask questions and cover additional material reinforces learning and builds confidence.

The required activities per season are listed, as follows:

SPRING

- Smoker operation and use
- Beekeeper behavior when approaching a colony
- Tool identification and use
- Recognizing drones, workers, and queen
- Recognizing pollen, honey, and brood in comb
- Basic hive evaluation
- Feeding and/or recognizing starvation
- Mite monitoring
- Stings and safety

SUMMER

- Supering: when, how many, which type

- Colony management during honey flow
- Honey harvest (discussion)
- Extracting, bottling, and storing honey (discussion)
- Storing honey supers
- Providing water for bees
- Queen excluders
- Nectar dearth and robbing
- Varroa mite monitoring

FALL

- Hive evaluation: queen, food stores, and disease
- Continued mite monitoring with sticky boards, sugar roll
- Entrance reducers and mouse guards
- Feeding
- Recognizing and addressing small and light colonies
- Fall treatment options (discussion)
- Nectar dearth and robbing (discussion)
- Mean bees! (discussion)

WINTER

- Feeding and/or recognizing starvation in late winter
- Checking overwintering hive(s)
- Learning about equipment: needs, terminology, sources
- Oxalic acid application for mite control

Remember, it is the student's responsibility to:

- Take the initiative to learn about bees and beekeeping
- Obtain a course textbook
- Communicate with your mentor and watch for emails from program admin
- Use the resources available to you on the program's website
- Complete the program within the specified time period
- Document your progress on the OMB Reporting System (<https://report.oregonmasterbeekeeper.org>)
- Provide program feedback via brief online surveys
- Alert program administration when you are ready to become certified

