

MENTOR-MENTEE EXPECTATIONS

MENTOR:

1. Must be an MCBA member in good standing. Must be registered and inspected by ODA. Must have at least 5 years of beekeeping experience.
2. Be personable, encouraging, and patient with new beekeepers as the learning curve is steep and the large amount of new information can discourage those first trying to learn. Expect to spend time in the beginning to help the Mentee get used to doing hive inspections and working around the bees.
3. Help the Mentee define their immediate beekeeping goals, such as: beekeeping for personal honey consumption, pollination, queen rearing, commercial beekeeping, etc.
4. When teaching techniques, the Mentor should be clear on what methods are based on fact and what methods are based on opinion or personal style. Offer information on different methods for further study and consideration. Identify/share helpful resources.
5. Challenge the Mentee with decision-making problems and the development of beekeeping strategies that align with their personal goals. Encourage experimentation.
6. Assure the Mentee that every beekeeper makes mistakes and that good beekeepers will learn from those mistakes and they should share what they have learned with others.
7. Clearly discuss and define the role of the Mentor with the Mentee, and how you will communicate (calls, text, emails) for questions. Expectations must align.
8. Mentor and Mentee should agree upon the number of times they will meet within the season. Parties should agree on the number of times they will visit each other's bee yards.
9. Determine and agree upon expectations when meeting. Suggest an activity or task the Mentee will be expected to engage in. Consider for every meeting the Mentee needs to have at least 1 specific question/skill that he or she wants to learn about.
10. The Mentor needs to ensure good management practices are being applied by the Mentee. Mentor should consider visiting during critical times: swarm season, dearth, and preparing for winter. Stress mite management.
11. Mentor should be willing to help in emergencies; such as pest/disease, swarms, or other situations that Mentees may not feel comfortable handling by themselves.
12. Encourage the Mentee to be part of and give back to the surrounding local bee community and expand their network of contacts.
13. Encourage good documentation techniques.
14. Mentor should only use tools and equipment as provided by the mentee to lessen the possibility of disease transfer. Mentor should not use their personal hive tools or equipment at mentee's apiary.

MENTOR-MENTEE EXPECTATIONS

MENTEE:

1. Must be an MCBA member in good standing and have completed the beginner class at least once. If the Mentee has bees, the apiary must be registered and inspected by ODA.
2. Pick the right Mentor in chemical use, your area to visit, and their experience and amount of winter losses
3. Be respectful of the Mentor's time. Send pictures when possible. Mentees should try to accommodate their Mentor's schedules rather than the reverse. Mentors may be working with several Mentees, have a full-time job, or they may have other time commitments that may affect their availability.
4. Share your ultimate beekeeping goals with your Mentor. Do you want to keep bees for personal honey production? pollination? queen production? hobby or sideline business?
5. Identify those specific skills or knowledge you want to learn from the Mentor.
6. Responsibility for all hands-on beekeeping tasks within the Mentee's bee yard remains with the Mentee. Determine if the Mentee will visit/work Mentor's bee yard. Determine and agree upon expectations of Mentees when visiting the Mentor's bee yard. Determine the number of visits and duration of each visit. Make a tentative schedule. Also, determine if the Mentor will visit the Mentee's bee yard.
7. Mentee is to establish a regular inspection routine of their hives with planned feedback to the Mentor
8. Be willing to try Mentor suggestions to learn techniques to allow sustainable beekeeping practices. Be receptive to ideas that may seem challenging. Share with the Mentor any decisions you make that may deviate from a collaboratively developed plan already made with your Mentor.
9. Consider keeping a journal/reference notebook on knowledge gained from each meeting/activity with the Mentor. Learn good documentation techniques.
10. Concentrate on learning sustainable beekeeping techniques and pest management methods that are time-tested before experimenting with the newest craze. Be patient with your Mentor's responses to your questions.
11. Be clear with your budgeting constraints. Be forthright as to your planned time commitment and efforts in beekeeping.
12. Work with your Mentor to keep your apiary the right size for your level of experience and ability.
13. Don't rely completely on your Mentor for information. Take advantage of the club bee yard demonstrations and field days. Make use of opportunities to learn online and attend in-person workshops. Read beekeeping books and subscribe to beekeeping magazines. Learn the science of beekeeping through deliberate, independent study. Attend your local beekeeping association meetings regularly, and volunteer – a great way to meet other beekeepers and learn.