

RDBKA Beekeeping for Improvers' Course 2024/25

An evening course of 10 x theoretical/practical sessions, from **7.30pm - 9.30pm every other Thursday, 14 Nov 24 - 17 Apr 25, at Colburn Church Hall** in preparation for the forthcoming bee season.

Previous beekeeping experience is essential. Ideally this is for those who have completed both the RDBKA Beginner' Course and the RDBKA Novices' Course (or equivalents) and/or individuals should **hold the BBKA Certificate of Proficiency in Apiculture**. It is an ideal course for those who wish to progress along the theoretical and practical aspects of beekeeping in line with the BBKA Training Qualification and Assessment Framework.

The aim is to develop a deeper beekeeping knowledge and demonstrate practices sufficient to support elements of **BBKA Modules 1 and 2 and the BBKA General Husbandry Certificate**.

Session 1 14 Nov 24	Introduction	Hives and Frames Design of hives, bee space Apiary hygiene Correct use of equipment Personal protective equipment
Session 2 28 Nov 24	Apiary Location & Management	Siting of Apiaries Layout of hives and equipment Temperament and aggression Natural food sources for an apiary Drifting and problems that may occur Annual cycle of management of a hive Prep of hives for winter Spring management Reasons for regular comb changing Opening a hive Time/reasons for adding supers Principles of feeding honeybees Robbing and causes/prevention
Session 3 12 Dec 24	Natural History & Biology	Differing races of honeybee Other honeybees and problems Features of queens, drones and workers Life cycles Natural mating of queens Seasonal variations in hive strength Work carried out by worker bees Summer and Winter bees Basic function of exocrine glands Detection & use of alarm pheromones Bee dances
Session 4 23 Jan 25	Foraging	Benefit of local forage crops Special requirements of some crops

Undesirable sources of honey
Composition of nectar
Source and characteristics of honeydew
Conversion of nectar to honey
The use of pollen to identify honey
Other forage, water, pollen and propolis

Session 5
6 Feb 25

Pests & Diseases

How to examine a brood comb
Visual symptoms of EFB/AFB
Other notifiable pests
Action on notifiable pests and diseases
When a bee inspector calls
Monitoring varroa
Recognitions of Nosema infection, Acarine infestation, chalk brood, sac brood, virus infections
Integrated Pest Management
Other methods of disease management
Mice, woodpeckers and larger animals.

Session 6
20 Feb 25

Honey Removal
& Processing

Legal and hygiene requirements
Extraction and bottling facilities
Removal of Supers from hives
Storage before extraction
Prep for extraction
Types of extractor
Extractions
Storage after extraction
Melting, straining and bottling
Labelling and legal requirements
Selling honey, sections and cut combs

Session 7
6 Mar 25

Swarm Prevention
& control

Biology of swarming
Prep for swarming
Swarm prevention
Basic elements of swarm control
Basic swarm control methods
Taking and hiving a swarm

Session 8
20 Mar 25

Other Products
Nuclei & Packages

Reclamation of wax
Prep of wax for sale
Collection and uses of pollen
Collection of venom
Collection and uses of propolis
Nucleus and a package
Method of making nuclei
Standards of nuclei for sale
Prep & standards and packages
Showing

Session 9

3 Apr 25

Advanced
Beekeeping
ProceduresPrep for moving colonies
Artificial swarming and equipment
Queen Introduction
Queen marking
Queen colours
Queen clipping
Bailey comb change
Shook swarm
Uniting colonies**Session 10**

17 Apr 25

Summary

Dealing with an aggressive colony
Normal reaction to stings
Anaphylaxis
Preparing for further study
Learning to teach others
Getting involved with organisations
The national beekeeping scene
BBKA and NBU

Cost £80 Please return completed **Application Form** to RDBKA Treasurer together with payment.