

Larry Ford

Want to Start Beekeeping?

HENDERSONVILLE – Last week, we wrote about the need for bees in urban areas and received substantial response from readers. We were surprised to learn that some long-time friends and acquaintances were beekeepers. For example, an e-mail message

from Claxton, Georgia which arrived via the US Postal Service. Recognizing, now, the interest level coupled with the need, we decided to write more about beekeeping and other hobbies of interest to area residents. In fact, we have decided to begin a

book, Beekeepers for Beginners, but, as we noted last week, local beekeeper Mark White also stressed the importance of having a mentor and learning as much as possible about beekeeping.

Hawkins learned much of his beekeeping from his father and



One reward of beekeeping is the honeycomb. The other is the big smile.

from former County Board of Commissioners Chairman Grady Hawkins and his wife, Doris, informed us that they were also beekeepers.

The Hawkins first got four hives from Charlotte and recently purchased another one

hobbyists' question and answer column. Again this week, we will look at beekeeping, beginning with whether or not you may be interested in beginning beekeeping.

Kim Flottum, editor of Bee Culture magazine, wrote an informative article called Now Is the Perfect Time to Start Beekeeping for The Beekeeper. The article was appropriately subtitled It Takes As Much Time to Keep Bees as to Keep a Garden.

Flottum noted that interest in beekeeping had multiplied since the discussion of Colony Collapse Disorder began and warned that the first decision should be one of available time. Flottum wrote that beekeeping takes as much time as caring for other animals. He said that two hives required about the same time as a cat and that more hives mean more time invested.

BeginningBeekeeper.com warns that beekeeping is "not for everyone...because beekeeping is a slightly different hobby."

Then, in bold, the author says, "But here's my real warning... It can be really easy to get frustrated."

The website is actually pushing

has been a beekeeper for "twelve to fourteen years." He said that his interest began with his father and that he later began on his own. Hawkins took a recess from his beekeeping activities after he lost a hive to Colony Collapse Disorder. He took a two-year hiatus before ordering his latest colony from Georgia. He said that this year things look good "so far."

On the benefits side, both White and Hawkins raved about he fascinating experiences of watching the bees. Hawkins said, "It's just a great thing to watch these bees." Hawkins also alluded to the physical exercise that beekeeping provides. He said, "It's about all you can do to lift a rack of super honey."

BeginningBeekeeper.com also stressed the exercise component, saying that many people needed a reason to get out and exercise and that beekeeping "provides a great way to get out, get moving and get some fresh air!"

The website echoed White and Hawkins' sentiments that it also provides a fascinating look at nature.

Next week, we will talk with more local beekeepers.

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