



## **Green Toe Gardens Beginning Beekeeping Course 2017**

**Instructors: Joan Mandell and Rich Wieske**

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*“Honeybees also provide us another great gift, one that feeds our brains rather than our bellies, for inside each teeming beehive is an exemplar of a community whose members succeed in working together to achieve shared goals. We will see that these little six-legged beauties have something to teach us about building smoothly functioning groups, especially ones capable of exploiting fully the power of democratic decision making.”*

Tom Seeley, *Honeybee Democracy*

### **Overview:**

Our classes emphasize mentorship and small group classes with personal hands-on experience. Before entering the apiary, we require students to take a six hour “Introduction to Beekeeping” workshop. Think of this as Green Toe Gardens “waggle dance”. It’s an opportunity to orient yourself to the realities of beekeeping in our urban and suburban northern climate.

As the beekeeping season progresses, we may add sessions or change class times to meet student demand. Keep checking our calendar for updates and details:

[www.greentogardens.com/site/classes-workshops/](http://www.greentogardens.com/site/classes-workshops/)

### **Specifics:**

The first year beekeeping course includes the “Introduction to Beekeeping” workshop as well as eight additional hands-on sessions in our apiaries. The total for the full course is \$200.

### **OR**

You can register for “Introduction to Beekeeping” as a stand-alone workshop. Fee: \$80. And later, choose any hands-on session for \$20 each, pay as you go.

We will also offer additional classes and “Bee Happy Hours” as the season gets going.

**To register:** Please contact us at [info@greentogardens.com](mailto:info@greentogardens.com) with your preferred class times. We prefer payment via check or cash.

## Introduction to Beekeeping

**\*\*\* Pre-requisite for all our hands-on mentoring sessions.\*\*\***

**DATES: Sun, Mar 26 (10:30-4:30 pm) OR Mon-Tues, Mar 27-28 (6-9 pm)**

Whether you want to have your own hive, be mentored in our apiaries or are just curious about how beekeepers work, this workshop is for you. Instructors Joan Mandell and Rich Wieske discuss bee biology, beekeeping history, plants and human health, where to get bees and beekeeping equipment. How do you choose hive locations and build a hive? May be taken as a stand alone or as part of the full first-year course. The Sunday session is six hours with a break for lunch. The Mon-Tues sessions meet two evenings for three hours each.

## Hive Building

**DATES: Sun, Apr 2 (1-3 pm) OR Mon, Apr 4 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

Build or paint your own hive boxes and frames, or help with hives for our apiaries. Sample honey and mead. Bring your bee Q and As.

## Planting Bees; Varroa Strategy Overview

**DATES: Sun, Apr 9 (1-3 pm) OR Mon, Apr 10 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

There are four main ways to get bees: buy a package in April, buy a “nuc” in June, catch a swarm in May (if you are the lucky one in 100), inherit from friends and family.

How to plant bees (aka “install a package”) and approach a hive. Package bee arrival is weather dependent.

## Bees in Packages (OPTIONAL)

**DATE: TBD (weather dependent)**

We will demonstrate how to place “package” bees in a hive.

## Understanding the Hive; Swarms

**DATES: Sun, Apr 30 (1-3 pm) OR Tues, May 2 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

How do you light a smoker and keep it lit? What are you looking for in a new bee colony?

Was the queen accepted? Is there enough food for the bees? What are the characteristics of workers, drones, pollen, nectar, honey, eggs? We’ll also discuss swarm biology. What do you do if your bees flee? And is it possible to bring them home?

## Bees in “Nucs” (OPTIONAL)

**DATE: TBD (weather dependent)**

We will demonstrate how to place a “nuc” (small colony of bees) in a hive.

## Health for First Year Hives; Queen Evaluation

**DATES: Sun, May 21 (1-3 pm) OR Mon, May 22 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

Evaluate the health of your queen and her hive. What story does the comb tell about nutrition (honey, pollen) and disease? How much space do your bees need?

### **Managing Growing Colonies; Varroa Again and Still**

**DATES: Sun, June 11 (1-3 pm) OR Mon, June 12 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

Do the bees have enough food and space in their hive, or do you need to add boxes and frames? Testing for varroa mites using the powdered sugar method. Discussion of “natural” varroa treatments. Bring photos of your hive frames, and questions about issues that are challenging to you.

### **Late Season Splits**

**DATES: Sun, July 9 (1-3 pm) OR Mon, July 10 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

Time to get ready for late summer and autumn in the hive. Understanding bee biology and how the hive begins to prepare for winter. How do you make “splits” and safely work with honeybees during these seasons?

### **Fall Management; Diseases; Combining Hives**

**DATES: Sun, Aug 20 (1-3 pm) OR Mon, Aug 21 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

How well are the bees doing? Should you combine hives, provide feed, add insulation or weather-proofing? What are some of the new and experimental ideas to help bees survive in our northern winter?

### **Winter and Spring Management**

**DATES: Sun, Sept 24 (1-3 pm) OR Mon, Sept 25 (6:30-8:30 pm)**

What will happen over the next few months? What can you do now to prepare for winter and spring?