

Beekeeper

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field meetings about four times a year and an annual banquet. Once you have the interest and the information, you should be ready to get started," he added.

There are a couple of ways of actually obtaining bees. "You can buy an existing hive or you can purchase starter equipment through a company such as A.I. Root, Inc. You should have a veil, gloves, smoker, hive and, of course, bees. Then it's a matter of experimenting and learning all you can from your fellow beekeepers."

Beehives should be located in such a place as not to be a nuisance to nearby residents. A wooded area or farm is preferred. The average hive is made up of the hive body and ten frames. Sometimes beekeepers put one hive body on top of another. The hives are dove-tailed wooden boxes, usually made out of white pine. The frames are made of wood and wire.

The beekeeper usually buys wax foundation sheets and puts them onto the frame. The wax is designed so that the bee can build upon it and either store honey or lay the eggs.

Bees feed mainly from clover. They also like alfalfa, locust, tulip poplar or fruit bloom. During the winter the beekeeper must supplement what the bee has stored with sugar water. He pours this into a feeder frame and this helps to sustain the bee over the cold winter months. The entrance to the hive is sealed off during the winter so that mice won't get in.

There are three classes of bees in the hives. There is a single queen bee who lays all the eggs. There are workers who collect the pollen and make the honey. Then, there are the drones who usually do nothing but mate the queen. Honey can be removed from the hive at anytime the frame is fully capped. It then gets to the consumer in either liquid form or comb or chunk form.

"We need more beekeepers in Lancaster County," says Shank. "Bees are good for the farmers



John Shank has won numerous awards for his honey. He also has become a collector of beekeeping books.



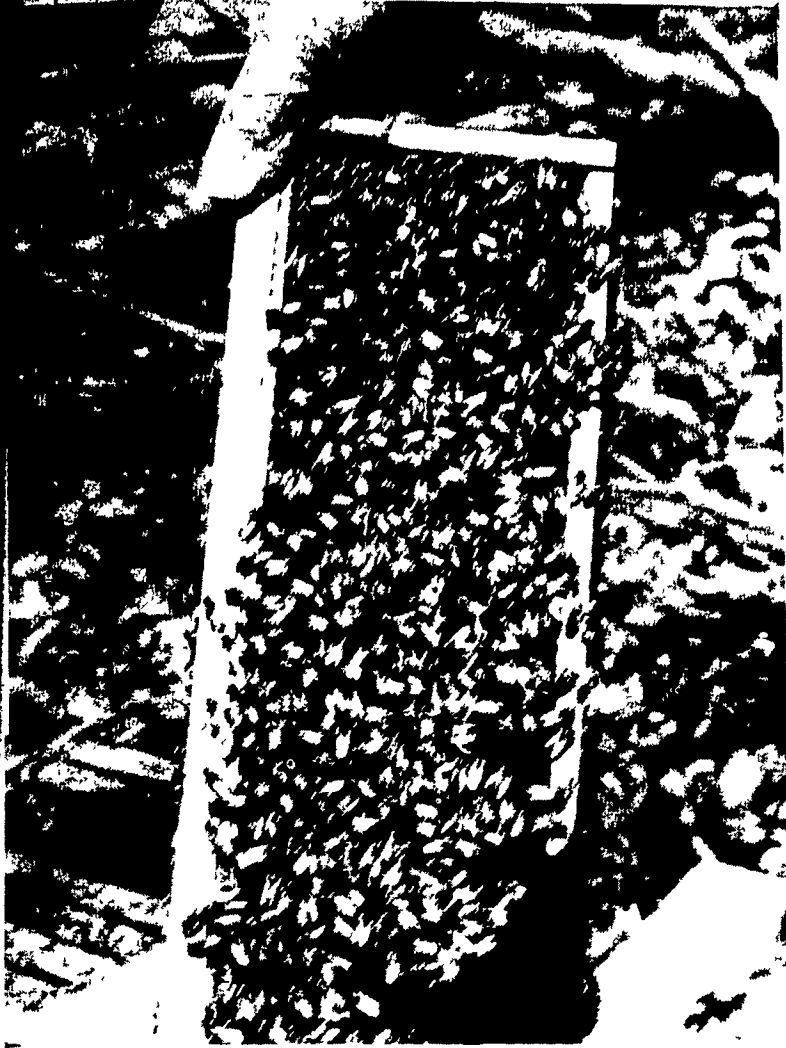
Shank feeds the bees a mixture of sugar and water to tide them over the winter.

for pollination. Some farmers rent bees for a short period of time from local beekeepers. I wish more farmers had their own. But I guess they're busy enough," he laughed.

Shank has won numerous awards at the Farm Show for his honey. He also sells some honey although it's not a full time thing with him.

"Mainly, I like beekeeping because it's a diversion of thought and action. I have a source of honey for myself and my friends. And I've made friends throughout the county and all over the state. It really is more than just a hobby."

To use a bad pun, John Shank would have to agree that he is in a honey of a business.



Bees swarm all over the frame. Notice that Shank here is bare-handed. He doesn't recommend this for beginning beekeepers.

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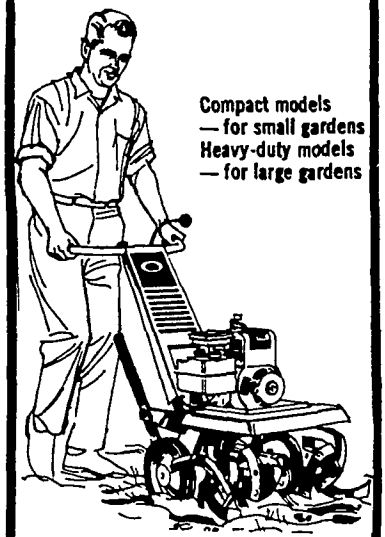


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