Splitting—Give the gift of bees! 3 methods. 1) Try to catch the swarm. Bellies are full—docile, unlikely to sting. Cut or shake the branch into a box. If high up, use a bucket fastened to a pole, pour the bees into the lid cracked. All will follow the queen (watch & try again). Move to a new spot right away or maybe. Give honeycomb or feed. 2) Shake, smoke, or drum a cluster with its queen into a new box, move to a new yard, feed. 3) Move a good hive to a brand new stand. Then evenly split your hives into 2, so both sides catch field bees. 3 hives from 2, with no moving or Q finding necessary.

Harvest—In fall or spring: Honey—Leave honey for the bees! Shake, brush, or smoke bees off honeycomb. Do not harvest brood, only honey that is sealed with wax cap—high moisture will increase fermentation. Comb is eaten or crushed—straining through a strainer bag, easiest when warm. Honey stays good forever. The sticky wax is rinsed to make mead—wax goes in a solar melter or boiled (on top of water to prevent explosion) then strained and squeezed. Candles, salves, soaps.

Wax moths—eat unprotected comb in the summer. Wintering—Insulation helps: thicker boards, foam, or adding trash bags of dry leaves, especially top surface to prevent condensation above. Avoid wind.

Mice—1/4 inch screen keeps them out after 1st frost.

Robbing—Neighbor bees will attack & rob a hive that is weak or if entrance too big. Stop all bee work, clean up, wait a few days if this happens.

American foul brood—Contagious, pore forming bacteria. Foul smell, sunken brood cap, very goopy when stirred with a stick, leaves a black scale on cell floor. Burn comb and sealed sick brood, perhaps every comb and box, let the bees start over. Monitor. Many hives are resistant, but this disease can kill the yard + neighborhood by reusing combs and robbing. AFB is the reason for bee inspectors, anti-fixed comb laws, and antibiotics in honey.

Healing sick bees—Prevention is key. Whether disease or parasite, make sure the bees are well nourished, not stressed. Replace old combs and infected brood with fresh naturally drawn wax. The queen raising process also cleans the brood nest. Join a bee club + throw a party if it works.

Keep it simple and promote diversity. Bees need 4 things: clean air, clean water, clean food, clean home (D. Lushy). Pests and diseases are symptoms of an out-of-balance system. Faith in nature’s resilience is too easily displaced by fear & quick phony controls. Some hive die, but “the more they die, the more they live.” C. M. Simon, Backwards Beekeeper

Give bees a chance. They don’t need to be “saved.” They are not going to save you, but they might teach you grace. Bees and all living things bring peace, awareness, and appreciation of a wild world.

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Give bees a chance. They don’t need to be “saved.” They are not going to save you, but they might teach you grace. Bees and all living things bring peace, awareness, and appreciation of a wild world. A clustering season is hope + risk, industry + thrill, all for one and one for all. Success is sweetness, light + lessons towards a Global Hive. Bee a leader, do a waggle dance, and may bees always be with you. Swarm the State! - www.anarchypetaries.org

Control kills.
All that begins will end. Bee it.
Keep Cool.
Bee Prepared.
Rest Beecore Labor.
Timeline of Beekeeping History

120-150 million years ago - insects socialize, bees evolve from wasps, plants produce nectar
15,000 BC - humans depict bees and honeycomb in African caves
5,000 BC - evidence of domestic beekeeping in Ancient Sumer
3100 BC - Bee hieroglyphs and hive migration in Egypt
350 BC - Aristotle observes divisions of labor + falsely notes a “King” Bee, hive inspections
1500s - hives brought to South and Central America, and likely FL, by the Spanish
1586 - queen caged as the female egg layer, L M de Torres (Spain)
1609 - The Feminine Monarchie Charles Butler (UK) declares a queen bee
1622 - successful import of hives from UK to Jamestown, VA
1682 - George Wheler (UK) sees movable top bar hives in Greece
1789 - Francis Huber’s observes his Leaf Hive by using beespace
1838 - Johann Dzierzon (Poland) invents a movable comb hive, describes mating
1852 - LL Langstroth patents frame hive.
Commercial beekeeping born.

How to make a skep
Anyone can make a skep! A hollow straw like rey works well. Shove straw through a ring to maintain size while wrapping it with cordage or split cane.

1857 - wax foundation invented by Johannes Mehring (Germany)
1868-9 - mysterious bee losses reported in KY, TN
1877 - A. I. Root makes large cell foundation hypothesizing larger bees will make more honey
1888 - G. M. Doolittle grafting larvae in Scientific Queen Rearing
1891 - “May Disease” coined to describe disappearing bees
1896 - “Disappearing Disease” coined
1905 - 1919 - “Isle of Wight” Disease, unknown cause, 90% loss 3 times in the UK, prompts the 1922 federal ban on bee imports to the US
1922 - hives with fixed combs outlawed in NY and other states, inspection mandated
1926 - first artificial insemination of a queen bee
1948 - Abbe Warre (France) People’s Hive in Beekeeping for All
1953 - Karl von Frisch describes the bee dance language
1970s - plastic comb foundation; corn syrup becomes major feed supplement; the US Peace Corps popularizes Kenyan top bar hives abroad
1975 - “Disappearing Disease” observed in 27 states and Mexico
1976 - Bee die offs in ID from Permacap M pesticide in pollen
1984 - Trachel mites discovered in FL, bees, losses
1987 - Varroa mites discovered in FL, losses
1994 - Imdicloprid, a systemic pesticide, released in the US
1995-6 - mystery bee deaths in PA and ND
1999 - Imdicloprid banned in France after bee deaths on sunflowers
2003 - Clothianidin, a systemic pesticide, released in the US
2004 - US border opened to Australian package bee imports to aid CA almond pollination.
2006 - Bee genome decoded, Baylor College of Medicine, TX
2007 - Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) coined and anecdotally linked to new pesticides
2008 - systemic pesticides banned in Italy, Germany, Slovenia. In US, NRDC sues EPA for withholding testing yet allowing release. No further action so far.
2010 - Beeologics produces the first RNAi medicine, which alters immune response, to combat IAP Virus.
2011 - Beeologics is bought by Monsanto Corp.

Bait Hive: An empty box may attract a passing swarm. Tom Seeley (Cornell) says that bees like: 10 gallon cavity, securely 10 feet up, visible but well protected, south facing bottom entrance 1.5” wide, old comb / propolis present, a hundred yard+ from swarming hives. “Vacancy” sign.

Beekeeping - Set up one or more feeding stations with honey and lib beeswax candles. Note direction of bees’ homeward flight, or capture and feed each bee until full, then dust with flour or powdered sugar to slow flight and make more visible upon release. Draw direction home from each station on a map, and find intersecting flight lines to locate the hive. Rather than chopping trees down, it is easiest to gain bees by setting up bait hives 100 yards away.

Removing bees from structures
Best done in spring, with time for the hive to recuperate. Walls and obstructions must be removed to expose the comb. Too much smoke will make the queen run, but cool, deliberate work makes for calm bees. Honey goes to a bucket and is fed back later, nectar goes to eating and mead, the brood is tied or banded onto bars or frames, the bees are scooped or vacuumed and put in the box, the box left in place until dark. Hopefully the queen is spotted, protected, and draws the other bees to her. If the bees run to another cavity, close up the wall and allow the bees to recluster in the original spot, then remove again the next day. Seal repairs really well.

Propolis - anti-microbial, anti-viral, anti-fungal, propolis resins coat the hive + sterilize it. Tincture in pure grain alcohol 3 weeks, strain with a coffee filter. Throat spray, toothpaste, varnish, or powdered in capsules.

Making Mead - Dirt sinks, bugs float, alcohol kills everything. 3 lbs (1 quart) honey per gallon of warm water, add a dry yeast, (champagne, cuvee, or bread yeast). Wild yeast or fruit yeasts work, but might make delicious honey vinegar instead. Seal to let CO2 out but no fruit flies in. NO metal. Store in a warm, dark place, 5 weeks to 6 years. Enjoy ancient alchemy.

Bee venom therapy - Stings are the best part of keeping bees. If you don’t get stung the honey doesn’t taste as sweet. Remove stingers immediately, unless in medicinal practice. Acupuncture points, joint problems, aches and strains, MS, arthritis, certain diseases, plasma, focus. Plantain and burdock leaf, food and rest, aid in sting relief.

for more see Dennis vanEngelsdorp, and The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting Eva Crane