

**Bees will live most
anywhere in almost
anything. The choice is
yours.**

**TOP BAR HIVE,
WARRE HIVE,
LANGSTROTH HIVE.**

Style, Preference, and Goals

Beehive Styles

Top Bar hives

Top bar hives are interesting for hobby beekeepers.



Langstroth hives

Garden hives

Eight Frame hives

All share the some advantages and disadvantages because of their construction.

Bee Tree the most Basic Hive!



Open Air Hive



Tired Beekeeping



GUM HIVES IN GREECE



Warre Hive configuration.

This hive configuration is used by some Natural Beekeepers. The use of natural comb building is utilized in this application. Frames may be used for stability.

The concept is basically similar to a top bar hive except you add boxes to the bottom building the hive downward.

Warre Hive configuration.

The concept is to have the bees draw down much as they would do in a hollow tree.

This is another concept used by hobby beekeepers. It is too labor intensive and less productive for commercial beekeepers.

Warre Hive



Warre Hive





Warre Hive



Warre Hive



Warre Hive with frames



Top bar hives are interesting for hobby beekeepers, and also for use in developing countries.

However, the most recommended type hive configuration is the Langstroth hive style. Most beginners and those interested in efficient honey production find this style most suitable.

Honey extraction in the top bar is a problem because of the fragile comb.

An article on top bar beekeeping was published in Bee Culture magazine in December, 1986.



28 Top Bars per Hive



Although the two most well-known styles of long top-bar hives are named “**Kenyan**” and “**Tanzanian**”, the Kenyan hive was actually developed in Canada, and the so-called Tanzanian hive is not the same as the top-bar hive that was developed in Tanzania.

The design of top-bar hives has its origins in the work done in 1965 by Tredwell and Paterson.



Stages of comb development



Improvising and improving the top bar hive.



Advantages of a Top Bar Hive:

**Only one critical dimension for construction
(1 & 3/8")**

No extractor needed

No foundation

No frames

Cheap

**Less area exposed when handling bees. Great
when working mean bees or when there is no
flow!**

Advantages of a Top Bar Hive:

No storage of supers

Less heavy lifting

More beeswax, since the honey comb is crushed to extract the honey. Comb honey production is also an option.

Disadvantages of Top Bar Hives

1.Lower honey production

2.Harder to get advice from experienced beekeepers, since their advice is typically geared towards standard hives.

Disadvantages of Top Bar Hives

3. Less flexibility in swapping combs between colonies, since the combs are not built uniformly straight.

4. Combs are more fragile, especially in cooler weather. The fragile combs can make transporting hives difficult when they have a lot of honey in them.

Disadvantages of Top Bar Hives

5. Requires a higher level of knowledge about bees to be an effective top Bar beekeeper.

May not be the right choice for every beekeeper.

A Few More Problems to be Solved with Top Bar Hives.

Challenging to start from a NUC or Package Bees.

More Care needed with overwintering.

More management to prevent swarming.

Burr comb and cross-bar comb more difficult to manage.

Comb attachment to sides of hive.

A Few More Problems to be Solved with Top Bar Hives.

Comb breakage; need to handle top-bars carefully.

Choice of durable and toxin free hive materials.

Lower honey production than Langstroth.

Bees prefer to move through a hive vertically rather than horizontally.

More experimentation needed to achieve optimum results.

Langstroth configuration.



Advantages Of Langstroth hives.

Interchangeable Parts

Langstroth hives use standard sized hive parts to allow for interchangeability with other hives.

This feature of non-unique hive parts allows for mass production, and therefore cheaper prices.

Availability.

Langstroth hives are the most common design of retailed hives. Because of this, it is relatively easy to acquire the proper parts to fit them.

Increased Honey Harvesting.

Advantages Of Langstroth hives.

Because honey is often extracted from reusable comb only small amounts of wax is lost during honey production.

This means that the same comb, when properly stored, may be used season after season, not needing to be replaced by the bees, and is therefore more efficient.

Expansion and Contraction

Advantages Of Langstroth hives.

Because of their modular design, Langstroth hives are perfect for expansion and contraction of particular hives. Hives can be made larger to fit more bees, or smaller to fit fewer depending on seasonal population.

Disadvantages

Complex Design

Langstroth hives require exact measurements and must conform to rather precise standards. These standards ensure that parts are actually interchangeable between hives. Attention must also be taken to consider bee space. If bee space is not properly observed it is not uncommon to have parts glued together with propolis or connected with burr comb.

Disadvantages

Decreased Wax Harvesting

Though wax may be harvested from Langstroth style hives, especially in the form of old comb, generally the only wax collected is that in the form of burr comb and wax capping during honey harvesting.

Most beekeepers prefer to preserve their wax comb so that it may be reused for as many seasons as possible. If wax production is desired a top bar hive may be better suited than a Langstroth hive.

Disadvantages

Heavy Lifting

Langstroth hives are known for heavy lifting when it comes time to harvest honey. Some beekeepers choose to use smaller Beekeeping/Honey Supers, but often they too may become difficult to lift when filled with ripe honey.

Disadvantages

Exposure

Langstroth hives may appear to be more difficult to manage compared to other hive designs, such as the top bar hive. The entire hive must be opened in order to do even minor management and hive wide inspections.

Conclusion

Choosing a Style of hive.

Preference for your location.

Goals for your hives.

Enjoyment.