



**Australian  
Honey Bee**  
INDUSTRY COUNCIL



# Setting up your first bee hive

Setting up a bee hive for the first time is exciting. Follow these five top tips to ensure your start in beekeeping is successful.



**Register**  
as a beekeeper



**Attend**  
training  
& join a club



**Select**  
a bee hive type



**Choose**  
a location



**Purchase**  
honey bees



## 1. Register as a beekeeper

Before starting to keep bees, beekeepers must register with the relevant state government body such as the Department of Primary Industries or Department of Agriculture, depending on the state or territory.

Once registered, a Hive Identification Number (HIN) will be issued which must be clearly marked on every hive to help identify the owner. Registration also allows beekeepers to be notified about industry information including any important biosecurity issues.

Beekeepers must also check if there are local government laws related to beekeeping, which may include limits on the number of hives allowed in a residential backyard.



## 2. Attend training & join a club

Attending accredited training gives new beekeepers the skills to manage honey bees and understand the legal obligations of owning bee hives. In addition to formal training, joining a local beekeeping club or association is recommended to learn and gain expertise from an experienced beekeeper.



## 3. Select a bee hive type

There are many different types of bee hives on the market - Langstroth, Warre, Flow and Top Bar to name a few. Each type of hive is made from a variety of materials including timber, polystyrene and plastic and they are manufactured in various sizes.

Starting out with the most common hive type, the Langstroth, is recommended as it is the simplest to use and helps new beekeepers build the foundation skills in beekeeping, especially in relation to managing pest and diseases.



## 4. Choose a location

Location is critical for a bee hive to be successful. Honey bees need the warmth of the sun to function, so choose a year-round sunny location to place the hives, including adequate sunlight during the winter. Bee hives must not face into a prevailing wind as it can chill them in winter or overheat the hive in summer.

Bees are attracted to lights, especially at dawn and dusk, so don't face the bee hive towards any lights, especially in urban areas.

On a hot day, honey bees can consume several litres of water. Make sure the bees have access to an adequate water supply so they are not tempted to visit the neighbours' swimming pool for a drink!



## 5. Purchase honey bees

When purchasing honey bees, take an experienced beekeeper and always ask to inspect the bees to ensure they are free from pests and diseases. Only ever buy from a reputable seller who is required to keep a record of who they sell bees to. They should only sell to registered beekeepers, so take your registration details with you.

For beginner beekeepers, start by purchasing a nucleus colony, which is essentially a starter pack with four to five frames of bees and a mated queen. More experienced beekeepers can purchase a 'package' of bees (one to two kilograms of bees in a mesh box with a mated queen) or a full colony.

## Important contacts

AHBIC's website has contact details for State Beekeeper Associations, State Government Departments and links to Registered Training Organisations. Visit [www.honeybee.org.au/industry-hub](http://www.honeybee.org.au/industry-hub) for more information.

Watch the video: [www.honeybee.org.au/industry-hub/beekeeping-101](http://www.honeybee.org.au/industry-hub/beekeeping-101)

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