



The Managed Mentoring Program on getting started in beekeeping.

# Managed Mentoring



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Apiary Selection and Hive Placement

Module | Hive Placement



# What is Covered in this Module

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Pad vs. Rail

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Space to Work

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Hive Placement Guidelines

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Individual Pads

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Individual Hive Placement

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Space in the Apiary

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Apiary Examples

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# Individual Hive Placement

**Positioning each hive in the apiary environment**



# Individual Pad vs. Rail Placement

- Individual Pad Recommended



# Individual Hive Stands

## □ We recommend Individual Hive Stands

### ● *Opinion: Single Hive Stands are Superior*

- Access from all sides makes it easier to work a hive
  - Lifting, placing boxes down, placing boxes back on the stack
  - **This is better for your back.** Less awkward reaches and twists like a rail system.
- Individual hives spread hives apart
  - This aids in less drift of bees from one hive to another (beneficial for mite management)
  - It lets you work one hive without consequence to its neighbors
  - It is better for hive robbing prevention



# Rail Systems

## ❑ Inferior for Several Reasons

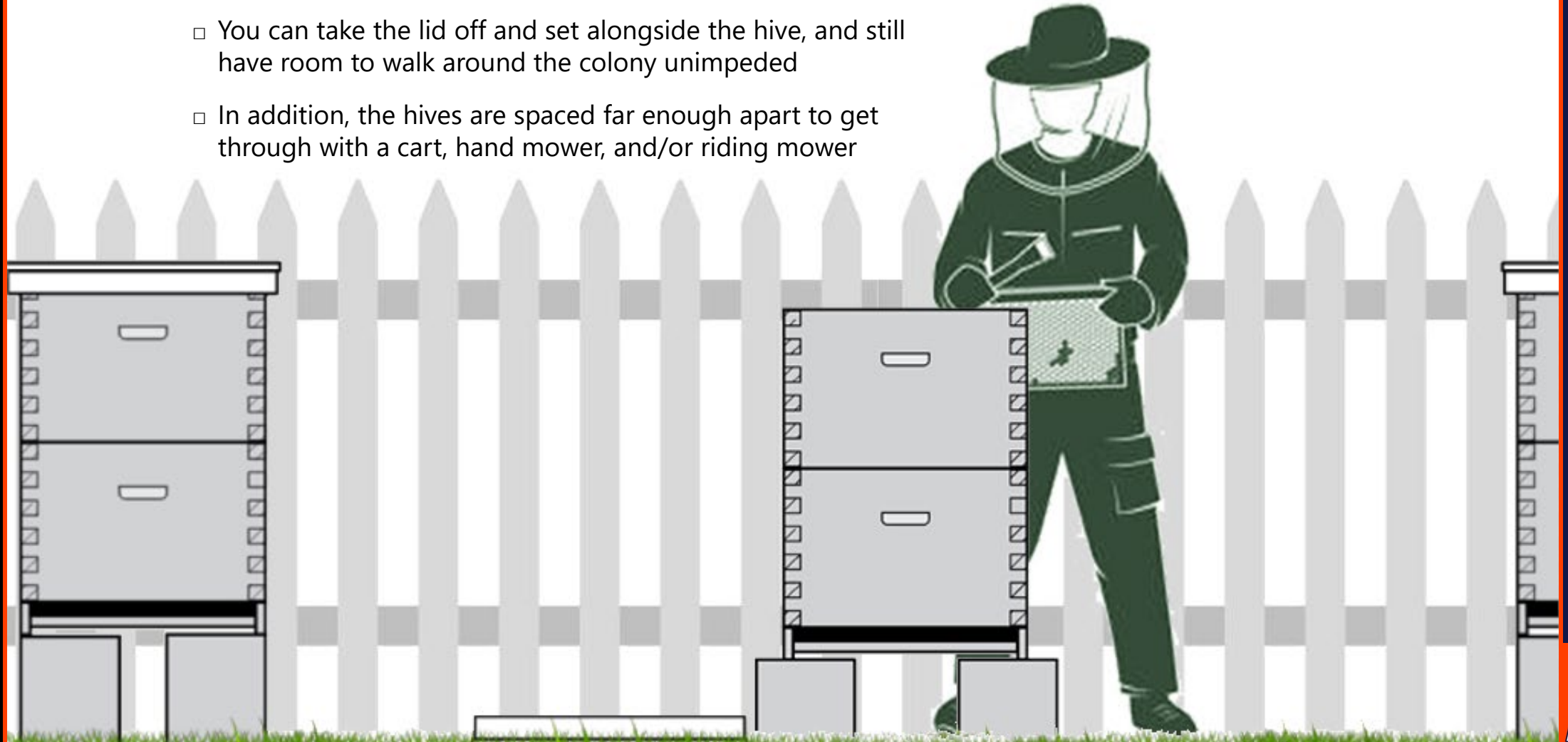
- *Many apiaries configure a 'rail system' that lines up multiple hives on one rail*
  - Rails limit your ability to truly get alongside a colony
    - ❑ After you work bees for a while you will know the advantage of this
    - ❑ Not back friendly, makes you prone to back injury
  - To work these hives you must smoke every hive before going into any that share the same rail
  - When you work one hive on a rail - any movement translates down the rail to the other hives.



# Space around the pad

## • Space to work

- Ideally you will have the space to work around the hive – left or right side, *as well as the back*.
  - You can take the lid off and set alongside the hive, and still have room to walk around the colony unimpeded
  - In addition, the hives are spaced far enough apart to get through with a cart, hand mower, and/or riding mower





# Hive Placement Reminder

## □ Placement Instructions

- *Face the hives toward the morning sun*
- *Full sun is recommended*
- *In Open Space - Away from brush*
- *It is beneficial to make as much space around each hive as possible*
  - Studies show that optimally hives are far apart; Especially as it concerns varroa mite infestations from drift.
    - Consider placing them as far apart as your apiary allows
    - Note however that most beekeepers do not adhere to this guideline, and it is often not pragmatic



# Full Sun Expanded

- Honeybees do well in full sun
  - *Colonies can thermoregulate in full sun, and bees are tropical in nature so they can handle the heat.*
    - If you are in the mid-Atlantic, you can keep them in 100% Full Sun
      - This contrasts with severe heat zones, like Texas, Arizona where different instructions will apply
  - *Full sun is advantageous*
    - Full sun thwarts some predators.
      - The bees can handle the heat, but some pests cannot. It also provides more warmth in cooler months, and earlier & longer light for working bees: expanding the working time



# Partial Sun is Acceptable

## □ While Full Sun is best....

- *The truth is many beekeepers do not have apiaries that afford full sun options.*
  - We know of many beekeeping operations that are in partial sun / dappled sun conditions.
  - We also know of a few that have wooded lots and have no sun and still get by.
    - Wooded lots bring predators often, which is its own problems.
      - Resident birds, skunks, racoons, and other pests are generally not present in open area apiaries. They come in, but that is different than being resident and foraging for food in the space – like being in the woods.
  - Wooded shady areas often can lead to *ant* and other insect problems.



# Place away from other features

## □ Fencing, Trees, and other Items

- *Keep the hives far enough away from any items that are adjacent to where you have placed your hives.*
  - Keep them far enough away from fences, nearby trees, overhanging limbs, buildings, shrubs, brush piles, undergrowth, and other objects.
- *Predator Spacing*
  - If you are in bear territory, distance the hives back from the bear fence
    - Keep them far enough that they cannot reach through, drop down over the fence
  - Keep low fencing for racoons, skunks, and other predators if this is a concern



# Room to Grow

## □ Provide for Expansion

- *Pick a spot that can expand, or have an alternate ready*
  - Sometime expansion comes on purpose (making splits) and other times it comes unexpectedly (captured swarms)
  - Whether you plan to have more hives or not, give some consideration for either permanent or temporary space to hive additional hives.
  - Keep in mind setbacks and property lines while planning for expansion



# Consider Theft

## □ Hive Security

- *Some locations are remote and subject to security concerns*
  - Honeybee hives are a commodity and often left alone for long periods of time and this makes them subject to theft.
    - It is not a rampant problem in the mid-Atlantic zone but it is still a consideration
- *If it is a potential concern*
  - Consider placing your hives in a location where they cannot be seen
  - Consider placing them in an enclosure and tagging them
    - Identification tags can be placed in a hive that will report movement and can be used to track location if stolen.



## Hives in Snow

### □ Access

- *Be sure you can get to hives in snow to care for them... and that you have access*
- *Consider sun for melting the snow from the entrances*



# Up off the Ground & Level Ground

## ❑ Off the Ground

- *Hives need above potentially damp ground*
  - The most common approach is to place hives on cinder blocks
  - Others choose to make or buy honeybee hive stands

## ❑ Level Ground

- *Place the hive stand on a level space*
  - Provide a level area for the hive stand / blocks as well as a level area around the hive for you to operate
  - Firm Footing – Tamped Grass, stone, outdoor mats and other approaches are viable





# Apiary Surface Material

## □ Grass or Ground Cover

- *Grass is customary*

- Most hive stands are placed in grass covered areas
  - What you place your hives over is beekeeper preference.
    - Keep in mind that if it is grass you will need to keep it cut (manually and/or with a mower)
    - Bees do not like vibrations and sometimes it will cause them to be defensive

- *Pad Ground Cover – Consider the pros and cons*

- Some beekeepers prefer something other than grass at the base of each hive:
  - Gravel square, Artificial Turf or Rugs, Stone, Ground Cover (Moss, etc.), Broad Cloth, Wood Chips, Concrete Pads



# Level Side to Side, Slight Tilt Forward

## ❑ Hive should sit level side to side

- *Get this wrong and the bees will not build the comb properly*
  - Bees hang from one another (called festooning) when placing wax deposits to build comb. If the hive is off (tilted) they will not be able to build proper comb

## ❑ Slight tilt forward

- *Water that falls on the landing will run off the front; not into the hive*



# Rows vs. Round Hive Placement

## □ Rows Predominate

- *Most beekeepers align their hives in rows*
  - It seems neat and orderly, but it might not be the most optimal choice

## □ Round Horseshoes

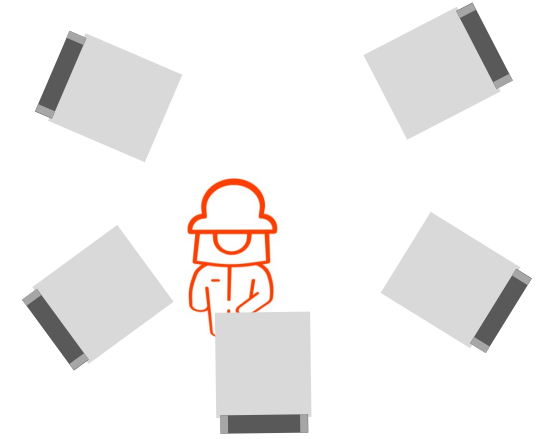
- *Research shows this might be a superior way*
  - Pads distributed in a round horseshoe shape around the yard, or even placed haphazardly may negate drift (a varroa mite and malady concern).
    - Drift encourages the spread of mites and maladies between hives



This is not that much of a concern with one or two hives. Something to keep in mind if you expand in future years.



# Consider Space and Haphazard



## □ Spread them out

- *Some research has indicated that the farther the hives are apart from each other the better they are.*
  - This of course requires a large plot of land. If you happen to have the room, consider disbursing hives away from each other instead of clustering. Not as convenient for the beekeeper, but possibly better for the bees.
- *Haphazard Placement*
  - Research also has suggested that colonies do better when they are not perfectly aligned to the same orientation. This somewhat goes against the instruction to face them toward the morning sun, but this is what has been suggested.

# Regarding Apiary and Pad Placement

## □ No Apiary is Perfect

- *Do your best to follow the guidelines*
  - No single apiary is perfect.
  - Pay attention to flooding first and foremost
  - For the rest do your best to choose
  - Do not force the boundaries and setbacks – choose something else
- *What follows are some random apiary shots collected over the years*
  - Some good, some bad... but interesting to study and learn from































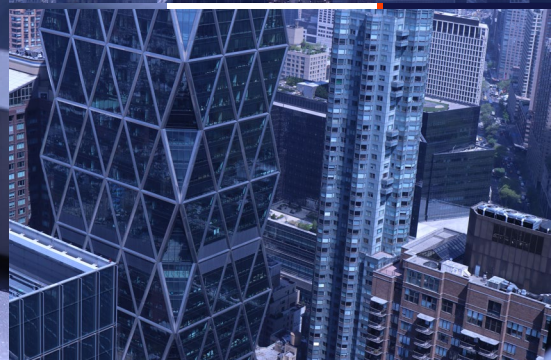


























# Closing Comments

## ■ Customary Close

- Where we stand, where we are going...
  - *This lesson closes out guidance for hive placement within the apiary.*
  - *Our next topic moves to the instructions for loading bees into your bee equipment (HOW EXCITING!!!!):*
    - Installing Bees – **Package Install** & Installing Bees – **Nuc Transfer** Install
    - Handling bees – **Post Install First Week**
    - Learning how to do proper **Hive Inspections**



# Q&A

- **What Questions did we not anticipate?**
  - If you have feedback, please leave a constructive comment; but be nice.
  - For Northwest send an email to [nwnjba@live.com](mailto:nwnjba@live.com)
  - For Beekeepers Corner send an email to [kevin@bkcorner.org](mailto:kevin@bkcorner.org)
    - *Please refer to the video in the subject.*

