



The Managed Mentoring Program on Getting Started in Beekeeping.

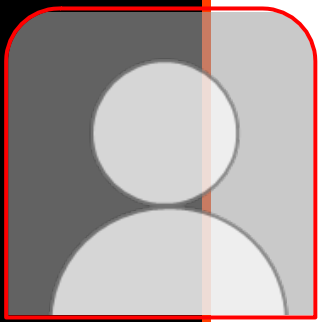
# Managed Mentoring



# Managed Mentoring

Guidance on what to buy, and how to buy it

Lesson | Purchasing Hive Equipment



# What is Covered in this Lesson

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Sourcing Equipment - Shopping

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Quality Over Price

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Individual Pieces vs. Kit Buying

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Plastic vs. Wax Foundation

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Woodenware Joinery

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Vendor Selection

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# Getting it right

## ■ Confidence in buying

- Engaging into something new runs the risk of being at a disadvantage due to lack of experience.
- One of the more stressful things for a new beekeeper is that moment of uncertainty when making a purchase.
  - *As such, we are going to talk a bit about the landscape of buying equipment before delving into what exactly to buy.*
    - Covering the shopping experience
    - And providing guidance on how to be a savvy shopper



# The shopping experience

- **How Beekeeping equipment is sold**
  - There are three predominant ways to obtain equipment
    - *Purchase from a website*
    - *Purchase through a catalog*
    - *Purchase from a local provider*
  - Each of these methods have pros and cons
    - *Today so many things are bought online, that it would seem a no-brainer to surface a website and knock out the task.*
    - *There are a few reasons that might not make this the optimal way to go...*



# Reviewing wares in the marketplace

## ■ The humble catalog

- The beekeeping industry is evolving from a paper catalog shopping experience.
  - *Beekeeping Equipment providers have a history of distributing print catalogs to advertise their wares.*
    - As an aside, early websites were simply electronic versions of print catalogs. Companies have finally taken the steps to build dedicated shopping sites that follow an ecommerce, shopping cart user interface.
- Catalog Maturity
  - *If you browse the paper catalog, you will learn that the descriptions and the photos of the equipment is well done.*
  - *This makes the catalog a superior way to get acclimated vs. the web experience.*



# Catalog, then website

## ■ Review using catalog(s) first

- Catalogs are free upon request, and contain a wealth of information
  - *Large suppliers are more than happy to send you a catalog.*
    - With a few catalogs at hand, you can get a sense of how a company does business.
    - As a bonus many of the catalogs have supporting information to help new beekeepers.
- Using catalogs as a shopping tool
  - *We suggest you use the catalogs to research, review, and get familiar with what is offered.*
  - *Then when you have made your choices, move to the online website to fill your cart and make your purchases.*



# Shopping Online

- **Getting Better, but not fulfilling**
  - Why not simply skip the catalog and go online?
    - *In our experience many beekeeping retailer websites are simply not as sophisticated as one would hope.*
      - Especially when many of us are accustomed to large retailer sites online like Amazon, Walmart, Target, etc.
      - Over the past few years many of them have been revamped and they are improving.
  - Tip: two-pronged approach
    - *One advantage websites do provide is search.*
      - Beekeeping catalogs are organized by sections but sometimes you will benefit from a search interface. The web benefits from instantaneous discovery through search.
      - Tactically, consider both a web and catalog approach, using search when it is an advantage.





# What of Local Purchases?

## ■ Local Store or Vendor Offerings

- The third category
  - *Equipment providers could be a local store or individual/small company that sells equipment.*
- Many pros and some cons to going this route
  - A local store is a great place to see and learn about equipment, but most are smaller spaces and keep a limited supply of equipment on hand. They may not have the things you are after.
  - Local/Regional beekeeping supply stores are few and far between.
  - Behind the scene, many are actually dealers or sell bigger outfit goods.
  - They do have an advantage and reputation often of offering amazing customer service.



# What of Local Purchases?

## ■ Local Store or Vendor Offerings

- Pros and cons going this route
  - *A great thing about a local store, especially if it is close to you, is you can purchase locally and save on shipping.*
  - *It also affords you the ability to see what you are buying and ask questions of a sales person.*
    - Most local stores have a good reputation of support for their customers.
  - *Unfortunately, there are not a lot of us that have the convenience of a local store so count yourself fortunate if is an option in your area.*



# Buy Local or not?

- **We are not averse to local**
  - But it is personal preference as to whether you go this way or not.
    - *If you are the type that has a sensibility of what you are buying, gauge the situation and proceed accordingly.*
    - *If you lack confidence, again gauge the situation, and if it works give it a try, or...*
  - Risk Averse Approach
    - *Simply go with a bigger retailer, with some confidence that they are serving the masses and have well designed programs to serve the beekeeping community.*
    - Once you have some acumen, you can always comeback and support the local providers.



## What we do

- **We do both!**
  - We support our local sellers
    - *Over time we have come to know and trust our local providers.*
    - *We like to see them succeed and as such we support them by making purchase with them when it makes sense.*
  - Consider a local association for guidance
    - *We will say over and over again that a beekeeper's association is a good way to go.*
      - In the case of local providers, there is no better community to get a gauge of that then consulting with some veterans over coffee at a local beekeeping club meeting.
      - You can benefit from the collective wisdom and experience of others.



# Reflecting on Quality

- **Hive Equipment is an investment**
  - When it comes to buying equipment, costs can add up quickly. It makes sense to consider quality.
    - *Hive equipment generally lasts for many seasons, especially if better quality woodenware is selected up front.*
    - *Vendors offer select grade wood and other features that may cost more in the beginning but pay for themselves over many seasons of use*
  - Frankly, beekeeping can be hard enough without dealing with poor equipment as seasons roll on so if you can plan a bigger initial investment, it is worth the layout.



# Reflecting on Quality

## *The Fabrication Aspect*



- **Fabrication and Tolerances Matter**
  - Bigger manufacturers have addressed quality control.
    - *As a rule, the woodenware and fabrication structures in larger organizations are quite mature.*
    - *Some smaller (ie. Local) companies have high quality stuff too*
      - Sometimes it can exceed what you get from more prominent vendors.
      - Sometimes however, they have not worked out all of the kinks, and their equipment is a notch below.
  - Go with more established vendors if unsure
    - *If you grasp what good fabrication means, and understand tolerances, then shop around.*
    - *If you do not, stay with the bigger, national, vendors.*



# National Vendors

*An example listing*



## ■ Caveat

- This is not meant to be an endorsement or a slight to anyone left off.
  - *The names listed here are established, well known vendors – some of them have been around for literally over 100 years*
- A sampling of Large Scale Vendors
  - *Mann Lake, Dadant, Betterbee, Glory Bee, Blue Sky, Miller*
- Regional Vendors
  - *Each area of the United States has very respectable second tier regional vendors.*
- Ask your association members
  - *Generally local beekeepers know what's out there. Consult with them on marketplace offerings in your area.*



## Web and/or Chain Store Offerings

- **What about Hives from Amazon or Box Stores?**
  - Unless you are an informed buyer, we do not advise going this route
    - *The national beekeeping supply companies know their product lines and beekeeping. That's what they do.*
    - The experience from Amazon will likely not match national stores.
      - It is impossible to know the quality of things that are sold in box stores (for example Tractor Supply)
      - It is reasonable to think that if you have questions – you likely will not see that much service.
      - Both of these sales channels are designed for distribution and not so much sales to beekeepers with guidance.
  - *A credit to national stores is they really do provide customer service with their wares.*





# Pre-Configured Hive Stack vs. Individual Pieces

- **Which is a better way to go?**
  - Many vendors offer a 'ready-made' starter kit.
    - *When it comes to buying a conventional stack, they are close but not our preference for a few reasons which you can evaluate and then decide.*
    - Starter kits are often bundled with gear that **we do not recommend**.
      - For those things will provide alternative guidance shortly.
    - Sometimes these kits are **sold with things you will not need** and that results in an **added expense**.
    - They are often sold with plastic foundation, and we expect that you are using wax foundation
  - It is a little more work, but individually sourcing is what we recommend.





# Before we get started...

## ■ **Hive Equipment Fundamentals**

- The following content assumes that you have reviewed the first lesson and have been introduced to the basic functions of the parts of a hive.
  - *If you have not, it might be a good time to pause this module and take the time to review the content of lesson 1.*
  - *Lesson 1 explains some of the rationale for some of the preferences that will be shared as equipment recommendations are made.*

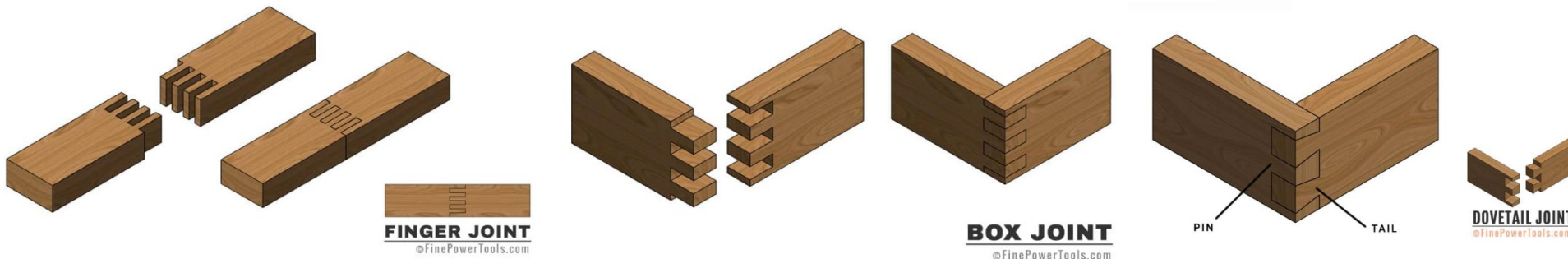
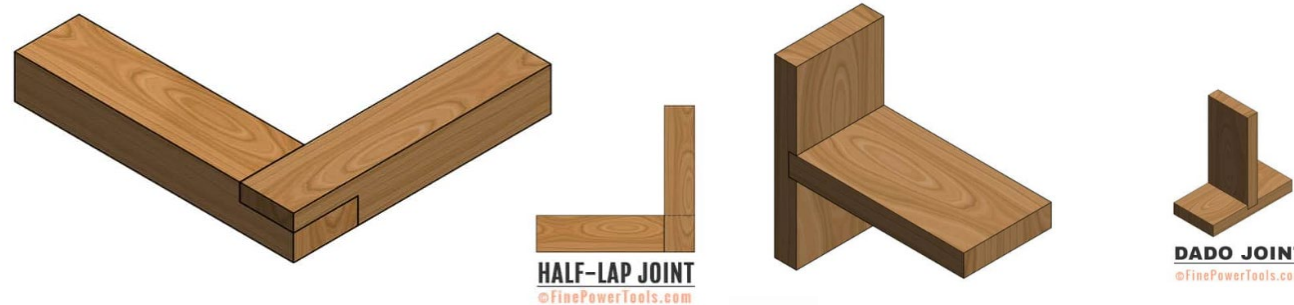
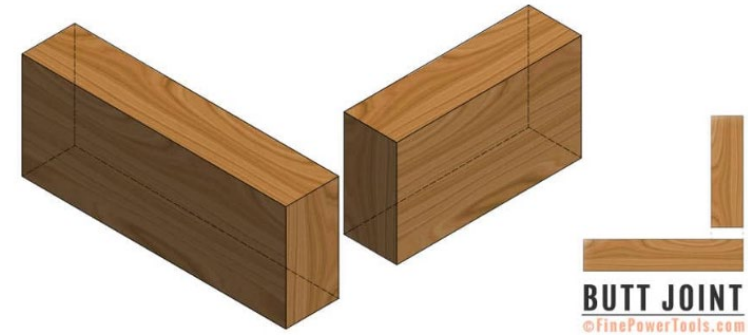
## ■ **Buy TWO(2) Setups**

- We emphasize that you start with two hives so buy two complete stacks.



# Joinery Primer

- **Butt Joint** > two boards set against each other
- **Joinery** > Boards that are fitted in some way



## Joinery vs. Butt Joints

- **Joinery is preferred**
  - We ask a lot of our woodenware hive equipment
    - *They are outside 365 days a year, exposed to sun, rain, snow, and so on. The wood materials take a beating.*
    - *We also exert heavy forces on them in moving, lifting, setting down, piling up, prying, and so on.*
  - Sometimes Butt Joints are fine, but in many cases the traditional Joinery is preferred
    - *Butt Joints are used because they are easier and faster.*
    - *Taking the extra measures for Joinery, in the various forms improves strength and stability.*



# Vendor Selections

- Experience tells us to find a primary vendor
  - *While most hive equipment is said to follow universal standards for size and design, the truth is, in practice they vary.*
    - We suggest that when it comes to woodenware, **consider using the same vendor and stay with that vendor for the long term.**
      - While box sizes are universal, the design of the rabbets, frame design and other facets do impact how hive equipment comes together.
      - Mixing and matching equipment sometimes leads to headaches and if you are a beginner, you have the fortune of starting out on the right foot by figuring out what vendor to go with and using their equipment in the operation.



# Closing Comments

## ■ Customary Close

- Where we stand, where we are going...
  - *This lesson closes out the primer on purchasing guidance.*
  - *Our next lesson talks about other beekeeping equipment needed for your starter kit:*
    - **Other Beekeeping Equipment** you will need
    - **Sourcing Protective Equipment** for the Beekeeper
    - Primer on **Building Frames**
    - Guidance for **Hive Fabrication**



## Q&A

- **What Questions did we not anticipate?**
  - If you have feedback, you can leave a constructive comment; but be nice.
  - You could also send an email to [comments@managedmentoring.com](mailto:comments@managedmentoring.com)
    - *Please refer to this video in the subject so we know what the reference is.*

