



# BEST Program

Bringing Ecology and Society Together  
Year 2012 – 2013



## Introduction to BEST Program

Honey hunting has been a popular activity throughout the agricultural history of Africa. Unfortunately, it is not sustainable because most people employ destructive methods of honey harvesting. Farmers do not tend to the bees regularly and will only approach colonies during harvesting season. They force the bees out of the hives with smoke and fire before collecting what remains in the hive. These practices misconceive the proper methods of handling bees and result in the loss of long-term productivity and profit.

Honey is a product of great potential and we can harness this unique natural resource to generate income in Africa. Only when bee farmers learn the proper way to handle bees can this industry be sustained.

The BEST Program is about Bringing Ecology and Society Together. We develop and advocate a paradigm shift from destructive honey hunting to productive beekeeping. Underlying our philosophy is the recognition that agriculture can only be sustained when there is ecological balance.

Too many worthwhile beekeeping projects fail in Africa due to a misunderstanding of African bees and their behavior. The BEST Beekeeping Basic Course addresses these problems by teaching farmers appropriate methods of handling African bees, and enabling them to manage an apiary productively. Properly done, participants can aspire to produce honey that meets the European Union Honey Legislation requirements.

Our Company provides a full value chain. When the participant successfully produces honey according to our method and quality taught during the training, we will provide a ready market for him. Together, we embrace the paradigm shift from destructive honey hunting to sustainable beekeeping.

## About EastWest Innovations Uganda Limited (EWI)

EastWest Innovations Uganda Limited (EWI) began its operations in Uganda since 2001 with the purpose of developing the Uganda Honey trade as a viable supplement income for the Ugandan farmers, with sustainable beekeeping as its *modus operandi*.

Today, EWI is a recognized source for providing pure, unadulterated honey. Since 2005, for every batch of honey harvested, samples will be sent to the University of Hohenheim for *Mellisopalynology*. Our honey meets the rigorous requirements set by the European Union Honey Legislation and the European Commission Food Safety Standard. Over the years we have maintained our standard through continuous effort in educating and training local beekeepers.

With a track record on quality honey exported to the EU, Switzerland, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore, EWI attained the prestigious "President's Export Award" in 2006.

## Syllabus of the Basic Beekeeping Course

- 1. Life cycle of honeybees:** Appreciating the life cycle of the honeybee can enable participants to approach these insects with greater sensitivity.
- 2. Hive management:** We stress the regular maintenance of the hive as a part of domestication of the bee colony.
- 3. Apiary management:** We teach proper practices to maintain the apiary, such as trimming the grass, providing sufficient water, and keeping predators away.



Step-by-step hive management



Demonstration of different hives

- 4. Criteria of a good location of an apiary:** To identify surrounding vegetation to determine the right location for keeping an apiary.
- 5. Different types of beehives:** We do not believe in one-size-fit-all. This program provides different types of beehives for participants to work on, so they can choose their most suitable type of beehive. It may be advisable for some farmers to start off with traditional beehives before investing in modern ones.

- 6. Hive setting:** Many farmers are not aware of the importance of proper hive setting, resulting in bee aggression and reduction of honey production. Proper hive setting includes the optimal positioning of the hive.



Hives found abandoned

Hives managed by BEST Program



7. **Hive baiting:** Proper baiting methods can attract bees to colonize a hive in a much shorter time.
8. **Calming the bees:** Understanding bee behaviors (e.g. the best time and ways to work on African bees) can reduce aggressive confrontation, which can make harvesting unproductive.
9. **Handling of African bees during the day:** Due to the fear of bee aggression, many farmers choose to handle bees in total darkness. Now, with proper techniques, participants can work with the bees in the early morning or early evening with greater effect.
10. **An introduction to value-added bee related products:** An introduction to how we can utilize bee byproducts (e.g. bee wax, pollen and propolis) to add value to participants' income.
11. **Beekeeping as a viable business:** This course teaches basic business plans, basic bookkeeping and entrepreneurship to enable participants to view beekeeping as potential career.



Byproducts from bee keeping

## Other Options

After completing the Basic Beekeeping Course, selected participants may progress to the Advance Beekeeping Course. The Advanced Course builds on participants' knowledge from the Basic Course, and emphasizes on capacity building and expansion.

The syllabus includes non-confrontational harvesting, colony multiplication, queen rearing, bee health, the construction of hives, harvesting of by-products, and value adding of by-products. The Advanced Course will also gear participants towards a possible career as bee trainers.

## Testimonials from Participants

*"This training is a "MUST" for anyone who is willing to keep bees. In this training, I learned how to handle bees in a very gentle way. My fear for bees has reduced – building a relationship between the beekeeper and the bees is very crucial."*

**Father Reverend Stanislas, Pastor**



*"I liked the creative aspect of the training – practical, participatory and interactive. The training emphasized the establishment of relationships with the bees... at the end of the training, all of us were confident enough to drop the veils and the gloves, to get up-close and passionate with the bees"*

**William K Mugisha, Business Consultant**





*"Instructors were open to discussion, patient, willing to evaluate new ideas. Excellent foundation for further bee management"*

**Stan Burkey, Independent Education Management Professional**



*"Before I came for the workshop, I had it in mind that bees were the greatest enemies of human being in life, but after I came to learn that once when you attend to them carefully and tenderly, they can give you whatever you want from them... I have learnt how to make money from bees and how to sustain myself by getting money from bee-products like honey, beeswax. I am now very much conversant with making bee hives and this will help me to make money from it."*

**Simon Peter, Retired Teacher**

*"The trainer was very calm, knowledgeable and had many years experience with African bees. This creates confidence in the students. The training facilities were very comfortable and appropriate. Very easy to get to... it's convenient. Because it was small a class, I felt it was well contained and well-attended to."*

**Olivia Murphy, Businesswoman**



*"Very good blend of practical that tied well to the sharing of deeper aspects of beekeeping. We were challenged to think for ourselves. The exposure to both the traditional bee hive and the modern bee hive experience."*

**Michael O Doud, Director Village of Hope**

## Contact Us

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*Redefining APiculture in Uganda and Rwanda*

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