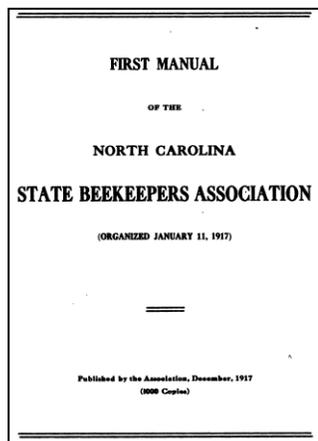


"[W]e recognize beekeeping in this State as a specialty which offers no encouragement to those whose practice is deficient, but does offer good average returns to those persons who are themselves temperamentally adapted to beekeeping, and who will keep abreast of modern practice in equipment and management of their bees."

— NCSBA, 1917



Have you ever come across people who seem to want the joys of having kids without the drudgery of parenting? These folks show up in the newspaper all the time – Junior sets fire to his crib because Mother stepped out for a few hours to party with friends. Father yells at Teacher because Susie is in third grade but can't read... but nobody at home has ever read anything with her beyond lottery scratch-off instructions and television schedules. Little Billy disrespectfully smarts off to teachers, store clerks, parents and anybody else he chooses because nobody has ever set a firm expectation of how to behave. (Just so there is no confusion, this doesn't apply to you and me – we are right-thinking citizens that all others should use as examples of how to be. Otherwise we wouldn't be reading this!)

How about this then... have you ever come across people who seem to want the joys of having honey bees without the drudgery of beekeeping? Just close your eyes and dream for a moment... wouldn't that be **GREAT**??? To be honest, keeping honey bees, like keeping kids, can at times be a real challenge, a burden, even a pain (both figuratively and literally). Why don't we just leave those bits out?

Over 100 years ago, North Carolina beekeepers thought about this issue and issued eight formal recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS¹

(Unanimously adopted as our "Creed.")

We, the members of the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association, assembled in our first annual meeting, do most earnestly recommend the following to our members and to all other beekeepers of the State:

1. We believe that the use of any kind or type of hive which does not provide movable frames to allow for free examination and manipulation of the bees is a disadvantage -- we recognize the movable frame hive as superior and more profitable, and most earnestly recommend its adoption by all our beekeepers as rapidly as their circumstances will permit, and we express our conviction that the standard size 10-frame hive is preferable. We furthermore call attention to the fact that such frame hives are not patented, and that anyone sufficiently skilled in the use of tools may make such hives, but we emphasize the advantage of having at least one good standard frame-hive which shall serve as a model in building others, to the end that all parts of all hives in the apiary shall be freely interchangeable.
2. We recognize that what is known as the Italian bee (or strains of it) is generally the most satisfactory, and we regret the presence of what is known as the "Black" or "Mixed" bees in so many apiaries of the State. While we are aware of the difficulty of keeping Italian stock pure, owing to the presence of wild black bees, yet we are convinced that our best interests call on us to replace the black or mixed bees in our apiaries with Italians as rapidly as circumstances will permit.
3. We indorse the Extension Work in Beekeeping as now begun, and bespeak the helpful cooperation of all our members in making it successful, whether by attending called meetings and demonstrations, by sending in names and addresses of beekeepers known to us, or in working reforms in our own practices where these

¹ First Manual of the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association, pp 8-10 (December 1917) Raleigh, NC: NCSBA

- may be shown to be at fault.
4. We note with interest that North Carolina stands among the leading States of the Union in number of bees kept, but takes a decidedly lower rank in the value of bee products. We believe that this indicates a need for more careful attention to our bees, to the end that the yield of honey per hive be increased. We believe, further, that it should rightfully discourage the careless, the indifferent, and the incompetent from attempting to engage in beekeeping, while at the same time it is entirely feasible for those who have a fondness for this work and are proficient in it to increase the number of their colonies and increase the yield per hive at the same time.
 5. We declare our conviction that the best development of the beekeeping industry in this State will be secured, not so much by having one or two hives of bees on every farm, in which case many will of necessity be neglected and deteriorate, but rather by those persons who are efficient in the management of bees increasing their apiaries while at the same time studiously searching for every practicable means of improvement.
 6. We appreciate the bee-club movement among boys and girls as an aid in showing who is, and who is not, adapted to the keeping of bees, and if they learn this while young, it will save the unadapted ones from later loss and will at the same time point the way to success for those who are adapted to beekeeping.
 7. We recommend that our members select for themselves certain subjects or topics in beekeeping to which they will give special attention and study during each year, or over a period of years, seeking information by careful reading, correspondence and experience, so that in our annual meetings we may have papers by our own members which shall be suggestive of better things, and which shall be an advance beyond the methods which are already familiar.
 8. Finally, and as a summary of the foregoing declarations, we recognize beekeeping in this State as a specialty which offers no encouragement to those whose practice is



Franklin Sherman was the first President of the NCSBA as well as State Entomologist for the NC Department of Agriculture. He left us a stern set of guidelines that warrant attention 100 years later. Photo: *Journal of Economic Entomology*, Volume 40, Issue 4, 1 August 1947, Pages 610–611, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jee/40.4.610>

deficient, but does offer good average returns to those persons who are themselves temperamentally adapted to beekeeping, and who will keep abreast of modern practice in equipment and management of their bees.

Wow, that's somber stuff. I don't think I score very high on every single one of those points, but hopefully you'll agree with me that the sentiment is worth striving for. There isn't anything in the list that a clear-headed, right-thinking beekeeper should dispute. A few of the specific items are outdated (for example, we don't have German Black Bees [*Apis mellifera mellifera*] anymore) but their modern equivalents do exist (for example, Varroa-resistant stock is the new, albeit elusive, ideal). Other items are timeless: for example, who can rationally dispute the value of standardized equipment? And what sort of idiot wouldn't gladly take advantage of freely-offered

Cooperative Extension knowledge, especially in the internet age?

But to return to our original question... what if we want the joys of having honey bees without the drudgery of beekeeping? Well, looking at the kid-keeping analogy again, it can be done! Yes, we can have the joys of kids without the accompanying drudgery: it is called being an aunt/uncle or grandparent! With respect to honey bees, we can do the same sort of thing by befriending a beekeeper and inviting them to put bees on our property, or even paying a beekeeper to do so. In those arrangements, the beekeeper does the beekeeping while we do the enjoying! The important thing is that somebody acts like a grown-up and is ultimately responsible for the living beings under their care, drudgery included. I think our predecessors in 1917 would have been very content with that solution.

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Do you want to “save the bees” without all the trouble involved with keeping honey bees? One option is to install mason bee houses on your property! See October 2013’s [“The Right Bees for You”](#) for more information.