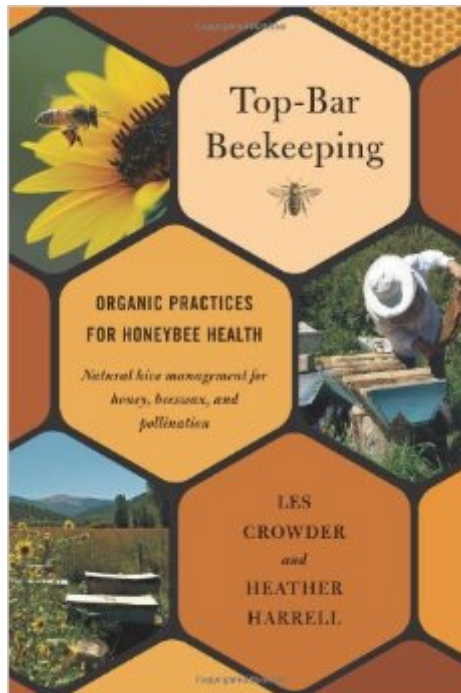


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# Top-Bar Beekeeping: Organic Practices For Honeybee Health



## Synopsis

In recent years beekeepers have had to face tremendous challenges, from pests such as varroa and tracheal mites and from the mysterious but even more devastating phenomenon known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Yet in backyards and on rooftops all over the world, bees are being raised successfully, even without antibiotics, miticides, or other chemical inputs. More and more organically minded beekeepers are now using top-bar hives, in which the shape of the interior resembles a hollow log. Long lasting and completely biodegradable, a topbar hive made of untreated wood allows bees to build comb naturally rather than simply filling prefabricated foundation frames in a typical box hive with added supers. Top-bar hives yield slightly less honey but produce more beeswax than a typical Langstroth box hive. Regular hive inspection and the removal of old combs helps to keep bees healthier and naturally disease-free. Top-Bar Beekeeping provides complete information on hive management and other aspects of using these innovative hives. All home and hobbyist beekeepers who have the time and interest in keeping bees intensively should consider the natural, low-stress methods outlined in this book. It will also appeal to home orchardists, gardeners, and permaculture practitioners who look to bees for pollination as well as honey or beeswax.

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## Customer Reviews

By chance I ran into Les and Heather several years ago while on vacation exploring the Santa Fe NM Farmers Market. Les engaged me in a conversation once I explained I was about to become a beekeeper. With conviction he handed me several photo copies on the Top Bar method. After

spending hours and hours online I was convinced that this was a path I should explore hands on. Now I have five TB hives and love the simplicity and natural methods Les spoke of. When I heard Les and Heather were writing a book, I never pre-ordered one so quickly on . As a TB beek, there are few experts that have the knowledge like this duo. And I'm thrilled to say that this book delivered. I've used Les's hive design and build them for about \$20 each in my shop each winter. The plans are in the book and are easy to make. I am most excited to finally have an explanation on how to manipulate the topbars throughout the seasons. Up to now, despite a small collection of books on TB beekeeping, I was winging it. But now I have a detailed and strong set of images to explain hive maintenance. The book covers a large selection of topic and makes a compelling argument on how TB methods are less stressful on the bees and more in tune with a natural feral hive. Heather is an excellent writer that is the perfect compliment to Les's experience. There are a lot of photos too to help you. If you are contemplating top bar beekeeping, this is the best book out there. You too can be part of beekeeping that is both affordable and natural. Thanks to Les's encouragement I have a batch of honey waiting to be bottled in my Pennsylvania kitchen. The joy I've had building my hives from scratch, learning not to be afraid of placing myself in the midst of 30,000 stingers, and now eating the fruits of the hive are --- oh so enjoyable.

I've been a Backyard Bee Guardian using organic and ecological practices for 15 years and mentoring others to support this amazing mediterranean honeybee in their backyard havens for over 10 years! This book is ESSENTIAL for success in Top Bar Bee Guardianship for new and experienced TOP Bar enthusiasts and will aid my teaching and mentoring greatly. And... by reading this book before you choose whether to do Top Bars or Langstroths may help you decide that Top Bar Hives are the right choice for Homesteaders and Backyarders! While I still teach how to run a Langstroth HIVE like a wild or top bar hive more or less, allowing bees to draw their own comb - allowing bees to swarm (yes I believe in contributing to strong local genetic variation and acclimation by allowing some of the swarms to get away and attempt to make it in the wilds of Santa Cruz) - I have begun to initiate new Bee Guardians into the magic of Top Bars because ultimately I believe that Langstroth Hives are designed primarily for the ease of industrial monocrop and chemical based bee manipulations and that Top Bar Hives are designed more for the ease of the bees. Yes you can get more honey with Langstroth Hives, but for Backyarders there are other inspiring goals and ultimately a TOP BAR HIVE with a viewing window supports less non essential interventions by overly manipulative humans and supports the shape of the colony's skeleton (the comb) to mimic what they do in the wild for example. Honey production is not my driving purpose in

serving Honey Bees. I keep bees to be of service to the Greater Good and the gifts I receive are superior fruit and food production on my homestead, contribution to locally acclimated genetic diversity, more beauty and food in my local landscape and enough honey for my family needs and some special gifting occasionally. I'm not in it to produce commercial crops of honey, and definitely not supportive of commercial pollination practices of forcing honey bees to forage on wastelands of chemically fertilized GMO crops with dead soil, no diversity of plant life and the bees themselves are constantly dosed in antibiotics, fungicides, miticides etc. Langstroth Hives have a dirty history - not their fault but the whole point of their design was to serve exploitation of Nature's gifts through mass production in the commercial food industry. Choosing Top Bar Hives is for me part of my recognition that the commercial food system is broken and Slow Food and Go Local approaches are one of our most important empowered actions for healing the rift between humans and Nature. This book is well organized, knowledge heavy and is the first to clearly articulate methods for rotating blackened brood comb out and supporting the reduction of the colony to the winter ball to the best placement in the Top Bar Hive. The authors are writing from experience and have great photos throughout the book and explain clearly, seasonal skillsets for Top Bar Success as well as how to raise your own queens. Top Bar Hives are gaining a lot of popularity for Homestead and Backyard Honey Bee Guardians - no heavy 50-60 lb supers to lift, less chance of bee stings, the best designs include windows for observation, they get easier and easier with more experience, and from a design standpoint are more in alignment with a BEE CENTRIC model of connecting with Nature in a way that nurtures us and heals our sense of separation from Nature and listens to what Nature wants rather than imposes our presumptions on it. Do not start Top Bar Beekeeping or Beekeeping at all without having this book in your Bee Guardianship tool kit, your night table, in your backpack, on your favorite reading chair. It's essential for your success in SERVING the BEES and Nature! With so much gratitude for the bees, and human beings who approach them with curiosity, respect and a service attitude!! YES!

I was looking for a book that spoke about top bar beekeeping exclusively. This is the one I was looking for! It is loaded with information for the beginning top bar beekeeper or even someone wanting to know more before deciding to keep bees. Well written, concise with great pictures and illustrations. The diagrams included were worth their weight in...honey! I am quite impressed with this book. It is well worth the price.

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