

Beekeeping in tropical Africa

Peter D Paterson, 2021

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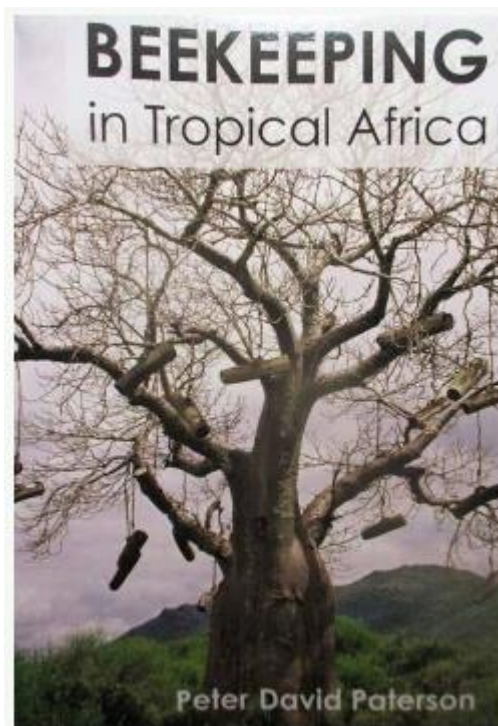
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This clear, warm-hearted and practically oriented book springs from a lifetime of beekeeping experience based in Kenya but including elsewhere in Africa and beyond. Its emphasis is on beekeeping as a livelihood option for farmers, and it is amply well illustrated with photographs and diagrams of truly appropriate simple technology.

Born in Kenya, Peter Paterson kept bees during childhood and studied beekeeping practice at Sparsholt Agricultural College in Hampshire, England. Thereafter he spent a season working on a large commercial bee farm, Creemore Apiaries, in Ontario, Canada. On returning to Kenya he worked for the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture on beekeeping projects supported by Oxfam and the Canadian International Development Agency through The University of Guelph in Ontario. With a lifetime of practical and dedicated ongoing beekeeping experience derived from his hives, plus studies from Africa-wide and beyond, this book provides a straightforward distillation to help both beginners and those eager to improve their beekeeping.

Since all agriculturalists and naturalists should have a deep appreciation of the role of bees in pollination and the means of encouraging their activities, this book is very important for their understanding, as this reviewer has much valued learning from the author. It conveys enough of the biology and communal behaviour of bees to enable beekeeping applications, but it does not claim to offer an exhaustive coverage of bee natural history or bee breeding. However, with its most useful glossary, bibliography, references and index (of both subjects and bee plants) it provides suitable links. It is a ready handbook for practitioners that seeks to keep their focus on appropriate practice, and for anyone wishing to have a clear understanding. It is an updated edition of Peter Paterson's 2006 book published by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation and Macmillan. There is a foreword by the author, a preface to the 2006 edition by the Director of the International Bee Research Association, and extensive acknowledgements.

The book has an introduction and seven chapters as follows.



1. Introduction: historical perspective; current practice; importance of bees; value of beekeeping; scope of the book.
2. Beekeeping in the tropics: races of bees, natural history of honeybees; where to keep bees; where not to keep bees; beekeepers; bee forage.
3. Beekeeping equipment: beehives – general principles; fixed-comb hives; movable- comb hives; movable-frame hives; smokers; hive tools; protective clothing; honey- handling equipment.
4. General management: where to site an apiary; bee houses; hive and apiary maintenance; obtaining colonies; handling bees; seasonal management; harvesting traditional hives; harvesting top-bar hives [Peter Paterson was closely involved with their development]; troubleshooting.
5. Specialised operations: making comb foundation; feeding bees; selecting, breeding and clipping queens; dividing colonies; moving colonies; importing bees from other areas; bees as pollinators.
6. Pests and diseases: ants; honey badgers; hive beetles; wax moths; death's head hawk moths; pirate wasps; bee lice; mites; borers; birds; bee diseases.
7. Bee products: honey; processing honey; marketing honey; beeswax; minor bee products; market development; beekeeping development.
8. Beekeeping projects – the basis for success: bees and flora; technology and economics; field examples; conclusions.

Like the honeyguide bird (*Indicator indicator*), this gem of a book is heartily recommended to students of agriculture and environmental management, and to all who wish better to understand beekeeping in tropical Africa and beyond. For practitioners, it is a true guide to the best approaches derived from a wealth of experience, which is conveyed in a readable style. It is to be hoped that this book will be the catalyst for many beekeeping start-ups as well as for improved beekeeping practice across Africa and beyond. Thank you, Peter Paterson for compiling and sharing it.

John Wibberley

(TAAI Member)