

Betterbee®

Beekeepers Serving Beekeepers

Beekeeping Kit Options

Betterbee offers customizable kits to accommodate your beekeeping preferences, while allowing you to purchase everything you need at one time. The purpose of this document is to explain the kits we carry and your options within each kit. If, after reading through this you have additional questions, please call us at 1-800-632-3379 or email us at support@betterbee.com.

Overview of Each Kit:

We offer five different kinds of kits. Within each you have a choice of wooden assembled equipment, wooden unassembled equipment or BeeMax® equipment.

The Beginner Kit offers everything you need (except the bees) to get you started, including a smoker, gloves, hive tool, book and veil. Hive components include an outer and inner cover, 2 medium honey supers and 2 deep hive bodies (frames included), a queen excluder, Varroa screen and bottom board.

The Increase Kit comes with all the parts of a traditional hive in one package. It's a great choice for increasing the number of colonies in your beeyard. Includes an outer and inner cover, 2 medium honey supers and 2 deep hive bodies (frames included), a queen excluder and bottom board and/or Varroa screen.

The Weight-Lite Kit is perfect for those who want to get started quickly, but wish to be kinder to their backs. Includes 3 mediums for the brood chamber to make for more manageable colonies (instead of 2 deeps). Also includes frames, outer an inner cover and bottom board and/or Varroa screen.

The Essentials Kit is great to start a colony of bees from a swarm or a split. Comes with all the components to start a colony including two deep hive bodies, frames, outer and inner cover and bottom board and/or Varroa screen.

The Supering Kit includes just those things you need to collect honey: two supers, frames and an excluder.

	Basic Beginner Kit	Beginner Kit	Increase Kit	Weight-Lite Kit	Essentials Kit	Supering Kit	Preferred Kit
<i>Telescoping Outer Cover</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X
<i>Inner Cover</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X
<i>Deep Hive Bodies & Frames</i>	1	2	2		X		X
<i>Medium Hive Bodies & Frames*</i>				3			X
<i>Medium Honey Supers & Frames</i>		2	2			X	X
<i>Queen Excluder</i>		X	X			X	X
<i>Bottom Board and/or Varroa Screen & Tray</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X
<i>Helmet & Veil, Smoker, Hive Tool, & Book</i>	X	X					
<i>Betterbee Jacket, Smoker, Hive Tool, & Book</i>							X

*Medium Hive Bodies and Medium Honey Supers are identical. Separated for clarity.

Beginner Kits (both Beemax® and Wooden)

Helmet and Veil:

1. **Square Veil:** This veil ties under arms and across your chest. The reinforced corners create a stiffer veil. Available with either the hard **White Plastic Helmet** or **Straw-Colored Ventilated Helmet**.
2. **Round Veil with Incorporated Hat:** This option provides a round veil with incorporated hat. Has two elastic straps to pull under your arms and a tie to go under your arms and across your chest.
3. **Shoulder Veil:** Quick and easy to put on with a single tie in the front. Built-in, adjustable hat and lots of ventilation.
4. **Pull Down Veil:** Similar incorporated hat as the Shoulder Veil, but with an added feature: the top of the veil pulls down, making it easy to grab a drink of water out in the field. Ties under arms and across your chest.
5. **Children's Veil:** If your kit is for a child, this is the choice for you. Round veil with incorporated hat.
6. **No Veil Option:** If you want more protection from a suit or jacket, this is the option for you.

Book:

1. **The Beekeeper's Handbook:** For two decades this book has guided thousands of beginning and advanced beekeepers in the how-tos of beekeeping. Simply put, this is the best of the beekeeping books both for beginners and experienced beekeepers.
2. **Beekeeping for Dummies:** Excellent diagrams and pictures in this book for beginners, although the title is an oxymoron, since you can't be a beekeeper and a dummy.
3. **Storey's Guide to Keeping Bees:** This comprehensive reference will serve both experienced beekeepers with specific problems and beginners who are just getting started.

Glove Style and Size:

Choose from **Deluxe Leather Gloves**, **Deluxe Ventilated Leather Glove**, or **Goatskin Glove** (non-ventilated). Our Deluxe Leather Gloves provide extra protection, and the Ventilated Gloves are especially nice on hot summer days. The Goatskin Glove is thinner and provides a more sensitive feel when working the hive. These come in sizes that accommodate all hands, even a **child option!**

Wooden Kits

Telescoping Outer Cover: Options only for 10 Frame wooden kits.

1. **BeeMax®:** Polystyrene provides insulation allowing warm moist air to escape in winter and keeps off the summer sun. Needs to be strapped or weighed down with a heavy rock or brick.
2. **Wood and Metal:** This traditional option provides years of protection. We recommend adding insulation under the cover throughout winter to aid in ventilating warm moist air to prevent condensation.
3. **Ultimate Hive Cover:** This rugged plastic hive cover never needs painting. The design provides a drip edge which directs water away from the hive.

Standard Inner Cover vs. Deep Rim Inner Cover: The standard inner cover is made of Masonite in the middle with a wood rim. The deep rim inner cover is made of Luan in the middle and allows for feeding patties without the need for a feeding shim, with a round hole that accepts a standard mason jar for feeding syrup. Both covers allow for ventilation, the standard inner cover through a notch and the deep rim inner cover through a plug that can be removed and a notch on the opposite side.

Select Grade Wood vs. Commercial Grade Wood: This refers to the grade of wood used to make your woodenware. You have a choice of Select (possessing only the occasional small knot) and Commercial (which will possess a greater number of solid knots)

3/4" or 7/8" Wall Thickness: Our 3/4" boxes are the most common sizing and offer a cost savings. The 7/8" boxes offer a heavier wall thickness. Both sizes fit all our wooden hive components and are compatible with each other.

Assembled vs. Unassembled: This is a more a personal choice. Do you have the time, energy, and tools to assemble boxes and frames? If no, let us do the work for you. (Note: you will need wood glue and a hammer for assembly. A pipe clamp can come in handy too.)

8 Frame vs. 10 Frame: Size matters, especially when you are hauling full honey supers. Eight frame supers can weigh 10 to 20 pounds less than 10 frame equipment. Not only are the boxes lighter, they are smaller and easier to carry. However, 10 Frame equipment is the industry standard.

Frame Options

This is where you have the most options. Due to standardizing shipping rates, we can only offer assembled frames with our assembled kits and unassembled frames with our unassembled kits. Our BeeMax® Kits offer the assembled frame options.

Options for Assembled and BeeMax® Kits:

1. **Plastic Frames:** Your choice of black (easier to see eggs and uncapped larvae) or white. We also offer these frames with an extra coat of wax applied in the factory. We find that with an additional layer of wax, the bees draw out and build the comb much more effectively. (You can also purchase **beeswax** and paint the frames yourself. If this is your first time with plastic frames we strongly recommend starting with added wax.)
2. **Wooden Frames with Plastic Foundation:** If you prefer wooden frames but want the ease of plastic foundation, this option is for you. Your choice of black foundation (easier to see eggs and uncapped larvae) or white foundation. As with the Plastic Frame option, we offer these with an extra coat of wax to facilitate the comb-building process.
3. **Assembled and Wooden Frames with Crimp-Wired Wax Foundation:** Frames come assembled and either **cross-wired**, with **support pins** or with **plastic support rods**. Due to breakage issues, we cannot install, and then ship, wax foundation. The wax foundation is included in your kit, which you will need to install. Instructions included.

Options for Unassembled Kits:

All unassembled kits come with **wooden frames** that you assemble yourself. For foundation, available options include: **White Plastic**, **Black Plastic**, or **Crimp-Wired Wax**. Black foundation allows you to more easily see eggs and uncapped larvae. (Many people choose Black Plastic for their Deep Hive Bodies and White Plastic for their Medium Honey Supers in order to see the color of their honey crop.) Wax foundation is typically preferred by bees, but is the most fragile option. The plastic foundation comes with a grooved top bar that the foundation snaps into. The wax foundation comes with a wedge top bar that is nailed into the top bar to hold the foundation in place. With wax foundation you have a choice of **support pins** or **plastic support rods**.

Kits with a Queen Excluder

Plastic vs. Metal vs. None: The purpose of the queen excluder is to prevent the queen from entering honey supers to raise brood, causing extra work when it's time to extract. If your hive is not in a position to produce excess honey, such as in your first year of beekeeping, then you should not use a queen excluder. Most folks choose a plastic queen excluder over a metal queen excluder due to price. Metal will last longer, but sometimes develops a warp. In our experience, the plastic excluder comes off the hive more gently because it's more flexible. Some choose no queen excluder and allow the queen to roam where she pleases. Note: The Queen Excluder must be removed before winter to prevent separating the queen from the winter cluster.

Bottom Boards

All kits except the Supering Kits come with Bottom Boards. You can also opt out of the Bottom Board if you prefer to use the Screened Bottom Board on its own. For the Beginner Kits, the Screened Bottom Board is mandatory as we want to provide the tools that create the most opportunity for success. Options include:

1. **Reversible Bottom Board:** The traditional choice. Available options include [Eastern Pine](#) (standard) or [Cedar](#) (RBBDC10). Has a 3/8" entrance on one side and a 3/4" entrance on the other.
2. **Screened Bottom Board and Tray:** If you wish not to use a Bottom Board at all, and still want the functionality of the Varroa Screen, this option is for you
3. **For BeeMax® Kits:** The Bottom Board included in BeeMax® Kits is a screened bottom board. If you wish to monitor for Varroa, then you will need to add the additional [BeeMax Varroa Combo](#) and either a hard plastic [white tray](#) or the [flat version](#). You can also opt out of the tray option altogether. If you do not have a hive stand that can support your tray, you can also purchase plastic rims to support your tray. These rims attach to the underside of your wooden support.