



# Selecting a bee hive

## Advisory Leaflet No: 3

There is a confusingly large array of bee hives on the market, all of which have their supporters and detractors. So before choosing one, it is worthwhile considering what type of beekeeper you wish to be and how you wish to keep your bees.

Questions to ask yourself are:

### 1) Do I intend to get involved in migratory beekeeping?



**National Hive**

A migratory beekeeper is one who moves his/her hives about to be near whatever crop is currently producing nectar. If yes, then you need a hive which is relatively easy to move such as a National, Smith or possibly Langstroth or Dadant. The latter two use larger frames which will not fit into many of the honey extractors currently available in the UK.



**Langstroth Hive**

### 2) Do I intend to be a conventional Beekeeper?

A conventional beekeeper follows traditional processes such as weekly inspections, frequent manipulations, treating with chemicals and autumn honey extraction. If yes, you need a hive with relatively small boxes to reduce the weights that have to be regularly lifted and one with boxes that stack vertically. Hives in this group include the WBC and Smith, as well as the four mentioned for migratory beekeeping.



**WBC Hive**

### 3) Do I intend to be a natural beekeeper?



**Warré Hive**

A natural beekeeper strives to keep things as natural as possible, focuses on the needs of the bees and keeps interventions to an absolute minimum. Whilst this approach can be followed using any type of hive, Top Bar Hives and Warré Hives are the most popular with this group.



**Top Bar Hive**

#### 4) Do I intend to be an alternative beekeeper?

Alternative beekeepers also adopt a very bee-centric approach, do not treat with chemicals and keep interventions to a minimum. In order to eliminate the need to lift heavy boxes, they use long hives such as the Lune Valley Long Hive, Zest Hive and Zamok Hive. These hives incorporate varying degrees of insulation to reduce the effects of rapid, external temperature variation, which makes them very bee friendly, heavy and not easily moved. The Lune Valley Long Hive can readily be managed by those in wheelchairs.



**Lune Valley Long Hive**



**Traditional Zamok  
Hive**



**Block built Zamok Hive**

Whilst some beekeepers enjoy having several different types of hive, the vast majority find that only having one type makes their beekeeping simpler, cheaper and reduces the storage space needed. For this reason alone you should carefully consider which hive is going to best suit the style of beekeeping you wish to adopt, and standardise on it.

[www.lunevalleybeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.lunevalleybeekeepers.co.uk)