

WHERE SHALL I PUT MY HIVES?

It is important that you think about this before you get your first colony of bees! Check through this list, it shows the ideal conditions for your apiary. Don't worry if you can't meet all the requirements, not many people will have a place that is perfect, so just aim for the best you can do!



Safety First!

Your first thought **MUST** be safety. Make sure your hive is not near the house, rather place it somewhere out of the way where people do not often go near the hive entrance. A tall two-metres-plus high barrier (hedge, trellis or wall) around the hives is really useful as it forces the bees to fly above people's heads when they leave the hive or come back to it).

Also - make sure your hive does not face onto a public footpath or directly onto a neighbour's garden!

The land - Make sure the land is firm, especially in wet weather. You don't want your hive sinking into a boggy surface!

Level ground - The hive must be level (or it may fall over and the bees will build comb that is sloping!). If your ground slopes, then make the hive level by inserting bits of tiles, wood or stones under the legs of the stand.

Stands - Never put your hive directly onto the ground - this is far too damp a place for your bees and it will also make the beekeeping work harder for you! Raise the hive above the ground on a stand, or pallets (these must be steady and not rock about!).

Easy access - Don't put the hives where they will be difficult to work, ie. not in a crowded position or one with difficult access. You need about one metre minimum of open space behind the hive (opposite side to the entrance) where you can stand or squat easily. Ease of access for a car is important, too, unless the hives are in your garden!

Weather

Sun - Place your hive where the morning sun helps the hive warm up! Also, the hive entrance should face south east to encourage the bees to get up and go early in the mornings!

However - make sure your hive is not in direct sun all day long, in summer your bees will need shade to protect the hive from the afternoon heat. Dappled shade is best.

Air and Frost - Make sure that the hive is not in a gully or frost pocket where the air is still and damp.

Wind - Put your hives where they will not be affected by high winds. A position behind a hedge, a wall or a pile of straw bales is a good idea. This will help the bees maintain the temperature inside the hive as well as prevent the hive from blowing over.



Providing for your bees

Water - Bees need water for themselves, to cool the hive and to dilute set stored honey. They will collect water from any convenient water source near to hand (and this maybe your neighbour's pond!). Place a container of water around 20-50 metres away from the hives. Make sure that it never runs dry and that the bees have something to stand on, such as marbles, pebbles or pieces of wood.

Food - Make sure you do not put too many hives in one spot. Your bees need to be able to find enough food and don't need too much competition! You will need to assess how much forage is available nearby (up to 4 miles away!) and judge how many bee colonies this will support. Usually, it works out at 1 acre of flowers per hive.



GOOD LUCK! and please send us a photo!