

Senior News

Georgia

Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!

Bee Farming is a Thing!

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Bee Farming Is A Thing!

By Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

COVER: Colorful bee hives!

Yes it is! Did you know that there are many beekeeper farms in Georgia? Beekeeping in Georgia has been around for awhile. It's a fascinating business. Who would ever think about these types of farms? Well, we do!

Okay, so what is it exactly? Bee farming or beekeeping is very popular in Georgia's agricultural landscape. It is simply the practice of keeping honey bees to produce honey, beeswax, and other products like candles and soaps. It's like having a small farm, but instead of cows or chickens, you're raising bees.

Due to our warm climate, many beekeepers have great success in farming worker bees, drones, and queens for pollination creating a variety of honey and many types of bee products to sell to the general public.



Beautiful close up
of the honey bees!

A good beekeeper provides a safe home for the honey bees, usually in a wooden box called the hive. Sometimes, these wooden boxes are colored and sometimes they are just plain white. I've seen pink, lavender, yellow, orange and light blue boxes for the bees. Anyway, honey bees are the only insects that produce food for people. Did we ever realize that one hive contains over 40-60 thousand bees? Imagine that, when we see a white or colored hive – the box – it has thousands of bees inside it working hard. The bees work so hard and that's why these "girls" are called worker bees. Yep, the worker bees are all female. But sadly, these worker honey bees only have a 4 to 6 week existence.



Cute Owl from
Blue Ridge Honey
Company!



Deborah Sasser
with her bees!

Anyway, the beekeepers make sure the bees are healthy, have enough food, produce and work hard and are protected against pests. The worker bees – the “girls,” themselves do all the work collecting nectar and pollen and returning back to the hive to turn it into honey. It’s hard work, but they are diligent.

Then what happens? Well, once the bees have made extra honey, the beekeeper carefully takes some of it. They use special tools to remove the frames from the hive, scrape off the wax caps, and spin the honey out. But it is important to leave enough honey for the bees to eat, especially during the winter. Then there is the beeswax. Bees must eat over six pounds of honey to secrete a pound of wax. Wow! And this coveted beeswax is used to make lots of things – candles, dental floss, crayons, lip balms, and soaps.

As mentioned, there are many honey bee farms here in our Georgia. One bee farm is located just outside Cleveland, Georgia, where beekeeper Lloyd Allison has built a very successful business with bee farming. It all started back in the 1940’s, with his grandfather purchasing land in the area of Cleveland, Georgia and his business has grown now to include other things, like vineyards.

Lloyd offers honey such as Wildflower, Orange Blossom, Blackberry, Cotton and Sourwood. At his farm store, he also offers a variety of all-natural lip balms, 100% beeswax candles, jams, and berries and grapes in season, mainly blackberries, and raspberries, generally available in July and muscadines ready in August to October. He is open everyday all year long. Want to plan a visit to this farm? Let’s round up our grandkids and away we go. They’ll love it. Just call [706.892.9898](tel:706.892.9898) for updates.

I purchased a wonderful honey from Blue Ridge!



Lloyd’s assistants working the hive!



A vendor selling honey and wonderful items!

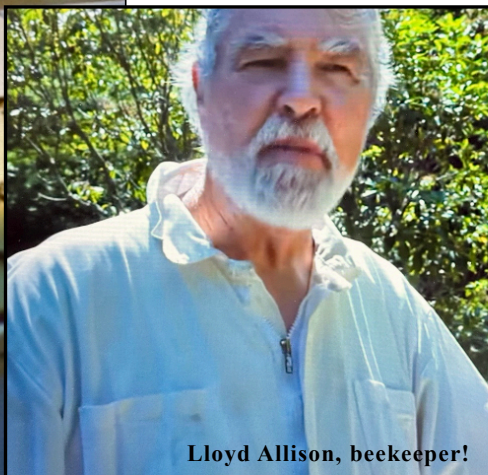
Now I recently visited a lovely bee store, called Blue Ridge Honey Company, owned by Bob Binnie. He has owned his store for over 40 years, has many varieties of honey and unusual beeswax products for sale. He also has a display of honeybees working in a large see-thru box which is fascinating. Blue Ridge Honey sells a variety of honey and wax products and it's a wonderful place to visit when we are in the area. They are in Lakemont, Georgia and contact information is 706.782.6722.

A third favorite of mine is Sasserfrass Hill Bee Farm, right here in Augusta. Deborah Sasser started her business as a hobby back in 2008 and now has over 20 bee hives. I met Deborah and she is working diligently to care for her honey bees. Deborah also has studied about diseases and pests that bees have to deal with. And she photographs the bees and has become a master of bee photography. She goes even further – educating the public about the honeybees through her lectures to civic groups, schools, women's clubs and church groups. She has 100% raw bee honey, with no preservatives and additives, and is non-pasteurized for sale. I have purchased several of her wonderful products to give as gifts to friends. Her website is www.sasserfrasshill.com - check it out. Bring the grandkids over to her

bee farm. They will love it.

Now we know some things about our fascinating honeybees and the creation of the marvelous sweet substance they produce. So let's plan a trip to a bee farm and bee happy!

**Lloyd working
with his bees!**



Lloyd Allison, beekeeper!

**More work on the many
bee hives at Lloyd's!**

