

1: 10 Free Beehive Plans For Backyard Beekeeping – The Self-Sufficient Living

The Kenyan Top Bar Hive Beekeeping Naturally promotes the Kenyan Top Bar Hive as one of the most effective natural bee hives for backyard and small-scale Beekeepers (Bee-carers). Entering the beehive from one side means that only a small number of bees are disturbed at a time, rather than thousands of angry bees reacting to just having their roof ripped off.

The Colorado Top Bar Beehive If you are new to beekeeping, a top bar hive might be of interest to you. They originated in Kenya where bees have a tendency to be more aggressive versus those we have in the United States and Europe. These hives allow you to only disturb certain portions of the hive at a time. This, in turn, makes for happier bees. The Barcelona Warre Beehive This hive is another hive that would be great for those just being introduced to beekeeping. It is a vertical top bar hive. It is actually really cool because not only is it top bar but it is also stackable. This makes for much easier use and much happier bees. Top Bar Hive This is just your basic top bar hive. One of the biggest fears behind beekeeping is being stung. This hive helps eliminate that fear. So they seem like a great fit for those that are new to the beekeeping scene. They are what we actually use. However, I like this one because of its cool design. It is a super long hive that you can just slide frames in and out easily. This hive might be less compact, but I think the ease of use would make up for that. The Wooden Skid Hive Another name for a skid is a pallet. Because they are free and very versatile. In this instance, you will deconstruct pallets and build a very functional beehive. I love the rustic look of these hives and it is also a great option for the homesteader on a tight budget. Top Bar Barrel Beehive I love upcycling. It just makes me happy to see people use what they have, use their creativity, and not depend so much on their wallet. This is a top bar beehive which is also known for how easy it is to use. They made the body out of an old 5-gallon barrel. This is creativity at its finest. It has since been a popular choice. These plans will teach you how to build your very own. Then you can try it for yourself and see if this hive truly is for everyone. I actually really like them. They are easy enough to get into and the bees seem to be very happy inside of them. We actually purchased ours second hand. However, this option is even better because you can have brand new ones in a less expensive way by building them yourself. It is different because you will actually have to make the frames to fit inside of it. It is quite a large undertaking but it appears to be very budget friendly. That is much cheaper than what you can usually buy them for. Warre hives are so great because they are basically smaller versions of Langstroth hives. It is actually recommended as a great option for urban or backyard beekeepers. He builds Langstroth hives with a few differences from the traditional Langstroth hives. However, the greatest difference noted is the handles. Most Langstroths have indented handles. He actually creates handles and then screws them into the boxes. But you are given full instructions on how to build these hives which could potentially save you a lot of money. They literally cut out the center of logs and stack them on top of each other. They allow the bees to build comb and live in the center of stacked logs. It is very inexpensive and very creative. If you are on a tight budget but have logs lying around your homestead then this option could work for you. Top Bar Hive Plans These are more plans for a top bar beehive. As mentioned before, top bars were created to disturb less of the hive all at once. The plans break down each section so even those that are newest to beekeeping and carpentry work could probably figure out how to build these hives without much fuss. The Plywood Swarm Box Catching swarms is a great way to get bees for free. This article not only tells you how to build the box but also how to attract swarms. Every spring plenty of bees swarm. You might as well be the one to catch them and offer them a new home. It is a plywood built beehive. The plans come with a brood box and four supers. Plywood boxes are also known for being less expensive to build because of the difference in materials. So how much better does it get? A beehive for little money meant to be a great set-up for bees to produce maximum honey. It truly could be your money hive. It would fit in perfectly in any rustic area. This is supposed to give the bees a great chance of survival during the winter months. This means a head start for a stronger hive come spring. So if you are looking for an exact replica of the Warre hive, now is your opportunity to build your own. If you just want to create a home for bees then place a pole in the ground with a bucket on top. It will give the bees a place to colonize and give

them a reason to hang around your property. Someone created the beehive cocoon. It is simple and inexpensive. It will do the trick in keeping your hive warm during those cold winter months. The Honey Cow This is a top bar hive that is created with a 5-gallon barrel. It is inexpensive and super easy to use. I never really thought about it before, but the author of this idea said that the idea behind this particular Honey Cow is for the bees to set-up as they would in a fallen log. That is pretty cool to be able to keep bees in as much of a natural set-up as possible. It is 40 pages of step by step instructions to build this hive. You will also get a recipe for an eco-friendly wood preservative. This is actually a really cool feature because so many woods now days contain pesticides. If you want to raise organic bees or raise an organic garden then you will be interested in this recipe. The Bee Box The bee box is actually created for a specific type of bee called the Mason bee. A lot of people really love them because they are super pollinators. However, the Mason bees have special requirements for a house. They use mud to fill spots in their holes to lay eggs within the nest. So that is why this nest looks like a box with lots of holes. The bees will go in there, fill it with mud, and lay eggs until their hearts are content. The Mason Jar Hive This is such a cool idea. You actually build a hive box but add Mason jars to the top of it. The bees will build comb up in the Mason jars. Not to mention, the hive is very pretty and interesting because you can watch your bees. I love them because the whole idea behind them is to make keeping bees as simple as possible. That is what I wantâ€”simple. Otherwise, often frustration replaces fun. So this beehive is meant for anyone. It uses the least amount of materials which in turn costs a lot less money. The pictures are amazing and it is so interesting to see how people keep bees all over the world. Who knew that mud and cow poop was a great way to keep pests and other unwanted visitors out of a beehive? We might need to remember that! This hive is so unique because they use materials on hand to build it. The comb where the bees build is removable one slab at a time and the hive is easy to move. Those are all really great features to have in a beehive. I have, and they get expensive. This year has been a booming year for our bees.

2: top bar hive plans

Two of these are the short sides of the stand and the other two are the wide struts for the top. 2: 1â€³ x 6â€³ clear pine: /2â€³ x /2â€³ x 3/4â€³ These are the long sides of the stand. 5: 1â€³ x 6â€³ clear pine: 24â€³ x /4â€³ x 3/4â€³ These are the narrow struts for the top.

One is declared more practical while the other is touted as more natural, but which one is best for you? Read on to find out! I find each of these designs to have their pros and cons so, it is not the goal of this article to declare one hive superior over the other, but to instead provide guidance to the reader so that they might determine which hive is best suited to their needs. If you are wondering what my personal preference is, I use mostly Langstroth hives because they make more sense for my business, but I initially started with Top Bar Hives and I really enjoy managing a few of them still. His design revolutionized the way people kept bees and allowed for both more manipulation and more humane practices. Langstroth hives changed this because they allowed beekeepers to extract individual combs without any destruction for both health inspections and honey harvests. This clever design has become the standard of modern beekeeping. Since it was created however, there have been many accessories added and not all of them are in line with natural beekeeping practices. For that reason, it is my opinion that it does not matter what shape box you put your bees in. What matters is how you treat them and the decisions you make as a beekeeper. The thing about Langstroth hives is, there are a lot of choices to make. The biggest change you need to make as a natural beekeeper in a Langstroth hive is that you need to get rid of the foundations. Just make sure you adapt your frames to have a comb guide to avoid cross-comb. You may also want to forgo the use of Queen Excluders. They really are not necessary because bees will naturally separate brood from honey when they are ready. I will admit, however, that I occasionally use them for certain colonies. Aside from these two equipment issues, all other natural beekeeping practices are related to management decisions and are therefore entirely possible in any style hive. Langstroth Pros I think the biggest pro for Langstroth hives is that you have so many options when it comes to management practices. For example, maybe you are not comfortable going foundationless? Well, you can ease yourself into it. Start with foundations and then slowly add foundationless frames only between combs that have been built out straight. Another big pro is that the frames allow for much more stable comb than in the TBH. If you are foundationless and you end up with some cross comb, you can fix it fairly easily by cutting out the comb and tying it in straight with rubber bands. If you do bee removals, you can transfer combs from a wild hive easily using the same method. In addition the compact hive design makes it simpler to transport the rescue bees to a new location. In some ways, a Langstroth hive requires less maintenance than a TBH. This can also mean more honey or at least, more honey harvest all at once. When it comes to honey, you have choices about how you harvest. Crush and strain, extraction which preserves the combs to be used again or you can opt for the FlowHive, which allows you to extract honey through a spigot on the side of the super without even opening the hive. There is some debate among beekeepers about which of these three methods is best for bees. Lastly, since this hive style has been in production for so long, equipment and information is readily available. Most apiaries selling starter colonies are selling them in frames only compatible with Langstroth hives. Most beekeeping books are written from the perspective of Langstroth beekeepers. Langstroth Cons The two biggest cons of the Langstroth hive are the amount of weight you must lift and the level of invasiveness for the bees. Honeybees and especially honey can be extremely heavy. The hive is a series of boxes stacked on top of each other. To inspect the lower boxes, you must be able to lift the one above and depending on its contents that box could weigh lbs! You can use 8 frame boxes instead of the standard 10 frame or you can use all medium supers and forget the deeps altogether, but you will likely still have to lift 60lb boxes at some point. This brings me to the level of invasiveness for the bees. When you remove the roof of a Langstroth hive, it can be a little traumatic. Imagine sitting in your house and then all of a sudden the entire roof is torn off! When it comes to stacking the boxes back together, it can also be very difficult to avoid crushing bees that are in the way. This means more stress on your bees. Like the Langstroth hive, it allows for inspection and manipulation of individual combs. However, instead of frames, there are only bars from which the bees hang their combs.

Also unlike a Langstroth, this hive is formatted horizontally instead of vertically. It will never grow taller or shorter. If you have any physical limitations, this hive is a great option for you. I am never exposing them too much, usually I make a small opening by removing empty bars and then I slide bars over as I go through the hive. I find this particularly useful living in an Africanized area. I also like how simplistic the design is. It takes less materials and is simpler to build than the Langstroth hive. The design also forces you into more natural beekeeping practices: Top Bar Cons The cons are that the measurements and designs are not standardized. You can buy different parts of your Langstroth hive from 3 different suppliers and they will all fit together, but TBHs come in all shapes and sizes. On that note, I find that some of the sizes are much too small. Remember, you have a limited amount of space and if the TBH is too small, your bees will never have enough room to produce excess honey for you to harvest. Also, wide and shallow is better than narrow and deep when it comes to selecting a box size. The combs will mimic the dimensions of the body of the TBH and long combs make for very unstable combs. When it comes to handling the combs and harvesting honey, things are less and more complicated at the same time. Despite the fact that it is easier to lift bars than it is supers, the combs are delicate and new beeks often break them from lack of practice. Unfortunately, there is no good way to reattach these broken combs like in a Langstroth hive. For this reason, TBHs can be quite demanding of a new beekeeper. When it comes to harvesting honey you just have one method. You must cut the entire chunk of comb off, crush it and then drain the honey out. This means bees will have to spend energy read: This is one of the reasons it is said that TBHs produce less honey. To be fair, using this method you will be extracting a lot more beeswax which you can process and use or sell. Clean, chemical-free beeswax can be sold for much more than honey. Below is a chart that breaks down a comparison between the two hives. Langstroth Hive Best for Beekeepers interested in bee removals, honey production, pollination work, queen rearing, versatile management options. Beekeepers who are interested in beeswax production, natural beekeeping practices only, no heavy lifting, building their own hive. Cost Prices can range from low to high depending on the quality of wood you select and the number of accessories you opt to buy. This hive is simple and inexpensive to make yourself. The cons are that the boxes can weigh lbs and you have to lift them to do your inspections. Mobility Vertical design fits easily on a dolly and takes up less room during transport. Awkward to move because of the shape and delicate combs. Honey If harvested with an extractor, you may get more honey. Three different methods of harvesting with several choices in accessories that can aid in the process. Smaller honey harvests more frequently throughout the year. Only one method of harvest. No known accessories that aid the process. Some argue that these hives produce less honey. With careful management, they will produce plenty. What about other styles of hives? If you want to sing their praise in the comment section, go for it!

3: What kind of beehive styles are there? - Backyard Beekeeping

Beekeeping in top bar hives, Michael Bush. Plans and a parts list for a simple Kenya top bar hive. Pictures and descriptions of a Tanzanian top bar hive that doubles as a long Langstroth hive.

Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans Basically, anyone who is interested in building with wood can learn it successfully with the help of free woodworking plans which are found on the net. The specific way each feature is presented and the material covered in these sites are the best reason for downloading Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans woodworking plans for your construction projects. Even though the plans provided in them are more suited to the needs of professional and advanced woodworkers, the suggestions and guidance offered can even make the most ignorant person successfully complete any Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans woodwork projects. Professionals find the free plans useful because it helps them save time in creating designs for their clients. These plans are very user friendly which helps in making each woodworking project enjoyable and simple. These online plans offer more options to woodworkers than any other sources. You can find the perfect woodworking plan according to your level of expertise or desired need. There are plans for beginners, professional and weekend hobbyists. For newcomers, these plans are a must have package as they are very simple to use and contain colored images of the highest quality and detailed instructions stepwise for every woodworking projects. Many of these Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans free woodworking plans online allow you to access thousands of ideas to assist you in building your project in a quick and professional way. You get blue prints, images and materials when you download these plans from the net. It does not matter whether you are skilled or not, these detailed instructions will assist you all through your project till you have completed it successfully. You will also get tips on how to start a woodwork business from some of the free woodwork plans online. These Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans woodworking plans also have few limitations to speak of, though these are minor ones compared to the advantages you gain from them. One of the common complaints about free plan software is the time which is taken for it to get downloaded completely. These plans are quite vast and if the internet is slow, it might take you hours to download the whole Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans plan. The other disadvantage of free plan is that the measurement provided is of a specific kind even though both kinds of measurement systems are available. You lose time by making the effort to convert the measurements into your kind of measurement system. On the whole, any of the free plan software are great and every woodworker can greatly benefit from the plan packages for building woodworking projects in a confident and successful way. The free woodworking plans are worthy of a trial. This is true, especially, when you need assistance in your woodworking skill, while working on a specific project. You can select from the vast amount of plans available in the free Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans woodworking plans online, which are offered by expert and experienced woodworkers. If you do not have the proper information, instruction, and skill, you may land up spending more money and time than you originally intended to spend. As a beginner woodworker, you need have the space, time and the correct tools. Having said, there are a few essential factors that you should keep in mind, before starting with any woodworking project. If you are beginner, you should first need to be very interested in woodworking. Creating something new with your own hands is a special feeling. Do not start a project if you are not interested, as this may land you in a bad place. Think of the main reason of creating this woodworking project. Decide on the uses of the item you are making. Consider your skills and analyze the time you have, before you start with a project. Start projects that you can finish. If you are in the middle of some work, then it is better not to start any project at all. If you keep these essential points in mind before you begin a Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans woodworking project, it will become very easy for you to achieve success. Woodwork requires planning as much as it requires effort. So how do you get started? As a beginner, always select a project that has a very basic build up or a simple construction. Some easy to begin projects include, bird feeder, benches, shelves, etc. As soon as you get hold of the techniques, you can always move to the next level of woodworking projects, like cabinets, sheds and others. Beginning projects should always be less complicated and less frustrating so that you have a better knowledge of working with woods and their tools. Once the project is selected, start selecting your tools. Many people think that power

tools are needs. However, for beginners basic hand tools can be very handy and more than helpful in completing a project. If woodworking is your hobby, then a few tools that you would require are: Workbench - A workbench is required for precise cuts and measurements. The workbench when fixed with vises offer ample space to work. Hammer - Hammer is an essential tool for woodworks. It helps you to drive nails, pins, staples, etc. A small and lightweight hammer will make things much easy for you. When you buy a hammer, always check the balance between the weight and stand. Always select a sturdy, yet lightweight product. Saw - A saw is another tool that you cannot live without while woodworking. This tool helps you to cut woods at different sizes. There are different types of saws available in the market. Choose a size that you can handle. Screwdriver - Screwdrivers are available in different shapes and sizes. Mostly there are Canadian types and standard flat type. Having all of them will help you in advance woodworking. You can also buy power screwdrivers as they make the work much faster. Measuring tape - It is another very important tool that you cannot work without. The measuring tape helps you to measure wood before they can be attached together. Wrench - Some woodworking projects require fixing bolts and fixes. For such projects, you require wrench. However, this is not a tool for beginners, but having it would make work easier for you at a later stage. Drill - Drill helps you make holes in wood. Power drills are more useful but they cost more. Low wattage power drills will make the task much easy. Other small and basic tools - These include pencils, gum, staple gum, level, erase, first aid kit and shop vac. Based on the type of project you want to complete, pricing can be determined. The simple the project, the less cost it involves. However, at the very beginning buying the tools will be a little hefty. Therefore, it is better to fix a budget first on the tools, then on the project. Buying the basic tools will ensure that you do not need to buy any more material other than the wood ply. It is like the woodworking Bible. Instructions guide is a very easy to understand process, what to do and how to do it. It is a systematic guide for completing the project. Time also plays an important role in the building of woodworking projects. Woodworking projects require time and therefore it is necessary for a beginner to have ample amount of time every week. Nevertheless, the most essential thing that will help you to achieve success is proper planning. With proper planning and a strategy, it is possible to achieve success quickly. If you know the purpose of woodworking, the item you want to build, the tools you require to own and the average time you can give every day; then you are all set to go. Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans Conclusion All these tips and instruction will make the woodworking projects and plans for beginners fast to complete. Always make sure that you have all the essential tools, materials, space ready. Keep the instructions of building an item handy. Proper strategy and planning will help you to make a great woodworking project for your home. Plans for Wood Furniture, is a renowned woodworking expert. Plans for Wood Furniture recommends Plans for Wood Furniture for better knowledge on woodworking plans. According to Plans for Wood Furniture good woodworking plans for beginners can essentially help a newbie in learning techniques.

4: Kenyan Top Bar Hive – Part 1 | Making Our Sustainable Life

Top bar hives are low tech, old style configurations of hives. As well as hTBH (such as the Kenyan and Tanzanian) there are also vTBH (vertical) such as the Warre. The Kenyan was designed to be low tech, low cost and simple to build using available materials.

Pine plywood, construction sheathing grade, untreated. Tools list You can complete this project using a variety of tools. This is what I use: Circular saw with a guide – to cut plywood. You can also use a hand saw, but do clamp a straight board to the work piece to serve as a guide. Table saw – to cut frame rests rabbets. Right-angle clamps, four e. Building instructions Step 1. These are the walls. Mark the sides that will face outside. Usually, the better-looking surfaces look outside. Also, the outer side of year rings should preferably face outside. If the board is slightly cupped, the concave side should look inside. If all four pieces you cut have exactly the same width at both ends, all is good. If not – run them all through the table saw so the width is uniform e. These are frame rests. Cut three entrances in the front wall. If you do not have a router, you can use a jigsaw instead. Assemble the hive box. The long walls go between the end walls. Put them on a completely flat surface e. Clamp all four corners using right angle clamps. Do drill pilot holes to prevent board from cracking. The bottom will go into this groove. Cut plywood as shown below. You will have the following parts, enough for exactly two hives: Do not use glue so you can remove the bottom in the future, if needed e. Turn the hive body on its side. Attach another leg on the opposite end wall. Then flip the box over and attach two more legs. It makes for a small, yet adequate landing board. Pre-drilling the landing board is essential to prevent splitting. Repeat with the remaining two entrances. Your hive box is now ready! Apply wood glue and attach the top plywood panel. It will fit tightly and will usually stay put. If not, use some construction glue to secure it to the top. Pay special attention to exposed edges of plywood and board. The hive is ready! Cover the frames with a layer of burlap. The painted top should last many years. The whole idea behind a top-bar hive is simplicity, so it can be made with the least amount of materials and tools when both are scarce and hard to come by. Not everyone likes simple, but I do. This hive can be built in a weekend, and you can leave it basic or fancy it up as much as you want.

5: 38 DIY Bee Hive Plans with Step-by-Step Tutorials (Free)

The Best Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans Free Download. Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans. Basically, anyone who is interested in building with wood can learn it successfully with the help of free woodworking plans which are found on the net.

Entrance with the cover slid back so you can see better. All cuts except for the triangles are square cuts. Tanzanian Top Bar Hive Long medium depth hive. This one has top bars in it instead of frames. On the right is comb from long medium top bar hive. The advantage to this one is that standard medium frames fit in it so if it needs resources from one of my other hives I can get a frame of brood that fits. Also, I can start one with some frames of brood from one of my other hives which are all mediums. Comb Measurements Just to show some measurements. Here is a brood comb from my Kenya Top Bar Hive. To measure, start at the 10mm mark and count over 10 cells. The second one shows how to measure cell size across ten cells. I have them in Nebraska and others have them places as cold as Casper Wyoming. Other than that, I have only heard it from people who have not attempted it. It is a good plan to get the cluster to one end at the beginning of winter so they can work their way to the other end over winter. If they are in the middle they may work their way to one end and starve with stores at the other end. The bigger problems are having top bar hives in very HOT climates and yet people seem to do that as well. Top Bar Hives were developed in Africa right? Actually they were developed in Greece thousands of years ago, and then used in many other places. Obviously this is not true. Bees do tend to only move in one direction when clustered and have trouble changing direction in a cluster in the cold. Trough hives chest hives, or whatever else you wish to call a horizontal hive have been kept in Scandinavian countries for centuries. According to Eva Crane horizontal hives are now and have always been the most popular form of hive from Scandinavia to the tropics. The bees know how to accommodate themselves to circumstances. They enter and inhabit a perpendicular hollow trunk just as well as a horizontal hollow branch of a tree. Without a queen excluder how do you keep the queen out of the honey? The queen is not looking to lay all over the place. Would you rather they swarm? The bees want a consolidated brood nest. Some people try to have some capped honey as their "queen excluder". I do the opposite. I try to get them to expand the brood nest as much as possible to keep them from swarming and to get a bigger force to gather the honey. So I add empty bars in the brood nest during prime swarm season. How do you harvest the honey from a top bar hive? You can either do crush and strain or you can cut it for comb honey. If you really want to, Swienty has an extractor that will work with top bar hives. But if you only have a few hives an extractor is seldom worth the expense. Some people say a top entrance lets the heat out. How do you do your entrances? In any hive top bar or otherwise I think a top entrance in the winter is always a good plan. It lets out the moisture and cuts down on condensation. Heat is seldom the problem, condensation is the problem in winter. A top entrance will let it out. Mine are all JUST top entrances. The reason I went with them was the skunks. My first TBH have a bottom entrance and the skunks were a serious problem. After going to the top entrances they have ceased being a problem. My entrances are simply the gap at the front of the hive between the first bar and the front wall. No holes to drill. In my experience no. I only know of one TBH beekeeper who actually seems to think so. Most have had the same experience as I have, which is that they do little attachment either way. How do you treat for Varroa in a top bar hive? I depend on the smaller natural cell size. But you could put a hole in and use oxalic acid vapor or you could drizzle oxalic acid or you could use powdered sugar. How do you feed a top bar hive? You could use a baggie feeder on the bottom or, if you build it to take Langstroth frames you could put a frame feeder in or, if not, you could build one to fit. The long mediums I can use most anything that could be used on a regular hive. What is different about the management of a top bar hive or long hive? The most important concept to grasp with any natural comb hive is that one good comb leads to another in the same way that one bad comb leads to another. You cannot afford to not be paying attention to how they start off. The most common cause of a mess of comb is leaving the queen cage in as they always start the first comb from that and then the mess begins. You have to put them back on track. This has nothing to do with wires or no wires. Nothing to do with frames or no frames. It has to do with the last comb being straight. The need for frequent harvesting to keep space in the honey area open.

The need for empty bars in the brood nest during prime "reproductive" swarm season to expand the brood nest more and prevent swarming. This is easily done by simply moving the bars containing the cluster to one end and putting the bars they replaced at the other. With the entrance on the end this is almost never a problem. With the entrance in the middle you are almost guaranteed to have this problem. The need to handle combs more carefully. You need to be aware of the angle of the comb with the earth. Keep the combs "hanging" in tune with gravity. You can flip them over but you have to rotate them with the flat of the comb vertical and not horizontal. You also need to check for attachments to walls, floor and other combs before you pull a comb out. Cut these attachments first if they are there. Which makes more honey? A top bar hive or a Langstroth hive? It comes down to management differences. Can I put a screened bottom board on my TBH? How can you have too much ventilation? Of course in the winter, too much ventilation means too much heat loss. But even in the summer the bees are cooling the hive by evaporation, so on a hot day the inside of the hive may be cooler than the outside air. So too much ventilation could result in the bees being unable to maintain a cooler temperature inside. On Langstroth hives you often have a top and bottom vent to get sufficient ventilation. Should I provide cross ventilation in my TBH? Bees seem to have more trouble ventilating a vertical hive with no vent at the top. They have to force dry air which wants to go down up to the top and hot moist air at the top which wants to go up, back down and out the bottom. So a top vent or top entrance in a vertical hive seems to be very helpful as it allows the hot moist air out the top which sucks the dry air in the bottom. With a horizontal hive, this is not an issue. They just move the air in a circular fashion in one side and back out the other side and out the door. Sort of like a nice level walk with no hills. This seems to work well. With cross ventilation such as a front and back vent or entrance the wind may blow through the hive and that may be a bad thing. Have you ever seen a bee tree with a landing board? Landing boards just give mice a place to jump on to get in the hive. In my experience, something around four feet seems to be good. Less is difficult to keep them from swarming. More is hard to get the bees to occupy the whole length.

6: Free Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans

A top-bar hive is a single-story frameless beehive in which the comb hangs from removable bars. The bars form a continuous roof over the comb, whereas the frames in most current hives allow space for bees to move up or down between boxes.

I followed various links on bee blogs and found myself browsing the Dave Loveless site, an Alaskan beekeeper. I posted a comment and to cut a long story short this resulted in him offering to write a few words on his experiences of the horizontal Top Bar Hive TBH. His review is rather delightful and his photos superb. I hope you all enjoy it as much as I did. Many, many thanks Dave. I got into beekeeping several years ago when, while walking down the street, I saw a neighbor friend on her front porch painting a bunch of large wooden squares. Hands on either side of my head, screaming in panic. My very next reaction was to think how cool. Over the next year or so, I studied and wondered about it. Then I made the goal with the encouragement of my wife to start the next spring a year in the future only to randomly meet a guy who convinced me to move that timeline up about 11 months, which I did. A panicked-month later, and I was a beekeeper! Nothing quite tops a quite summer evening out in the beeyard. This past spring, I convinced my dad to join in the fun. He retired this year and was looking for a hobby. Last fall, he joined me at the hives during an inspection, and the experience stayed with him. Still, it is experienceâ€. Weight, Simplicity, and Access. A Deep can hit close to pounds while a normal Top Bar is probably going to max out around 15, maybe 20 pounds. To clarify, the individual top bars are about the same weight as deep frames, but you never have to lift the whole body. If you lifted the entire hive, not only would it be a two man job, but it would be much heavier than a Langstroth. A variant, with vertical sides, is known as a Tanzanian Hive. In a Top Bar, you really only have a box and bars. If it breaks, he just goes and gets another one from the lumber store. Accessâ€Top Bars are horizontal hives and they can be placed at a height that is convenient for you. For him, that takes care of the near constant curiosity without needing to disturb the bees and gives him the opportunity to show the hives to curious neighbors. In addition to these primary Pros, Top Bars have the advantage of being foundationless. Personally, I like the idea that the wax is naturally rotated in each harvest. If you like to gather wax, Top Bars will always produce more wax than other hives. If you subscribe to small-cell theories, Top Bars also allow the bees to build the comb size they want, rather than the comb size you give them. One final Pro is that Top Bars can be opened a single bar at a time, restricting the amount of hive that is actually opened. Most of these Pros are not necessarily Top Bar specific, but they are advantages you can get in a Top Bar hive. Experience, Difficulty and Size. Difficultyâ€Similar to the experience issue, Top Bars require more regular care and attention. Because the combs are foundationless, the bees may curve the comb on the bar, which causes problems down the road, including awkward comb attachments. Top Bar beekeepers tend to visit their hives more regularly to handle these and other issues. For a beginning beekeeper, the commitment can be a bit much. Another difficulty issue is that Top Bars not only lack foundation, but they also lack frames. This requires you to manipulate the bars much differently and carefully than you would a standard Langstroth. I have heard from several Top Bar beekeepers that it is easier to start with a Top Bar and move to a Langstroth than the other way around. Sizeâ€With vertical hives, you have as much space as you can give to your hive. They run out of room, and you add a box. You have what you have. You can alleviate this issue by harvesting and inspecting more frequently, which most Top Bar keepers do, but it is something to consider. On the size note, a commercial operation would have trouble running Top Bars I think. In our experience, the bees tend to attach new comb to the walls, but with regular inspections that impact is limited. As to harvesting, Top Bars are pretty much crush and strain. This is based in the idea that bees have to eat honey to make wax. I have a few complaints about this idea, namely that bees eat honey no matter what and therefore have the ability to produce wax and that honey production is more a matter of population, not existing wax. My opinion, of course, and what was that thing about five beekeepers and six answers? Like the Pros, these Cons are not necessarily restricted to Top Bars only, and you can face these issues in any hive depending on how you have it set up. For my dad, the weight issues and the desire to keep bees in a simple, observable way, made a top

bar with a window an easy choice, but it is not the right choice for every beekeeper.

7: Beekeeping in top bar hives, Michael Bush

The free plans will enable you to build a working top bar hive, using simple tools and readily obtainable timber. If you want more detail, with background information and more pictures, you may like to buy my book - [Balanced Beekeeping I: Building a Top Bar Hive](#).

Once you decide to be a beekeeper woo hoo! We as beekeepers want a little more. We humans have a lot of wants. Here are some beehive styles that you can choose from when deciding how you want to keep bees.

Langstroth hive These are Langstroth hives. Note the wooden frame surrounds and supports the comb. If you drive by a field with white boxes stacked up on each other and bees flying in and out, they are most likely Langstroth hives. Reading material, equipment and mentors are easy to come by for these hives because they are so common. There are two different sizes available: Horizontal top bar hives: Top bar with suspended comb from a KTBH. The Kenyan hives have sloped sides and the Tanzanian hives have straight sides. The sloped sides may or may not! Vertical top bar hive: Warre hive in a field of goldenrod and fall flowers. The hive is supposed to mimic a tree, allowing the bees to attach their comb to the top bars in each box and extend them towards the ground. As the hives fill up with comb, new boxes are added underneath the stack which is the opposite of how Langstroth hives are expanded with new hive bodies added to the top. There is also less available reading material. You can either buy a hive or build one yourself as plans are freely available online. Even more beehive styles! And then you can geek out on alternative hive styles, of which only a FEW of what is available worldwide are listed here: Drauglis is planning on building his own hive based on these, so watch his Flickr page. Drauglis via Flickr cc Log hives in France. Gabludlow via Flickr cc What I did: I also installed an unexpected swarm into a Kenyan top bar. That should keep me busy and help me discover which hives I really like best. Beekeepers, what styles of hives are you keeping and what do you like and dislike about them? Comment below and help us noobs out. Future beekeepers, what is important to you as you consider what kind of beehive styles would work for you? Enjoy exploring the different beehive styles. Bees feast on honey.

8: Free diagram and plans for a top bar hive | mistress beek

Thus, top bar hives may provide a substantially lower cost for entry into beekeeping, and they are the predominant hive in some developing and under-developed countries. In comparison to the Langstroth hive, top bar hives provide an environment much closer to the conditions found in nature by wild and feral bees.

Honeybees provide many important products and services. Not only do they give us a delicious honey and beeswax, but they also provide pollination, which is very important. Over the past couple of years we have attended several talks and workshops dedicated to honeybees and apiculture. First, we attended a wonderfully informative lecture about Wine and honey tasting – what could make a better afternoon? Finally, last summer, we attended a talk given by Kim, Master Gardener of Berry Creek Station, who first talked about the lifecycle of bees, types of bees and the uses of bee products. She was gracious enough to take us into her private backyard to show us her bee garden and three of her hives. The advantages of the top bar hive over the Lanstroth are numerous, the most important being the health of the bee. You see, wild bees will make the cells in their honeycomb about 4. If you give a bee colony a comb foundation that has larger cells, about 5. Scientists found that the larger bees were actually lazy! And the varroa mite, which is a nasty little leachy parasite for honeybees, reproduces inside the cell with the developing honeybee, and the longer the honeybee is in the cell, the more varroa mites! The larger bees develop inside their cells about 2 days longer than the smaller, more natural bees. The disadvantages of the Kenyan Top Bar Hive? The bees must first make their own comb, which means they have less time to make honey. We would rather have healthy, happy bees than have to use chemicals and pesticides, which is what I believe is part of the colony collapse problem! Bottom line – smaller bees, no tracheal mites and less problem with varroa mites! With this knowledge and plans in hand, we decided to build our own Kenyan Top Bar Hive. We begin our project of making a Kenyan Top Bar Beehive! We used the plans that Kim gave us, but after researching Kenyan Top Bar Hives, we found numerous other plans on the internet. They were all pretty much the same, and we improvised a bit here and there. A viewing window was cut into one side of the beehive, and a plexiglass window inserted. We did stay true to the measurements for the actual box, along with the angle of the sides. In hindsight however, I think it would have been nice for the bees to have a wider landing spot – maybe 2 inches instead of one. This is what we will do when we make our next hive. That might invite ants, mice, etc. Ray made legs out of simple 2 x 4 framing lumber with braces to keep it sturdy. Once the legs were attached to the box, we added the hardware for the viewing window. I saw these cute suitcase-like latches and thought they would be great! A couple of hinges made the whole thing complete. After the plexiglass window was caulked in, the viewing window was complete. Now for a roof. When you search for images of Kenyan Top Bar Hives on the internet, you can find many, many types of roofs. Some pictures show thick cardboard held on with bungies! We opted to go with a pitched roof, both for the aesthetics, the insulation value and the snow load. Our version of a Kenyan Top Bar Beehive! So, there it is! Everything but the actual Top Bars! I may be attending the following parties:

9: Kenyan Top Bar Hive Plans

The one critical dimension in this whole design is the width of the top bar, which is, according to people who have been doing this longer than I have, 1 1/4" to 1 3/8" or mm for most bees.

General information[edit] Modern top bar hive Although the two most well-known styles of long top-bar hives are named " Kenyan " and " Tanzanian ", the Kenyan hive was actually developed in Canada, and the so-called Tanzanian hive is not the same as the top-bar hive that was developed in Tanzania. The design of top-bar hives has its origins in the work done in by Tredwell and Paterson. Similar "long" top-bar hives were also developed in the early s by other authors. The David Hive was similar to the Kenyan top-bar hive, except that the comb was not cut from the bars at harvest time but reused after extraction. Also in , William Bielby designed a top-bar hive that featured catenary curved comb. Although modern "long" top-bar hives originated in the middle of the twentieth century, initially for use in development projects, a "tub shaped" top-bar hive has been in use for centuries in some regions such as Greece. An example of the tub shaped top-bar hive is the so-called Greek hive that was first described in the 17th century and has been used in Crete until recently. Tub shaped top-bar hives are usually small enough to be portable, and allow beekeeping methods that involve periodic merging and splitting of colonies. Bee hives that conform to the general description of top-bar hives have existed for many centuries. Spon briefly mentioned this in his memoirs, but Wheler gave a detailed description and a drawing of such a hive in his work Journey Into Greece, published in The beekeeper Zuanne Papadopoli described tub shaped top-bar beekeeping in clay pots that were used prior to in Crete. He wrote about it in his memoirs in Although there is evidence that beekeeping was commonly practiced in Crete since the Late Minoan I period BC , [8] the most common method of beekeeping in that region is using clay or woven long, cylindrical hives. The fact that harvesting was done from the middle of the log meant that brood comb was destroyed every time honey was harvested. The Tanzanian government then promoted two alternative hive types, namely a log hive that could be harvested from either end so that the brood nest in the centre remains undisturbed and a plank hive, which was a simple top-bar hive. The plank hive did not use moveable top bars, however " bees would attach comb in natural patterns to the roof. The advantage of the plank hive was that it enabled some inspection before harvest. Ntenga then designed a transitional hive, in , based on the plank hive that uses moveable top-bars. This hive is sometimes called the Tanzanian Transitional Hive in literature, and was the original Tanzanian top-bar hive. It used top-bars with either a centre groove, a V-shaped bevel, or flat surface. The top-bars had lugs that were narrower than the bar itself. The hive could take 28 combs. The hive was covered with two lids, each covering half the hive. Smith [11] and Dr. Isaac Kireia Kigatiira from Kenya, who was a student at Guelph in the early s. Hanging the hive some distance from the ground protects it from both wild and domestic animals, as well as from ants and beetles. A version with straight sides was developed by Henry Mulzac [19] by , which used Langstroth compatible dimensions. The South African Jackson hive also uses Langstroth sized frames. Design[edit] Although guidebooks for use in Africa often give precise dimensions for the Kenyan hive, and encourage beekeepers to keep their equipment of uniform and interchangeable sizes, one of the main selling points of the KTBH among proponents from English speaking countries is the fact that it can be made to practically any size and shape, as long as the top bars have an appropriate width. The angle of the sloped sides is most commonly recommended to be 30 degrees. The width of the top bars is the sum of comb thickness and one measure of beespace. This helps ensure that bees build exactly one comb per top bar. In English speaking countries, the top-bar hive is usually mounted on a set of legs that lift the hive to a height that is comfortable for beekeepers. In African countries, the height of the hive is often also determined by the type of animal the hive is meant to be protected from. Top Bars A top-bar hive has bars from which the honey bees attach and hang wax comb , an array of hexagonal six sided cells. A beekeeper can make top bars from any plain wood. Combs can be handled individually. The depth of the bar and the length of the bar can be whatever the beekeeper wants, but usually between 17" and 20". The depth of the top bar hive should be 12" or less. If deeper, the weight of the comb filled with honey tends to cause it to fall off the bar into the bottom of the hive. The bees will lose access to

this during the winter cluster in the hanging combs, thus increasing their likelihood of starving. It is important to give the bees a clear starting point to build comb on each top bar. Some TBH beekeepers fashion their top bars with a V-shaped bottom to guide the comb building. Alternatively, some use a table saw to cut two closely spaced slots along the long axis of each new top bar. Either type of guide, wax line or grooves, gives bees a place to hold on to with their hooked feet. This allows a substantial "drape" of bees to form, which is the beginning of comb building. This allows a great deal of flexibility in both placement and configuration. The entrance should not be placed high on the hive as this will allow the escape of winter heat. Rather than place the entrance in the end wall it should be located in one of the sides of the hive, especially in the Tanzanian straight sided hive. This will allow the bees to access the side which they must use to access comb in the back of the hive for storing nectar. It is suggested that bees in a Kenyan hive will have much less tendency to adhere comb to the sides of the hive. Once adhered comb is freed from the side leaving a beespace the bees tend to not rejoin the comb, so this is not a significant problem for either hive. It is important in either type that end access or some free space without comb is available so adhered comb may be freed. Advantages over hive systems using standardized frames[edit] Reduced storage requirements[edit] Since no seasonal storage of honey collection boxes "supers" is needed, nor is a centrifugal extractor commonly used, the storage requirements are also greatly reduced. Hive management[edit] It is recommended that new or recycled empty bars be placed at each side of the brood chamber just before spring build-up as it is easier for the bees to make new comb than to move honey stores to make room for new brood. This will also ensure the maintenance of a well built honey barrier between the brood and higher grade stores. To prevent the buildup of old comb in the brood chamber it may be advantageous to add new bars only on the entrance side of the brood chamber just past the pollen stores. This will cause a collection of older honey in re-used comb, which may be removed and used to produce a somewhat lesser quality of honey, as it will have additional flavors from the propolis used to strengthen and protect the brood comb. Such honey may be especially appropriate for making mead and root beer , as additional flavors will predominate. The progressive removal of brood comb appears, as noted above, consistent with control of AFB. The use of follower boards to selectively control the amount of interior space available to the bees can be helpful, particularly in young hives or when dealing with newly captured swarms. Follower boards are adjustable solid panels, which effectively reduce the size of the interior space within the hive box that is accessible to the bees. Queen exclusion[edit] Natural queen exclusion occurs more frequently in top-bar hives, because the brood nest is separated from the honey section by at least a full bar of honey comb, and not just a few centimetres of honey as may be the case in a multi-storey framed hive. And the more honey is gathered, the further the brood nest becomes from newly created comb. However, some commercial top-bar beekeepers have found that artificial queen excluders are sometimes necessary to keep the queen from laying eggs in the honey section of the hive. Inspection can be started at any one of the bars, and can be completed over several sessions. Inspection of the combs can be carried out with far less disturbance to the bees than is the case with multi-storey hives, since only a small amount of the hive is exposed at any one time. Some hives incorporate a viewing glass window in the side of the hive that allows for observation without opening the hive itself, since in theory the combs do not get attached to the sloping sides. The top-bars rest freely on the hive walls without spacers, which means that the top-bars can be slid easily along the length of the hive during the inspection, without altering the sequence of the combs, and non-inspected bars need not be lifted out of the way to gain access to other bars. Harvesting honey[edit] The most popular method of harvesting honey from a top-bar hive is by cutting the comb from the top-bar, crushing the comb and straining the honey. This results in honey with a higher pollen content than honey that is extracted by flinging out without crushing the comb. Top-bar hive comb can be extracted by flinging motion, e. Honey can also be harvested from top-bar comb as cut comb. Owing to the fact that crushing and straining is the most common method for honey harvesting in this type of hive, beeswax is often a by-product of top-bar hive beekeeping. Philosophy[edit] Top-bar hives are popular with some beekeepers who believe it is a more natural form of beekeeping. Their building does not usually require such precise measurements as modern multi-story hives.

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