

# BEE KEEPING

by Angela deFreitas

A **beekeeper** (or apiarist) maintains colonies of bees in hives in order to collect **honey** and other products. Beekeeping by humans (known as apiculture) is a type of small farming which dates back literally thousands of years. The beekeeper harvests the honey produced by the bees, prepares and bottles it of sale. Sometimes beekeepers also create by-products from the hives such as **beeswax**, **pollen** and **royal jelly** and produce bees for sale to other beekeepers.



## WHAT THE WORK INVOLVES

At some time during the day a beekeeper might:

- Make, maintain and/or repair hives
- Harvest purify and bottle honey
- Make beeswax candles and/or soaps as by-products
- Keep up to date on local laws governing the keeping of bees
- Work on marketing the final products

Most of the working day is spent outdoors but extracting, purifying and bottling of the products are usually done indoors.

Beekeepers wear protective clothing including gloves, suit, veil and helmet to protect themselves from bee stings. Work will sometimes involve the use of smoke to prevent stings.

Beekeeping is not an intense operation as the bees do not need careful monitoring and can be left for several days with no attention.

## WHO IS THIS CAREER FOR?

If you love nature, working and being outdoors and have an interest in how creatures and insects contribute to our natural environment, then you'll probably be very intrigued by honey bees. You must be interested in this way.

## WHAT CAN I EARN?

Your earnings will depend on your own hard work, efforts and business skills in promoting and marketing your products.

## HOW DO I QUALIFY?

Attach yourself to an experienced beekeeper and learn what the work is about. Volunteer your time and get hands-on experience with these insects.

Research and read as much as possible in order to understand things like the differences between worker bees and queen bees. Join a local bee farmers association if you can find one.

### **WHO OFFERS TRAINING IN JAMAICA?**

Check with the Ministry of Agriculture, HEART/NTA, The National Youth Service and local bee farmers associations

***Angela deFreitas is General Manager of CHOICES Career & Education Advice –  
e-mail - [info@choicesonlinejm.com](mailto:info@choicesonlinejm.com)***

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