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Bad Beekeeping



Synopsis

This beekeeper's memoir follows the life of a young man from Pennsylvania as he drops into the bald prairie badlands of Saskatchewan. He buys a bee ranch, keeps a billion bees and makes a million pounds of honey. And then he quits.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ron Miksha had 2,000 hives of bees twenty years ago. He produced over a million pounds of honey in Saskatchewan and sold thousands of queen bees in Florida, one of only a handful of people to have kept bees in both countries, hauling hives thousands of miles every year. Ron's interest in beekeeping stretches back to his childhood and his family's farm in the eastern USA. As a teenager, he was the youngest apiary inspector for the state of Pennsylvania. Ron kept bees there, but soon moved his hives to Florida, where he raised queens to sell to other beekeepers. A chance meeting led him to Val Marie - a desolate, windy prairie town in Saskatchewan, Canada, where he bought a small honey farm and expanded it into a large business. He produced queens in Florida during the winter and extracted honey in Saskatchewan during the summer. The adventure lasted ten years. Then a series of hot dry summers, small crops, and low prices convinced Ron to sell the farm and retire - at age 32! After his beekeeping career ended, Ron decided to try university. He chose Earth Sciences as his second career, won seventeen excellence scholarships at the University of Saskatchewan and graduated with honours in Geophysics. Now Ron Miksha is president of a seismic geoscience company. Ron is a father, a scientist, a member of Mensa, and a licensed

engineer. Ron still keeps bees - as a hobby. His fifteen hives are on a grassy meadow in the Rocky Mountain foothills near his home in Calgary. Today, Ron is president of the Calgary Beekeepers' Association. A well-known and controversial figure in the beekeeping industry, Ron Miksha writes extensively for bee journals around the world. *Bad Beekeeping* is his first book.

Interesting insight into the large scale commercial side of beekeeping without being studious or dry. I learned many things and also learned to watch out for others as I try to grow my business. One of the things I took away was just because it's beekeeping, it is still a business and normal business rules apply - proper security and cleanliness of worksites and processing spaces, get experts to install critical infrastructure, try to know when to ask for help.

If you ever dreamed of becoming a commercial beekeeper, you should read "*Bad Beekeeping*" first. The author puts the life of a commercial beekeeper in perspective. Having been a commercial beekeeper myself for many years back in the 1970's and 80's, I was able to relate with this book from it's beginning to it's end. The author obviously has above average writing skills. He has a way of making the reader feel like they are living the life style themselves. Whether you're a hobbyist or raise bees for a living, you will enjoy reading this book. Thanks Ron for sharing the life style with all of us.

This is a wonderful story of a young man who practiced the one thing he knew well - beekeeping. With simple, honest writing it is the story about how hard work lets people learn about themselves while working to maintain a commercial relationship with nature. I sometimes thought Ron worked harder than the bees he raised but remembered the energy we all bring to our tasks early in our careers when something is important to us. I felt strongly that Ron's finely detailed efforts allowed him to move past his beekeeping and rewarded him with the opportunity to reach out and find how beekeeping fit into the larger world around him. The book is simple and raw and I learned much about bees. It is well written enough that you wonder about what happened to those he worked with, family and loved ones, and the Canadian village where he staged his bees in summer. This was an excellent book. We all have a story to tell that will teach and entertain others. Ron tells his story very well. I hope he writes a sequel.

An interesting read. Wish he has spent a little more time on the final years of growth and getting bigger but no biggie. Well written and sometimes really funny look at the life of a commercial

beekeeper. Worth a read.

Instead of "Bad Beekeeping," Ron Miksha's book could have been called "Portrait of the Beekeeper as a Young Man," since it is all about his growing up as a commercial beekeeper in the 1970's and 1980's. Working the canola bloom, his summer beekeeping operation in Saskatchewan, and working citrus, his winter beekeeping operation in Florida, Ron had a unique run as a beekeeper that is simply not possible today. Regulations, rules and differing concerns on opposite sides of the U.S./Canadian border made his operation a one-of-a-kind, as well as one-of-an-era. His story is a roller-coaster ride of great successes matched with spectacular failures. His calculations and plans meet with the unexpected and that is the fun of his tale. Although no longer a commercial beekeeper; instead now, a geophysicist and entrepreneur, he remains a hobbyist beekeeper in Alberta. As beekeepers, we have not lost one of our own.

This is one of few books that I can truly call a must read - if you are a beekeeper. The book is very well written, easy to read, hard to put down. The character development is excellent. I did not want the book to end. The only complaint I have is that the author appeared to rush the last chapter in order to finish up the book - that is okay. I can't think of a better way to end the book.

'Bad Beekeeping' isn't really a beekeeping book, at least not in the sense of how to keep bees. Rather it is more of a memoir of the author's life during the time he was a commercial beekeeper. It is very well written and Ron Miksha has a wry sense of humor. 'Bad Beekeeping' is a fun and interesting book with interesting insights.

Chosen by my daughter-in-law because she got her first beehive and bees last Spring...so far she's been successful but does like to double-check herself since it's her first attempt...

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