

# Time Commitment of Beekeeping by Operation Size

The approximate number of hours and frequency of visits needed to work all colonies in hobbyist, sideline, and commercial beekeeping operations. The labor estimates in this table are likely overestimated, and represent the typical maximum time needed. The number of hours in each category for each season reflects the amount of time spent managing the largest number of colonies for hobbyist (10 colonies) and sideline (250 colonies) beekeepers and about 700 colonies for commercial beekeepers. The latter represents the approximate maximum number of colonies a single individual can expect to maintain on a full time basis without additional assistance. The amount of time required per visit per size of operation is not linear. Larger beekeeping operations tend to streamline work, requiring less time per colony visit.

Season	Hobbyist Beekeeper ~1-10 colonies	Sideline Beekeeper ~11-250 colonies	Commercial Beekeeper ~251+ colonies
<b>Spring</b>	Up to three hours needed to work 10 colonies every 7 – 10 days throughout the season	Up to 50 hours needed to work 250 colonies once every 7– 10 days throughout the season	Up to 120 hours needed to work 700 colonies every 7 – 10 days throughout the season
<b>Summer</b>	Up to three hours needed to work 10 colonies once every two to three weeks throughout the season	Up to 50 hours needed to work 250 colonies every two to three weeks throughout the season	Up to 120 hours needed to work 700 colonies once every two to three weeks throughout the season
<b>Fall</b>	Up to three hours needed to work 10 colonies once every four to six weeks throughout the season	Up to 50 hours needed to work 250 colonies once every four to six weeks throughout the season	Up to 120 hours needed to work 700 colonies once every four to six weeks throughout the season
<b>Winter</b>	Up to three hours needed to work 10 colonies once every six to eight weeks in a mild climate and three to four months in a colder one throughout the season	Up to 50 hours needed to work 250 colonies once every six to eight weeks in a mild climate and three to four months in a colder one throughout the season	Up to 120 hours needed to work 700 colonies once every six to eight weeks in a mild climate and three to four months in a colder one throughout the season
Notes:	<i>Infrequent night and weekend work: This is necessary only when moving colonies, or making weekends the days that colonies are worked. Infrequent travel may occur if bees are moved for honey production or pollination purposes. Hobbyists often do not move their colonies.</i>	<i>Frequent night and weekend work: Sideline beekeepers usually engage in typical migratory beekeeping practices, requiring bees to be moved at night. Furthermore, they typically have a full time job other than beekeeping making weekend work common. Frequent travel is necessary.</i>	<i>Extremely frequent night and weekend work. Commercial beekeepers spend a lot of time on the road, moving colonies for honey production and crop pollination purposes.</i>