

# Beginner Beekeeping Series

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## INTRODUCTION

Georgia is historically in the top five for number of honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies. With honey bees facing a myriad of pest and disease challenges, Georgia is a prime location for educational programming related to honey bee physiology, health, and management. The Lanier and Clinch County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Agent introduced basic beekeeping concepts to a group of primarily adult learners, with almost monthly classes to walk students through the seasonal needs of a honey bee hive. Students were also given the option to purchase bees and equipment to start their own hives.



Students work together to assemble a deep hive body.

## INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Classes began in January and ran through September. Content was synced to seasonal tasks or activities within beekeeping. Instructional methods were varied to accommodate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. The majority of classes started with interactive PowerPoint lectures that encouraged student questions along the way. Hands-on activities followed the lectures.

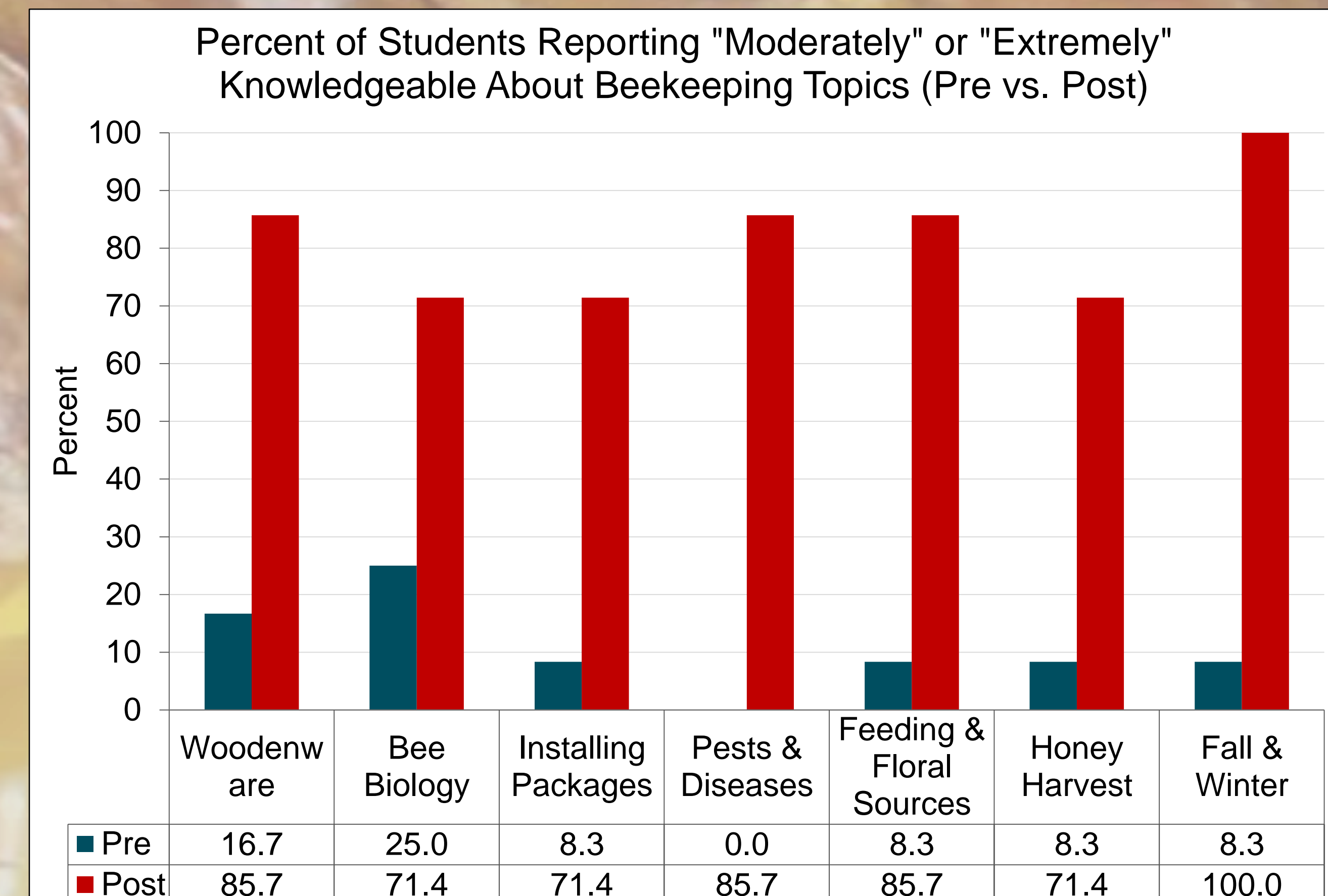
Examples of learning activities included:

- Working collaboratively to build bee hives and explain the significance of each hive component
- Identifying local nectar sources and when they typically bloom
- Watching a demonstration of honey harvest, then uncapping and extracting honey themselves
- Observing differences in color and taste of honey from various geographical locations, as well as pairing the flavors with different foods
- Locating anatomical features of the honey bee under a microscope

The ANR Agent also offered in-hive site visits to students who had purchased bees. This helped reinforce concepts learned in class and apply them to their own hives.

## RESULTS

- Pre- and post-evaluations with Likert scales were administered in January and September to gauge change in self-reported knowledge
- Beekeeping knowledge increased by an average of 70.9% across all topics
- An average of 11 students attended each of the 6 three-hour classes



## IMPACT

- When asked whether the Series gave them a good overview of honey bees and the basics to get started in beekeeping, 100% agreed
- Students indicated they wanted to take additional beekeeping classes in the future
- In the post-evaluation, the following were noted as "most beneficial" about the Series:

*"Every class was very beneficial. The teacher was very knowledgeable about beekeeping."*

*"The knowledge of the instructor and how she simplified the class so everyone understood what she was teaching."*

*"Small class size, group participation, hands-on experience."*

- Students will go forward with enhanced knowledge of honey bee biology, pollination impacts, and how to care for their first hive of bees.

## OBJECTIVES

Overall objectives of the Beginning Beekeeper Series and supplementary beekeeping education:

- 1) Consumers will be aware of the honey bee's major contributions to agriculture and food supply through pollination.
- 2) Students in the beginning beekeeping course will gain a foundation of knowledge to be competent and responsible beekeepers.
- 3) The public will be equipped with ways they can contribute positively to honey bee health and well-being, as well as other pollinators.



Youth students learn about the honey extractor and try their hand at spinning out honey.



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