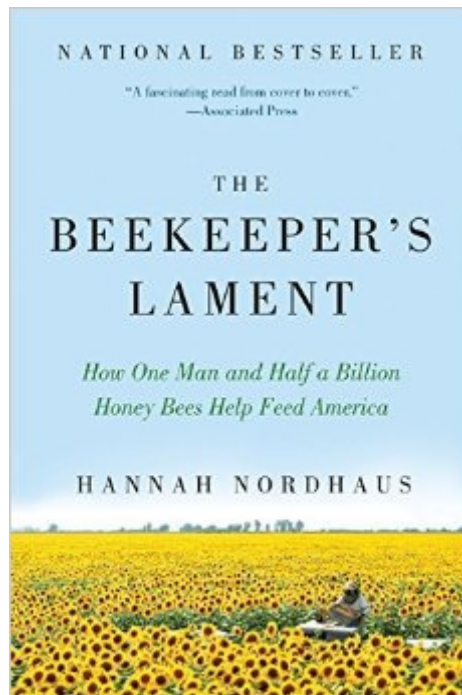


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# The Beekeeper's Lament: How One Man And Half A Billion Honey Bees Help Feed America



## Synopsis

• You'll never think of bees, their keepers, or the fruits (and nuts) of their labor the same way again. • Trevor Corson, author of *The Secret Life of Lobsters* Award-winning journalist Hannah Nordhaus tells the remarkable story of John Miller, one of America's foremost migratory beekeepers, and the myriad and mysterious epidemics threatening American honeybee populations. In luminous, razor-sharp prose, Nordhaus explores the vital role that honeybees play in American agribusiness, the maintenance of our food chain, and the very future of the nation. With an intimate focus and incisive reporting, in a book perfect for fans of Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire*, and John McPhee's *Oranges*, Nordhaus's stunning exposé illuminates one of the most critical issues facing the world today, offering insight, information, and, ultimately, hope.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Throughout this book, I kept exclaiming, "Yes! That is how it is." Hannah Nordhaus has managed to capture the special relationship between bees and beekeepers and the stresses both are experiencing. In the end we come to understand that keeping bees alive and healthy is not easy. Some people are quick to point a finger at commercial beekeepers as the culprits behind bee losses. But all beekeepers care deeply for their bees. Nordhaus clearly portrays how beekeepers face a deal with the devil when they move their bees into orchards and other crops for pollination. Everyone that eats almonds, fruits and vegetables needs to understand this vital and ironic situation. Nordhaus walks us into the world of bees through the eyes and heart of John Miller, a

commercial beekeeper who transports his 10,000 colonies of bees between North Dakota and California for honey production and almond pollination. John is wacky, inspired and earth-smart, and he is the perfect person to represent beekeepers in America. The book is hilarious, disturbing, and very accurate; it's the best book about beekeeping I've read in a very long time.

A timely and informative book suitable for a wide readership. It could be subtitled *The Life and Times of John Miller, Commercial Beekeeper*. Miller is a character and his presence breathes life throughout the pages of the book -- Nordhaus must have realized she had a gem in Miller, around which she could build a worthy and entertaining book. Miller is descended from a long line of beekeepers and struggles annually, as do all beekeepers, to keep his thousands of colonies healthy as they face drought, disease and pestilence on a number of fronts. Nordhaus expertly weaves the history of beekeeping into her book -- beekeeping has never been easy, and is far more difficult today than for past generations. All successful beekeepers are hard workers or they wouldn't survive and Miller is no exception. Miller is an atypical beekeeper in that he is gregarious, quirky, smart (both street-smart and book-smart), with an off-beat sense of humor that helps him survive the inevitable mishaps that occur in his profession. Highly recommended whether you know anything about bees or not.

*The Beekeepers Lament* is a fantastic and engaging story chronicling the life and times of American bees and their keepers. Hannah Nordhaus introduces us to the world of bee wrangling with humor, details, and effortless prose. She is truly a great story teller conveying complex concepts and huge amounts of detail on bee culture, the history of beekeeping in America, the anatomy of the hive, and the pests and calamities befall bees and their keepers with ease and flow. The portrait of John Miller's migratory world of bee keeping is a phenomenal new view into commercial agriculture and its symbiotic relationship with hundreds of millions of bees traversing the country every year. He is an unforgettable character and the reader is able to fully appreciate the life and culture of the commercial beekeeping community. A great read and you will never look at a buzzing bee the same way again!

Since 2007, honey bee hives all over the world have emptied out as their inhabitants inexplicably vanished. "In the last half decade, a third of the national [U.S.] bee herd--about a million colonies--has died each year, often under mysterious circumstances." We are almost totally dependent on honey bees and their human keepers to pollinate our almond trees, cantaloupes,

blueberries, citrus trees, bell peppers, sunflowers, etc., etc. If it's a fruit, seed, nut, or vegetable, a bee is probably responsible for bringing it into being--and these hard-working pollinators are trucked back and forth by their keepers across the United States when their services are needed. There are very few wild honey bee colonies. Maybe none. "The millions of acres of intensely and singularly planted crops at the center of the American agribusiness machine simply cannot produce without the help of the beekeepers' pollinating army."According to author Hannah Nordhaus, bees have been a hot topic ever since the Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) caused hives to empty out overnight. But honey bees were in trouble long before they started their 'flight of the living dead.' In this amiable, but ultimately sad and scary book, the reader also learns about varroa mites, wax moths, foulbrood, and PPB ('piss-poor beekeeping'): "Bees have been on life support for decades now, kept aloft only by the efforts of determined--perhaps imprudent--men" like the beekeepers who are featured in this book. Beekeepers (bee guys) are vanishing almost as fast as their bees. It's a tough profession that requires protective suits, smokers, tons of corn syrup, a high pain threshold, plus semis, forklifts, and other utilitarian vehicles. John Miller, a multi-generational bee guy is the main focus of this book, which is part history, part science, and (yes) part lament. Be sure to watch his video on YouTube, where he gets stung several times while he is talking about why he does what he does (basically, he loves bees). According to Mr. Miller, this author has 'captured the essence' of beekeeping in America, and I (who once almost earned a badge in beekeeping in the Girl Scouts) have to agree with him.

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