

The
journal for
sustainable
beekeeping

&

Beekeeping & Development

NUMBER 40

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1996



**LATIN AMERICAN BEEKEEPERS' UNION ■ ZOOM IN ON ETHIOPIA
USING EUCALYPTUS ■ INDIAN LOG HIVES ■ WAX FOUNDATION MAKER**

LOG HIVES OF SORAG

KEEPING BEES in log hives is common in this village of the Pindar Valley, in Uttar Pradesh, India.

The village is approximately 50 km from the nearest road. Most villagers are farmers, growing barley, beans, buckwheat, potatoes and wheat. There are several varieties of fruit trees and jungle blooms, all of which provide bees with forage.

The bees are the Indian hive bee (*Apis cerana*) and are kept in log hives. These hives are made from hollowed-out logs of *Quercus* spp (ban oak) and *Rhododendron* spp. The two ends are blocked with wooden disks and packed with clay. The average hive length is one metre, and the walls are about 8 cm thick.

According to the local beekeepers these hives allow big colonies to form, which are well protected through the winter when snow accumulates up to a metre deep.

Hives are usually set into walls (see photograph) or kept in the open in a shady place with heavy slates placed on top.

Honey is harvested in July and October. Honey is not usually sold but can fetch a price of Rs60 (US\$2) per kilogram. Wax is discarded. Some people eat the comb containing young brood.

The advantages put forward by the local beekeepers for this log hive are as follows:

- The log hives are made from local materials by the beekeepers and are extremely cost-effective.

- The thickness of the hives is suitable for the prevailing cold climate (the temperature can drop to -10°C).
- Beekeepers do not have to rely on equipment supplies from anyone else.
- Knowledge and beekeeping skills are easily passed on through the generations.
- The shape and concept of the hive is very similar to a nesting place used by bees in the wild.

This article is by **KEYSTONE**, the group for Eco-development Initiatives based in Nilgiris, India

A log hive from Sorag



© KEYSTONE



© KEYSTONE

Sorag hives are usually set into walls