# A QUIET HOBBY WITH A BIG IMPACT




Hidden in Bald Head Island's maritime forest, a hive of Italian honeybees hums with the activity of thousands of tiny wings working in unison. They're tended by Scott Goodwin, who first came to BHI in 2003, bought a home in 2011, and moved here full time with his wife in 2021. Not long after, a mail-order box of bees arrived on his doorstep and sparked what's now one of his favorite pastimes: beekeeping.

Today, Scott tends a hive of about 70,000–80,000 bees, carefully tucked away to keep both people and pollinators safe. "It's a quiet hobby," he says. "You work as a team with the bees." That team effort shows in the rhythms of the hive: three stacked levels where worker bees live below and nectar and honey are stored above. When it's time to peek inside, Scott uses a smoker to gently calm the colony, sending out puffs of smoke that interrupt the bees' chatter and keep them from swarming.



*Smoke disrupts bee communication.*



*Checking for honey and nectar.*

Life on the island offers both gifts and challenges for beekeeping. The bees feed on flowering trees, beautyberry bushes, vines, and even the pollinator garden a couple miles away. But the bees face their own set of challenges, from mosquito spraying to natural predators, making the health of the hive especially precious.

Patience is another part of the equation. It takes about three years before a hive produces harvestable honey. In June 2025, Scott celebrated his largest harvest yet: 20 pounds of BHI honey, the product of thousands of tiny wings at work.

For Scott, though, the honey is only part of the story. Beekeeping, he says, is a way to give back by supporting the island's environment, helping sustain the bee population, and practicing careful stewardship to ensure pollinators have a safe place to thrive. "The bees do the hard work," he smiles. "I just help them along."

## *Why Bees Matter*

*Honeybees are more than just honey-makers. They are essential pollinators, responsible for fertilizing a wide variety of plants and trees. On Bald Head Island, their work supports the health of the maritime forest, gardens, and native flora. Nationally, bees are credited with pollinating roughly one-third of the food we eat from fruits and vegetables to nuts and coffee. Without them, ecosystems and food supplies would look very different.*



*A hot knife is used to cut off the caps of the beeswax so that the centrifuge can remove the honey.*



*The centrifuge with frames loaded into it*



*Filling a jar of honey.*



*Photo by Rex Osborne.*