

# Beekeeping in Namibia

• JANE KANDETU

FOR those looking to combine a love for nature with sustainable income, beekeeping is emerging as both a rewarding hobby and a viable business in Namibia.

Veteran beekeeper Johan Coetzee recently shared insights into the practice, highlighting its benefits, challenges and opportunities.

Coetzee's beekeeping journey began when he observed bees through glass hives.

"Watching them calms me, helps with stress relief and improves decision-making. The benefits you gain from bees often outweigh what they gain from you."

Beekeeping, he said, offers numerous health benefits, as honey contains over 256 elements beneficial to humans, and products like propolis, pollen and beeswax have medicinal uses, including treatments for asthma and cancer support. Honey also provides a steady energy release without causing sugar spikes, making it ideal for people with diabetes.

For beginners, Coetzee emphasised preparation and safety.

"Start by reading, watching videos or contacting the Namibia Beekeepers Association. You'll need a small garden with flowers and access to water. Protective gear like gloves, a veil and proper clothing is essential, and always check for allergies first."



Photo: Johan Coetzee

**HONEY BUSINESS**... Propolis and pollen are highly sought-after, and honeycombs can be sold at premium prices.

Interacting with bees requires calmness. "Bees are intelligent insects attracted to calm people. Observe them quietly, don't shout or wave your arms. The bees die after stinging, so handle them responsibly," he said.

Namibia's climate and vegetation are favourable for beekeeping. "We don't face the massive die-offs seen in other countries caused by mites or pesticides," Coetzee said.

Beyond honey, a hive offers multiple revenue streams.

Beekeeping supports agriculture through pollination, strengthening Namibia's farming sector.

Coetzee encourages communities to actively protect bees: plant trees and flowers, avoid pesticides and relocate swarms safely when needed. His advice underlines the dual benefit of beekeeping: fostering environmental sustainability while creating economic opportunities.