

# Getting Started



## Location, location, location

- Where you site your hive may determine whether your colony *thrives* or *dies*

## Acquisition options

- Singles
- Nucs
- Packages
- Swarms

# Are you legal?

- **Check restrictive covenants if you are considering keeping bees in a residential neighborhood to make sure there are no prohibitions.**
- **Consider setback distance from property lines, and provision of a water source.**
- **Number of hives**

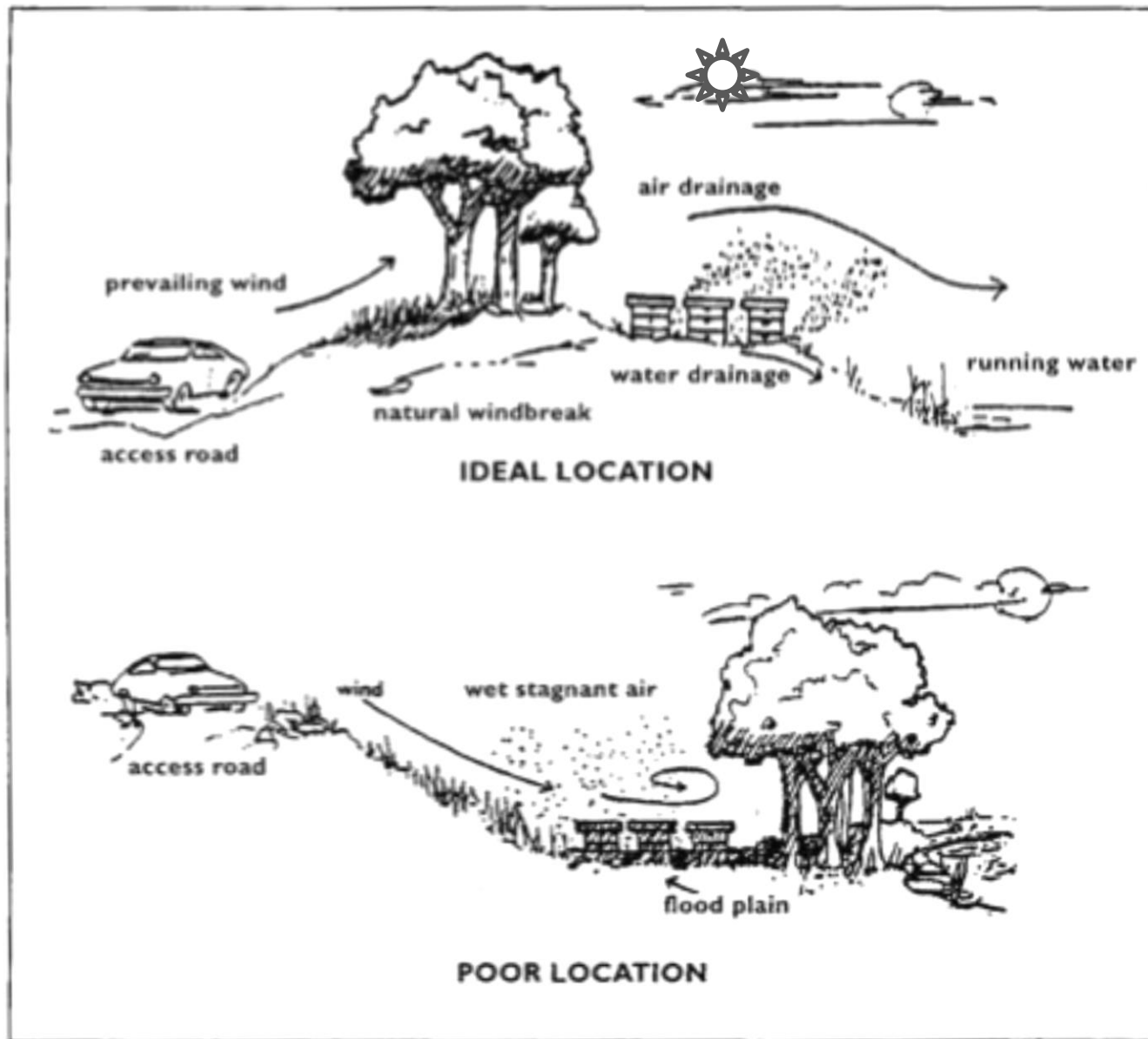
# Forage

- Bees need access to food and water
- You need blooming plants within a two-mile radius around your hives.  
**Pine forests, monocrops: No!**  
**Wildflowers & weeds: Yes!**
- Pesticides / toxins: Consider farmland, golf courses, landfills

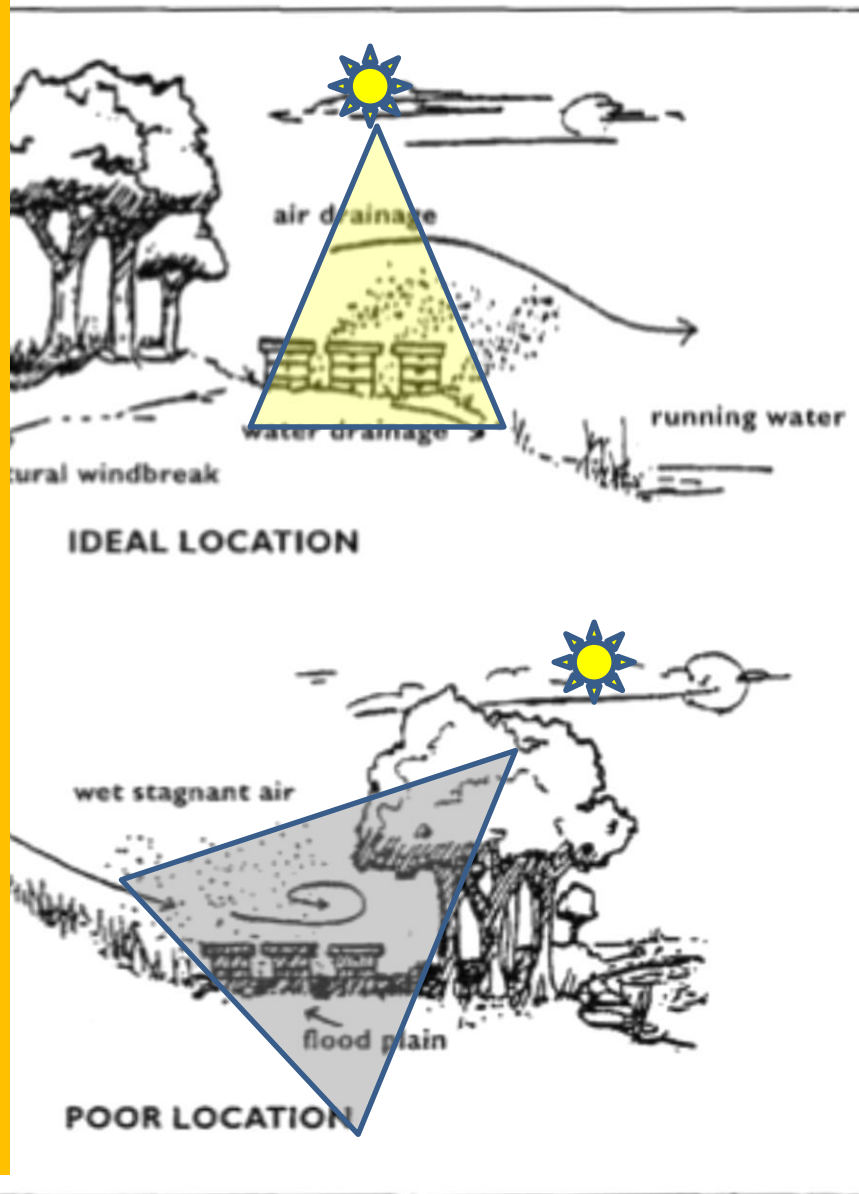
# Forage

**Aim for a maximum of  
four hives on a 1/2-acre lot.**

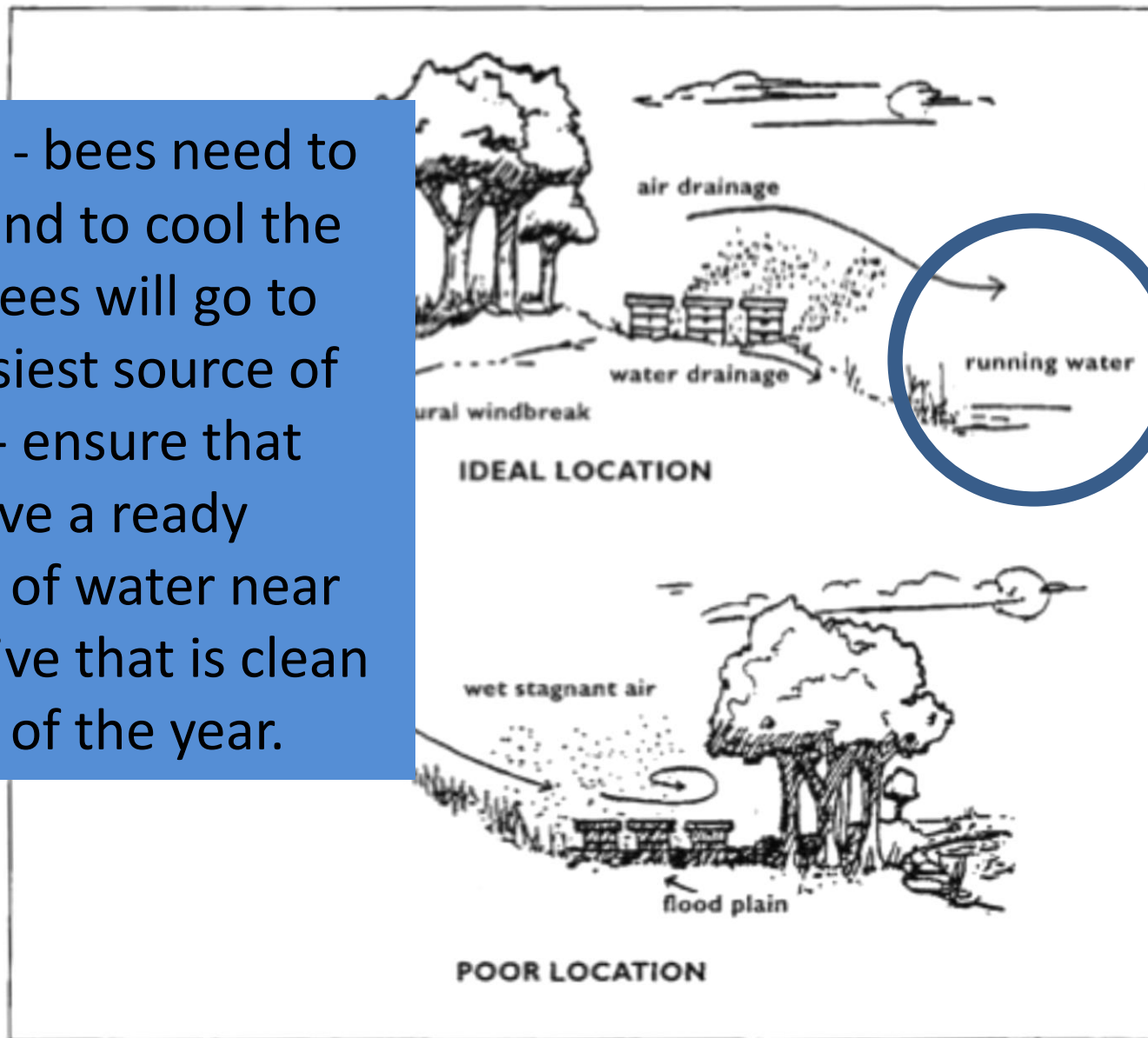
Best Apiary Characteristics from *The Beekeepers Handbook*, Sammataro & Avitabile



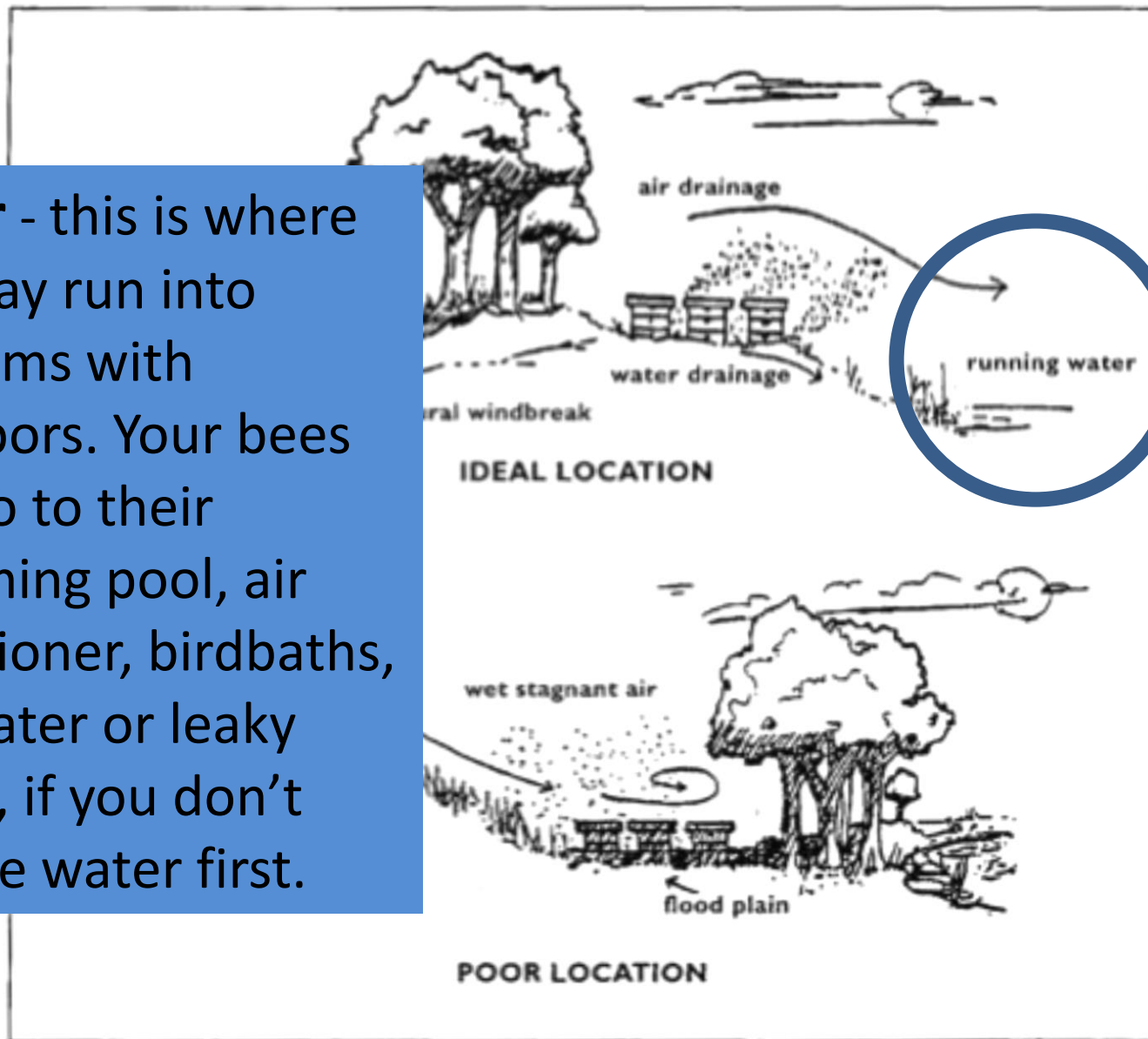
**Sunlight** - full sun or dappled sun work best. Remember, bees need the sunlight to warm up and get going in the morning. If you keep a hive in a shaded area, they may not get started working as early in the morning and in the winter, at all. Southern exposure is helpful for this reason.



**Water** - bees need to drink and to cool the hive. Bees will go to the easiest source of water - ensure that you have a ready source of water near your hive that is clean and all of the year.

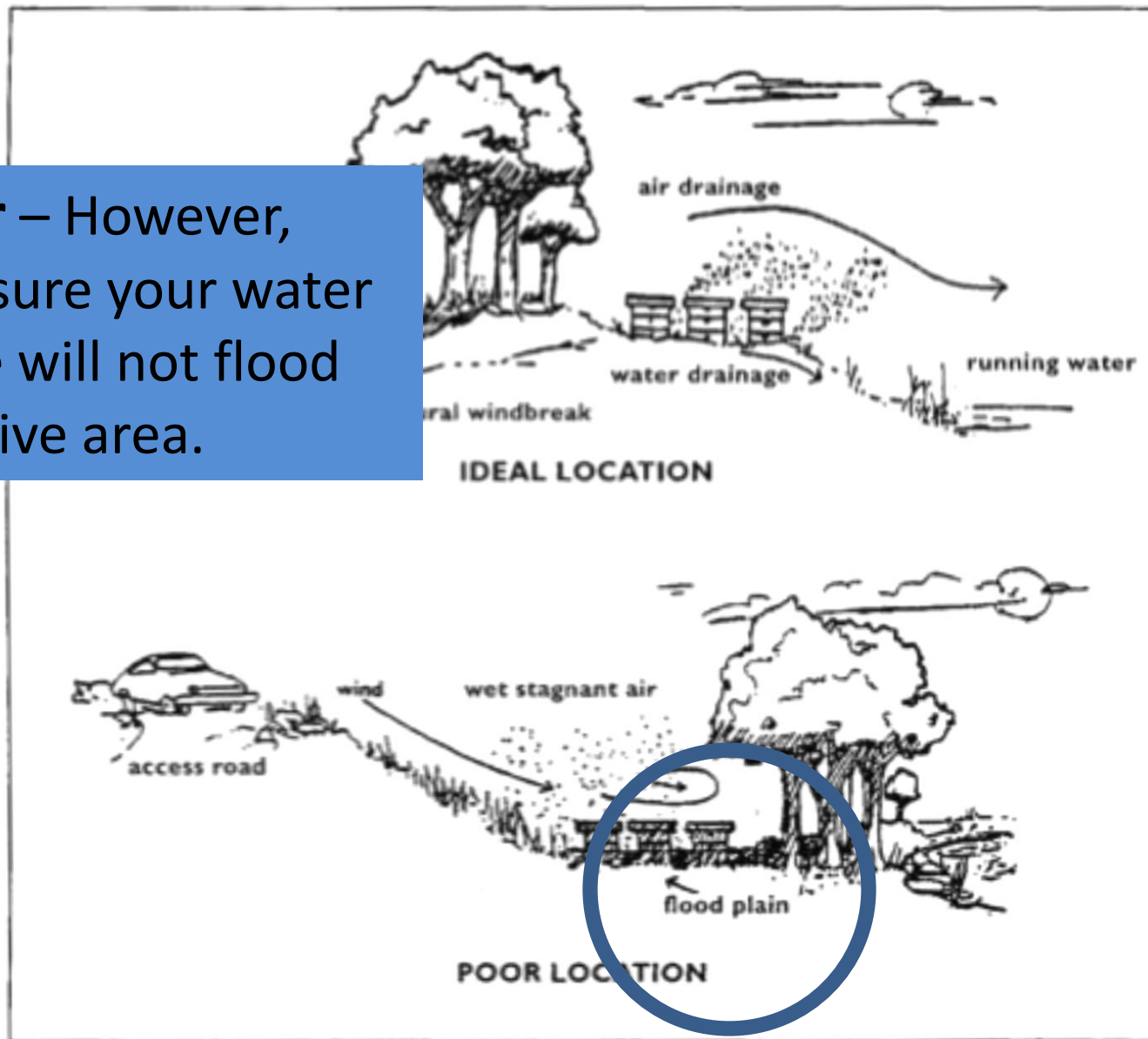


**Water** - this is where you may run into problems with neighbors. Your bees may go to their swimming pool, air conditioner, birdbaths, dog water or leaky faucet, if you don't provide water first.





**Water** – However, make sure your water source will not flood your hive area.



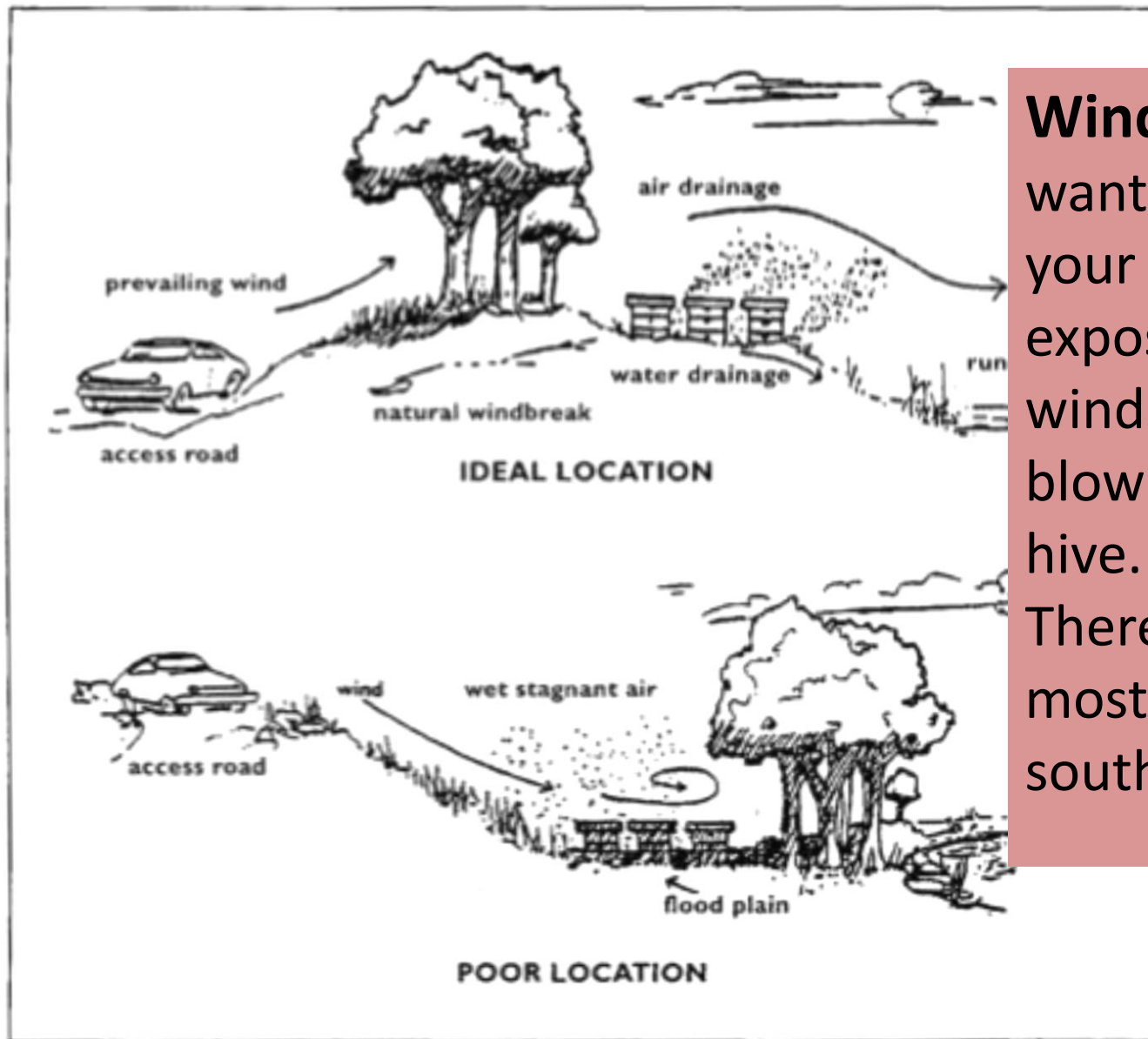
# High ground





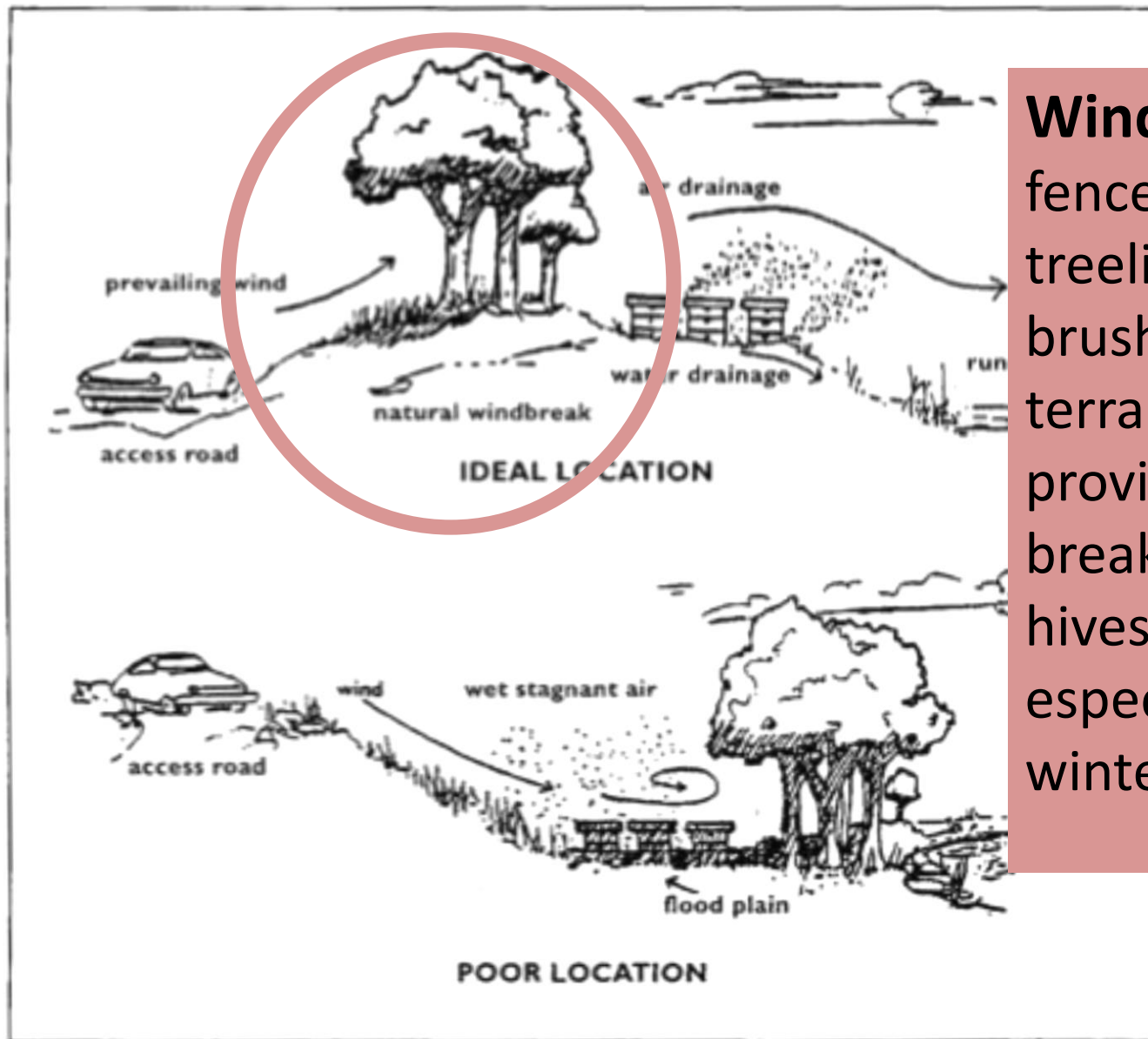


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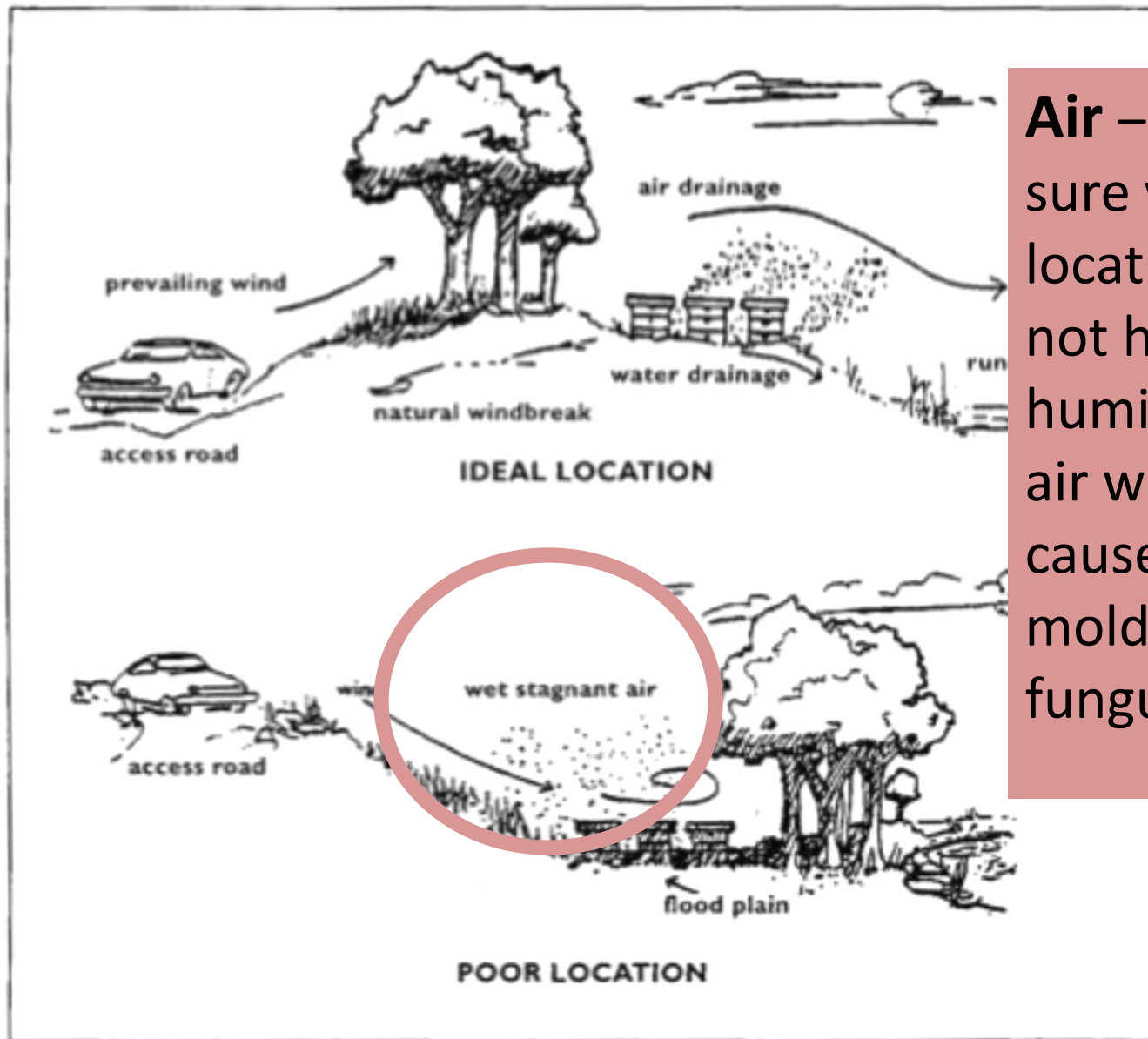
**Wind** - you want to protect your hive from exposure to winds that will blow INTO the hive. Therefore, most hives face south/SE.

Best Apiary Characteristics from *The Beekeepers Handbook*, Sammataro & Avitabile



**Wind** – Use fences, hedges, treelines, brushlines, or terrain to provide a wind break for your hives, especially in winter.

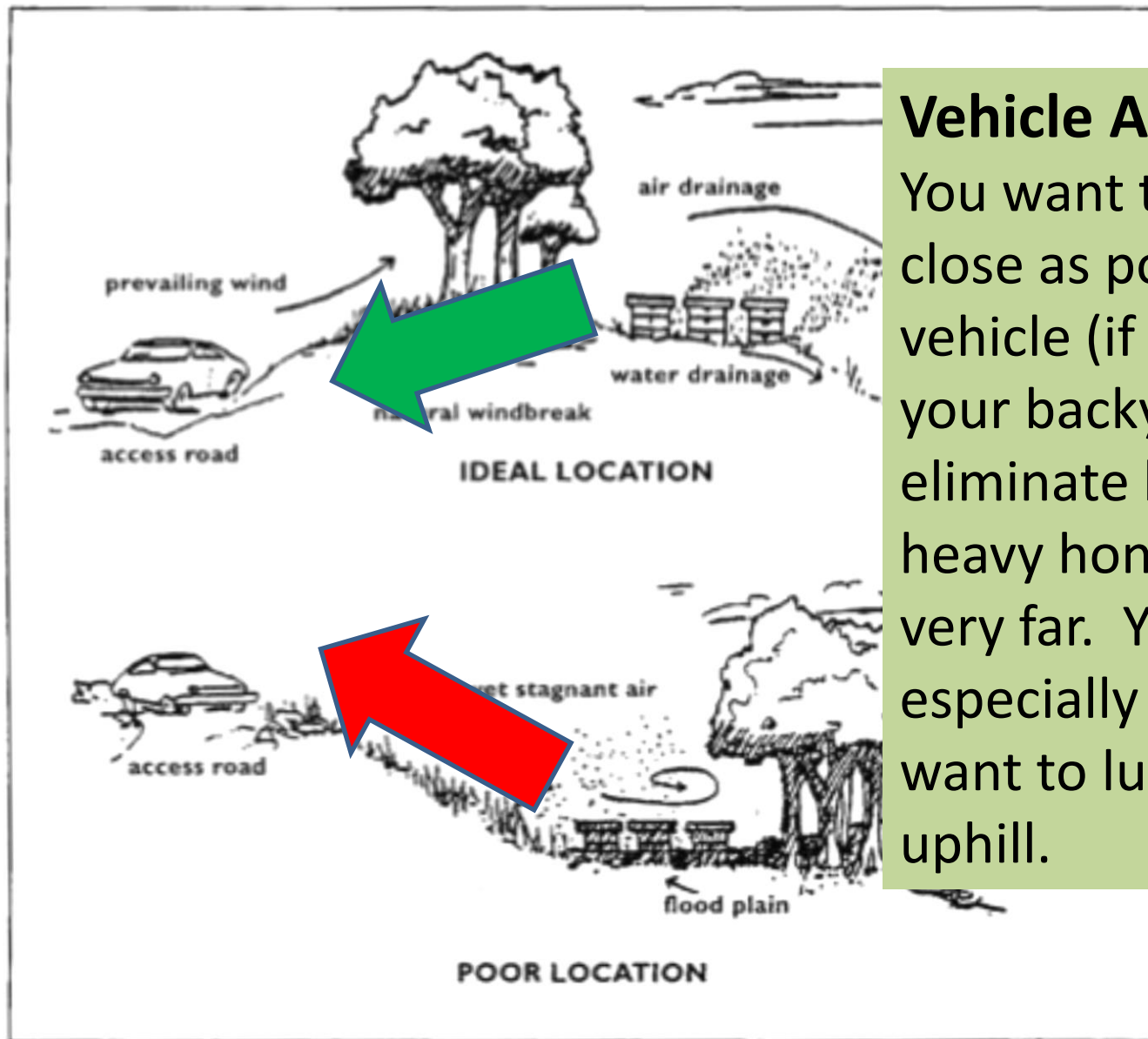
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**Air** – Make sure your location does not have humid stagnant air which can cause diseases, molds, and fungus.



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**Vehicle Access** – You want to get as close as possible by vehicle (if not in your backyard) to eliminate lugging heavy honey supers very far. You especially don't want to lug them uphill.

# Other logistics

- **Elbow room:** Leave yourself room to work around your hives. Don't jam them together.
- **Level ground:** You don't want to stumble while lifting heavy boxes.
- **Flight path:** Erect a 6-foot barricade between hives and your lot line or active foot-traffic areas in your yard to keep bees flying high and avoiding accidental collisions with you or neighbors in their takeoff and landings.



# Hive Setup

- You should work your hives from the back.
- Level the hive from side to side. If it is not level the bees will build lots of cross-comb bracing.
- Tilt the hive slightly forward to keep water from running in the entrance
- Make sure the stand is stable, will have a lot of weight when the boxes are full.
- Place a solid surface under the hive.

# Reasons to raise your hive



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**Protection** - Predators such as skunks and raccoons should be considered and there are steps that can be taken to combat them if you live in an area where they are present.

Ants can be kept at bay using ground cinnamon, ashes, oil barriers, diatomaceous earth, and other means.

Mice have a harder time accessing a raised hive.

# Reasons to raise your hive

**Protection** - Raising your hive will also help minimize the build up of snow in the winter; the bees need to be able to exit the hive on warm days in the winter for cleansing flights.

You can't fully protect your hives from fire, but you can minimize the chances by not putting your hive around stacks of old wood or in dry grass fields where a fire could spread quickly.

# Lastly ...

**Protection** from paranoid, ignorant, and irrational people.

- *Out of sight is out of mind.*
- Vandalism must be considered; don't place a hive where the general public has access to it. Try to put your hive somewhere out of the way or out of sight to reduce or remove the risk. Make sure your hive is on private property that you either own or have permission to use.

# Nuc(leus) hives



# Nuc advantages

- **Includes all ages of bees and brood, and their own queen, when acquired**
- **Usually reared by an experienced owner**
- **Owner usually available for questions**
- **Already assembled**
- ***May* produce honey by end of season if acquired early enough**



# **Nuc/single disadvantages**

- **Old equipment could harbor AFB**
- **Comb could be old, need replacing**
- **Equipment may be of different types, sizes**
- **Honey could be diseased**
- **Queen could be old or of poor quality**
- **Could have mites, small hive beetles**



# Packages



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# Package advantages

- **Easy for beginner to work (fewer bees)**
- **More adult bees than a nuc**
- **No brood diseases**
- **Replacements easily obtained**
- **Available in 2, 3, 4, 5-lb. units, with or without queens**

# Package disadvantages

- Queen stressed, could be injured
- **\*\*\*\* Dependent on weather \*\*\*\***
- No eggs/brood until queen starts to lay;  
at least 21 days until new adults emerge
- Must be fed heavily to draw comb
- Could have pests
- Researchers: 1-year failure rate HIGH

# Swarms



# Swarm advantages

- **Interesting**
- **Bees to augment weak colonies, make nucs, or start new colonies**
- **Extra wax and honey from removed combs**

# Swarm disadvantages

- **Queen is old.**
- **Queen may be hard to capture**
- **Bees could be Africanized**
- **Bees could be mite-, SHB-infested**
- **Will have to assess queen health, colony health and possibly medicate**
- **Can be labor-intensive with an unsuccessful outcome**



Questions?