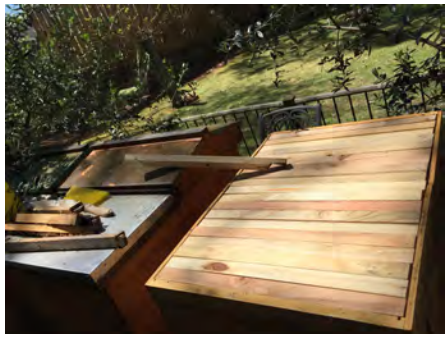
Seeking converts ... Top-bar, anyone?

Last year, the hives of **Apiopolis** were **transfigured:** all three ***vertically-oriented Langstroth hives*** (*2 stacked deeps + 2 supers on top*) were converted to ***horizontally-oriented top-bar hives*** (one *deep / super* was joined side-to-side with another *deep / super* and the middle wall was removed). Each hive was then a single rectangular box (20"wide X 17"tall X 28"deep), ready for top-bars and a roof.

The **conversion** webpage provides additional information and references on **top-bar** beekeeping, as well as a pictorial display of the conversion process. The intent was to use existing **Langstroth hive** woodware to convert to **top-bar.** Moreover, although one hive was configured as a **Kenyan style top-bar** (inner wall sloping sides), that required a bit more work which, according to many beekeepers, may may offer no real advantage to the simpler **Tanzanian style top-bar** (vertical walls).

As anyone who has been an amateur beekeeper for more than a few seasons knows, with **Langstroth hives** one quickly accumulates an inventory of *out-of-active-use* woodware and waxware (supers, frames, foundation, comb, etc.) that must be cleaned and repaired and stored properly if it is to be used later that season or in the next year. In addition, harvesting of honey using centrifugal extraction of wired-foundation, framed honeycomb requires equipment which must be periodically borrowed or else bought and cleaned and maintained in working order. There's an old adage**:** *People get into beekeeping because of the bees, and get out of beekeeping because of the honey* (harvest can be hot, heavy, sticky work).

Commercial beekeepers, if not solely earning a living by providing pollination services, seek maximization of honey yield, and measure success by the 55 gallon drum. A greater challenge for the amateur beekeeper, however, is to figure out how to manage a small backyard apiary such that it doesn't become a messy chore that is abandoned for other pursuits after a few years **...** ***sustainability***, it's called.


A driving motivation for **top-bar** beekeeping is to utilize elegant minimalism to impose a structure allowing inspection and selective harvest of comb, while letting the bees do the rest. Recently, after a visit to local purveyor of beekeeping supplies (Foxhound Bee Company), a finishing touch was added to one of the **top-bar** hives in **Apiopolis** (see **here**)**:** *one-piece-wedge*, solid wood top-bars (see pics) now provide the fixed guidelines for comb attachment. The hive has become simply an empty wooden box with an entrance; ***all internal construction is done by the honeybee colony itself***.


To ***convert*** existing **Langstroth** woodware to a **top-bar hive**, do this**:**

1) Set 2 *deep hive bodies* side-by-side.
2) Place 2 supers on top.
3) Cut out middle wall to yield a single cavity box.
4) Use plywood sheets to join boxes together, front, back, and sides.
5) Place *one-piece-wedge top-bars* on top.
... add bees.

Honey can be harvested whenever sufficient honeycombs are filled by **cut, crush-and-strain** method or else packaged as cut-comb honey. **The harvest is pristine, freshly-made product, from the wax cells to the honey in the comb**.