



Bees at The Shipyards

The Bees at the Shipyards Project provides a great home for the fascinating honeybees busy at work bringing nectar and pollen back to their hive.

By keeping honeybee colonies at The Shipyards, we help the local honeybee population, promote a greener city through pollination of our parks & gardens, and produce delicious local North Vancouver Urban honey.

Having our bees visible in a safe viewing environment provides a unique educational opportunity for our guests to learn about the fascinating world of the honeybee and their importance to both the environment and our food supply. (Did you know that honeybees pollinate one third of the food we eat including berries, fruits, and even feed for livestock such as clover and alfalfa.)

The Bees at the Shipyards Project is made possible by support from Shipyards Development Ltd, Main Street Honey Shoppe, and the City of North Vancouver.

Our bees are the western honeybees with the scientific name, *Apis mellifera* of the race *Apis mellifera ligustica* known as the Italian honeybee. These bees are known for their golden brown colour, their gentleness, and their tendency to produce populous colonies and hence large honey production (under the right conditions).

Each colony can have from 50,000 to 80,000 bees in the spring and summer. A colony typically contains a single (fertile) queen, about 300 drones (male bees) and the rest are (unfertile female) worker bees. The Queens only task is to lay eggs of which she can lay up to 2,000 eggs per day. The drones only task to go on mating flights and mate with a Queen from another colony. The worker bees essentially do all of the work in the colony from cleaning, to nursing larvae, feeding and grooming the Queen, producing wax, processing honey and pollen, guarding the hive, to foraging for pollen and nectar.

DID YOU KNOW?

To produce 1 kg of honey:

- Worker bees gather 5 kg of nectar from 5 million flowers
- Make 70,000 trips (approx 100,000 km)
- Takes 7,000 foragers one day to collect nectar

What are those bees doing on their foraging trips all day long?

Bees must forage and collect 4 basic compounds for the honeybee colony to thrive:

1. Nectar - Collected from certain flowering plants and then processed and stored in the hive. Honey is the energy source for bees and is used both for day to day tasks in the hive and for foraging. Extra honey is stored in the hive to provide a food supply to sustain the colony during periods where no external food source is available, such as in the winter months in temperate climates.
2. Pollen - Pollen is the nutrient source for honeybees, containing protein, vitamins, minerals and lipids. Pollen is required for larval growth and development, as well as for adult development and maintenance.
3. Water - Water is of great importance to the colony being necessary for the development of larvae and for the proper functioning of tissues and organs of adult bees. Water also plays a major role in temperature and humidity regulation within the hive.
4. Propolis - Propolis is a composite of resins from various plants, in particular poplar trees in BC. Propolis has a sticky consistency and has a broad spectrum of anti-microbial action. Propolis is used to protect the hive against pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. It is also used to seal up cracks and unwanted openings in the hive.



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Since bees are vegetarians and are only foraging on specific plants, they are not interested in coming to your barbeque (unlike wasps). Given the gentle nature of Italian honeybees, they are not interested in stinging unless they or their hive are threatened. Bees pay a heavy price by stinging as they can only sting once and then they die. If a honeybee lands on you, she will just be resting and will fly off.

We hope you enjoy watching our bees at work.

For more information about honeybees, healthy honeybee products and the Bees in the City program please check out our website: www.mainstreethoney.com