



# SHOW ME THE HONEY

INTRODUCING HIVES INTO YOUR CLUB







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Golf courses have a reputation for being “green deserts,” due to the lack of biodiversity and pollinators.



However, with help from programs like Operation Pollinator, superintendents have begun working to bring diversity back to their courses through butterfly gardens and natural areas. While this is a fantastic step forward, we tend to forget about bees. Bees have also earned an unfortunate reputation as merciless stinging pests. For this reason alone, many do not want to invite bees into their neighborhoods, courses, and common areas.

What many don't know is that the average honey bee is quite docile, only stinging when provoked. Bees can only deliver one sting to humans, as they will perish after that sting.



## WHY KEEP HONEY BEES?

Honey bees are responsible for pollinating over \$30 million worth of crops each year in the US.

They have the potential to make trees and plants have bigger, more plentiful blooms, and fruit trees will yield larger, more flavorful fruit. When you invite bees into your course you are helping increase bee populations, bit by bit. They have been on this planet for over 30 million years, but in the last few decades honey bees have seen a drastic drop in population numbers due to pollution, pesticides, and diseases. Without honey bees, everything stops. They pollinate the crops that feed us and the animals that we use for meat and dairy, as well as the cotton that we use for clothing and other textiles. By introducing 10 hives (each hive contains 20,000-80,000 bees) you are helping preserve life as we know it.

Members will delight in knowing that by keeping bees, you are taking an environmentally friendly approach to maintaining your club. While bee hives may not be as visually interesting as butterfly gardens, they do produce honey, allowing you to provide a novelty product to members.

## MEET THE BEES

Honey bees are eusocial. Adult bees are divided into a queen, female workers and male drones.



### THE WORKERS

All worker bees are female, and have many different jobs throughout their lifetime. The typical lifespan of a worker bee is roughly six weeks during active seasons. They will live longer in winter, surviving for 4-8 months.

A worker's responsibilities include various tasks within the hive. At this stage of development, worker bees are referred to as house bees, they will maintain the cleanliness and temperature of the hive, nurse larvae, attend to the queen and build the hive. In the last weeks of their lives their duties involve work outside of the hive as field bees. Field bees will travel over two miles to find the ingredients used to make honey.



### THE QUEEN

Only one queen lives in a given hive. She is the largest bee in the colony, and is the only female with fully developed ovaries. The queen's primary purposes are to produce chemical scents that help regulate the unity of the colony and to lay eggs. She is capable of producing more than 1,500 eggs a day at 30-second intervals. That many eggs are more than her body weight!

The bees pay close attention to the queen, tending to her every need, as she is incapable of tending to her own basic needs. Her attendants feed, groom, and remove the queen's excrement from the hive.



### THE DRONES

Making up a relatively small part of a hive's population, drones are the only male bees in the colony. Drones lack stingers, as their only purpose in life is mating with queens. Mating occurs outside of the hive, often about a mile away, and roughly 300 feet in the air. Once the queens have mated, the drones die. As cool weather begins setting in, mating season comes to a close. Any males who have not mated will be expelled from the hive by the females. Their large appetites are not welcome during the winter season, when food in the hive is scarce.



## HIVE PLACEMENT

Hive placement is crucial for the survival of the bees. The best place for placing hives is an out-of-play area that can be easily accessed by our beekeeper, with

- ☞ **good drainage**
- 💧 **nearby water source**
- ☀️ **partial sunlight**
- 🌀 **minimal wind.**

We will meet with you prior to installing your hives to help you find the best location, as filling all the criteria may not be possible.

### THIRSTY BEES

You may be aware that bees will travel for miles to collect nectar and pollen, but they also need to collect water to dilute too-thick honey, and to regulate the temperature of the hive. Bees will seek out the closest water source, and if that happens to be your club's water station, you might have some problems. Put out a pie pan filled with gravel and topped off with water, or an automatic pet water bowl near your hives to give bees a close water source.



## BEE FRIENDLY PLANTS

By planting bee friendly plants, you are helping keep your bees fed and the environment healthy! Add these plants to butterfly gardens, containers, or within the landscape itself. Bees will travel over two miles to find flowers and other plants to collect pollen and nectar, so there's no need to surround your hives with these plants.

Salvia • Hyssop • Firebush  
Zinnias • Cleome • Cosmos  
Dahlias • Snapdragons  
Geraniums • Foxgloves

## EACH VISIT TO THE HIVE

Each week we will check in with the hives.

These visits have many different purposes as the year goes on.

The beekeeper will check the hive for population numbers, the brood pattern, and the wellbeing of the queen and her eggs. If everything is normal, you have a strong, healthy colony! We also check the temperature of the hive and the productivity of the bees, as those are also indicators of a hive's health.

Bees are susceptible to several different diseases, so the beekeeper will keep an eye out for any signs of malady and medicate the hive when necessary.

During honey flow season (when one or more major sources of nectar are in bloom), the hive will be checked to ensure that the bees have enough honey supers to fill with honey, and removing unused supers to prevent pests moving in.

When honey is not being produced in high quantities, the bees must be fed to keep the hive healthy and happy. A honey super is used to collect the surplus honey, which will be the honey you will receive. Not all honey is taken from a hive, the bees produce honey to fill the deep-hive body, which serves as a nursery and food pantry for them. In places that have cold winters, hives require more than one deep-hive body to keep the bees fed for the winter, but in Florida only one is required, which allows you to get more honey.







## THE SWEET BENEFITS

When you sign on with bees, the honey will follow. A productive hive can create up to 40 gallons in 11 months.

However, there are a lot of factors that can affect the amount honey the bees are producing, such as extreme weather, temperature, hive location, disease, pests, and pesticide exposure.

Historically, honey has been utilized for a wide variety of uses, including soothing coughs, boosting memory, relieving seasonal allergies, killing bacteria, and resolving dandruff! Today we generally tend to think of it as a fancy sweetener, despite the medicinal properties.

Honey can have a lot of uses on the golf course as well, maybe not in a traditional sense, but think more along the lines of marketing. Nothing says novelty quite like selling honey that was produced at your club. Club-specific honey will have its own flavor, unrivaled by the honey purchased in stores.

Whether your honey is being sold in pro shops, given as prizes at tournaments, or used as favors for a Ladies Tea event, members will treasure having a unique product that came from your club.

FOR MORE  
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