

KPL Green

About our Beehives



Why do we have beehives?

Bees, native bees and honey bees, provide crucial pollination services for both edible and non-edible plants in our community and our world.

Our honey bee hives are part of our KPL Green initiative: a series of projects designed to promote nutritional literacy and help us learn and grow together toward a more sustainable community.

Most importantly, our hives will serve as a platform for education and conversation about the importance of all bees and other pollinators.

Our two beehives are located on top of Central Library's green roof and visible from the second floor of the library.

What about the honey?

Bees transform nectar from plants into honey. One hive can make over 200 pounds of honey. Over the winter, the bees will eat the honey because it's full of nutrients and a great source of energy as it is full of sugars. Each winter 80 pounds are left in the hive for the bees.



Kitchener
Public Library

Honey bee safety



Ontario honey bees rarely sting. Most stings are from wasps, not honey bees. As wild creatures, honey bees may sting if their hive is attacked or, as a last resort, if they feel threatened.

The flight path of bees from the hive is usually in an upward arc away from the hive. Our two hives are elevated well above people's heads and are out of the path of humans. In fact, there are hundreds of licensed beehives throughout Kitchener, with many in the downtown core. Our two hives will not pose any additional risk to residents.

Who looks after the bees?

Beehives require professional care. Our hives are regularly inspected and monitored by a local apiarist from **Best for Bees**.

What can I do to help?

There are a number of ways you can support local bees:

- Plant pollinator-friendly gardens especially with native flowering plants.
- Plant flowering plants that bloom in all growing seasons.
- Don't use pesticides or insecticides.
- Rake gently (bumblebees hibernate underground).
- Leave bare patches in your yard for tunnelling bees to make their home.
- Make water available to birds and insects, such as a bird bath with stones or marbles, to give the bees a place to stand while drinking.



Honey bees by the numbers



- Each hive can contain from **10,000 to 60,000 honey bees.**
 - Female honey bees are called worker bees and they make up most of the bees in hive.
 - Male honey bees are called drones and cannot sting.
- There is only **one queen** per hive.
 - The queen will not leave the hive except for one week of mating at the beginning of her life and if she swarms.
- The queen will mate with up to **15 drones**, but none from her hive.
- The queen lives **two to five years** and lays up to **2,000 eggs** every day. She takes a break in winter!
- Aside from the queen, honey bees have short life spans, living only live **six weeks to three months.**
- When bees die, their bodies are removed from the hive. You may see some dead bees around the hive. Don't worry, this is natural!
- When it's raining, too cold or too dark the bees prefer to stay safe and cozy inside the hive.

Know your bees

The library has many resources on bees, beekeeping, and other pollinators including books, e-books, audiobooks, and DVDs.

Questions?

Email askkpl@kpl.org.