

How to Build Your Bee Club



What is a Bee Club?

A Bee Club is a dedicated group of students and organization/community members who intend to educate, share, and take action about the health of our pollinators! A bee club does not need live bees, only the mission and intent to share the buzz!



Why Now? A Demonstrated Need.

- Declining bee populations have been documented by scientists around the world. The Bee Cause Project addresses this issue by providing teaching tools such as curriculum guides, lesson plans, Bee Grants, and support to schools and organizations.
- With each Bee Program, students and community members are educated about the issue. Most develop a sense of compassion and responsibility for our pollinators.
- Current research and literature address the loss of connection between children and nature. The honey bee is an excellent stepping-off point for learning about how interconnected we are through life cycles, food chains, and our impact and dependence on the environment.
- The purpose of the Bee Club is to build and grow on these buzzworthy principles. Much like a honey bee hive, it is easier to work as a team! These club members work together to learn, share their bee wisdom, and work on projects to better the relationship between people and pollinators.

Roles and Responsibilities:

If you have received a Bee Grant in the past, some of these roles may sound familiar! These recommended roles are easily adjusted whether a program decides to welcome live bees, or learn from a distance.

➤ BEE ADVOCATE

The Bee Advocate is the program leader. The advocates may be novices, but they are ready to learn and build community around the bees. The Bee Advocate is a critical role serving as the main point of contact for members, administration, staff, and community. It is recommended this person is a more permanent fixture in the organization or school, such as a staff member or educator, in order for the Bee Club to grow year over year!

➤ BEE MENTOR

The Bee Mentor is your connection to the wild world of bees. This person is usually an active beekeeper. If you have live bees, a beekeeper will take a much more active role in managing campus hives. Otherwise, establish a relationship this person to open the door for in-person visits, knowledge sharing, and potentially, observing bees in a portable travel hive.

➤ BEE CLUB MEMBERS

The heart of your Bee Club is of course the members! In the case study included in this document, a school built their first Bee Club out of a science class. It then expanded into a group of students who wanted to manage actual hives on campus. Whatever their level of involvement, these members are ready to learn and share knowledge!

➤ COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

Support from your community is key. Start with your Bee Mentor, local beekeeper community, and Beekeeper Association. Then we encourage you to connect with 4-H Extension Agents, professors, and local farmers. These community members work in alongside the bees and are often able to share how pollinators play a role in their daily lives and work.

Bee Club Initiatives:

- Complete the “Bee” a Friend to Pollinators Lesson Plan
- Hold a school wide “Name the Queen Bee” contest for a real or fictional hive
- Build a “Buzzworthy” Library Corner dedicated to pollinator books and art
- Learn how bees survive in your region with an Adopt-a-Bee Initiative
- Connect with another Bee Grant Program as pen pals to share experiences
- Host a community wide Pay-it-Forward Fundraiser
- Create or build upon existing pollinator habitat
- Visit a local park, farm, or apiary to observe the impact of pollinators outdoors
- Connect with a beekeeper and learn first hand from a professional
- Celebrate “bee” themed days such as Honeybee Day (August 15), Honey Month (September), Earth Day (April 22), and Pollinator Month (June) to name a few
- Host a Pollinator Summer Camp
- Track and compare seasonal pollinator activity
- Post fun bee facts around campus
- Host a Honey Tasting event with a local beekeeper
- Research and share native perennial plants best suited to pollinator health
- Advocate on a local level with your municipality about pollinator health and habitat
- Educate neighbors about proper pesticide use and how it affects pollinators

Bee Club Case Study:

Ashley Hall School, Charleston, South Carolina: Ashley Hall was one of the first schools to receive an Observation Hive in Charleston. This school already had pollinator curriculum when they added an Observation Hive. They had a dedicated Science Lab teacher in their Lower School who wanted to expand the pollinator curriculum and applied for a Bee Grant. Their observation hive was installed in the science lab. All of the students visit the lab weekly so they were able to observe the hive on a regular basis.

The science teacher was able to observe the bees day to day and became fascinated with them over the first year. She saw the students’ interest and knew there was potential for more. The second grade class studied insects as part of their science curriculum. Now they had their own bee colony to

observe. With this, classroom teachers started to learn about the Observation Hive and used the honey bee as a focus of their insect study.

Building on the students’ enthusiasm, the science teacher then asked another teacher to join her in creating a “Bee Club.” The purpose of their particular Bee Club was to extend the in classroom learning into the practice of beekeeping through an outdoor hive on the roof of their school. The Bee Club was created to support the students in taking care of this hive, learning how urban bees forage for food, and how they as people affect their ecosystem on a hive level.

This club formation has been a learning process for the teachers, but the Bee Club has been so successful that it has gone from one session per year to two sessions and even spurred a Butterfly Club and a special summer camp week! There are now two outdoor hives on campus, which allow the students to don bee suits to do hive inspections, care for the bees, and even harvest honey. An Upper School Biology teacher became interested and was able to get a Top Bar Hive with another grant from The Bee Cause Project. The ability to access two different types of traditional working hives opened up a vast array of possibilities for investigations and experiences.

Ashley Hall next extended their observational learning into the preschool program. Through Pay-it-Forward honey sales, they installed an observation hive in the preschool next, extending observational learning to students as soon as they begin school. It has proven to be an inspiration and an excellent provocation for all kinds of learning and constructive play. The students across campus now connect the bees with the plants and the plants with the food chain. They don’t fear honey bees and know not to swat!

Ashley Hall is an example of a school that has leveraged pollinator curriculum, interested educators, a single Observation Hive, and then a Bee Club from one classroom into a campus-wide program. Although Ashley Hall does have live bees, the purpose of their program is to build community and knowledge around honey bees. The grade levels now work together to educate and grow as a hive!





ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE!

Oftentimes pollinators are misunderstood even though they work hard for us and our food! It only takes one conversation to spark a lifetime of exploration. Begin the conversation with these fun facts!



The honey bee has been around for about 30 million years.



Honey bees are one of the few bees with hairy compound eyes.



The honey bee's wings stroke over 200 times a second! This fast motion is what creates the distinctive honey bee buzz.



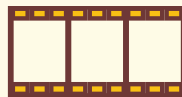
During honey production periods, spring and summer, a worker bee's life span is about 6 weeks



The average honey bee will actually make only one twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime...About the size of your pinky fingernail.



Bees die after they sting! The stinger has a barb that is attached to the abdomen; so, when they sting they lose part of their abdomen and die.



Honey bees can perceive movements that are separated by 1/300th of a second. Humans can only sense movements separated by 1/50th of a second. Were a bee to enter a cinema, it would be able to differentiate each individual movie frame being projected.



Queens will lay almost 2,000 eggs a day at a rate of 5 or 6 a minute. Between 75,000-200,000 eggs are laid per year

For any questions about growing your Bee Club, please don't hesitate to reach out to info@thebecause.org.