

Beekeeping in Metropolitan Boston

THE BUZZ ABOUT URBAN APICULTURE

Apiculture takes flight at several Boston Properties buildings in the Metro Boston area.



In 2013 Boston Properties partnered with Best Bees, a Boston-based full-service beekeeping operation. Hives have been installed at four rooftop locations: Atlantic Wharf, Prudential Center, 100 Federal Street and Kendall Center. These rooftops provide ideal habitats for bees, which prefer ecologically diverse, open space with sunshine and minimal tree cover.

Across the country, honeybee populations are suffering severe population reduction caused by disease, loss of habitat and the use of pesticides. The most recent threat to bees is an outbreak of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which can cause sudden and catastrophic die-offs of bee colonies.

Preservation of honey bees is tremendously important to the natural environment and the economy. Bees pollinate more than 100 fruit and vegetable crops that contribute more than \$15 billion annually to the economy of the United States.

Urban apiculture is especially important in the fight to save the honeybee because bees in cities have a higher overwinter survival rate and as a result are able to produce more honey than their suburban or rural counterparts. This is due to the urban heat island effect and the comparatively low rate of pesticide use in urban ecosystems.

Bees also play an important health role for city dwellers. They support food sovereignty by facilitating the pollination of urban agriculture and help to improve access to nutritious local food in areas that are often inhabited by low-income or at-risk communities. Eating local honey has an added benefit for allergy sufferers. Small amounts of pollen ingested from local honey can reduce irritation during allergy season.

The sweetest benefit of all is homemade organic honey. In partnership with Best Bees, Boston Properties is producing over 100 liquid pounds per year.



“One tactic for integrating healthy and productive workspaces into the urban environment is to convert barren zones of commercial rooftops into platforms for agriculture and renewable energy generation. With the beekeeping project, we’re going beyond environmental impact mitigation to regenerate and improve urban ecosystems.”

– Ben Myers,
Sustainability Manager
Boston Properties