

Bee Garden for Townies - Chelsea Flower Show 2007



The first garden created for the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) at the Chelsea Flower Show shows how to create a productive and safe area for bees in an urban environment.

Gardeners need bees and bees need gardens

Without bees there would be very few flowering crops. Today 60% of our food plants depend on bees especially tree fruit, soft fruit, salad crops, beans and pears. No bees – no healthy diet.

The Garden for an Urban Beekeeper, designed by Philippa O'Brien, introduces a new initiative by the BBKA to actively promote urban beekeeping as so much bee forage has been lost in many areas of the countryside.



Already there are beehives hidden away on rooftops, behind garden walls and on allotment plots in the heart of most British cities and towns. They provide a vital service to local gardeners, collecting pollen and nectar from tree-lined streets, local parks and gardens and from railway embankments covered in ivy and bramble.

Philippa O'Brien, the garden's designer, said: "When kept properly, bees are good neighbours. It is however essential to select good tempered bees and to place the hive in a dry, sunny spot".

The BBKA bee-friendly roof garden at Chelsea is stocked with fruit, flowers and vegetables. As well as lavenders, scabious and wisteria there are fruit trees growing up a wall, currants and gooseberries that have been recently pollinated and summer vegetable crops that will require the services of the bees before they set fruit.

Central to the garden is the Beekeeper's Shed roofed with sedums to provide forage for the bees and stocked with clean protective clothing, hive equipment and honey.



The position
hives in the

of the
garden

show how crucial it is for the bees to have a clear flight path out and into the hive. The two metre-high trellis demonstrates the importance of pushing bees above head height before they leave the garden.

The BBKA garden would not be created without the support of Vann Plastic Ltd, Q Lawns Ltd, Stuart Garden Architecture, Fermi, Parterre, Capel Manor College and [Philippa O'Brien Garden Design](#).