

Town of Montgomery Conservation Advisory Council
The Honey Bee Project
2011 Education Award

In January 2011, following a warning and a call to action by the United Nations concerning the northern hemisphere honey bees' dire condition, the Community Garden of the Town of Montgomery, an action project of the Town's Conservation Advisory Council, received permission from the Town Board to establish a bee station (apiary) near the 66-plot community garden at Benedict Farm Park.

Local beekeepers worked with novice beekeepers who were already garden members. Bee hives were purchased, painted and constructed during the winter. In the spring, a nuc, or new colony with queen and workers was purchased. A second nuc was donated by a local beekeeper. An area of the park was fenced and warning signs saying "Bees Working!" were posted. The new hives were installed with volunteer help from community garden members.

Garden members were trained in hands-on bee hive maintenance by experienced beekeepers. The youngest volunteer, Cristiana, a home schooled fourth grader, wrote a four page essay, "The Life and Times of the Honey Bee," which was read at one of the garden's pot luck dinners.

The purpose of the bee project is four fold. First, given the declining condition of honey bee populations in North America and Europe, the project is hoping to help counteract the loss of bees through Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Our aim is to physically reintroduce honey bees into the environment. Second, the bee project intends to help educate the local population as to the importance of honey bees in the pollination of food crops and other plants and to publicize the dangerous condition of declining bee colonies. Third, the bees are maintained to help provide a healthy environment for the two acres which now constitute the Town of Montgomery Community Garden. Fourth, after the colonies have displayed survivability, we hope to harvest honey crops for the garden members.

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