

Green Impact Excellence Scheme Case Study

Biodiversity and Bees

Background

Institution: SEACAMS, Swansea University

Team Name: BeeCAMS

No. of years participating in Green Impact: 3 years

2013-14 Award Level: Excellence

Highlights

- *Introduction of honey bees and hives onto the Swansea University campus.*
- *Designation of a site for a wildflower meadow on campus.*
- *Raising awareness through web page and honey bee event.*

Description

Through the sustainability team at Swansea University, 'BeeCAMS' (a Green Impact team made up of Anouska Mendzil, Christine Gray, Ian Dodkins, and Chiara Bertelli), we we're put in contact with a local beekeeper Lynne Berezanski, keen to find space for two beehives, thus introducing honey bees to the University campus. The first beehives were introduced in January 2014, and growing interest has led to six beehives in total being relocated to the campus. Some of the hives are owned by staff working at the University and the others are owned by individuals outside of the University, part of local beekeeping societies, whom still tend to and look after the bees. The BeeCAMS team helped to coordinate the relocation of the hives, the access for off-site owners to the hives and the safety precautions needed to protect the hives.

One of the most important things honey bees and other pollinating insects need is a supply of flowers for food. Anyone can help encourage bees to their gardens by planting 'bee-friendly' plants, but it is vital to know what to plant. BeeCAMS wanted to provide a wildflower meadow that would be suitable for the honey bees to use a source of pollen and nectar, also essential for honey production. By liaising with the grounds team of Swansea University, a site has been designated for a wildflower meadow, found behind the Penmaen building. The next task was to find out what to plant and to find a supplier. Advice was sought from Dr Dan Forman, an ecologist within the Biosciences department at the University who is also involved in the Welsh government's Action Plan for Pollinators in Wales. The seed mix chosen for the wildflower meadow contains species such as poppies (*Papaver rhoes*), borage (*Borago officinalis*), cornflowers (*Centaurea cyanis*) and goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*), also recognised on the RHS 'Perfect for Pollinators' list. The seed mix contains about 26 species of wildflowers that flower from May to October and will be a potential food source for bees and other insect species which will also help to boost the biodiversity of the Swansea University campus.

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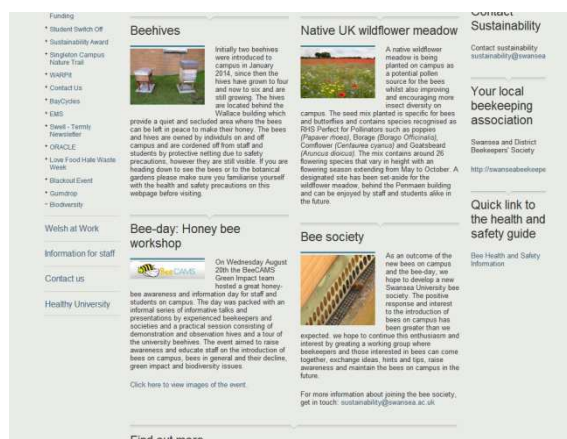
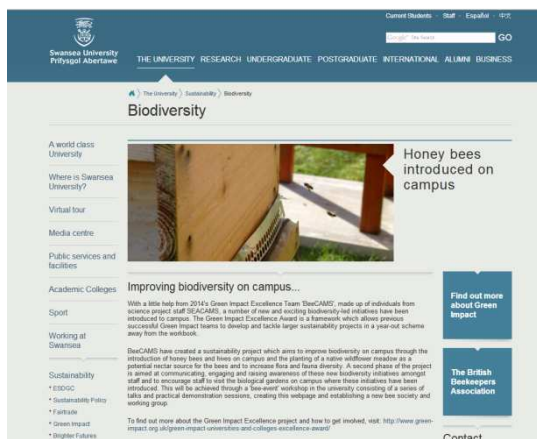
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To inform staff and students about the bees on campus, a new webpage on the Swansea University website has been created as part of the BeeCAMS Green Impact Excellence Scheme (<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/sustainability/biodiversity/>). It was important to include details about the location of the bee hives as well as health and safety implications, but also educational information about honey bees and useful contacts for local beekeeping organisations. The BeeCAMS Green Impact Excellence scheme was rounded off with a honey bee awareness day to inform people about the project and future plans for the University to purchase and look after more bee hives that would be housed in other sites around the campus. The event was well attended with members of staff and bee keepers from local associations attending. The day consisted of a few talks about bees and pollinators, bee keeping and an informal question and answer session for the people attending that were interested in keeping their own bees. There was a fantastic array of displays including a display case with live honey bees showing a cross-section of a typical beehive, and honey for sale from local beekeepers. The day was rounded off with a tour of the beehives on campus.

Photograph



Above, one of the first hives to be relocated to Swansea University, owned by Lynne Berezanski from the West Glamorgan Bee-Keepers Association



Above, screen shots of the Swansea University web pages created about the BeeCams project.

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Above left, Julian Caruana giving a talk about honey bees and beekeeping. Above right, some of the display material and honey for sale provided by local beekeepers.



Above, the BeeCAMS team with two guest beekeepers, from right to left - Julian Caruana, Ian Dodkins, Christine Gray, Anouska Mendzil, James Davies and Chiara Bertelli.