

ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE BIODIVERSITY BEE KEEPING PROJECT



Step 1

Initially we approached our Principal to see if this could be a whole school project. When Mr Kelleher gave us his full support, we then looked for suitable sites to keep the bees. Three sites were identified and the site deemed most suitable was the central atrium in our school. In this way the whole school could observe and learn about the bees.



Step 2.

We then discussed where and how to source and fund the start-up costs of the bees. In the course of the Green School's meetings we discovered that fifth year student Tom Haran had an invaluable source! Tom's mother is a beekeeper and was able to suggest we contact Paul O'Sullivan from Bee Supplies as a very reputable source. We sounded our project with him and he was happy to help.



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Step 3

We needed to be educated on Bee keeping and make sure that we were insured. We left these aspects to Mr O'Flynn to work on! On becoming members of County Dublin Bee Keepers Association all of our insurance concerns were dealt with, additionally this is where we met our bee saviour Rose Breslin. Rose became our bee consultant and teacher.



Step 4

Rose volunteered her time and expertise over the next few months. She gave us weekly lectures on the bees. She advised us on hive preparation and maintenance. The time and effort she put in was hugely appreciated especially as she did this for free. This whole school project is truly indebted to her.



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Step 5

Our supplies arrived! Hives, suits, food supplies and wax. Tom Haran and his father built our hive stands. We then learnt how to prepare our frames with wax for the brood boxes and Supers.



Step 6

We then weather-proofed our 'Real Deal' hives with wood stain varnish, giving it 4 coats. After that we went about educating the students, parents and staff who had some concerns over the imminent arrival of the bees.

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Step 7

Our Bee's finally arrived from Jim Donoghue of Mullingar on Friday 12th May. We were all here at 7.30am to welcome them. As the study and class windows open out onto our atrium, we had to ensure the safe orientation of our bees over the weekend. This meant all windows were closed for 48hrs while the bees learnt their route to and from the Nuc box. After this period they learnt their way and we've had the windows open since with no problems of any stray bees!



Step 8

Rose then helped us clip the wings of our new Queen bee and we relocated her and the colony from the Nuc box to their new home in our hive. They have been happy ever since. St. Michael's now has over 15 trainee beekeepers from students, to teachers to our librarian and school secretary. It's been a really inclusive successful project that we are expanding from here.

