



Press Release

Tips for beekeeping in the city: What we can learn from bees at PORR

Vienna, 16.05.2022 - Bees are hugely important for our environment. And PORR doesn't only want to remind people of this on 20 May, World Bee Day. In addition to its extensive expertise in construction, PORR has more than 470 hives at almost 50 locations. To mark the fifth birthday of the sustainability initiative bee@PORR, the company has now set up a Bee Trail in Monte Laa Park with tips for any budding beekeepers.

"The vast majority of the 32,000 or so apiarists in Austria keep bees as a sideline or hobby", explains Amir Zouhbi, Head of Real Estate and responsible for bees at PORR. Included here are private persons as well as companies that want to do something to promote sustainability and prevent bee mortality. "We know that mistakes can often happen, especially when starting out. That's why we want to pass on our knowhow from five years of bee@PORR".

After all, PORR is not only an expert in every aspect of construction. It has also been providing homes to bees as part of its initiative bee@PORR since 2017. 470 beehives at just under 50 sites ensure that everything is buzzing and humming along nicely. To mark World Bee Day on 20 May, PORR has now made a Bee Trail with five fascinating display boards at Monte Laa Park beside its headquarters in Vienna. "Sabiene", the PORR worker bee, tells children and adults how many bees live in a hive, what the life of a worker bee looks like and the other products that are made alongside honey.

Beekeeping in the city pays dividends

PORR also has tips and tricks for anyone thinking about taking up beekeeping. "Beekeeping in the city is a rewarding thing to do. Not only to do something to prevent bee death. Bees really feel at home in the city. In good locations, you can harvest up to 40 kilograms of honey per hive in Vienna - as long as there is an adequate supply of flowers", says Zouhbi. Especially in cities, bees find sources of food that simply don't exist in rural areas anymore. "One additional benefit is that you get to clear your head when beekeeping. You have to radiate calm when at the hive, which usually requires a lot of concentration. So you get to block out the stress of everyday life for 20 to 30 minutes". While the effort is certainly worthwhile, you can get a hive on a whim or as part of some publicity stunt. PORR shows the right way to do it.

Five Dos and Don'ts from five years of bee@PORR

Tip 1: Provide enough space. "Lots of people think a two-by-two metre balcony is enough. That's not true - bees and apiarists need space to move freely and feel at ease", says Zouhbi. Moreover, not every spot is suitable for a beehive. And you must also be sure to comply with the any legally stipulated distance limits to your neighbours.

Tip 2: Allow enough time. "Although honeybees are good at looking after themselves, they need the right support at the right time". As a rule of thumb, you should calculate 20 to 25 hours of work per colony per year, especially for the period between April and July. "As a company, we have learnt that the optimal set-up is two to three employees involved in looking after the bees at each site", says Zouhbi.

Tip 3: Plant wildflowers. If you want to support these industrious little gatherers, plant some wildflowers. Even small areas can have a big impact as cultivated flowers are often of little use. “A bee sanctuary garden has a mix of many different wildflowers that not only attract honeybees but also other important insects like bumblebees and butterflies. Seeds for this can be bought as mixes”, explains Zouhbi.

Tip 4: Use digital insights. For those whose hives are further away or simply like to keep in touch with their bees, there are digital solutions. PORR works with BeeAndme, which provides temperature sensors and weighing scales for beehives. Zouhbi: “This allows us to see how the colony is evolving any time at the touch of a button and to deduce how the bees are doing at that moment: a constant internal temperature of 34 degrees Celsius in the hive means, for example, that they are currently brooding - it is exciting to observe how a colony changes over the course of the year”.

Tip 5: Clarify what’s involved. “There are a lot of things you don’t think about at the beginning”, says Zouhbi. For example, insurance is highly recommended and registration in the federal consumer health system is mandatory in Austria. “Beekeeping also means a financial investment; before you decide to do it, it is best to contact a local beekeepers’ association. There you can get all the information you need to get started, get tips from experienced beekeepers or borrow expensive equipment like the honey extractor”, says Zouhbi.



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Amir Zouhbi © PORR

The press release including high-resolution images is available for download in the [PORR Newsroom](#).

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