



About 160,000 bees are presently living in Auckland's Victoria Park, near the motorway leading to the Harbour Bridge.

make The Park

Text from website www.makethepark.info

SARAH SMUTS KENNEDY AND TAARATI TAIAROA

The Park is a social sculpture formed through community participation and social action. The heart of *The Park* comprises six bench beehives located in the centre of Auckland City. Collectively, the hives have the capacity to produce 200 kilos of honey, provided the bees find enough food. Residents who help Make *the Park* by planting a Pollen Hotel for the bees and registering it on www.makethepark.info map will be invited to collect some honey at harvest time.

In order to survive, these bees need safe food sources.

Bees will forage 6.5 km for nectar and pollen. Their flight paths can reconnect private backyards, balconies, offices, berms, and public spaces into one collective social sculpture.

When people who live within the distance the bees can travel make Pollen Hotels, they help to create *The Park*. Clusters of individual Pollen Hotels become Pollen Hotspots that provide a secure food source for the six beehives overwintering in Victoria Park. When the time comes to harvest the honey, it will be given to those who have helped nurture its creation.

The six hives are positioned as a hexagon. This form is intended to elicit harmonics to support the health and wellbeing of the bees.

Pollen Hotels and Hotspots

The entire length of the western side of Darby Street in the heart of Wynyard Quarter has been transformed

into a Pollen Hotspot. Lined with wooden planter boxes – each one a Pollen Hotel full of flowers and edible plants – the street offers many square metres of food for bees. Alongside the planter boxes, thousands of New Zealand natives have been planted – canopy trees like Pohutukawa and Kowhai and lower growing plants like Harakeke (NZ flax). They are densely planted so that in Spring, they will provide an abundance of pollen and nectar for bees. The plants for this particular landscape project came from stock grown by the nursery owned and run by local iwi Ngati Whatua Orakei at Takaparawhau (Bastion Point). The nursery provides a way for local iwi to revive their connection with the land.

A Pollen Hotel is a space with a high density of flowering plants producing nectar and pollen for bees to feed on. It might be a pot plant with flowering herbs, or a fruiting lemon tree or a flower garden. It could be just a few hanging plants on a balcony or an entire vegetable garden, a planted verge, or a rose garden.

When many Pollen Hotels converge they become a Pollen Hotspot. This might be a vegetable garden surrounded by a flower garden next to a pollen-laden citrus tree. Or it might look like a street of roadside berms planted in Rosemary, lined on either side with Pohutakawa's. The Pohutakawa will flower in summer but then produces no food at all for the rest of the year. Taken together however, these plantings will supply bees with a year round food source.

When many Pollen Hotspots connect, a Pollen Park emerges. Now the bee communities can really thrive as they are able to find stable food sources all year round.

These food sources also need to be safe and not harmful to bees feeding on nectar and gathering pollen from the flowers. Bees in a safe Pollen Park do not need supplementary feeding with sugar water or corn syrup. As a result they produce excellent quality honey with real medicinal properties.

Pasture Paintings

Beneath the six hives lies a hexagonal Pasture Painting. Pasture Paintings are one idea for making a Pollen Hotel. Large circles, triangles, and lines have been hot-steamed onto roadside berms around the edge of the Waitemata and then seeded with plants like clover and lupins commonly found in pastures. These will grow over the coming months and provide food for the bees in Victoria Park. A form of pollen hotel, the Pasture Paintings have been designed and implemented by the artists; Sarah Smuts-Kennedy and Taarati Taiaroa, in collaboration with Richard Orjis.

Social Sculpture

The concept of social sculpture originated with the German artist Joseph Beuys. In the 1960's Beuys proposed that sculpture could be the community itself as it becomes active in shaping society or the environment through the use of language, thoughts, actions, and objects.

A famous example of his work is 7000 Oaks. Conceived in 1982, Beuys proposed planting 7000 sapling oaks next to 7000 1.2 metre high basalt rock markers in the city of Kassel, Germany. That year 7000 basalt rocks were dumped onto a lawn outside an exhibition building in Kassel. The Kassel community was invited to decide where the trees would be planted. After five years the 7000 rocks were finally placed next to the saplings and no longer sat outside the exhibition building. Today you can see these trees towering all over Kassel as well as New York where the project was extended by The Dia Foundation.

Who makes The Park?

People living and working in the Waitemata are encouraged to participate by plotting their pollen hotels

online, on *The Park* map. The map helps us visualise the amount of food available to our bees from our urban environment; it helps us understand the distance bees will travel; and it shows our collective action.

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Informative blogs

The Park's website offers a series of informative blogs for creating pollen hotspots and looking after bees. Topics include plants suitable for containers and small spaces; suggestions for larger scale plantings; getting your own beehive; planting by the moon; products harmful to bees and us; raw honey for health; options for bee-friendly weed control.

Art can be an effective tool for raising public awareness – do you know if that seed you just purchased has been coated with bee-killing pesticides? It is likely that the products Poncho and Gaucho, produced by Bayer, are being used in New Zealand to treat seeds. These include imidacloprid, which is one of the most common neonicotinoids and is known to harm bees. A seed supplier we talked to said he'd noticed an increase in the use of treated seeds of well over 60% in the last three years. This suggests treated seeds and plants grown from these seeds are now widely spread throughout the country. Bees harvesting nectar from these plants will be affected by the residues.

The public sculpture *The Park* is a conceptual idea that offers a framework for thinking across space; for increasing our perception of relationships between nature and man; for transforming private space into a public artwork and individual actions into collective outcomes. If you make a Pollen Hotel in your own space at work or at home, add it to *The Park* map at makethepark.info 🐝

Make the Park is the brainchild of artists Sarah Smuts Kennedy (right) and Taarati Taiaroa. It is supported by POP, a Waitemata Local Board arts initiative.

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