



City of Vancouver *Planning - By-law Administration Bulletins*

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HOBBY BEEKEEPING

*Authority - Director of Planning
Effective February 27, 2006*

In July 2005, the Director of Planning issued guidelines outlining good management practices for hobby beekeeping in residential areas of Vancouver.

Urban hobby beekeeping provides increased biodiversity and pollination for plants in backyard, community and public gardens. Cities in Europe and North America (including several municipalities in the Greater Vancouver Regional District) also support hobby beekeeping of honeybees within city limits. Through good management practices, hobby beekeeping is a safe and suitable activity for residential areas.

Beekeepers in Vancouver must register with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (see next page for contact information). The following municipal guidelines complement provincial standards and promote good management practices for beekeeping in residential areas.

1. It shall be the duty of every person on whose property bees are kept to adhere to good management practices and maintain bees in a condition that will reasonably prevent swarming and aggressive behavior.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the person on whose property the bees are kept to provide adequate water for the bees to prevent bees from seeking water in neighbouring swimming pools, birdbaths, ponds or other community bodies of water.
3. Hobby Beekeeping is to be limited to:
 - (a) One and Two-Family Dwelling Districts (RS- and RT-); or
 - (b) Agricultural Districts (RA-1) on sites containing a one- or two-family dwelling; or
 - (c) A site containing a community garden; or
 - (d) A site where beekeeping will form part of an educational program.
4. A maximum of two (2) beehives per lot in One- and Two-Family Dwelling Districts (RS- and RT-) on a parcel of land less than 10,000 square feet.
5. A maximum of four (4) beehives per lot on a parcel of land with an area over 10,000 square feet.
6. Beehives are restricted to rear yards.
7. In order to ensure the appropriate height of honeybee flight path:
 - (a) A beehive will be situated 8 feet or more above ground level; or
 - (b) The beehive entrance will be directed away from the neighbouring property and situated behind a solid fence or hedge that is 6 feet in height running parallel to the property line; or
 - (c) A beehive will be located a minimum of 25 feet away from the neighbouring property line.

The report to Vancouver City Council on Hobby Beekeeping (Urban Apiculture) can be reviewed here:

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20050721/documents/pe3.pdf>

For further clarification on the guidelines or queries about beekeeping in Vancouver, please contact:

Devorah Kahn

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Social Planning Department, City of Vancouver
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Registration with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

The guidelines for hobby beekeeping in Vancouver complement the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL) Beekeeper and Apiary Registration program for British Columbia. The Provincial Bee Act requires anyone in BC who operates honeybee colonies to be registered with this provincial ministry. The location of the apiary must also be registered. If a person is contravening this registration process, BCMAL Apicultural Staff have the authority to destroy or dispose of the honeybees or beehive equipment. The Provincial Bee Act also enables BCMAL to respond to complaints, conduct inspections and to control diseases that affect bees.

To register an apiary online, please go to the following website:

<http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/apiculture/index.htm>

For further information on beekeeper and apiary registration, please contact:

Paul van Westendorp

Provincial Apiculturist
Phone: 604.556.3129
Fax: 604.556.3030
Email: Paul.vanWestendorp@gov.bc.ca

For inspection services, please contact:

Jacquie Bunse

Provincial Inspector for Greater Vancouver
Phone: 604.521.4993

Further information on Honeybees:

- Honeybees are social insects with a marked division of labor between the various castes of bees in a colony. A colony of honeybees includes a queen, drones and workers.
- Honeybees are vegetarians. They gather nectar to produce honey and pollen for raising their brood. Honeybees also collect water to control the temperature of the hive.
- While they are gathering nectar from plants, pollen grains are also transported on their bodies, leading to pollination of other plants.
- Over the last 90 million years, flowering plants and bees have co evolved, creating a complete interdependence between the two.
- The presence of honeybees in the city can increase harvests for backyard, street, rooftop and community gardens.
- It is estimated that the pollination services provided by honeybees are often 60 to 100 times more valuable than the market price of honey.
- Honeybees only sting when they or their nest is threatened. Wasps on the other hand, are carnivores and may sting as they hunt for food.
- Bees generally do not visit picnics, barbeques and garbage cans. Yellow Jacket wasps and hornets are scavengers attracted to any area where food remnants can be found during the summer season.