

Hope sites a hive of activity with introduction of 100,000 bees

Written by Luke

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One hundred thousand honey bees have been introduced at two Derbyshire quarries and biodiversity in surrounding areas improved, to support the nationwide campaign to grow Britain's bee population.

Hope Construction Materials, the UK's leading independent supplier of concrete and cement, has introduced 100,000 bees across its two largest operations – Hope Cement Works, Hope Valley and Dowlow Quarry near Buxton, in Derbyshire.

In both locations, the three-mile radius that surrounds the quarry where the hives have been placed contains a sustainable nectar supply, predominantly from wild cherry plants, buttercups and daisies, making it the perfect environment for the honeybees.

The environment around the quarries and the substantial access to food and water makes both locations perfect for the hives to thrive.

Hope's bee installation is the latest in a number of tangible steps by the company to improve biodiversity and enhance the sustainability of the quarries. Alongside the installation of the honeybee hives, Hope is working towards the development of the surrounding environments to support bumblebees, whose populations have suffered a decline in recent years. Both of Hope's quarries are surrounded by a variety of wildflowers including Birds Foot Trefoil, Red Clover and Marsh Orchids.

The company hopes to produce up to 40lbs of 'Hope Honey' per hive for employees, local residents and businesses next year. The Hope bees are cared for directly by Hope's employees, Assistant Quarry Managers Alan Porter and Tom Herrick, who both have a keen interest in bees.

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Both are fully trained beekeepers and visit the hives several times a week to check the colonies are healthy and top up their feed of sugar and water to help them mature for their first few months on site.

Alan Porter, Assistant Quarry Manager at Hope Works, says: “We are extremely excited to finally have the bee colonies on site at both Hope Works and Dowlow; and all 100,000 of them seem to be settling in well. Water is essential for a bee’s survival, especially during summer months, and the lakes we have in the quarry is vital to them thriving here. We are looking forward to seeing how we can assist in the Bumble bee population.”

Tom Herrick, also Assistant Quarry Manager at Hope Construction Materials adds: “The pollen from our Italian honey bees in the hives here at Dowlow is dark orange and red thanks to the surrounding cherry blossom and I would expect Dowlow’s honey to be a copper colour, but we will have to wait and see when we get our first honey crop later in the year.”

Gill Perkins, Conservation Manager at the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, says: “The Bumblebee Conservation Trust promotes the development of bee-friendly environments by creating bio diverse spaces around both restored and active quarry sites which could help play a vital role in their long-term survival.

Both of Hope Construction Materials’ quarries provide great environment for bees with the biodiversity of plants available to them, and the passion of the employees is terrific. We are grateful for their support and would like to encourage any other organisations in a position to care for bees to do so.”