

To Bee Or Not To Bee?

Royal Colwood Golf Club
Don Singlehurst, superintendent

Victoria, British Columbia



Collaboration between a local bee master and Royal Colwood has been beneficial for all parties involved, especially the bees.

Issue

During the spring of 2015, a wild bee population took a liking to the flagstick on one of the practice greens at Royal Colwood Golf Club. When players reported a large population of bees on the flagstick, the practice green and an adjacent hole were immediately closed. After a careful inspection by General Manager Philip Nurse, it was determined that the honey bees were looking for a hive location and a local bee master was contacted for assistance. The bee master suggested that rather than removing the hive, it would be better to simply find another location on the property for the bees to live. After viewing the entire property, an excellent location was found near the 17th tee.

Action

The bee master explained that along with this group of bees, even more hives could be added to the site. With unanimous support from the board of

directors, a small structure was built that allowed several more hives to be introduced into this ideal environment for honey bees. Nearby blackberries and other plants provided food for the bees and encouraged honey production. Signs warning players not to enter the area would help keep bees and golfers in harmony.

Results

Establishing honey bee hives at Royal Colwood has been successful for all parties involved, especially the bees. The bee master provides his expertise and in exchange retains 80-90 percent of the honey, the club keeps the rest. Mr. Nurse reports that the estimated 1.5 million honey bees from 21 hives produce several hundred pounds of honey each year. Of the approximately 250 pounds of honey the club received in 2016, 50 pounds went directly to the chef for use in prepared meals and the other 200 pounds was put in 200 separate containers for sale to the members. Honey sales in 2016 raised approximately \$1000, with the funds going to various portions of the golf operation.