



Nearly 15 years later this new beekeeping initiative, which is funded by the J Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust fund and the Heritage Lottery fund, is based on Groundwork's typically collaborative approach to delivery. Not only does the project aim to establish new colonies, it also intends to train 160 people in the heritage skills of Queen bee rearing and raise awareness of the Black honeybees' plight through a series of roadshows and workshops.

"This project would normally be confined to a ring-fenced academic programme," said Phill Dewhurst, Project Manager of the Offshoots Project. "In this instance, however, we're empowering the local community with the knowledge and skills to make a difference to their local ecosystem and consequently to the long-term survival of mankind."

Using Offshoots' network of productive beds and polytunnels, forage plants such as marjoram, borage and Limnanthus (poached egg plant) will also be grown to plant within the grounds of Towneley Hall to provide foraging food for the new bee population. A further 10,000 plug plants will be distributed throughout parks and public green spaces in the area, increasing the diversity of the forage area and, subsequently, increasing the quality of the honey produced.

"This is a fantastic example of local organisations working in partnership to deliver an innovative project that engages the local community and its wildlife," said Nick Riley, Director at Groundwork Pennine Lancashire. "We find this approach produces the most relevant and effective solutions for all the environmental and social issues that we tackle – not just in the community and youth inclusion services we deliver; but in our landscape design and build projects and even our environmental consultancy and training. We're really confident that our Black honeybee project will be among these successes. It's such an important issue for us all – we're determined to get this right."

“ IF THE BEE DISAPPEARS OFF THE SURFACE OF THE GLOBE, THEN MAN WOULD ONLY HAVE FOUR YEARS OF LIFE LEFT ”

ALBERT EINSTEIN, 1949.



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