

Barnes & Webb

Hive Rental FAQ - 2014

ABOUT US

Barnes & Webb is a London based beehive rental company set up in 2013 by Chris Barnes and Paul Webb. We're passionate about bees and urban beekeeping and wanted to find ways of sharing this experience (and the honey!) with others. As important to us is helping to increase the honeybee population after the recent dramatic fall in numbers.

After working in New Zealand on a bee farm which offered a hive rental service to local residents this seemed like the perfect way to achieve those aims back in London.

We're now placing hives in outdoor spaces across the city, building an urban apiary which is giving people local honey, pollinated plants, the knowledge that together we're helping to increase honeybee populations and an up-close insight into the fascinating world of the honeybee.



No outdoor space too small!

Book your free site visit
and we'll assess and
recommend the best
place for bees.

WHAT WE OFFER

BEEKEEPING THE EASY WAY

The best part about our service is that you need no beekeeping experience whatsoever - we do all the work.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We'll visit you to make sure there's a suitable spot for the bees and answer any questions you may have.

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Then in the spring we deliver your healthy, honey producing hives.

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You sit back and enjoy endless hours of your bees calming hum, watching them returning to the hive laden with pollen and of course enjoying the most delicious honey from your own garden.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

Two or more working hives, regularly serviced

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A share of all honey harvested, extracted and jarred by us

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A chance to get involved and learn about beekeeping

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A unique way to reconnect with nature

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The knowledge that together we're helping the environment

FAQ

GENERAL

Where do you service hives?

Currently we cover the central and Greater London area but if you are located elsewhere please still get in touch and we'll send you updates as and when we expand our service area.

What is the ideal place for a beehive?

Bees like a sunny spot with partial shade, ideally near a fence or screen which protects the hive from the wind and encourages them to fly up above head height when leaving or entering the hive.

My outdoor space is very small - is that a problem?

In essence, no outdoor space is too small. That said the beekeeper needs enough space (approx a 3 meter diameter) around the Hive to carry out the work. People have kept bees on balconies, so anything is possible. The only way to know for sure if you have a suitable space for beehives is to arrange a free inspection. **Email us**, or call 0208 985 2634.

Why do you only hire hives in pairs?

Quite often a colony will need to have elements replaced and this is best done if there are 2 hives together., also, the colonies can mate with each other.

Is there a minimum term to your contract?

Bees don't like being moved around too much and it's not a simple task either so we have a minimum contract of 1 year. Most people keep their bees for years as they soon come to enjoy them and of course the delicious honey that we harvest at the end of summer.

FAQ

Access might be tricky at certain times. Is that a problem?

Some beekeeping activities can be very time sensitive so we need to be able to access the hives at all times. However we will discuss your individual circumstances when we do a site inspection and agree arrangements to gain access to the hives.

Are there any laws regarding keeping bees?

There aren't any specific laws regarding beekeeping. We do have a contract which you'll need to read and sign but this is as much for your benefit as ours.

What if someone complains?

To prevent this from happening we recommend that you inform everyone using the surrounding area that you plan to have beehives before we install them. Usually a bit of enthusiasm and an explanation will bring them around. If you don't feel confident telling them anything directly then direct them to our website so they can read for themselves. If anyone complains after your bees have been installed, it's best to use common sense first, have a chat and ascertain what the problem is. Most disputes can be resolved with a kind word and a jar of honey, only in an extreme case would we have to remove your bees.

BEES

What type of bees do you have?

Currently all our bees are Buckfast - chosen for their suitability for urban, backyard beekeeping. That said, once the queen has flown off and mated there can be no guarantee who she mates with so the pure Buckfast strain can end up being quite a mix. If any of our colonies become too aggressive or exhibit any other bad traits we will re-queen them as soon as possible.

Should I be worried about getting stung?

Unlike Wasps, Honey bees usually only sting as a last resort because they die in the process. We position your hive to avoid the bees flying across frequently used areas and if you're relaxed around them they'll leave you alone.

FAQ

What about children?

With young children, you should only need to tell them not to play too near the hives. If a hive was disturbed or worse knocked over this could cause the bees to sting.

How about cats or dogs?

Cats and dogs seem to get on fine around bee hives, again we can't guarantee your pets won't get stung but if it happens once they're generally smart enough to avoid them in the future!

What do we do if someone gets stung?

The first thing to do is to remove the stinger by scraping it out with your fingernail or the blade of a knife then put some ice on it to help relieve any pain or swelling. You can then clean the affected area and apply an antihistamine ointment.

What can we do to help our bees?

There are lots of things you can do to keep your bees happy when we're not there. Firstly make sure they have access to water. They prefer shallow damp areas that they can stand on and drink from. So a small pot or dish with mud/gravel in it kept wet will suffice. Secondly you can make sure there's enough food in the near vicinity by planting wild flowers, or at the very least not pulling them up. A wild garden is not only good for bees but for many other animals too.

Will our bees swarm?

We spend the spring and summer doing everything in our power to prevent the bees from swarming. However, it's a natural process of the bees expanding and it's hard to prevent.

FAQ

HONEY

How often will we get honey?

Beehives are normally harvested towards the end of August. All being well with your colonies you should receive your share of the honey in early September.

How much honey will we get?

Depending on which rental option you choose you can get between 20% - 50% of all harvested honey. The weather, the health of your bees and the availability of forage have significant effects on the honey crop. In the first year the yield may not be as much whilst the bees establish the hive.

What kind of flavour will the honey have?

London honey is regarded as some of the tastiest honey you'll find and has won many awards in recent years. This is due to the huge mixture of pollen available to the London honey bee. This also makes it impossible to tell exactly what flavour your honey will have. In urban hives the bees forage in gardens within a 3 mile radius. Normally by the end of the honey season all London honey has sold out, so guard yours with your life!

