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the voice of the garden

Posted in *All posts*, *June* on 15th June 2015

'The hum of bees is the voice of the garden' - Elizabeth Lawrence.



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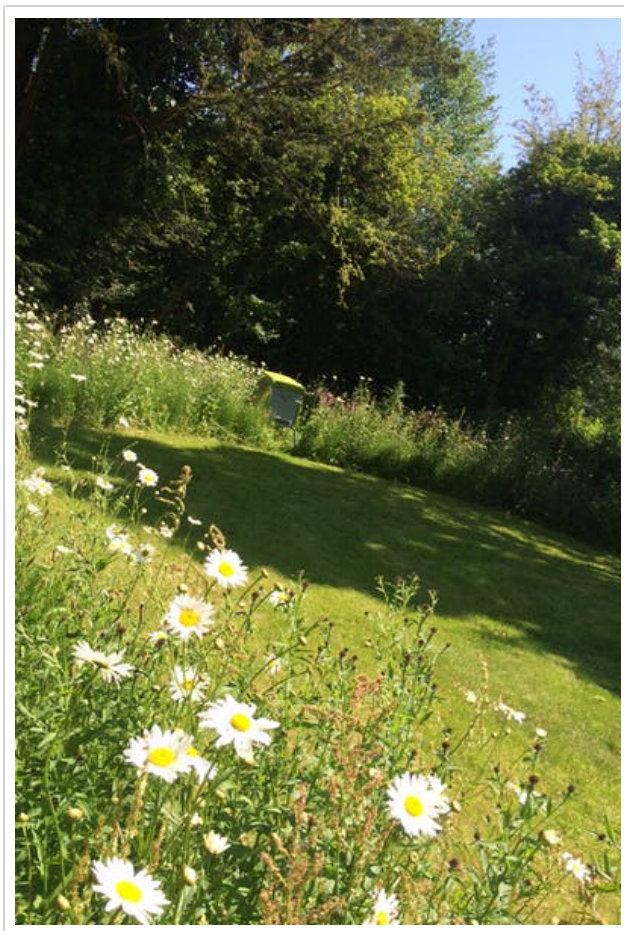
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I was very excited to welcome my Omlet Beehaus in early May and positioned it in the far corner of our garden, amongst of one of our wildflower beds. Once that was in place, I got on with building the frames which will house the bees. This is where the queen will lay her eggs and the worker bees will store the pollen, nectar and honey. The frames are made up of a rectangle of wood which holds a sheet of bees wax which is called foundation. It is on this that the bees will then draw up and build their honeycomb and set up house. My daughters loved helping me build them and are keen for me to get them some beesuits so that they can get up close and personal when I inspect the hive!



A beehive should be sheltered from wind and have some dappled shade throughout the day. Ideally it would also face away from the prevailing wind and get some morning sun. It's also a good idea to position it out of the way of general garden 'traffic' away from pathways etc. The misconception of keeping bees is that people will assume you'll have a garden full of bees, but the reality is that you don't even notice they are there. Once they come out of the hive they tend to fly directly upwards to their cruising height of about 15ft where they can fly for up to 3 miles to forage for nectar and pollen. It's lovely to sit and watch them fly in and out with their pollen sacks bulging on their back legs and it's incredible to believe that there will soon be approximately 50,000 bees in the corner of my garden!



My nucleus arrived a few days later. A 'nuc' is a small colony of bees, usually taken from a well established hive. You can purchase one from your local British Beekeeping Association where there will always be someone selling one. You'll get a queen bee and a few frames of brood (eggs & larvae) which will also

contain some food stores (nectar, pollen & honey) to keep them going whilst they establish themselves as a new colony, in a new hive. Once you transfer them to your hive you should give them a few days to settle in before inspecting them. They'll need to get their bearings and find the nearest source of water and the best places to forage.

Water is really important to bees as they need it to make honey and survive. Luckily we have a stream running through our garden so the bees have a continuous source, but if you don't have a natural water source close by, then they'll appreciate a tray filled with water with a few stones or pebbles within it on which to land and have a drink.

Once they're settled in its best to check on them once a week and make sure they're happy and doing well. My Beehaus came with a hive book – a place to record everything you see on each inspection – its amazing what you can forget from one week to the next if you haven't written it down! On opening up the hive the other week I saw a couple of bees emerging from their comb. It was so lovely to see and amazing that once they emerge they'll get to work straight away!

The wildflower beds in the garden are coming out into bloom now, and the Sarah Raven [Cosmos seeds](#) which I planted in pots outside my garage are almost budding so I'm expecting to see some gorgeous flowers in the next month or so. The bees are currently loving the clover flowers in the field next door, and will be all over the lavender when it comes in to flower. Bees also love lime trees - it gives their honey a lovely almost minty taste - I'm thinking of a good place to plant one for next year!



I'm thoroughly enjoying keeping bees and highly recommend it. It's a window into another world and it is fascinating to witness it. I'm super excited about tasting my own honey at the end of the summer, if all goes well! More on that in my next post.. :)

If you'd like to follow my progress, learn more about the honey bee or see the garden flourish this Summer, please visit www.aplacetobee.co.uk.

You can also purchase a simple [Bee House](#) for only £14.95, that can be attached to a garden fence, wall or tree (near your flower beds of course) to encourage the pollinators into your garden. Find out more [here](#).

Laura x

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