



LEARNING FROM THE BEES | BERLIN 2019

**WORKSHOP + CONFERENCE
29 AUG – 1 SEP, KÜHLHAUS BERLIN**

BACKGROUND



Current situation

As the world hurtles towards widespread environmental degradation, glimmers of golden hope fly in the air. Bees. Although suffering from myriad human-imposed stressors, indicators show that wild bees (in comparison to managed colonies) are succeeding in nature.

From these examples we can learn much about what the species as a whole needs to survive—and thrive—and subsequently what we can learn from them to improve our understanding of Nature and how current practices in apiculture, agriculture, and forestry can be detrimental to them, to the planet, and to us humans too.



Vision

The organizers of *Learning from the Bees | Berlin 2019* aimed to convene bee advocates from different disciplines to listen to the bees' lessons—from an apicentric perspective—and then apply those learnings far and wide to spread natural beekeeping. Emphasis was placed on *Zeidlerei* (tree beekeeping) and audience participation.

At this juncture, it is critical that practitioners share ideas, expertise, data, and experiences so that we learn from one another and, together, shape an alternative, improved future.



Mission

To spark cross-disciplinary dialogue among beekeepers, foresters, farmers, and others about the limitations of current practices and how wild bees (aka bees in trees) can shape the future of beekeeping and environmental stewardship

Objectives

- To train participants in the craft of *Zeidlerei* (see page 9)
- To convene diverse opinions and to bridge disciplines
- To provide hope and to inspire
- To offer opportunities for networking
- To encourage collaboration and action
- To collect citizen-science data on wild bees' health



Dates

- *Zeidlerei* workshop: 29 & 30 August
- Conference: 31 August & 1 September

Locations

Kühlhaus Berlin served as our principle venue, with Technikmuseum Berlin, St. Jacobi Cemetery, and Prinzessinnengärten respectively hosting adjunct activities: the *Zeidlerei* workshop, tree climbing, and Saturday evening's dinner, garden tours, and screening of *Honeyland* documentary.



PRODUCTION

Learning from the Bees | Berlin 2019 was organized by members of



Mellifera Regionalgruppe
Berlin

The Ambeassadors

with support from



KühlhausBerlin



prinzessinnengärten

and funding / in-kind donations from



CrescoCapitalGroup



PROGRAMMING



Introduction

Zeidlerei typically consists of hollowing out cavities within living trees or carving out logs, into which bees can move. Bee-centric beekeepers laud this practice for providing more natural habitats than boxes, citing the fact that bees have lived in them for 30+ million years.

Ten German and Polish experts, some of whom have revived and spread the craft throughout Europe, came to Berlin to teach the basics: how to carve and install log hives, tree-climbing techniques, tool maintenance, safety precautions, and more. They lectured on the history of *Zeidlerei*, its advantages, forest conditions, and properly operating log hives.



Outcomes

Students nearly completed 20 log hives. Some were taken home by participants, while others have been slated for use in the Citizen-Science Project.

For that, 12–20 hives will be installed at partner institutions—universities, bee research labs, forest preserves, and other suitable sites—where future bee colonies will be studied to see how they fare in these more natural homes.

The objective is to contribute scientific data on the health and habitats of wild bees, as followed by a protocol developed by bee scientist Prof. Thomas Seeley.



Introduction

Learning from the Bees | Berlin 2019 posited that current apicultural, agricultural, and forestry systems are flawed and that, by coming together—unified by our love for bees—we could reimagine an alternative future for beekeeping more aligned with Nature and better informed by what the bees need.

Conversation and collaboration were encouraged, with emphases on audience participation and speakers sharing concrete takeaways (ideas, best practices, resources, tools) that attendees could bring home to then implement within their communities to further spread natural beekeeping.



Some program features

- 2 keynote lectures
- 3 moderated panel discussions
- *Speed BEE Talks*: 9 rapid-fire presentations on innovation, creativity, trends, and bee news
- 6 parallel breakout sessions
- 2 book signings
- Art exhibition with life-sized photos, drawings, sculpture, live-painted mural, interactive interviews, and display of *Zeidlerei* artifacts
- Dinner, garden/apiary tours, and screening of *Honeyland* at Prinzessinnengärten
- Closing sing-along ceremony to integrate the collective experience



Partial speaker roster

- Dr. Turgut Altug, Green Party Berlin (DE)
- Jacqueline Freeman*, Spirit Bees (US)
- Heidi Herrmann*, Natural Beekeeping Trust (UK)
- Markus Imhoof*, *More Than Honey* (DE)
- Dr. Rosa María Licón Luna, Wild Bees Project (FR)
- Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Randolph Menzel*, FU Berlin (DE)
- Dr. Przemysław Nawrocki, WWF Poland (PL)
- Thomas Radetzki, Aurelia Stiftung (DE)
- Deborah Richmond*, Rewilding Our Planet (PT)
- Torben Schiffer, HOBOS (DE)
- Prof. Thomas Seeley, Cornell University (US)
- Laura Williams, Awakened Forest Project (PT)
- Dr. Johannes Wirz*, Goetheanum Institute (CH)



*pictured

A close-up photograph of a honeycomb with several bees. Two bees in the center are facing each other, with their heads touching and antennae extended, appearing to be in the middle of a communication process. The honeycomb cells are dark brown and circular. Other bees are visible in the background and foreground, some partially obscured.

OUTCOMES

Some Stats

212

conference attendees +

36*Zeidlerei* workshop participants

from

26

different countries.

72

people contributed to the Citizen-Science Work Session, while

36

speakers, moderators, instructors, and performers shared their research, expertise, data, and stories.

10

scholarships were awarded.

10

staff +

21

volunteers produced the event.

Never in my life did I expect to meet Tom Seeley face-to-face, have him interested in my work, and have the possibility to collaborate in the future. Thank you! —Przemek

It was incredible how [this] community formed, how it was brought to life. —Helmut

We learn through the eyes of bees. That was very important...this message. —Antonio

The conference was atmospherically beautiful. —Johannes

[The conference] will have life-changing impact. I have an opportunity to buy land near a forest. I now know that I must, that it's not a financial decision but the right one. The bees need help. This is what I can do. —Amanda

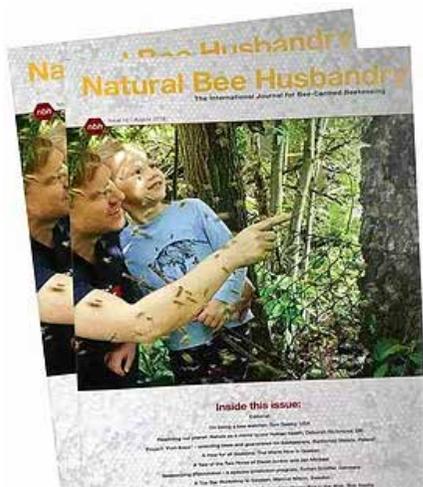


Coverage to date

bienen&natur

Das Praxismagazin für Imker und Bienenfreunde

20 years
sustain
the alliance for better food and farming



DEUTSCHES
Bienen
JOURNAL

Aurelia
ES LEBE DIE BIENE

Pending coverage



**AMERICAN
BEE JOURNAL**



Revenue

- Grants 10.000€
- Sponsors 5.500€
- Ticket sales 46.781€
- Bar sales 690€
- Book sales..... 2.401€
- Log hives..... 1.210€

TOTAL 66.582€

Expenses

Zeidlerei Workshop

- Honoraria6.389€
- Venue871€
- Logs + transportation1.822€
- Catering5.501€
- Supplies401€
- BVG to St. Jacobi.....193€
- Ticketing125€
- Marketing299€
- Production.....5.008€
- Miscellany.....1.849€

SUBTOTAL 22.458€

Conference

- Honoraria7.092€
- Venues3.732€
- Equipment rental.....10.501€
- Translation services9.871€
- Catering1.960€
- Bookstore1.557€
- Art exhibition.....575€
- Supplies412€
- Documentation.....564€
- Ticketing500€
- Marketing299€
- Production5.008€
- Miscellany.....2.337€

SUBTOTAL 44.408€

NEXT STEPS



Finalize logistics

- Edit and publish videos
- Distribute survey and analyze results
- Update website
- Write and send newsletter to mailing list
- Develop Citizen-Science Project (see page 21)



Soft-Launch Spring 2020

- Build core team and Advisory Committee
- Negotiate with partner institutions
- Contact and partner with COLOSS, Free the Bees, HOBOS, Apis Arborea, BEEtree-Monitor
- Secure funding
- Develop protocol and survey/app
- Finish incomplete log hives and install at partner institutions by Spring 2020
- Promote project to natural-beekeeping and tree-beekeeping groups around the world



THANK YOU!

LEARNING FROM THE BEES

"HONEY BEE, HOW ARE YOU?"

"FORESTER, HOW ARE YOU?"

"NATURE, HOW ARE YOU?"

"FARMER, HOW ARE YOU?"

BUILDING
BRIDGES

PROTECT NATURE
RECONNECT
YOURSELF

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

WE CAN
DO THIS



For more info

Please contact

Silke Meyer, silke.meyer@mellifera-berlin.de

Steve Rogenstein, our lead producer, ambeessadors@gmail.com.

Photo credits

- Florian Amrhein
- Pau Cardellach
- Silke Meyer
- Onyx Baird
- Sandra Grosset
- Saskia Schneider
- Sabine Bergmann
- Patrick Lindhof
- Alexander Wild

