

May 14, 2019

Sweet success

Edmonton – MacEwan's urban beekeeper Troy Donovan is looking forward to unwrapping the university's bees for another season. The university's four bee colonies are located on the roof of Building Five on the university's City Centre Campus and are tended to by Donovan and his assistant Ian Anderson who ensure the safety and wellbeing of the colonies.

"Before winter arrives we wrap the bees by pushing all the hives together and wrapping them in insulated plastic blankets on the sides and on the top. We can't look inside until spring arrives when we remove the blankets and move the hives apart."

The hives are part of MacEwan's urban beekeeping project, which emphasizes the importance of increasing food security in an urban setting while also focusing on education and economic sustainability. After the honey is harvested, it is packaged and sold. The first batch sold out in 23 minutes.

Since the project began in 2016, the four honeybee colonies have produced a total of more than 208 kilograms of honey. In fall 2018, the hives yielded 109 kilos of honey, more than triple the 2016 harvest of approximately 30 kilos. "We started with four hives the first year and then added two new hives the following year," says Donovan. "New hives usually start small and then build up over time. By the third-year of the project we were working with six mature hives."

Donovan says the honey is unique not only in where it comes from, but also in taste, which has hints of florals and mint. "These flavour profiles change from year to year, depending on the urban areas the bees choose to pollinate. MacEwan honeybees have access to a variety of rose bushes, ornamental apple trees and several other plant varieties within a four-kilometre radius of the campus."

Throughout the summer months, MacEwan University's Office of Sustainability will be providing urban beekeeping tours to help educate all age groups about the importance of pollinators in our environment. Donovan will unwrap the bees for the 2019 season on Thursday, May 16.

Time: 4 p.m. **(Weather permitting)**

Where: Rooftop, Building Five, City Centre Campus

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.

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