

UK conservation agency launches plastic beehive

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Johannes Paul holds a frame covered in bees taken from a "Beehaus" urban beehive at a garden allotment in central London. The new plastic beehive was launched to encourage people to keep bees in their gardens or on rooftops to help boost declining honeybee populations.

A new plastic beehive was launched in Britain on Wednesday to encourage people to keep bees in their gardens or on rooftops to help boost declining honeybee populations.

The [bees](#) seemed to like their ultra-modern home as they buzzed happily in and out of the postbox-like slot in the grey and yellow 'beehaus' on the roof of state-backed [conservation](#) agency Natural England's London offices.

The agency's chief scientist Tom Tew said if more urban residents kept

honeybees, it would increase the insects' numbers and make them more resilient to attacks from disease and pests which threaten their survival.

"We need to recognise that if we want plants to flourish, we need healthy populations of insects to sustain them," Tew said.

"There's no reason why our towns and cities should exist as wildlife deserts -- wildlife can thrive when we design our urban areas with nature in mind and the 'beehaus' is a great example of how easy it is for anyone to bring the natural world closer to their doorstep."

Its makers Omlet claim that at one metre wide and 0.5 metres high (three feet wide and one foot eight inches high), the 'beehaus' is twice as big as a traditional [beehive](#), giving plenty of room for the colony to grow in comfort.

The kit can be bought online starting from 495 pounds.

The number of honeybees in Britain has dropped by up to 15 percent in the past two years, according to government figures, as they face a growing range of diseases and wild flowers they feed on are wiped out by urban development.

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