



Eighty thousand bees check in to San Francisco hotel

June 19, 2010

The Fairmont San Francisco has installed honey beehives in the hotel's new culinary garden in order to help support the bee population, which has decreased in number by 90 percent since the 1980s, the hotel said yesterday.

Beekeepers established four nascent beehives, each containing approximately 20,000 bees, in the garden outside the hotel lobby. When the beehives mature in four to eight weeks, they are expected to each house up to 50,000 bees, the hotel said in a statement.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture believes a virus is responsible for the collapse of honey bee colonies, Fairmont explained. "This situation is often called 'CCD' or Colony Collapse Disorder. Without honey bees, pollination is not possible. The decrease of the honey bee population is extremely significant since one out of three mouthfuls in the diet is affected by the honey bee population."

Executive Chef jW Foster described yesterday's installation as the first step in cultivating a culinary garden which will eventually measure 1,000 square feet. "He will soon add rosemary, thyme, oregano, basil, chives and cilantro to the lavender which now grows in the garden. Guests can view the culinary garden through floor-to-ceiling windows in the foyer leading to the hotel's Pavilion Room," the hotel said.

"The cultivation of honey beehives marks the latest step in The Fairmont's history of environmental stewardship. Our hotel has been part of the fabric of San Francisco for more than a century and its success can be contributed to an enduring commitment to the local community and environment," said Regional Vice President and General Manager of The Fairmont San Francisco, Tom Klein.



Executive Chef JW Foster of The Fairmont San Francisco, Helene and Spencer Marshall of Marshall's Farm, and Regional Vice President and General Manager of The Fairmont San Francisco Tom Klein taste honey while installing four beehives, containing 80,000 honey bees, in the hotel's new culinary garden. The initiative is aimed to help maintain the dwindling bee population.

Photo courtesy of Fairmont San Francisco

Home-harvested honey on menu

This year the beehives are estimated to produce approximately 250 pounds of honey which will be served to hotel guests as part of The Fairmont's commitment to offering local, organic, sustainable cuisine. "This home-harvested honey will be used in soups, salad dressings, pastries, ice cream and as an accompaniment to the hotel's time-honored afternoon tea service," the hotel explained.

"The Fairmont is currently the only hotel in San Francisco to raise honey bees. Honey beehives can also be found at The Fairmont Washington, D.C.; The Fairmont Dallas; The Fairmont Royal York in Toronto, The Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver; The Fairmont Algonquin in St. Andrews, Canada; The Fairmont Yangcheng Lake in Kunshan, China and The Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club."

Fairmont San Francisco installed the bees in partnership with Marshall's Farm, headquartered in American Canyon, California. Spencer and Helene Marshall of Marshall's Farm have been producing organic honey since 1993 and currently operate beehives throughout Northern California.