



## Apiology

# Why cities around the world are buzzing

**T**here are beehives all over our cities, on office rooftops, in parks and allotments, and in school grounds and urban backyards. Some of our most famous landmarks host hives; Buckingham Palace, Tate Modern and Fortnum & Mason.

In just three years, membership of the British Beekeeping Association has doubled to 20,000, as young, urban dwellers transform a rather staid pastime into a vibrant environmental movement.

Camilla Goddard, 38, epitomises the new beekeeper. Metropolitan and eco-conscious, she keeps bees on her allotment, in a university campus and on the roof of a cosmetics company in Covent Garden, central London, seeing it as a small contribution to saving the planet.

"By keeping just one hive you are immediately introducing 50,000 pollinators into an urban area and that can have a huge impact on the environment. I like the idea of doing something as an unfettered individual when most of the time we can't seem to affect any of the sad things that are happening to the earth," she says.

After a ban was overturned



in 2010, more than 100 people have hives in parks, above restaurants and at work in New York. "It is a special way to connect with nature," says 27-year-old lawyer Vivian Wang, who keeps hives 12 storeys above mid-town Manhattan.

In Melbourne, Australia, the city beekeepers' association is full to capacity with 160 members and has had to turn away potential new recruits.

Last year, North London Beekeepers Association had to do the same when membership topped 170. And Berlin's House of Representatives, cathedral and the planetarium are host-

ing hives as part of an initiative inspired by Parisian Jean Pautco, who has kept bees on the roof of the Paris Opéra for almost 20 years.

Pautco also inspired Ian Wallace, who has five hives on the roof of Fenwick department store in the UK's most bee-friendly city. "I'd heard about similar schemes in London and Paris and decided if it's good enough for them, it's good enough for Newcastle."

**Alison Benjamin**



Alison Benjamin is co-author of *Bees in the City*, the urban beekeepers' handbook, published by Guardian Books priced £12.99.