

# Green Roof going for Gold

Located just outside of Victoria, BC Green Roof, Vancouver Island's only Green Roof dedicated nursery is going for gold this year.

2014 does not only mean preparing plant material and dealing with their growing stock of plant material, they are exploring the production of bee honey harvested from their Green Roof plant material.

With over 12,000 sf. of Sedum plants grown in modules and mats as well as over 120,000 individual plants, nature's best is attracted to the many flowers all these plants produce.

With 2013 as starting year of growing plant material destined for roof top applications on a large scale, rather than producing only a few thousand plants, the massive honey bee population that descended onto their plants made Kevin Kersten of BC Green Roof wonder if they could not harvest their Green Roof Honey and use it to promote Green Roofs.

Victoria sends out daffodils to showcase the best of our region why not send little jars of honey to promote Green Roofs Kevin says.

There is no financial gain for us trying to sell a few jars as the quantity of honey we can harvest from our fields only allows us to produce enough Green Roof Honey to send out as a symbolic message. For this reason BC Green Roof has decided to try and produce some honey and send out little jars in order to promote green roofs and create awareness of their benefits.

We have contacted the Local Bee Keepers Association to find some help setting this up and hope soon to receive our little hard workers.

Although their increased growing capacity for plant material is fairly new, BC Green Roof brings over 15 years of experience in the Green Roof industry to our region.

Kevin Kersten and his wife Karina have emigrated from Holland, where they worked as advisors for one of Europe largest producer of green roof materials used in Green Roof applications.

Having worked on green roof projects surpassing 45 thousand square meters annually (equal to 2 Vancouver convention centers yearly) gained them tremendous insight in what works and what does not work as well as what to look for when it comes to details during a planning stage.



## Local Green Roof experts to set up Bee hives to harvest honey from Green Roof plant material and use it to promote the best you can get from a roof.

It is this knowledge Kevin from BC Green Roof wants to spread as he expressed that a green roof and its technology behind it, is the most interesting of greening urban areas and development of projects.

Overlaying his experience out of the full-grown industry of Europe with the rather young green roof industry in our region, and north America for that matter, Kevin and its company experience some difficulties being a small company and new in town.

It is not just a matter of us knowing a lot, and thus all will listen, Kevin explains. However, those that do take the time to listen conclude that there is more to green roofs than they knew before.

When Kevin walks around and visits local green roofs and follows scientific tests within Canada, as well as Europe, he explains to be somewhat concerned, notices things, seeing patterns and trends in how materials are applied, how things are designed and how green roofs perform. He wonders

how he can create more awareness of what they experience and know based on proven facts.

It is not a bad thing to look back and learn from the things we observe Kevin tells, not all is bad but not all is good either. You need to know where to look for in order to find out.

We have many nice Green Roofs in the region where all efforts have been made to address all aspects involved (as it does not stop by adding some growing medium and plants). The numbers are growing as developers incorporate green roofs on their buildings.

BC Green Roof has therefore decided to give free advice and assistance, as it can't hurt to have an extra set of eyes overlooking things.

BC Green Roof has also started to provide educational presentations for parties involved when planning a green roof.

Some who have been involved in the planning of green roofs in recent years think our approach by looking back is negative for them, yet those that are open to listen to what we know express that more people should become aware of this in order to have a healthy development of the industry.

During a presentation last year in which we focused on the Ins and Outs of Green Roofs we tried our approach as "let's talk". After seeing our presentation 60% of the attendees found it hard to find in-depth information on the subject with the remainder questioning if the information they did find was correct. 80% did not realize that our findings were happening in local green roofs and 100% agreed that it is a healthy process to look at our green roofs in order to learn from them.

Kevin explains not only to be of assistance to professionals, developers or investors but also to home owners who want to explore green roofs.

We are working together with local garden centers to set up presentations for them, focusing more on what they can do at home as maybe a shed or carport can be outfitted with a Green roof.

Going for a green roof as home owner becomes more interesting as recently the City of Victoria has announced to integrate a 20% credit towards their storm water utility bill when a green roof is installed.

What makes a green roof work is the combination of the materials from root barrier to drainage and engineered growing media (combined called a Green roof system).

Kevin explains that they provide independent advice, when it comes to green roof systems as they don't have to worry about sales numbers a cooperate head office would be interested, nor do they install large green roofs. They feel there are professionals out in our region that could do just that with our guidance and refer to them for this service.

On the end someone would need plants, and that is what they grow. Kevin explains that they want to make sure all is well, where there plants go to, and that the customer gets a green roof that last as they focus on the technology behind / underneath plants.

Those interested in a green roof can visit [www.bcgreenroof.ca](http://www.bcgreenroof.ca) ask their designer/contractor for a one on one meeting, or check with their local garden center if they will host a presentation.