

All the Buzz about Bees on This Week's 'White House Chronicle'

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 3, 2017/EINPresswire.com/ -- Stephen H. Burke, a lawyer in Providence, R.I., advocates for U.S. honey bees as though they were his clients.

On this week's "White House Chronicle," which airs beginning Nov. 2 on PBS, Burke argues for the importance of honey bees, which pollinate \$15 billion worth of U.S. crops each year, including more than 130 fruits and vegetables.



Llewellyn King, Host, "White House Chronicle"

"One out of three bites of food in the United States depends on honey bees. But the population is declining due to numerous causes, including Varroa mites and other parasites, construction and habitat loss, and pesticides," he said.

Llewellyn King, "White House Chronicle" executive producer and host, said, "Honey bees are sentinels. If we live in a healthy environment, they will be healthy."

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If anyone has caught the bug from watching or listening to Stephen Burke, we have posted his beekeeping steps on whchronicle.com."

Linda Gasparello, co-host and producer of "White House Chronicle"

During the winter of 2006 to 2007, some U.S. beekeepers began to report unusually high losses – 30 to 90 percent – of their hives. As many as 50 percent of all affected colonies demonstrated "mysterious" symptoms.

"This 'Colony Collapse Disorder' occurs when the majority of worker bees in a colony disappear and leave behind a queen, plenty of food and a few nurse bees to care for the remaining young bees and the queen. Hives cannot sustain themselves

without worker bees and would die," explained Burke, who is the secretary of the Rhode Island Beekeepers Association.

While colony loss has declined, it is still a concern. But it isn't Burke's only argument for beekeeping.

"We call ourselves 'beekeepers,' but it's been suggested that perhaps a better description would be 'bee hosts.' We don't really 'keep' them at all. They're free to leave whenever they want, and sometimes they do. But we provide a place where a colony of honey bees can be warm, dry, well fed, and protected from predators.

“We dedicate our time and resources to financing, building and maintaining bee residences: hives. We purchase protective equipment as required, and food, and medicines to assure our charges stay healthy and productive.

“In return, we get the joy and satisfaction of a success in a challenging and rewarding hobby, as well as honey, beeswax, and other products of our hives,” he said. On the set, he had some of his hives' wildflower honey, his protective white hat and veil, and an empty wooden beehive.

Burke's joy-of-beekeeping argument is falling on willing ears. He is a beekeeping instructor at the University of Rhode Island and he said his classes are “ always oversubscribed.”

Linda Gasparello, the program's co-host, said, “If anyone has caught the bug from watching or listening to Stephen Burke, we have posted his beekeeping steps on whchronicle.com.”

“White House Chronicle” airs nationwide on PBS and public, educational and government access stations, and on the commercial AMG TV network. It airs worldwide on Voice of America Television and Radio. An audio version airs three times weekends on SiriusXM Radio's P.O.T.U.S., Channel 124. An interactive list of stations which carry the program can be found at whchronicle.com.

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