

# Tanger Outlets The Walk Alveole Beekeeping Program with Hayley Botts

## Transcript

J: Hello and welcome to Meet AC's newest podcast series, Atlantic City Voices. I'm Jessica Kasunich, communications manager with Meet AC.

K: And I'm Karina Anthony, marketing director with Meet AC. And we are your official podcast hosts for Atlantic City Voices

J: Throughout our monthly series of Atlantic City Voices we will be interviewing various voices of Atlantic City who are important leaders in our community and destination.

K: The topics we discuss will vary, but will mainly focus on important conversations around regenerative tourism and redevelopment and investment throughout Atlantic City.

J: We'd like to welcome and introduce our special guests, Hayley Botts, Alveole beekeeper for the Tanger Outlets, The Walk, Rooftop Beekeeping Program.

K: Hi, Hayley. Welcome.

J: Welcome, Hailey. We're delighted to have you as our special guest today.

H: Hi there, Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be on the show.

K: Hailey, can you tell our listeners a little bit more about yourself and describe what Alveole is and what you do?

H: Yeah, absolutely. So I'm an urban beekeeper and based in Philadelphia and I service beehives in the area. Alveole is an urban beekeeping company that installs beehives on rooftops across the city and use the hives as a way to educate businesses, organizations and schools about beekeeping in our food system. We're out to make people find love with bees, which in turn will make them fall in love with nature completely changing their sense of responsibility towards the environment.

K: So I know that some people have preconceived notions that bees are bad and will attack people. Are there certain types of bees that you use in your beehives?

H: Yes. So we actually use one of the most docile species of bees. There are the Italian honey bee and those they are really not concerned with people at all. They're just out to go and get their nectar and get their pollen. They're a great resource for us, a great tool that we use so that

we can get really up close and personal with the bees without having to have all the protective equipment on.

J: Let's talk more about these amazing worker bees. I had the opportunity to attend a workshop last summer when Alveole first came to Tanger Outlets The Walk, and it was so amazing to learn about the worker bees and the queen bee.

H: Yes. So the worker bees make up most of the hive, actually. So they're about 90% worker bees and they are their all female. And so being that they're mostly females in the hive, only about 10% of those are male. And the worker bees really do everything. To sustain the hive, they gather the nectar, they gather the pollen, they take care of the baby bees that the queen is laying. They even clean out the head to keep everything clean and they're really the most important and most important for the hive success.

J: By having this rooftop beekeeping program, it helps support the growth of the ecosystem and providing habitat for the country's declining bee population. Correct?

H: Yeah, in some ways, yes. But the goal for our project is more so educating people on just how important honey bees and wild bees alike are for our food systems. Honey bees can be the best gateway insects to help people understand the dangers that all bees face and to better understand the importance of pollinators for their health and our ecosystems. All pollinators are really on the same team and the similarities between bee species means that when we support one species, the others benefit. A good example of this would be like restricting pesticide use to protect local beehives that then positively impacts the entire local ecosystem.

K: I think these educational workshops are very important for our community. Since this program has started in Atlantic City in 2021, how much honey has been produced by the honey bees?

H: So much so. Last year, the hive produced about 30 pounds of honey. And now that the bees are settled in and the hives been here for a little over a year, we're looking at harvesting probably around 45 to 50 pounds of honey during our harvest period, just a couple of weeks. And honey is really just a collateral but really tasty benefits of beekeeping, where our main focus is being reconnecting people to nature and cities and building urban ecological awareness.

J: That's incredible. And here at Meet AC, we are dedicated to giving back to the local communities. So how is this, honey that's been produced, been shared with the local community?

H: Oh, well, at the end of the season, we jar the Honey and give it back to Tanger Outlets and they're using it as a benefit way in their upcoming honey brunch and crafts coming up in September. And not only in giving their honey, they've also dedicated their workshops to the local community. We did a workshop for Earth Day back in April and we will be doing another in October, in October for the fall farmers market as well.

K: This is such a sustainable solution, inspiring people to do better and do more for the environment. How can groups get involved with Alveole or interact with this specific program?

H: Yeah, it's a great question. So businesses and schools and organizations can get involved with our beekeeping program, [alveole.buzz](https://alveole.buzz), and anyone who is interested in learning more about the bees specifically here at Tanger outlets can check out [myhive.alveole.buzz](https://myhive.alveole.buzz). It's kind of like the bees own social media platform that I post on updating what's going on inside the hive with tons of up close bee photos and fun facts.

K: So you have bee selfies on their?

H: Tons of bee selfies.

K: Do you happen to have any plans for more rooftop beehives in Atlantic City?

H: No, we're always open for more of them. We'd love to see and just a plethora of hives throughout the city just to really make the area, make it greener, make it more ecologically sustainable.

J: How many do you have around the country right now?

H: Oh, around the country. Around the country. I know in every city we've got about 15 cities in the US right now. And every city has between 30 and 70 hives. So you've got a bunch. So we actually started up in Canada and then we spread down, kind of grew into the US and then we also this year grew into Europe. So we're in the UK, Amsterdam. All over the place, really.

K: Now, in addition to your educational workshops in person. You also offer a virtual team building. Is that right?

H: Yes, that's correct. That's been a great way to get people involved while still being safe and precious around in these times.

K: So you can kind of share all that information. That one will get in person, but just digitally. And how do you do that? How do you make them feel involved in the beekeeping and with the beehives virtually?

H: Well, sometimes it's actually even a little bit more effective doing it virtually. We've got one specific workshop called Meet Your Bees, and that one people can be a little bit wary of getting so close to so many bees all at once. But with that, I've got the camera. It's kind of just like a video chat and I'm showing a showing frames of bees. You're able to see them as close as you can possibly see them just actively roaming around on these frames. And it's incredible just to see like you're sitting at your desk at work and you're just got all these bees on your screen. You're looking at queen bees. You're you're learning all these all this crazy stuff about bees you never thought you'd learn before.

J: I thought this was the most fascinating part during my visit at the bee hive last year.

H: Yeah, I was definitely just seeing the raw, just how many bees are in a hive was just. Just mind-blowing sometimes.

J: We even got to taste the honey that was being produced at the time, and it was delicious.

H: I love that. Yeah, it's crazy. Even how different honey can be in just different areas. We've got a couple of hives up in Princeton and that is even going to taste far different than the honey down here in AC.

K: You know, I always make sure that when I get honey that it's local honey and you know, that I support the local farmers. And it really does taste different if you get honey from Cape May or if you get honey from Atlantic City.

H: Mm hmm. Absolutely. And even the color you can tell, it's just it's all of the different flowers that these bees go to. It's just truly amazing.

K: It's fascinating. I watch the bees buzz around my lavender plants at home, and it's amazing seeing this tiny creature just work in such an organized fashion.

H: Yeah. So it's it's amazing. There's so organized to just going into a hive you can see they keep everything very uniform. They keep it all very neat. And they're just they're just best, you know, being that they're so small, it's also just just having that moment just with nature like that, it just makes you see that we're we're all kind of in this together we're all just kind of trying to survive out here.

J: As we wrap up, we have one final question that we'd like to ask all our guests. What are your top three favorite restaurants to dine at when visiting Atlantic City?

H: Yeah. So when I come down for a weekend trip, I love stopping by Wing Craft for the local drafts and they'll stop by Ruth's Chris for a great happy hour. And then on my way home I would stop by Vegan Are Us for a sandwich.

J: I love all those options.

K: Yeah. Situated right in the heart of Atlantic City at The Walk. Those are all really different but, you know, great options for anyone visiting the city. You have something affordable you know down home eats at Wing Craft and Vegans Are Us couldn't be more different than Ruth's Chris.

H: Oh yeah.

J: Not to mention those are all just steps away from the Atlantic City Convention Center. So great for attendees when in town.

K: Hayley, thank you so much for being a guest on Atlantic City Voices. We look forward to continuing the conversation on environmental responsibility and biodiversity within the local communities.

H: It was lovely to speaking with you both. Thanks again for having me.

J: Thank you for listening. And stay tuned for next month's podcast to find out who the next Atlantic City Voice will be.