



Hiveshare

Ten years ago, Chris Campbell was a photographer and single father of three young children living in Sutton. Reflecting on society and the environment, he decided to make a change and became a beekeeper as one way to, “contribute rather than consume”. Starting out with just one hive, he has grown his business, Hiveshare, to 92 hives with ambitious plans for continued growth.

Most of his hives are in Georgina, York Region, where he cares for his bees on behalf of clients, as Hiveshare does not follow a regular business model. The Hiveshare program was designed to enable anyone to get involved with bees and beekeeping and benefit from the local, unpasteurized, artisanal honey created each year. Customers buy into a quarter, half or whole hive and in turn receive the honey from that hive as it is harvested. Anyone who does not wish to receive the honey from their share is given the choice of donating it to the local food bank where Chris regularly contributes.

As landscapes become increasingly urban and technology drives innovation, one fact remains true. Bees have been and will continue to be an essential contributor to our wellbeing.

- About one-third of our food comes from crops pollinated by honeybees, including apples, melons, cranberries, pumpkins, squash, broccoli, and almonds, to name just a few.
- Pollinators like bees affect 35% of global agricultural land and support the production of leading food crops worldwide.



Customers are welcomed to come visit their hives annually on an agreed date when Chris inspects them. These educational tours are a key component of the Hiveshare business model, although Chris does not charge extra for this incredible experience. He has provided small school tours and private tours, to help inform others about bees and where our food comes from. These are arranged in advance by contacting Chris through his website.

The days as a beekeeper are long and relatively solitary during the summer. Chris typically works 50-hour weeks to inspect and maintain his hives and create the honey and wax-related products that he sells online, at farm markets, as well as through select local businesses.

Some of his best sellers are delicious honey blends like his Chocolate Honey, as well as a practical Paw Wax used to protect and treat animal paws during our extreme Canadian weather. Chris also prefers to partner with other local entrepreneurs and growers to create his products such as the Garlic Infused Honey and Habanero Honey.

Ten years in, much of the infrastructure such as fencing, security and tree planting is now in place. Ever enthusiastic, there are plans to further develop the farm shop area, which is expected to open in time for the 2020 season.

Chris also rears his own Queen Bees and is hired to help those with swarms. He loves the work, where he is continually learning and can work outside surrounded by nature. One might assume that the winters are quiet, but Chris keeps busy with his secondary business offering photography and social media management support as well as interacting with other beekeepers internationally. Each year, he travels to share his knowledge and learn from others. In his words, “You can constantly fill up your bucket. I love it.”

Learn more about Hiveshare on his website, Hiveshare.ca. You can also follow Hiveshare on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).



Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2019, Chris decided to offer free delivery to local customers within a specific geographic area. The timing couldn't have been better. This touch-free service provided a safe option to reliably supply clients during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and beyond.

York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy

York Region is committed to supporting our vibrant agriculture and agri-food sector. This work is being guided by the Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy. With five strategic goal areas accompanied by 45 recommended actions, the strategy is an ambitious framework designed to achieve results and demonstrates York Region's commitment to the sector.

To learn more about York Region's agriculture and agri-food sector, visit york.ca/agrifood