VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
M C M X X I I
Co-funded by the European Union

POSTER TEXT

Ecosystemic Awareness LAB · Final deliverable, written version · Team _____

Type directly into the tinted fields. This is the complete text of your proposal. What survives onto the A3 poster is an editorial decision made later; what does not fit goes to the Complementary Document.

Started on paper during the workshops. Finalised here.

Team

Bee-neficial : 333

Eva Alarcón Espejo, University of Alicante (Architecture)
Sofiia Syrota, VMU (Artificial Intelligence Systems)
Austėja Maščinskaitė, VMU (Landscape design)
Lucia Gonzalez, University of Alicante (Architecture)
Marjette Slabina, Estonian Academy of Arts (Art History and Visual Culture)

Asta Ivanauskienė

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
M C M X X I I
Co-funded by the European Union

1 · Stakeholders

1.1 Key stakeholders / parties

Whose conditions or interests does the proposal attempt to represent? Who or what does the proposal seek to speak with or for?

Identify precisely the human and/or more-than-human beings, populations, ecological communities or processes whose conditions of existence orient your proposal.

Our main stakeholder is *Apis mellifera,* also known as the European honey bee. However, bees do not exist separately from their environment. By extension, this proposal also considers plants and trees, which support the nutritional needs of bees by providing nectar and pollen. In return, these plants benefit from bee pollination. Moreover, this exact relationship extends to a wider ecological network that includes other pollinators and insects, such as butterflies, moths, beetles and wasps, as well as beekeepers, students and soil ecosystems.

1.2 Pleasures and sufferings

What enables these parties to live or thrive? What causes stress, restriction, displacement, harm or disappearance?

Describe the spatial, material, environmental and relational conditions that support or disturb them.

The presence of bees is restricted by the suffocating emptiness of the park. The scarcity of flowers (partly due to excessive mowing), and trees with various illnesses, prevent the bees from fulfilling their nutritional needs. Additionally, there are no appropriate places for the bees to build hives. Lastly, the park is oriented towards the students and staff of VDU, leaving no space for bees. The inherent fear of bees also prevents people from peacefully coexisting with them. However, the size of the park provides extensive options to create a more bee-friendly place. In addition, bees generally thrive in environments with diverse flowering plants, native species, clean water, sunlight and suitable temperatures. Furthermore, different plants blooming from spring to autumn can provide a continuous source of nectar and pollen throughout the active season.

1.3 Allies and antagonists

Who or what supports, constrains, competes with, feeds, shelters, regulates or otherwise affects these parties?

Identify their relations, dependencies and tensions, recognising that these may change across space and time.

Bees have both allies and antagonists. Flowering plants (in Lithuania, most importantly: *Salix caprea* (Goat willow), *Acer platanoides* (Norwegian maple), *Lotus corniculatus* (Bird's-foot trefoil), *Trifolium pratense* (Red clover), *Centaurea jacea* (Brown knapweed)) etc and bees depend on each other through pollination. Beekeepers can provide and maintain hives and also relieve colonies of excess honey. At the same time, other pollinators act both as allies, for preserving the balance of an ecosystem, but also as antagonists, competing with bees for

pollen. Examples of antagonists include domesticated bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, beetles and other insects. In addition, the general public also acts as bees' antagonist, by taking their honey and destroying their living environments.

Additionally, these relationships are influenced by environmental conditions. Extreme mowing and intensive agriculture reduce available resources, whereas diverse nectar- and pollen-rich vegetation, including native wildflowers, flowering shrubs and trees, can support bees throughout the season. Similarly, high humidity, drought and other extreme conditions can create additional stress.

It is also important to recognize the relationship between bees and people. Firstly, a large population of people have an inherent fear of bees, due to misinformation and stigmatization. But if a closer look is taken, bees are very similar to people, especially when it comes to routines, patterns and social hierarchies. The dynamics and social relations in a beehive actually mirror the way social and economic hierarchies function in our society. These similarities could allow people and bees to coexist, if only an appropriate environment was designed.

1.4 Challenges and opportunities

Which conditions have restricted or enabled these parties in the past, which do so in the present, and which may emerge in the future?

Map challenges and opportunities across time. Consider how the same condition may be an opportunity for one party and a challenge for another, or may change its significance over time.

Past and present challenges include reduced flower diversity and availability, agricultural intensification, pesticide exposure and habitat fragmentation. It's important to mention that habitat loss and frequent mowing can further reduce the amount of available food.

Looking towards the future, increasing climate change may alter flowering seasons and create a mismatch between when flowers bloom and when bees need food. As a result, already existing pressures may become even more radical. Additionally, if the lack of education on bees persists, the fear of bees will grow and coexisting will never become a possibility. Thus, this crisis can be looked at as a learning opportunity for schools and universities. The latter can attempt to integrate the study of bees and beekeeping - and allow ethical practice on existing honeybee colonies and beehives.

These challenges also create opportunities to rethink how landscapes are managed, for example, through more diverse vegetation, wildflower areas and reduced mowing.

1.5 How we came to know them, and what we got wrong

How did you come to know these parties and their conditions? What remains uncertain or misrepresented?

Identify your sources and methods, and explain what you had to infer or imagine and what your representation may simplify, exclude or get wrong.

Besides seeing honeybees fly around our balconies and land on our food; there is also a lot of research on bees and their importance for upkeeping balance in an ecosystem. People have lived alongside bees for centuries, thus bees are relevant in many world cultures. In Lithuania, bees were/are present in mythology and tied to the goddess Austėja also known as the goddess of bees. Thus, culturally, bees were treated as family - this is sadly not present in contemporary mentality.

Besides this cultural significance that we were unaware of, we also did some research on the biological importance of bees. We were aware of basic biological processes, such as pollination and the building of hives. However, we had no idea how similar bee colonies were to human societies. We read extensive research papers on how bees act with each other, how they form hives,

What still remains uncertain is how bees could/will act in a new environment, created with them, for them.

1.6 Space that matters

Which place and wider urban context matter most to these parties?

Read the environment from their position: identify the boundaries, distances, spatial components, materials, climatic conditions and temporal cycles relevant to them.

For bees, the most important thing is not necessarily a specific place, but whether that place provides enough food, water and shelter. In Akademija Park, bees can find some flowering plants and trees; however, frequent mowing and the limited diversity of flowers reduce the amount of available nectar and pollen. Bees can survive both in very urbanized spaces and less urbanized spaces - the key is a dense network of food sources.

At the same time, Akademija Park has the potential to become a more supportive space for bees. Its green areas could provide diverse food sources throughout the year, while trees and less disturbed areas could offer shelter. Therefore, the park matters because it could become part of a larger network of places where bees can feed, rest and survive within Akademija.

More specifically, the park is home to many native species of trees (listed earlier in the document) that act as the main source of nectar for bees. Additionally, the trees are in flight-height for the bees, which makes flying distances comfortable and accessible. Tree

trunks can act as shelter all year round - even creating an insulated space for hibernation throughout the winter.

1.7 The conflict

Where do the conditions or interests of these parties come into tension with the park as it is currently organized, used, maintained or governed?

Identify the specific practice, spatial condition, relationship or expectation producing the conflict - or an important dependency that is currently overlooked.

As we see it, there are two primary conflicts - that are also kind of in contradiction with one another. The first conflict is between bees and how the park is fundamentally organized. The park's main stakeholders are the students and staff of VDU. Thus, the park is oriented around their convenience - the paths go directly through the park, the benches are next to the paths etc. The Soviet-style sculptures of rectors are clear symbols of the park's anthropocene orientation. Additionally, the park's emptiness does not support the food networks which are necessary to sustain the life of bees.

The second conflict is between bees and other pollinators who compete for resources. This conflict is in inherent contradiction with the last conflict because it presupposes that there are a lot of bees. However, the conflict stems from the notion that ecology relies on balance. An excessive amount of bees is just as bad as a lack of them. Thus, this is a conflict or relationship that has to be kept in mind when creating a park oriented towards the bees. This is often a dependency, which is overlooked, but can become a very prominent conflict when there are many different pollinators (domesticated bees, wild bees, wasps, butterflies) in a shared area.

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
M C M X X I I
Co-funded by the European Union

2 · Problem question

What specific change in the identified relationship, condition or conflict should the proposal address?

Rearticulate the conflict as a clear, specific and open-ended question grounded in your research. The question should identify whose conditions are at stake and what needs to change, without presupposing a particular architectural solution. End it with a question mark.

Our clear problem question is: How can we design a food and network shelter for bees to thrive throughout the year at the Akademija park?

3 · The proposal

3.1 Aim

What do you seek to do?

State the proposal's main intention in response to the identified problem, formulated as a sentence beginning with "to" (to build, to initiate, to create, to begin, to transform, etc.).

The aim of our proposal is to transform the Akademija park in a way that is oriented towards the bees, while also stepping on the toes of Soviet patriarchy. Thus, the park would act as a suitable environment for the bees, but also as a clear political statement against anthropocene activity. These two goals go hand-in-hand with one another, allowing for the creation of a more plural and inclusive world. Thus, our proposal includes the contemporary push for plurality in humanitarian areas of knowledge, such as anthropology and philosophy. Plurality of power and knowledge evens the playing field between different demographics of people and different species, creating a more inclusive world.

3.2 Change

What difference do you seek to initiate, for whom or for what?

Describe the change in conditions, relationships, behaviors, perceptions or decisions to which the proposal seeks to contribute.

The main difference that our proposal seeks to initiate is a comfortable environment (food and shelter network) for the bees. However, the architectural plan layout also requires student involvement and maintenance for long-term success. Thus, the difference we seek to initiate is one of mentality. This proposal aims to tackle the fear that people generally have towards bees - that prevents them from coexisting with them. Thus, the maintenance of the park, the hives and the seasonal plants would be up to the students. Additionally, beekeeping study programs could learn side by side with the bees.

We also seek to raise awareness for eco-feminism and show political resistance towards “man-made” anthropocene environments. Thus, this project is not just a push for the freedom and peace of bees, but also a political step for women and women-led societies (which is why we have also both visually and theoretically connected this project to the Guerilla Girls and their

movement). With this, we are rejecting the notion of human exceptionalism and supporting the idea of "companion species"; an idea propagated by Donna Haraway (Haraway, 2003).

Thus, this project is greater than just an environment for bees, but a political campaign that vouches for mutually dependent and socially entangled societies.

On another note, we wish to also shed light on Lithuanian mythology and closeness to nature and bees. The modern world has distanced itself from nature-related mythology and consequently also nature. The French thinker Rousseau proposed that we should "turn back to nature", but we believe that Bruno Latour's idea of "we were always part of nature" is a lot more relevant here. Since people cannot be extracted from nature, there is nothing to go back to - there is just the acknowledgement that people and nature are one. Keeping this in mind, we wish to shed light on the goddess of bees - Austėja - referenced in Lithuanian mythology. Bees were considered to be part of people's families. Let's bring back mythology, let's bring back fairytales.

3.3 Function

What does the proposal do in terms of its function, and how might this contribute to the intended change?

Explain how the proposal operates and state its hypothesis of change: why you believe its actions or effects could help initiate the intended difference.

The proposal's main component is the integration of existing sculptures, which the bees would "colonize". The notion of colonization works as a "clap-back" to the way people colonized the park. This idea supports the autonomy of bees, but also makes a strong political claim against anthropocene environments.

Additionally, the proposal integrates seasonal plants to ensure the all-year-round survival of bees. These species of plants are native to Lithuania, thus also going hand-in-hand with the local context and supporting the growth of local plants.

3.4 Form

What spatial, material, organizational, legal, visual, political, performative or other form does the proposal take?

Show how the proposal looks, is experienced or enacted, and how its form supports its function.

As mentioned, the proposal includes the usage of existing sculptures in the park. The elevation of these sculptures allows the beehives to be at flight-level for the bees, promoting comfortable pollination. Additionally, elevated sculptures would create a buffer space between students and bees - that way they can coexist.

Again, as mentioned earlier, the proposal also has a clear political and performative function and form. The political statement of colonized sculpture shows the power of bees to break traditional patriarchy. The sculptures are also very bold, including the “shock-factor” to really drive the political statement home.

3.5 Networks

How might the proposal affect existing relations, dependencies and tensions?

Explain how it may change the roles, agency and relationships of the key parties, including their allies, antagonists and other affected actors.

As stated and explained previously, this proposal would both theoretically and practically change the power dynamics of the park. By shifting the attention from people to bees; bees gain autonomy. However, the proposal promotes the coexistence between people and bees - the elevation of sculptures allows for both bees and students to move freely. The new and more inclusive park design also supports the growth of plants, which bees and other pollinators can pollinate. Thus, the proposal creates a symbiotic, mutually beneficial, system between the pollinators and plants. A larger variety of healthy plants and networks would also allow for greater biodiversity and support the survival of other species too. This in turn tackles the suffocating emptiness of the park and creates a cozier environment for all.

3.6 Blind spots

What might the proposal overlook, exclude or unintentionally cause?

Identify its uncertainties, risks and possible unintended consequences, including which human or more-than-human parties might benefit, be harmed or be excluded.

This proposal most definitely has limitations. One of the limitations is the potential monopolization of the area by bees. Even though bees are the most powerful and common pollinators, they are not the only ones. If too many bees live in a certain area, they prevent other pollinators from existing in that shared area. This is why the healthiest ecosystems are balanced and allow for the coexistence of many pollinators. Our proposal does not account for balance between pollinators, thus bees could potentially monopolize the area. The second limitation is the pragmatic everyday interaction between people and bees. Even if students are well informed about bees and even study them, the inherent fear may still persist. Thus, it would take a long time for both parties to get used to one another.

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
MCMXXII
Co-funded by the European Union

4 · Visuals

Include at least three visualizations. Each should perform a different epistemic task - revealing something about the proposal rather than merely illustrating it. Each visualization should include a short caption explaining what it reveals.

4.1 Descriptive render [3D render, drawing, painting]

What would the proposal look like if it were actualized?

Represent its spatial, material or performative form in relation to the existing place.

Our idea proposes some clear changes to the existing park (visual poster in the Drive folder):

- Integration of existing sculptures of VDU's rectors. These sculptures are elevated to better match the flying patterns of bees and create a buffer space between walking students and flying bees. The bee hives surround the sculptures, creating a bold and powerful statement for a shift in the current power dynamic.
- Seasonal flowers and other plants would be planted around and between the 5 existing sculptures to create a network of nutrition for the bees. This also serves a clear aesthetic purpose and supports the inclusion of student initiative (plating and maintenance) and activity.
- These public hives also serve an educational function, as beekeeping students at VDU can maintain, learn and cooperate with bees. There is an existing theoretical background for that too. Instead of students learning about bees, students would be learning *with* bees. This mentality shift is very prominent in contemporary anthropology, initially proposed by Tim Ingold (Ingold, 2000). Although the notion of studying "with" not "about" is in reference to people - it can most definitely be expanded to inter-species relations.

4.2 Assemblage [diagram]

Which human and more-than-human parties, processes and systems are involved, and how are they connected?

Show their different forms of agency, dependencies and tensions, and how these relationships and their collective agency might change if the proposal were actualized. Include relevant temporal changes or cycles. Express this as a diagram.

Besides a poster, which clearly demonstrates the new layout of the park, we created a diagram to show the scientific evidence for species of plants, which support bees. The diagram represents the availability and importance of food throughout the year. The circular calendar is divided into 12 months and 4 seasons, with different colours representing the changing vegetation and flowering periods. The trees and plants surrounding the calendar visually show seasonal transformations, from bare vegetation in winter to a lot of greenery and flowers in the summer months.

The diagram highlights a mutually dependent relationship between bees and flowering plants. This is both biologically and socially important because it demonstrates that no species is autopoietic.

4.3 Perspective shift [free form]

How is the place and the proposal encountered from the situated perspective of the key stakeholder or party?

Represent what may be perceived, sensed or experienced from this position, while acknowledging the limits of translating it into a human visual representation.

We want to answer this question rather imaginatively - *how would the bees perceive our proposal?* Bees are scientifically proven to have and create social hierarchies. Thus, power dynamics are present and encouraged. Considering this, bees would definitely thrive in the new autonomy created by the new design of the park. Our park design also acts as a multi-layered playground for bees - as they can fly at a comfortable height and roam around in the flower beds. Many scientists, such as scientists from the Queen Mary University of London and newspapers, such as the Telegraph have published studies and montages of bees playing with balls with no other aim than entertainment. This proves that a playground-like plan could encourage this playful behaviour among bees.

It is, however, important to note that even though bees are our main stakeholder, there are many important agents in the park. This means that there is no clear universal “correct viewpoint” for our proposal. Supported by Haraway’s famous idea on situated knowledge - all agents and stakeholders will view and benefit from our proposal differently, each experiencing their own limitations (Haraway, 1988).

Overall, we believe that bees would feel at home in our fairytale-like park design.

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
MCMXXII
Co-funded by the European Union

Complementary Components

What exists beyond the poster and the Complementary Document. Add hyperlinks for files, photographs for physical artefacts.

We have created 3 complementary components to support our proposal (all available in our Drive folder). The aim of these complementary components is to expand the conversation beyond just an architectural plan.

As explained throughout this document, our proposal has clear political motives. Supported by Haraway, ecofeminist movements and other feminist movements, such as the Guerilla Girls, we create a campaign for political and biological autonomy. Thus, our first complementary component is a political campaign and accompanying political manifesto. The political campaign poster is inspired by the Guerilla Girls (the body of a person, the face of a bee). The political manifesto ties in the notion of autonomy and situated knowledge. Our political manifesto gives the bees a voice within their new environment. That is why a manifesto suits and compliments our proposal.

Our third complementary component is an original fairytale. It may not be apparent at first, but fairytales hold key importance in creating values among younger demographics. Since our proposal also initiates a shift in mentality, the fairytale is a key component in our campaign.
We also chose a fairytale narrative structure deliberately, drawing on Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm. Fisher describes humans as homo narrans, storytelling beings who evaluate messages through narrative coherence and narrative fidelity rather than pure logic.
We also drew on transportation theory (Green & Brock, 2000), which shows that immersive narratives can reduce resistance to a message's claims. Our fairy tale extends this beyond ecology alone, fusing habitat loss with a colonial allegory to reach audiences that direct argumentation struggles to move.

Our complementary components support the idea that interdisciplinary projects are the only solution for an inclusive world.

References

Studies, precedents, artists, legal cases, thinkers, and the lectures from this week.

ARTISTIC / ARCHITECTURAL REFERENCES

- OXMAN. (n.d.). *Synthetic Apiary*. https://www.oxman.com/projects/synthetic-apiary
- Hahn, J. (2021, November 19). Neri Oxman's Synthetic Apiary II shows how beehive construction "is a responsive and dynamic process." *Dezeen*. https://www.dezeen.com/2021/11/19/neri-oxman-synthetic-apiary-two-honey-bees/

- Art Gallery of Ontario. (2016, June 18). *Hive mind*. https://ago.ca/agoinsider/hive-mind
- Guerrilla Girls. (n.d.). Guerrilla Girls. https://www.guerrillagirls.com/

LANDSCAPE PROJECTS

- The Landscaper. (n.d.). Bee a hero: How your landscape choices can help bees. https://www.landscaper.org.uk/landscaping-guidance/bee-a-hero-how-your-landscape-choices-can-help-bees
- Beekeeping Made Simple. (n.d.). Bee-friendly garden. https://www.beekeepingmadesimple.com/blog/bee-friendly-garden=

BEEKEEPING INITIATIVES IN KAUNAS

- Motuzaitė, J. (n.d.). BiodiverCities - '22 Kaunas. https://biodivercities.eu/eng/pilot-kaunas-22.html
- Motuzaitė, J. (n.d.). BiodiverCities - '24 Kaunas. https://biodivercities.eu/eng/pilot-kaunas-24.html

BEES IN LITHUANIAN CULTURE

- Vaitkevičius, V. (2016). From the vocabulary of the local culture: Family beekeeping. Tautosakos darbai, 51, 66–87. https://doi.org/10.51554/TD.2016.28884
- Steponavičienė, D. (2000). Bitės įvaizdis lietuvių mitologijoje ir tautosakoje [The image of the bee in Lithuanian mythology and folklore]. Liaudies kultūra, 4, 28–33.
- Vaitkevičienė, D. (2016). Mead in the Baltic society: From beekeepers to nobility. Tautosakos darbai, 51, 32–65. https://doi.org/10.51554/TD.2016.28883
- Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus. (n.d.). Apie bitę, bitininką, bičiulystę ir grėsmę: Paroda „Iš avilio" Vinco Kudirkos muziejuje. https://lnm.lt/aktualijos/apie-bite-bitininka-biciulyste-ir-gresme-paroda-is-avilio-vinco-kudirkos-muziejuje/
- 15min. (2026, June 25). Ant teatro Kaune stogo įkurdino bites: Norėtumėte paragauti Laisvės alėjos liepų medaus? https://www.15min.lt/m/id/aktualu/lietuva/ant-teatro-kaune-stogo-ikurdino-bites-noretumete-paragauti-laisves-alejos-liepu-medaus-56-2711340
- IKI Lietuva. (2026, May 19). Virš „Iki" parduotuvių dūzgia bitės: Ant stogų statomi aviliai. https://iki.lt/naujienos/virs-iki-parduotuviu-duzgia-bites-ant-stogu-statomi-aviliai/
- Dundulienė, P. (2008). Pagonybė Lietuvoje: Moteriškosios dievybės. Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas.

BEES AS ECOSYSTEM BIOMONITORS

- Skorbiłowicz, M., Skorbiłowicz, E., & Cieśluk, I. (2018). Bees as bioindicators of environmental pollution with metals in an urban area. Journal of Ecological Engineering, 19(3), 229–234. https://doi.org/10.12911/22998993/85738
- Sbarro Health Research Organization. (2026, August 28). Honey bees can serve as sentinels for environmental health. Phys.org. https://phys.org/news/2026-08-honey-bees-sentinels-environmental-health.html
- Mair, K. S., Irrgeher, J., & Haluza, D. (2023). Elucidating the role of honey bees as biomonitors in environmental health research. Insects, 14(11), 874. https://doi.org/10.3390/insects14110874
- Celli, G., & Maccagnani, B. (2003). Honey bees as bioindicators of environmental pollution. Bulletin of Insectology, 56(1), 137–139.

- Sbarro Health Research Organization. (2026, August 28). Honey bees can serve as sentinels for environmental health. Phys.org. https://phys.org/news/2026-08-honey-bees-sentinels-environmental-health.html
- Mair, K. S., Irrgeher, J., & Haluza, D. (2023). Elucidating the role of honey bees as biomonitors in environmental health research. Insects, 14(11), 874. https://doi.org/10.3390/insects14110874
- Celli, G., & Maccagnani, B. (2003). Honey bees as bioindicators of environmental pollution. Bulletin of Insectology, 56(1), 137–139.

ECOFEMINISM/POSTHUMAN THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- Braidotti, R. (2019). Affirmative ethics and generative life. Deleuze and Guattari Studies, 13(4), 463–481. https://doi.org/10.3366/dlgs.2019.0373
- Mies, M., & Shiva, V. (1993). Ecofeminism. Fernwood Publications.
- Mies, M. (1993). Who made nature our enemy? In M. Mies & V. Shiva, Ecofeminism. Fernwood Publications.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. Feminist Studies, 14(3), 575–599. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066
- Haraway, D. J. (2003). The companion species manifesto: Dogs, people, and significant otherness. Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Haraway, D. J. (2016). Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373780

- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3), 575–599. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

OTHER

- Ingold, T. (2000). The perception of the environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill. Routledge.
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. Communication Monographs, 51(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390180
- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79(5), 701–721. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.5.701