

## Kingbridge Innovation Hub Welcomes 80,000 honey bees

The newly announced Kingbridge Innovation Hub is losing no time in getting demonstration projects up and running, sparking interesting discussions and discovery about the natural environment along the way. Several weeks ago, 1,500 white cedar trees, were planted on the property, as part of a tree nursery for native trees and species at risk. Another 9,000 trees of different varieties have been planted in a holding area and will be moved later this year. Now, the trees have been joined by bees. Eight new hives are now buzzing with 80,000 honey bees. The hives are located beside the tree nursery, and have access to the naturalized forest and the Humber River which runs through the Kingbridge property. The bee project is part of a focus on protecting biodiversity, local food production and natural ecosystems. The bees will be cared for by onsite team members and several volunteers. "Bees belong with trees," said Karen Dubeau, executive director of the Kingbridge Innovation Hub. "It's well known that they play an important role in the agricultural sector for food production, but they are also critical to support food production of nuts, seeds and fruits, food that all other animals and birds in the forest ecosystem rely on. Bees are also a common area of interest between Seneca College and Kingbridge, which recently announced a strategic partnership. As part of their Sustainability Plan, Seneca hosts hives at three of their four campuses, including the one in King Township, and produces 10,000 pounds of honey per year for their campus cafeterias. The College also offers a variety of courses on beekeeping, and has connected with the Kingbridge team implementing the project. In addition to the bees and trees, the Kingbridge Innovation hub is actively working on projects related to managed forests, re-naturalization, food forest designs, medicine gardens, vertical farms, and much more. As outdoor gathering restrictions begin to lift, Kingbridge is looking forward to inviting residents and visitors to explore the demonstration projects, and to engage in conversations. They are actively looking to connect with partner organizations and individuals in the community. "If you are passionate about exploring exciting ideas to transform our community and in finding new ways to make the world a better, healthier place, we hope you will reach out and share your ideas. We are excited to bring people together to co-create ways of achieving a more sustainable and prosperous future," said Lisa Gilbert, general manager of Kingbridge. The Kingbridge Innovation Hub is both a physical location and a community-wide methodology to foster, curate and engage multi-stakeholder collaborations aimed at identifying, trialing and evaluating transformational solutions to track, mitigate and inform about the impacts of climate change on agriculture, food production/distribution, water and conservation of the environment.