

Anel Honey Park: the first park in Greece about apitourism and apitherapy

Who we are:

The idea dates back 2 years before. Since 1968, Anel Co is well-known worldwide for the beekeeping supplies trade and its unique patent products, helping the beekeepers to evolve and follow the demands of a new era. Anel Honey Park is an initiative of Anel Co Branch, situated near Thessaloniki at Neo Rysio village.

Why we created Honey Park:

Anel Honey Park: Problem / challenge and solution

Local flora and pollinators are evolved in parallel and are interlinked to each other. Honey Park is trying to change habits and attitudes of students and adult tourists and visitors in order to support the survival of honeybees. Also, with apitherapy or bee therapy/remedy we are trying to promote the public use of bee products in their daily lives in order to enhance their well-being. Our mission statement is *“Without plants there is no life. But without bees there are no plants”*.



Image 1. View of the park in an event.



Image 2. General view of the park

“Both students and adults need to get to know about the hard life of other species because of human activities. Lack of knowledge leads to lack of interest about the environment. Students must see nature thrive in action and experiment with nature in order to be concerning adults” Elefterios Pantelakis- General Director Anel Co.

The way we worked for this project - tools used:

Learning methods and techniques are continuously evolving, through the history of education, parallel with humans and constructivism is important to construct new learning experiences. An approach to non-traditional education/ learning for the public and students in Honey Park with inquiry activities has positive impact on the environmental learning experiences being offered. Using all our senses is important to increase awareness of nature and value its importance with experiences in order to have a connection.

Students in Greece are becoming more disconnected with nature year after year, not only in cities, but also in villages. Technology is changing their way of thinking and creates a barrier between them and the rest of the natural world. Story-tellers in the guided tour knock down the barriers and build a bridge between people and nature. In our workshop we use our senses to explore the bee products, learn their diversity and nutritional power. Finally, relaxing it the api-therapy house for 30 min will definitely live and experience of how are the vibration, smell and everyday life in a hive!

Honey Park's theoretical and educational framework was based on scientific research and data about the decline of honeybees as well as the shrinking of natural floral habitats of Greece. Pedagogy was developed in the context of Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE). Educators mainly organize, encourage and guide the visitors rather than presenting scientific content knowledge. This is a more efficient learning process for parks, botanic gardens, museums etc. The project #LoveNotLoss and #NatureForAll of IUCN CEC was a cornerstone resource for reflection and inquiry of our project. Project was financed and developed by the private company Anel Co Beekeeping.



Image 3. Students smell aromatic plants and count pollinators

Who is our audience?

Until now, our target groups All Over the World are

- Students from very early age (3 year-old) to high school
- Tourists
- Beekeepers

Summary of services

Honey tasting

In the park you can taste different types of honeys, from all over Greece! Our company has many beekeepers which are clients and associates in the same time! They produce honey and the public taste it in our park!



Image 3. Honey tasting

One of my most favorite experiences in Thessaloniki. We were visiting the city from the United States and sent a message to Anel hoping to come and explore the Honey Park. They really went out of their way to make that happen. I believe anyone of any age could enjoy and connect with something in the park--it was fun, education, and yummy (yes you get to taste the honey!). Thank you! Visitor from California Anel Honey Park Facebook page review, 2016

"Apitherapy house"

"Apitherapy"* or bee-therapy includes all procedures using bee products for well-being and helping several health conditions (FAO, 2009). Beekeeping/ hive products are cited in many ancient scripts as medicine. Nowadays, bees and their products are used in many ways as alternative "therapies" in alternative medicine to enhance physical and mental health!

Its origins are ancient: the first known prescription about the use of honey for medical purposes was written on a clay tablet, found in the Euphrates valley and dating somewhere between 2100 and 2000 BC. There are records from ancient Egypt and ancient India about using honey in treating wounds. Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician and 'father of medicine' listed the physical effects of honey: "It causes heat, cleans sores and ulcers, softens hard ulcers of the lips, and heals carbuncles and running sores" (Manjo, 1991).

Apitherapy areas: houses in Anel Honey Park

In Anel Honey Park we created special "Apitherapy" houses. These are the first and unique in Greece! Within the visitors can:

- See bees perform their daily tasks from observation hives
- Calm and relax in the "beds of Apitherapy"
- Listen the bees buzz
- Breathe the air of the hive with special masks
- Enjoy herbal blends to improve your well being

In your visit you can taste different bee products and be informed by special scientists and apitherapists for the beneficial properties of bee products.

The buzz and smell of the hive will help you relax, reduce stress, anxiety and insomnia.

Along with your visit you can taste different bee products and herbs. Click [here](#) to book your visit with a full program in the Apitherapy house!

Parents can enjoy one hour "meditation" in the house, reducing stress and anxiety of everyday life, while the children are engaged in the park activities!

**Our services DO NOT replace your personal doctor or physician. They improve your well-being, rather than treat a disease. Always consult your medical doctor before you follow new, alternative treatments. We advise people allergic to bee's sting not to enter the Park. Danger of bee sting exists in any outdoor place we visit, as well as Honey Park. Our staff are trained in case of bee sting or other situation.*



Image 4. Smelling the Greek aromatic plants



Image 5. Observation hives: clear view of honey bees working in a safe distance



Image 6. Workshop about the uses of bee products



Image 7. Anel Honey Park: A view of some flowerbeds from above



Image 8. Seminars of bee products recipes

What you can see/do in the park - Guided tours and more:

According to Anel Honey Park Master Plan, the main idea is the creation of thematic areas, which are organized to host special activities and events, but also to “tell the bee story”. Until now we have completed more than half of our thematic areas:

1. **Plants and Bees:** information kiosk with surrounding plantations of aromatic-medicinal-beekeeping Greek native –mainly- plants
2. **Bee society:** information kiosk about the bee organization and the Greek beekeeping tradition from ancient times.
3. **The equipment of the beekeeper:** information kiosk about the work and collection of beekeeping products
4. **Observation hives:** see the bees doing their everyday work from breathtaking distance with special observation hives in different shapes
5. **Vegetable garden:** bees pollinate 70% of our garden! See them “on the work”!
6. **Workshop-Gift Shop:** buy your favorite honey types, fresh pollen and royal jelly, propolis in many forms, but also unique souvenirs, Greek herbs, toys, books and cosmetics.
7. **Path of the senses:** make your barefoot walk in the garden! Two special designed routes –one for children one for adults- make you connect with nature and learn the secrets of the garden!
8. **Inquiry-based science learning areas:** Why bees build hexagons? Lots of questions answered in an entertaining way!
9. **Leisure and Observation:** Just relax in our benches around the garden
10. **Labyrinth:** part of our “meditation route” you follow it to “prepare yourself” for the apitherapy house!
11. **Apitherapy:** here is the final stage and mainly goal of Anel Honey Park. In the house you can relax (or sleep) on special designed beds. Under of them 8 hives are doing their daily work. The hives offer you a buzz and an aroma inside the house without any danger to being stung!
12. **Special landscaped barbecue area:** In Greece we tell “Nature gets up the appetite”. After a great experience in the park, a barbeque leaves you with the best final taste.
13. **Outdoor fireplace:** What makes a hive so well organized? Hang out and discuss with your friends in the fireplace: where every story is to be told.
14. **Farm animals:** A family of donkeys, a mini –but mighty- goat, couple of sheep, a herd of rabbits, a brood of chickens give life and loudness in the park.

Seminars & workshops

A continuously grown variety of our seminars target to cover our clients’ needs and support Life Long Learning and education. New and old beekeepers, citizens interested in well-being and healthy living, young parents, students, beekeepers’ associations in various countries, tourists etc are booking their preferable workshop or seminar all year around. Some of them are:

- **Plants & Bees:** extracts, tinctures, ointments, creams, soaps and more with natural ingredients and raw bee products.
- **Royal jelly production:** participate in the process (producing our own royal jelly) of Royal Jelly! Come and discover the properties and its unique nutritional value!
- **Bee Diseases:** Learn one by one the diseases and “enemies” of bees and the way to treat them with eco-friendly methods.
- **Beekeeping plants:** We are All One in Planet Earth! Meet beekeeping plants (plants producing enough pollen and nectar) of Greece and see how it can help you and your apiary!
- **Hands-on beekeeping activities:** Throughout the year we perform practical exercises to people who already know or want to come in closer contact with the profession of beekeeper.

A park for children and adults. An incredible experience in the world of bees with honey tasting, apitherapy, beekeeping products testing and more. Worth it! Tripadvisor review, 2016

Public engagement success and challenges - Results (2016)

The project started before some months and we are still gathering data. In almost one year thousands of students and adults (mainly tourists and beekeepers from various countries) visited the park and followed a guided “fly bee tour”, workshop or seminar. This is quite big for a new visited place in Thessaloniki Greece! Since “who is our audience” was clear from the beginning we had promote something new to make the visit worthwhile. And there are plenty more activities to come! You have to make a marketing plan and grow your social media profile to make it work. And you have to make it parallel to the construction and activities program.

*Excellent experience! My kids were thrilled! They tried different types of honey, learned about the important role of bees. They learned to respect the environment! Mother, Anel Honey Park
Facebook page review, 2016*

The socio-economic Greek challenge

Even though Greek tradition in apitherapy dates back to ancient Greece, it is not widely practiced and not specialized areas exist, in contrast with other countries. Nevertheless, Greece’s economy situation is ideal for offering something innovative for the Greek audiences as well as visitors from other countries. Despite of The difficult economic situation in Greece our strong company profile achieved something new and viable in the same time, by our own available funds.

*We should highlight that we “work like a hive”, our staff members create a good team with skills complementing each other in order to offer the finest apitherapy experiences!, Evropi-
Sofia Dalampira, Anel Honey Park Director*

Working and offering help and supplies to organizations, institutes, old and new beekeepers, **has** a great impact to Anel Honey Park, as it contributes in a form of scientific, practical, dissemination of knowledge, mouth-to-mouth or other forms of support.

Additional Information

<https://www.facebook.com/AnelHoneyPark/>

<https://twitter.com/anelhoneypark>

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/locations/1033355855/?hl=en>

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g5413088-d8483611-Reviews-Anel_HoneyPark-Thermi_Thessaloniki_Region_Central_Macedonia.html

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