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Mistwood Golf Club Producing Food and Honey in Their Own Backyard

This year, Mistwood Golf Club started The Farm, a project that not only sees them grow their own vegetables, herbs, and flowers, but also keeping their own bees for pollination and honey harvesting. Less than a year in, it is already garnering awards. The FairWays Foundation, which awards grants for sustainability on golf courses internationally, awarded Mistwood a grant to cover infrastructural startup costs for the entire farm to table program. What makes this program worthy of such a grant? Grab a shovel and let's dig in!

Golfers at Mistwood may have noticed a greenhouse near the hole 9 tee and a massive garden near the hole 2 tee. These are some of the many office spaces of Angelica Carmen, the sustainability expert who was hired by the club this spring. She has been growing herbs and vegetables for the kitchen at McWethy's Tavern as well as flowers for dish garnish and decoration around the property. Salad greens, cucumbers, basil, summer squash, zucchini, beets, radishes, carrots, and peppers are just some of the crops from year one's harvests. "I try to grow completely without chemicals and use mainly organic methods," says Carmen.

While the greenhouse and garden are right near the course, the beehives, which house a combined 600,000-700,000 bees in the summer, are located a bit farther away. Mistwood benefits from the ecological services the bees provide through the pollination of plants and vegetables and from honey harvesting. The honey is used in the kitchen and is available for sale on property. "Natural honey is unfiltered, raw, and local, which is good for allergies and good to boost your immunity in general, as long as you don't overheat it and sterilize it," explains Carmen. The color, thickness, and taste of the honey changes with the seasons and is based on what the bees are eating.

"It is great to see business in town are using sustainability," said Mayor John Noak. "Whether it is using green energy or growing their own ingredients, the benefits to the business and to our community are immense."

2022 was the first year of The Farm and there are some big plans for year two. An area next to the greenhouse will be converted to native wildflower pollinator gardens. This will benefit the biodiversity of the property, provide more food for the bees and other pollinators, and act as a fieldtrip destination for students. The main garden, which will get its own set of native plantings, has an area that will be the future center of activity. Patrons will be able to engage in farm to table dinners, honey tastings, chef cooking demos, and any other special events that will be hosted on site. Also in planning is



the possibility of golfers and tavern customers being able to tour the garden and beehives. "We will get to show all of this to people and tell them our story. They may even be able to become involved. It's not meant to be kept secret," says Carmen.

With a grant award to their name, in house honey sales flowing, and plenty of stories like this being written, The Farm is a secret that won't stay secret for very much longer.