

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT:

PREPARING FOR BEE SEASON

Bees have the most important job in the ecosystem of pollinating flowering plants and assisting the spread of seeds. Bees have unfortunately acquired a bad reputation that has caused *melissophobia* (fear of bees). There are valid reasons to be scared of bees however they are important and the land needs them. The intent of this Public Service Announcement is to provide information on bees, how to prevent bees in your residence, and the Africanized Honey Bee (AHB).

Bee Safety and Awareness: What You Can Do!

Winter Preparation:

- Inspect your home for bee hives (especially when the weather is cooler) and look for any bee attractants (e.g. leaking pipes, water accumulation areas, discarded soda cans, overturned flower pot) at least once a month. Soda residue in recycled bins can still attract bees, so situating the recycle bin further from your home and rinsing the can of residue can be effective.
- Fill all cracks and crevices with steel wool and caulk to prevent bees from building a colony in your home.
- If a bee hive is detected, please contact a local beekeeper or pest control company. Removing a bee hive is ideal in the winter because the bee population is low, in comparison to a full-fledged hive that can contain up to 70,000 bees. Bees are often dormant in the winter and evenings but take precautions while inspecting your home and yard.

Warmer Temperatures (90 degrees and higher):

- ***Be Alert!*** If you hear the hum of a healthy bee colony, quickly take inventory of your surroundings and look for a bee hive (e.g. bees coming out of a crack in the wall, hole in ground, trees) then quickly exit the area away from the hive. Bees will behave oddly before a full-fledged attack, like flying at your face or buzzing over your head. If that occurs, run for shelter or a distance away from the bees (note: an Africanized Honey Bee has been known to chase up to a quarter mile). **If you are allergic to bees, carrying an EpiPen is recommended.**
- ***Be Calm!*** Don't panic at the sight of a few bees foraging. Screaming, flapping arms and blindly running will agitate bees and could cause injuries, like sprained ankles. Bees are attracted to scents, like perfume, scented lotion, aftershave so they can fly around you while foraging. Other than being a nuisance, they are not likely to sting unless provoked (e.g. stepping on them, swatting at them).
- ***Be Aware!*** Bees tend to attack things dark in color, such as clothing and hair. Light-colored clothing is recommended, which also helps with reflecting sun rays on hot summer days.
- ***Bee Attack!*** Run as fast as possible. Don't try jumping in water, the bees will wait. Cover your head and find shelter (e.g. car, house). Some bees may get in the shelter but a well lit room could cause confusion in the bees. Scrape the stringer off quickly with a card because the sac will continue to pump venom. Seek medical attention immediately if you experience hives or trouble breathing.

Bee Preventive in Your Bee Safety!



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"KINDS" OF BEES IN A COLONY:

- THE QUEEN:** She is the largest in the colony and can be recognized by a elongated abdomen. Once a queen is born, she goes into mating flight (lasts her whole life) and the drone bees fertilize her. She lives the longest in the hive and can lay up to 2,000 eggs per day.
- DRONES:** The male bees of the hive and their only job is to mate with a queen (any queen so not hive specific). They do not collect food or pollen, and are often kicked out of the hive during winter, when resources are low.
- WORKERS:** Smallest yet the mightiest bee in the colony, not to mention all female! They nurse, provide food, protection and the hive. They are very busy and live up to a month, however in the winter they can live longer.



**Africanized Bee (left)
European Honey Bee (right)**

Africanized Honey Bees (AHB) were introduced in Brazil, cross-breeding the European Honey Bee (EHB) and African Honey Bee, to increase honey production. The hybrid are physically similar (slightly smaller) to the EHB but the major difference is the defensive behavior of their hives. Another difference is that AHB have a lower amount of venom in their sting, compared to EHB.

AHB defends their hive in a larger area, in comparison to the EHB. They will quickly protect their hive. Their swarm is aggressive and often in larger numbers (possibly half the hive) than EHB.