Bees In Our Environment

- Apiary Program

Beekeeping/Apiary

In Los Angeles County all beekeepers are required to register their hives annually with the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/ Weights and Measures per **California Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) Section 29043**. Beekeepers must complete the **Annual Apiary Registration Form** and should read the **Annual Registration Notification Letter** for information.

- Annual Apiary Registration Form
- Annual Registration Notification Letter
- California Food and Agricultural Code: Division 13: Section 29040-29056.

Keeping bees can be an entertaining hobby in the urban environment but these complex insect communities need continual maintenance. Before keeping bees-a prospective beekeeper should research the practice first, contact City or County agencies for restrictions, price beekeeping equipment, talk to neighbors about having bees and find a mentor (often through local beekeeping associations).

Beekeeping is allowed in many cities as long as they do not become a public nuisance. To prevent such nuisance complaints beekeepers should maintain their bees in the following ways.

- **Hive Placement.** Before placement find a location with easy access for hive maintenance, a dry environment, nearby water source, and adequate distance from neighbors and public areas (to prevent sting incidents). A 6-7 foot screen may be needed as a barrier from public areas and to encourage upward flight above eye-level.
- **Provide Water.** Bees need water to cool their hives. Providing a continuous, ample source of water will keep bees out of neighboring swimming pools, spas, bird baths, and even a pet's water bowl.
- **Provide Space in Hive Boxes.** Overcrowded hives may cause bees to be irritable resulting in more aggressive behavior and may also tend to swarm in search of space. To prevent such behavior, beekeepers use a variety of techniques to provide space, such as: adding bee boxes or supers, replacing brood frames with clean foundation, etc. This will allow bees to manage their space comfortably and hopefully prevent swarming.
- **Re-queen with Known Genetics.** To prevent cross breeding with wild Africanized bees, bee keepers should re-queen their hives with mated European queen bees of known genetic origin. Africanized colonies are difficult to manage because they are so protective of their hives. Their aggressive behavior increases the likelihood of bee attacks and possible liability.
- **Work with the Bees Regularly.** Continual work with the bees allows the beekeeper to know the needs of the apiary. Bee hives may need help when stressed by lack of food resources, water, pests, space, or failure of a queen. These conditions may be easily prevented with supplements, treatments, or just taking a little time to manage the bees.

All nuisance complaints are investigated by the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/Weight and Measures' office.

If you have questions about beekeeping in Los Angeles County call our office Monday – Friday 7am-5:30pm at (626) 575-5466.