

Bees in Our Environment



- Nuisance Bees

Nuisance Bees

Problems with bees develop in urban communities when bees come into close proximity to humans causing a nuisance. Nuisance bees come into contact with people most commonly in four ways:

1. Swarms. [Pic](#) During the months of April, May and June many honey bee colonies swarm. A colony will divide and about 1/3 of the workers will leave with a queen to find a new location. The individual bees fly so close to a queen in flight, that together they form a mass reaching one to two feet in diameter. These masses are often seen on structures, shrubs, or the ground. If the swarms are left alone, they will usually leave in two to three days. Again, these bees are looking for a new home, so it is possible that they will find a place to stay nearby. If you should find a swarm in a location that can't be tolerated due to safety issues, contact a bee keeper or a pest control company. Some bee keepers will take these bees and add them to their own existing colonies. If the bees are not easily accessible, a pest control company may be needed to remove the bees with a pesticide.

2. Feral Bee Colony. ([Pic 1](#), [Pic 2](#) & [Video](#)) Bee swarms will eventually find a suitable location for another hive. In the wild, bees may find an opening in trees, quiet locations under rocky overhangs or large tree limbs. However, in the urban landscape, structures are often perfect for bee colonies. Bees are drawn to quiet, unmaintained structures where openings in the structures provide protection and space for a colony to grow. If a feral bee colony establishes a colony on a property or in a structure and has been determined to be a public nuisance, County Public Health Ordinance 11.02.190 requires the person having control of the property to abate or remove such a condition or nuisance within a reasonable time.

3. Foraging Bees. ([Pic](#), [Video](#)) Bees are a very important part of our environment. They pollinate flowers and are the primary means in which many fruits, vegetables, and seeds are produced. Bees forage for food (pollen and nectar) and water to cool their hive. These foraging bees often come in contact with people and pets near flowering plants, pet water bowls and swimming pools. These bees are not aggressive; however, they could accidentally become entangled in a person's hair, get stepped on or come in contact with someone's skin by some means. In these situations a bee will naturally defend itself. We learn a quick and painful lesson when this occurs.

4. Beekeepers. ([Pic 1](#), [Pic 2](#)) In Los Angeles County, 35 of the 88 cities allow bee keeping. However, each city may have its own unique restrictions. Honey bees are usually kept in wood boxes called "hive boxes". Bee keepers must properly maintain their hives so that they don't become a public nuisance. Bees need water to cool their hives. Providing a good ample source of water will keep bees out of neighboring swimming pools, spas, bird baths, and even a pet's water bowl. To prevent cross breeding with feral Africanized bees, bee keepers should re-queen their hives with mated European Queen Bees.

Africanized colonies are difficult to manage because they are so protective of their hives. Their aggressive behavior increases the likelihood of bee attacks.

In Los Angeles County all beekeepers are required to register their hives annually by completing an Annual Apiary Registration Form with the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures Department per California Food and Agriculture Code: Division 13.

Nuisance bee incidents which affect the health and safety of the public will be investigated promptly by calling the Bee Info Line.

(Link to 'Filing a Complaint Page')

1(800) 233-9279

1 (800)-BEE-WARY