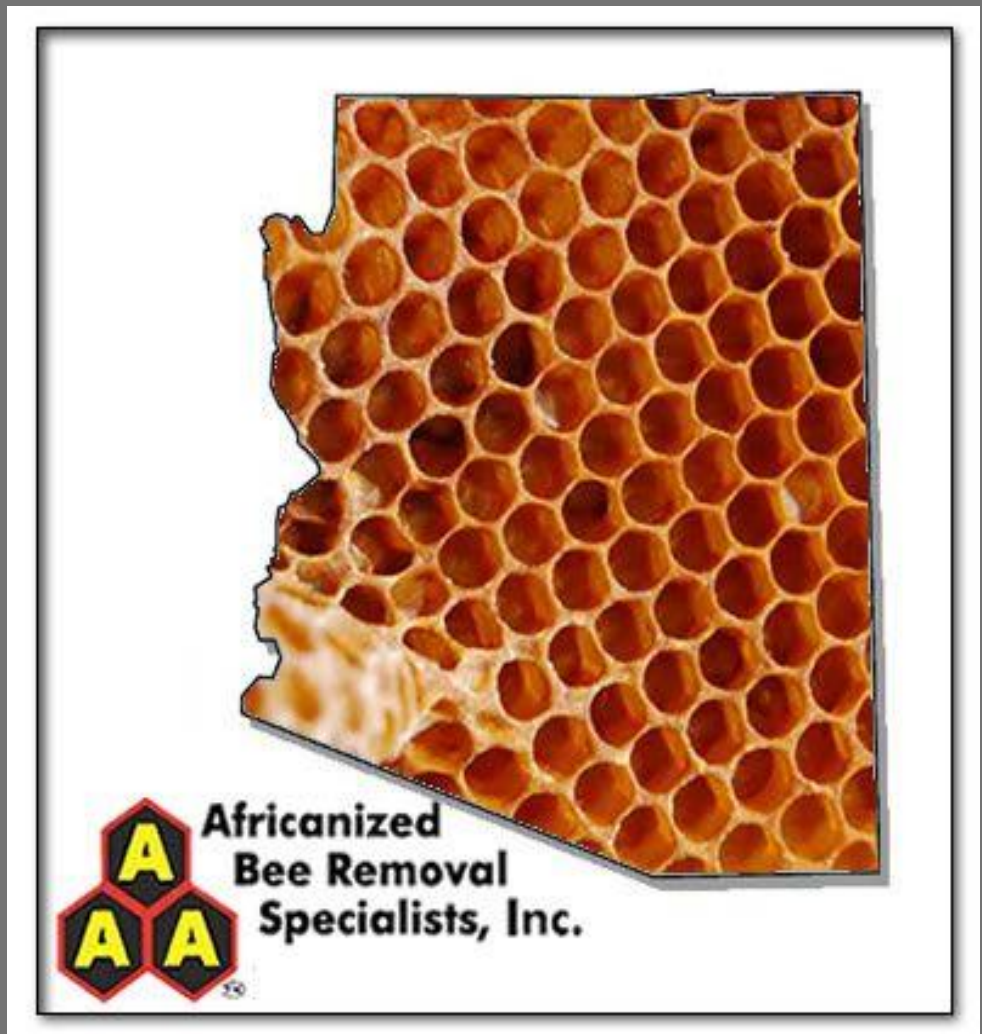


2012

# A Consumer's Guide to Bee Removal Services



# Table of Contents

<b>What is a real bee removal specialist company?</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Comments: The quality of professional bee removal services in Arizona</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Shopping price? What questions should you ask?</b>	<b>(6)</b>
<b>What about live bee removal service providers?</b>	<b>(8)</b>
<b>How can I find beekeepers that want to keep the bees?</b>	<b>(10)</b>
<b>Are Africanized honeybee swarms dangerous?</b>	<b>(11)</b>
<b>How do Africanized honeybees colonize your home?</b>	<b>(14)</b>
<b>What are the signs of honeybee colonization?</b>	<b>(17)</b>
<b>What should I do if I have located an Africanized honeybee colony?</b>	<b>(20)</b>

# **A Consumer's Guide to Bee Removal Services**

## **What is a real bee removal specialist company?**

Since 1993, we are internationally known Arizona beekeeper experts in African bee removal, honey bee removal, honeycomb removal, Africanized killer bee control, wasp removal, wasp nest removal, aggressive wasp control and are beekeeping and bee removal specialists. We are not just a pest control company.

We are beekeepers from Arizona Bee Products, which is a large commercial wholesaler of Sonora Desert bee products. Each Arizona bee removal specialist is a professional beekeeper who practices beekeeping and apiculture and knows bee control and how to safely handle a bee colony whether they are Africanized honey bees or European honey bees. Prior to African killer bees being discovered in Tucson, AZ in 1993, we sent beekeepers from our staff to Mexico to study how the invasive species would affect our commercial bee hives. We began developing techniques to protect and secure our commercial bee hives. As a result, we are the oldest beekeeping company that specializes in bee removal, bee control and bee swarm removal in Arizona.

AAA Africanized Bee Removal Specialists, Inc fully licensed to perform bee control, wasp control and pest control service in Phoenix, Tucson and surrounding Arizona cities. Each certified bee removal specialist is individually licensed in addition to being a professionally trained AZ beekeeper in beekeeping and honeycomb removal. We are beekeepers and real bee removal specialists.

African bee removal, honeycomb removal, wasp removal and wasp nest removal can be very dangerous and honey bees, honeycomb, bee pheromone, wasp pheromone and wasp nests can damage your home. Mishandling a bee colony, improper bee removal, bee control, wasp removal, and wasp control methods, and improper honeycomb removal methods will worsen the damage, the danger, and further spread bee

pheromone or wasp pheromone, which will lead to bee colony or wasp colony re-infestation. We are AZ beekeepers, honey bee removal, honeycomb removal, Africanized killer bee control and aggressive wasp removal, wasp nest removal and wasp control specialists, not just pest control.

A real Arizona bee removal specialist is an experienced beekeeper who practices beekeeping, is licensed by the State of Arizona in pest control and is highly trained and experienced in AZ bee removal, both in honey bee removal and African killer bee control, honeycomb removal, bee swarm removal, wasp removal, wasp nest removal and wasp control.

As bee removal specialists, we are extremely proud of the fact that we were able to assist the people of Arizona with their bee removal problems, from the advent of African killer bees arrival in Arizona to the present. We now have many bee removal competitors that do not understand that a honey bee colony requires, whether Africanized bees or otherwise, special handling and care. Bees, Africanized honey bees or European honey bees, cause extensive damage to a residential or commercial building structure, both from the application of bee pheromone, and honeycomb deposits. Improper methods worsen the damage and always invite future bee infestation or wasp infestation problems. Don't risk the disaster of a poorly done job, call us first! We are beekeepers and real bee removal specialists and wasp removal specialists.

## **Comments: The quality of professional bee removal services in Arizona.**

We have had many calls from home and business owners over our years of service that have used other bee removal or pest control service companies, asking us to explain to them why they are having repeated bee infestations. Many have said, even though they have had their bee problems treated by other pest control or bee removal service companies, they still continue to get bee hives back; sometimes more than once a year. These calls are not unique to any given area in central or southern Arizona; we have had them from Cochise, Maricopa, Pima, Pinal and Santa

Cruz counties and every city and city area imaginable.

Generally, the callers always describe the work that was done by the other companies as follows: "A representative showed up, sometimes not even wearing a bee suit or having a ladder, spent 10 to 20 minutes, and sprayed the opening the bees were flying in and out of. Essentially, I paid for someone to spray a can of insecticide, don't know what, at the opening and leave a couple of pest strips at the site. I spent a good amount of money with them and the bees never went away or they came back within a short period of time. I called the company I used back, and they told me I had a new problem and they wanted to charge me again for a new service." In many cases, the company either denied service or returned three or four times without success. Eventually, we'll get called or the company refers the property owner to us.

An Africanized bee infestation is a very serious problem. African bees are potentially very dangerous and have properly earned the name African killer bees. Bee removal services should not be dabbled in or treated lightly by companies professing to provide bee eradication, bee extermination, bee removal or honeycomb removal services. Many pest control companies are inexperienced or treat a bee problem as they would any other insect problem. Many companies that advertise under bee removal services are unlicensed with the Office of Pest Management, State of Arizona, or are really just pest control companies advertising under a pseudonym name.

Africanized bee colonies are always dangerous to handle, sometimes lethal, and can cause tremendous damage to homes and commercial building structures if not treated properly. Improper methods worsen the damage and lead to future bee problems. Bee pheromone, a marker scent the colony deposits at the site, does not go away on its own and cannot simply be scrubbed out with soap and water. A passing swarm can pick up that marker from a considerable distance away and will try to re-occupy a former bee site before it will go anywhere else. Honeycomb, if not removed

properly, will immediately start attracting robbing bees from other colonies and begin liquefying and melting down. Honeycomb meltdown can saturate building materials like drywall and insulation, cause wet rot to framing structures, attract other unwanted pests and spread pheromone scent throughout your walls making the problem much larger.

We are professional beekeepers, practice bee keeping and bee control, and can testify to the number of complaints and jobs we have taken as a result of poor professional practices in the industry. Bees damage your structure and improper methods worsen the damage. When you contact a company that advertises bee services, ask a lot of questions about their experience, licensing status and about what they intend to do for the price they quote. With bee services, and to avoid future bee re-infestations, like anything else, you often get what you pay for. **Call AAA Africanized Bee Removal Specialists, Inc. first and get the facts!**

## **Shopping Price? What questions should you ask?**

### **1. What will they do to prepare and calm the bee colony?**

- We will spend an hour or more, as required, to calm and prepare a colony for extermination. We use a queen simulated pheromone that we have carefully developed over the years in a bee smoker that causes the colony to group up around the queen rather than disperse and work in the cavity. It also keeps the bees calm and allows us to probe the site without exciting the bees and causing even more pheromone secretions and damage.
- During this process, we also wait for the returning foraging field bees to rejoin the colony leaving zero to very few flying insects in the air outside the entrance before we start procedures.

## **2. Do they just immediately spray the entrance with a strong insecticide?**

- Without preparing and calming the colony, just spraying the entrance puts the colony in alarm and attack mode, causes them to secrete even more pheromone scent, and tremendously increases the damage. Additionally, it will cause some of the bees to flee the intrusion and may spread them out throughout your house walls or ceilings and may even drive them inside your house. This is a common procedure among our competitors and the worst possible technique for solving a bee infestation problem.
- Poisoning the entrance only accelerates the problem, does nothing but increase the pheromone scent at the site and can lead to serious bee emergencies.

## **3. Do they make any effort to probe for honeycomb and how do they do it?**

- We spend a great amount of time, sometimes several hours during the preparation phase, and while we are waiting for the foraging field bees to return, probing the site by drilling small toothpick sized holes and exploring the cavity the bees have occupied to develop a concise picture of the damage the bees have caused to your home. We use thin hard line probes that are inserted through these holes. The residual that is removed can tell us the age of the colony by the coloration of the brood comb, exactly where the honey is stored in the cavity, and the quantity, depth, width and height of the comb deposit. We never touch the main entrance during this process in order not to interrupt the flow of returning foraging field bees. Additionally, we will use optical scopes to explore the cavity if necessary.
- Many of our competitors just tell you that you have honeycomb and either refer you to a specialist like us or offer you a removal at an additional price. We will prove to you that you do have a honeycomb problem while we are at your site during the preparation phase and show you the results of our probing. If a honeycomb removal is feasible and necessary, we will carefully explain it to you and provide you with a formal written quotation on a comprehensive, solution based, comb removal

process, not just a rip and tear out procedure that still leaves you with residual dripping honey, comb tracks and does nothing for the pheromone deposits at the site.

#### **4. What will the site look like after they are finished spraying?**

- Are there still a lot of bees flying outside the entrance? Are bees still going in and out of the entrance?
- After spraying the entrance with a heavy phosphate poison or a strong residual insecticide, our competitors, commonly apply a pest strip at the entrance and tell you that it is sufficient to take care of any bees that are still alive inside the colony or the large number of returning foraging field bees. They commonly say to wait a couple of days and see how it goes. Unfortunately, it often doesn't go well and you have hundreds of aggravated stinging insects trapped outside the entrance for the period of time they asked you to wait for. Further, as mentioned previously, if the colony is not dead, it will recover and if the entrance is poisoned, the bees will search for another way out and this will often be inside your home.

Caution! You get what you pay for! There is no inexpensive, quick fix to a developed bee infestation. Without proper care and treatment, your chances of re-infestation in the future are almost certain. A passing bee swarm will reoccupy a former bee site before it will choose another location. Don't risk the disaster of a poorly done job! Call us first and get the facts.

#### **What about live bee removal service providers?**

We have recently noted a resurgence of self proclaimed professional beekeepers, new live bee removal companies and some pest control companies offering live bee removal services, many with low cost pricing, and many with "lip service" guarantees. They are particularly targeting the greater metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. Their presenting sales approach is that honey bees are scarce because of a phenomena called "Colony Collapse Disorder" (CCD), as has been touted in



the news media, and that honey bee colonies and bee swarms, Africanized or not, have value to the environment, to beekeepers, and should at all costs be saved and protected. They generally advertise humane treatment and promise that the honeybees will be hived and maintained. Many will say that they are not African bees and assure you that you did the right thing. If you employ these people, there are many important questions that you should ask them first:

- What are your credentials as a beekeeper? Do you have a U.S. Department of Agriculture License? Do you have an Arizona business license? Are you licensed with the **State of Arizona Office of Pest Management?**
- What do you intend to do with the bees?
- What do you intend to do about the honeycomb and bee pheromone scent left at the site?
- How do you intend to transport the bees safely to the area they will be hived at?
- Can you guarantee their safety? How will I know?
- What will you do if the bees come back or I still have bees after your done?
- Is it really true that you can recondition an Africanized bee colony? How does that work?
- What is my liability while you are trying to remove them? Are you insured?
- How much public danger is involved during the bee removal process? Fully explain your procedures.
- Who is responsible for any structural damage that you may cause during the bee removal?

If you do not get straight answers on any of the above, I recommend that you move on. There is usually a reason that the price is quoted so low – buyer beware!

Realize that many individuals pursuing this are not licensed because they profess to not use insecticides, which are heavily regulated and supervised by the State of Arizona for good reason. It is simply a way around licensing and certification. Also, to recondition an Africanized bee colony takes a great deal of work, time, expense and constant vigilance. Most commercial beekeeping companies will not take the time or suffer the expense to do it at all. Many of these "save the bees" companies simply kill the bee swarm or bee colony after they are removed, release them elsewhere or allow them to suffocate during transport.

We are professional beekeepers, bee researchers, and bee pest control specialists. African honeybees are not affected by CCD, are not in short supply, and the public danger an established bee hive can present is significant, potentially lethal and can lead to future area bee infestation through their characteristic of periodic bee swarming.

Some individual beekeepers may actually want to spend the time and expense to wait for three months and protect, re-queen and re-condition an Africanized bee hive. Please use caution in searching out these presumptive advertisers. Generally, they are not solving your bee problem and they are killing the bees anyway or making them somebody else's problem. Again, you get what you pay for!

## **How can I find beekeepers that want to keep the bees?**

There are very few commercial beekeeping operations that collect and re-queen Africanized honeybees. We know, because we experimented with it when the bees first arrived in southern Arizona in 1993. It was less expensive for us to maintain our own domestic stock and, frankly, the quality of the honey was much better and much more predictable – not to say that Africanized honeybees do not produce honey. Finding beekeepers that will collect and farm Africanized honeybees is difficult. Most of the time, it will be individual beekeepers or hobbyists that are willing to do this.

Your best bet is to contact your local beekeeping association or a bee supply store and ask if they know of anyone who is collecting without charging a fee. Buyers beware - if they do not do it for free.

## **Are Africanized Honeybee Swarms Dangerous?**

Honeybee swarms are common throughout Arizona. What domestic European honeybees we have left in the southern and central parts of the state, typically only swarm once or twice a year in the early spring. These are in managed areas and usually tended by professional beekeepers. There have been no wild European honeybee swarms reported in our area since 2005. Africanized honeybees, in contrast, will swarm all year long. Their survival strategy is to constantly sub-divide and continue to seek and occupy forage rich areas. This is how they infest and take over areas so quickly. Statistics say that there may be as many as six or more Africanized honey bee colonies in a city block. An established African honeybee colony is capable of sending out swarms many times a year if forage is available. Peak periods of swarming activity are in the spring after winter rains and in the fall after the monsoon rains.

A swarm is a migrating group of honeybees composed of a queen, drones and many workers. Sometimes, as they travel, smaller swarms will join larger swarms to increase their chances of survival and multiple queens may be resident in the swarm for a short period of time as they travel. It is common to see swarms move through an area looking like a dust devil or large moving ribbon, and as they travel, they make a significant amount of noise. Many people report that it sounds like a low flying airplane moving through the area. As swarms periodically decide to rest, they quickly form into a ball, protecting the queen, on trees or bushes or similar vegetation. A typical resting swarm will look about the size of a football, or a glob of bees, which counts about 8,000 to 12,000 bees. Some combined swarms can be much larger and look like a basketball in size and can,

occasionally, be even larger. Resting will occur after several hours of flying or if rain or winds force them to hold up in a protected area.

Swarms, Africanized or not, are not overtly aggressive in nature. They are more interested in survival than in any form of confrontation. It is very common for people to call us and say they just discovered a large ball of bees in their bush or tree and it was not there an hour ago. It only takes a swarm three to six minutes to form at a chosen resting site, and when they do form, they quiet down quickly as they rest. There is very little activity until they decide to continue to move on and then, they leave just as quickly. Over the past several years, we have studied Africanized honeybee swarms extensively. Our research indicates that swarms are non-aggressive unless directly interfered with by spraying with insecticides or attempting to dislodge them or make them move out of their resting location – they are non-reactive when they are at rest unless threatened or disturbed. Further, any attempt to dislodge them may force them to move into a nearby structural cavity, in order to increase their chances of survival, rather than continue to move through the area and continue to migrate. Swarms are transient. Our research indicates that if you see them on vegetation, they will more than likely continue to move, otherwise, they would have already chosen to move into your house or a neighbor's house directly. They deserve watching, but statistically, they will explore areas for colonization at least a quarter of a mile away from their resting site, if they are not moving on. A honeybee swarm may rest anywhere from five minutes to seven days at a particular site. In unusual circumstances, they may decide to stay at their resting site and build honeycomb, however, this is usually in pine trees, citrus trees, Mulberry trees, with abundant shade, and they will always be there for more than seven days. If honeycomb is eventually visible, and it will be, this is a subject of concern and you should call us.

Africanized honeybees are prolific pollinators and deserve our respect. Aggressive behaviors begin to occur only after the bees have developed honeycomb, brood and have established themselves in a structural cavity that they intend to occupy or, rarely in an open exposed colony. It is their nature to seek out structural cavities that they can easily defend and occupy. Structural damage will begin immediately if the bees move into a structural cavity as they lay down a pheromone scent, an oily urinary secretion that acts as a marker to that particular site for that specific colony and can be recognized by other bees as well from as far as three miles away. Additionally, they will immediately begin to build honeycomb which is highly moisture retentive, will cause significant structural damage, and will also cause future infestation problems if not properly handled by a professional. If bees are noted moving into a structural cavity, or they are seen going in and out from one, call us immediately to avoid the consequent damage and danger. Damage can be minimized, if a new colony is stopped quickly, but never entirely reversed. The longer a colony is left to become established, the greater the damage and higher the probability of future infestations. If a swarm has decided to rest in a commercial, or a high traffic area, and you are uncomfortable with your liability if someone would disturb them, then call us.

With the advent of so much publicity in the media about Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), many people have become concerned about the scarcity of bee populations across the United States. All honeybee populations are tremendous pollinators and add to our environment. Africanized honeybees are now pervasive in Arizona and have successfully dominated domestic honeybee colonies in the wild – they are here to stay. People in Asia and Africa have co-existed with the species for centuries. After the “killer bee” scares of the late 1990s, we have learned much about them. We advocate, as well as most Fire Districts throughout the State of Arizona, leaving them alone unless there are potential public liability issues.

In summary, they are here to stay. Like any other insect, reptile or wild animal in our Sonora desert environment, we need to understand their

behaviors. Africanized bee swarms are not a serious threat unless directly confronted or interfered with. On the other hand, African bee colonies are very dangerous and should not be allowed to establish without control when around people, livestock or pets and will cause serious structural damage to commercial and residential structures with a high probability of future additional infestation in the general area of the original colony if left unchecked to develop on their own.

## **How Do Africanized Honeybees Colonize Your Home So Quickly?**

Africanized honeybees (African honeybees) are well established in central and southern Arizona. They are an invasive species and there are very few to no feral European bee colonies left in the wild. In order to establish more colonies, honeybees raise a new queen and the old queen and one half of the members of the mother colony leave in what are called a swarm. These swarms are usually made up of between 8,000 and 15,000 bees. People frequently see swarms flying through the air, swirling like a tornado of bees, buzzing loudly. Often these swarms will land on a tree or bush in a large clump. Other times, they will land on a structure with a small opening to a larger cavity, such as the vent boards of a house, a concrete block perimeter wall with a crack in the mortar, a water valve box, saguaro cactus, etc. When a swarm of African honeybees land on a structure of any type, they have found a new home and immediately begin funneling into the selected cavity through the small opening previously discovered, nearly disappearing inside within 10-15 minutes. Any opening large enough to slip an ordinary writing pencil into is large enough for the bees to enter.

Whereas European honeybees swarm once in the late spring and very occasionally in the fall, Africanized honeybees, *apis mellifera scutellata*, may swarm up to 15 times a year in ideal environmental conditions. This fact alone helps to explain why Africanized bees have become so prevalent

in Arizona, although the first colony wasn't discovered and identified until 1993, in Tucson. Since that time the number of Africanized honeybee colonies has increased dramatically.

Once inside the selected cavity, the bees begin exploring and cleaning the cavity, spreading their pheromone scent and building honeycomb. Pheromones are glandular secretions the bees use extensively to communicate with each other throughout the hive. In this case, the most damaging scent for the homeowner is the tracking scent they apply that marks the site as unique to that particular colony. Foraging bees from the colony can recognize the scent from as far as two miles away and use it to track back home. Unfortunately, unless treated, the scent is long lasting and can lead to future infestations. Even if the original colony is no longer in residence, a passing swarm of bees can register the pheromone and will occupy a former bee site preferentially to other new locations.

Often, the homeowner's first clue that they have a bee problem is when they begin finding bees inside the house. As the newly-arrived honeybees explore the cavity they have selected and before it is well marked with their pheromone scent, some of the bees who are exploring the cavity will get too far away from the outside entrance and no longer be able to see the light coming from that entrance. In an effort to find another way outside, these lost bees may come into the living area of the house via lighting fixtures or outlets or other small openings. They will immediately fly to the brightest light they see, during the day they will fly to a window or skylight, at night to a lamp. People will often think the bees have come in through a hole in a screen or through a door. This is very seldom true.

These lost bees do not want to be inside your house; they must be with the rest of the colony to survive and are trying to get back to the outside entrance. If you discover dead or dying bees below your window, glass door, skylight, or other light-filled area, you should take some time to walk slowly around the outside of your home. Frequently homeowners are able to locate the outside entrance to the cavity the bees have colonized. You

may be able to see 3-4 bees or more going in and out of a specific opening or area of your home as they begin to forage for pollen, nectar and water. This activity indicates the entrance to a cavity the bees are using and starting to develop. If you discover dead bees in the house, call a licensed bee removal specialist immediately to have the colony located and eradicated. Do not allow a new colony to become well established and create a dangerous situation. As the bees build honeycomb, the queen will begin to lay eggs, as many as 1,500 per day. The queen may begin laying eggs as soon as two days after the bees arrive, and sufficient honeycomb structure is built, and the eggs of Africanized honeybees may hatch as quickly as 19 days after they are deposited in honeycomb cells. The honeycomb cells are also used by the foragers who immediately begin bringing nectar and pollen back to the colony to store it in these cells. Reflecting on the fact that 21 days after the bees arrive, there may be 1,500 more bees, and then the next day 1,500 more bees than the day before, etc., one can see why it is recommended that you call a licensed bee removal specialist immediately upon discovering you have bees in a structure.

## **What are the Signs of Honeybee Colonization?**

When you see a colony or swarm of honeybees it is appropriate and wise to assume they are Africanized and should be treated with respect. These bees have justly earned the reputation and handle of "Killer Bees." Many, many animal deaths, including dogs, horses, cows, rabbits, ducks, geese and chickens have been caused by the stings of Africanized honeybees. Men and women have also been killed or critically injured by Africanized honeybee stings. Aside from being overly aggressive, these honeybees are unpredictable. We often take calls from people who say they have had bees under their shed for a year and have never been bothered, then, on that day, they walked past their shed and 50 bees chased them into the house. Shed colonies are perhaps one of the most dangerous situations



commonly faced by homeowners and their neighbors. Most of the dogs who have been stung to death in Tucson have died as a result of a neighbor's unknown, or ignored shed colony. These colonies will frequently perceive a threat because of repeated barking of a dog next door. It is thought that the vibration resulting from the barking triggers the attack. Once these bees begin stinging, they will continue long after the dog is dead. Further, they will attack not only the barking dog, they will go after any animal or human within about a one-quarter mile radius. The 46-year-old Sunizona, Arizona woman who died in 2002 as a result of an Africanized honeybee attack knew the bees were in her shed wall for over a year without incident. No one knows why bumping the shed wall on that particular day caused such an extreme reaction from that Africanized honeybee colony. She suffered enough bee stings to cause her death. Her boyfriend, who it is claimed suffered more than 200 bee stings, but was a much larger person, was in intensive care for several days due to the effects of the bee stings. If you know you have a honeybee colony on your property and you experience bees bumping into your face and head as you get close to the colony, you are being given a relatively gentle warning that you are threatening them. Bumping frequently, but not always, occurs before an all-out attack is launched. Bumping is sure indication that you have an established colony nearby.

The eradication of honeybee colonies on private property is the responsibility of the owner. Once you have knowledge of a honeybee colony's presence on your property, you have liability, should someone else be injured. It is important that you walk around your property weekly observing any bee flight. Important indicators that you may or may not have a honeybee colony include:

1. Direct bee flight, usually not more than 3-4 bees going in and out of the entrance within about one minute, is a strong indicator of colonization. The entrance is usually a small crack or opening which leads to a larger cavity. If the colony has been resident for a fairly long period of time, you may see a dark stain just below the opening. If you are close enough, and you

see that the bees have pollen on their back legs, it is a sure sign that there is an established colony. In and out behaviors from any specific opening should be treated with caution. You may wish to have a licensed bee removal specialist perform an inspection of the site to provide certainty.

2. Finding dead bees under a light you leave on at night. Bees in an established colony within line of sight of a porch light or other light visible from the outside are attracted to the light and will fly at the light until they are exhausted and will usually die, dropping below the light. If this is happening at your home, look around your property during daylight hours and try to locate bees flying away to a specific location. If this is not on your property, you should contact the property owner and alert them to this hazard.

3. A few common areas in homes where colonies become established include, behind vent boards, in house walls going in through holes where conduit or pipes go into your home, in boxed-in beams, below or above bay windows, inside decorative stucco pop-outs of any sort, through scuppers into parapet walls, Vega beams, under decks, above ground spas, sheds, dog houses and play houses, inside water or irrigation valve boxes, inside old tires, under boat covers when the boat is used infrequently, at joints between two sections of manufactured homes, and under the belly pan of mobile homes.

4. You do not have a bee problem if you see bees going from flower to flower in your garden or on blooming trees. Even though there may be many bees moving through the flowers, and you hear loud buzzing noises, these are worker bees that may originate from many different local colonies. They will not attack in mass. When the peak blooming period is has passed, they will move on to other forage sources.

5. It is common to have bees foraging for water in your pond, pool or water feature, or fountain. There will be more bees during hotter times of the year and when there are fewer natural sources of water as is the case during a drought. The bees require water to keep their honeycomb cool

and prevent it from melting down. These bees are not usually aggressive, and don't attack in mass, but can be a nuisance and you may be stung if you should happen to put your hand on one. Heavy foraging for water is an indication that there are established colonies near your home or on your property. Again, you may wish to have a licensed bee removal specialist perform an inspection of the site to provide certainty.

6. During times when there are not a lot of natural sources for pollen and nectar, honeybees will forage on other sweet liquids including soda, fruit juice, jelly (perhaps dropped onto a table from a peanut butter and jelly sandwich), humming bird feeders, etc. You can avoid this foraging behavior by keeping lids on garbage cans, or if there are no lids, the trash bags should be changed frequently. Wipe down or hose down areas where sweet substances may have been dropped as people are eating or where trash has been discarded. Hummingbird feeders should be taken down at night when the bees are not foraging and removed from the site for at least a week.

Many people report to us that they do not think their bees are Africanized because they have never been aggressive. Please do not make this assumption. As has been discussed, this false assumption is the cause of many stinging deaths and injuries in Arizona and other southwestern states. African honeybees are not always aggressive; however, they can be extremely defensive if they perceive they are in danger. Known triggers for all-out bee attacks are the presence of dark colors in the vicinity of the colony, vibrations and loud noises, and foreign scents like perfumes or insecticides. It is also a false assumption that African honeybees can be harassed or "smoked out" to the point that they will leave their home site voluntarily. If they leave (abscond) voluntarily, it is because they have run out of available food sources in their forage area.

## **What Should I Do if I Have Located an Africanized Honeybee Colony?**

If you do discover a honeybee colony on your property, immediately look under Bee Removal in the Yellow Pages and call a company who is licensed with the Office of Pest Management. Beware of companies who advertise that they are licensed; however, they may not be legitimately licensed with the Office of Pest Management. By law, in Arizona, a licensed pest control company must display their OPM license number in their display advertising. Companies which are not licensed with the Office of Pest Management are unable to purchase the appropriate chemicals with which to eradicate an established colony as these chemicals are restricted and are sold only to a licensed Pest Control Operators. Using the wrong chemicals can cause an attack, can result in bees fleeing the pesticide and coming inside the living space of the home, and can cause nausea or chemical reactions in people with chemical sensitivity.

Unlicensed individuals do not necessarily obtain adequate education or carry an appropriate amount of liability insurance as licensed Pest Control Operators are required by law to do. Additionally, it is a Class 6 felony to apply pesticides on property you do not own without an OPM license. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ERADICATE THE BEES YOURSELF**, unless you are a licensed Pest Control Operator and bee removal specialist and know the appropriate procedures to follow to abate and control an Africanized honeybee colony.

African honeybees colonize a chosen site very quickly. They are potentially very dangerous to humans, pets and livestock, and should be treated with respect. They are an invasive species to Arizona and other southwestern states, extremely adaptable to our climate and already well established throughout the southwest. Outside of the danger a resident African honeybee colony presents, they also cause tremendous structural damage to residential and commercial properties in terms of honeycomb meltdown, saturation of materials, wet rot and pheromone deposits which, left

untreated, will almost certainly lead to future bee infestations, even if the original colony has been removed. We do not have a bee scarcity problem as has been the case with some of the northern state's European honeybee populations. African honeybee colonies are plentiful in the desert southwest and the only control on their expansion that we have observed is drought and long periods of extended freezing cold. If you have a resident bee colony on your home or property, or if you know of one nearby, realize it is very probable that it is Africanized and should be removed by a licensed bee removal specialist company.



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