

In the vicinity of honey bees

A guide to sharing space where honey bees live or forage.



Perhaps your neighbor is a beekeeper, or you are working in a community garden where honey bee hives are managed. Here are some facts and tips for keeping your cool near our flying fuzzy friends.



**Will County
Beekeepers
Association**

Est. 2011

Call (630) 557-6233 to report bee swarms.

v 1.01 / 2016-07-11

Pollination

Honey bees contribute \$15 billion to the value of US crop production; primarily almonds, apples, grapes, oranges, strawberries, soybeans, and pumpkins.

Honey

Naturally sweet and antibacterial, and the only food product humans eat that is made by insects, raw honey helps wounds to heal and never spoils.



Honey bee facts

- Female worker bees live in a colony with a single **queen bee**, which is the mother to all the other 20,000 - 60,000 bees, and lays 2,000 eggs daily.
- Male drone bees make up about 1% of the population, and **have no stinger**.
- Bees are usually very **gentle** and not prone to aggressive behavior when they are outside their hive, visiting flowers or drinking water.
- A honey bee can sting only once, then it dies. **Remove the stinger** quickly to minimize the amount of venom that enters your body.
- Getting stung does **not** set off a chain reaction causing all nearby bees to attack.
- Honey bees eat **only** nectar and pollen from flowers and blossoming plants; they don't fly around your soda cans, picnic lunches, or buzz around garbage cans. Those are yellow jackets, which are aggressive scavengers and carnivores.
- Honey bees are **covered** in hair, on their bodies, legs, head, even their eyes. These hairs collect and transfer pollen, which helps plants reproduce.
- Worker bees **live about 6 weeks** while the queen can live up to 4 years.
- Honey bees **huddle together** for warmth during the Winter and eat honey they have stored.

Swarms

When a colony outgrows its space, around half leave and attach to a tree or nearby structure while scouts look for a new home. During this time the bees are very docile, having filled their stomachs with honey for the journey and with no home or young to protect. Contact a beekeeper immediately to recapture the bees.



photo: standing next to a swarm on a fence

Bee Aware

- Honey bees need water, and are not picky. They may use a dog dish, swimming pool, or puddle if desperate.
- Honey bees may visit flowers on the ground, such as clover. Wear closed toe shoes for safety.
- A small percentage of people are severely allergic to bee stings. These folks should carry an EpiPen. Most people have a mild reaction similar to a mosquito bite: swelling and itching for a few days.

Avoid these beehaviors

- Bumping, moving, leaning on, or otherwise disrupting the hive
- Swatting at flying bees
- Using floral scented shampoos, soaps, makeup, or perfumes
- Spraying any insecticide or herbicide anywhere bees are kept or near plants they visit
- Using mowers or weed whackers nearby that produce "thumping" or uneven vibrations