

How to Avoid Being Stung by Honeybees

Take Some Common Sense Precautions at Home

- Make a "bee patrol" around your home once or twice a week during swarming season usually in the spring and fall. Listen for the sound of bees in the air. Persistent buzzing may mean a hive or swarm is nearby.
 - "Bee-proof" your home by filling in potential nesting sites such as tree cavities and holes in outside walls. Put screens on the tops of rain spouts and over water meter boxes in the ground. Remove piles of trash and junk.
 - If you discover a bee colony, don't disturb it. Find out who removes or destroys wild colonies in your area and report it to them. Try calling a pest control operator to see who removes bees.
 - If attacked by Africanized honey bees, your best defense is to run away as fast as you can. Seek shelter immediately in a building, a car or heavy brush.
 - If you are stung many times, seek medical attention immediately.
 - If you are allergic to bee stings, or think you might be, consult your physician immediately for the best precautions to take.
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Mowing or Operating Other Machinery

- Vibration and exhaust from mowers and other equipment can disturb the beehive, and bees will respond by attacking.
 - Check the area carefully for bees and hives before starting motorized mowers, weed choppers or chainsaws.
 - Be aware of culverts or drainage pipes that may be harboring a colony, and junk piles of dense shrubbery that may be shielding a hive from sight.
 - Don't allow grass clippings to be propelled into suspect areas.
 - Have an emergency plan. Know where you will run for cover if attacked.
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While At Play

- Watch and listen for bees.
- Avoid beehives and bee traps hanging in trees.
- Bees nest in hidden places. Don't play near old buildings or junk piles.
- If you notice numbers of bees flying around your home, contact authorities.
- If bees start flying around you, run away. Don't swat them--it will only make more bees want to sting you. And don't "freeze" in place--you will still get stung if you do.

- If bees attack, don't try to escape by jumping into a swimming pool or pond. The bees likely will be waiting for you when you come up for air.

Protect Confined Animals

- Check carefully for bees in pens or barns where animals are confined. Regularly check areas where pets are kept on leashes or in small fenced yards or pens.
- Call authorities to remove nests or swarms.
- If bees are disturbed and begin stinging, open gates and cover animals, if possible. Move animals to safe distance.
- Animals stung repeatedly should be seen by a veterinarian. First aid is the same as for humans.
- Watch for allergic reaction, such as pinpoint pupils, shaking and vomiting.

Know the Facts

- Africanized and domestic honey bees look the same, so stay away from all bees.
- Africanized bees will build a nest almost anywhere.
- If you know of any wild bee nests, have the nest removed.
- Africanized bees defend a wide area around their home, so you may not even see the hive before bees start buzzing around you.
- Large numbers of Africanized bees are likely to sting when they sense someone is too near their nest.
- If you get stung or hear bees buzzing, run away fast and get inside a house or car. If there is no shelter, run through bushes or high weeds.
- A honey bee will leave its stinger in your skin if it stings you. Get the stinger out by raking your fingernail across it. Don't pinch or pull the stinger out. Put ice on a sting to reduce the swelling.