



Gary W. Black
Commissioner

Georgia Department of Agriculture

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CITIZEN CALLS REGARDING BEES AND WASPS

Question: Does the Georgia Department of Agriculture respond to bee swarms?

Answer: No. It is the responsibility of the property owner to take care of bee swarms, yellowjackets, wasps or any other pest.

Question: To whom should I refer callers when they contact the sheriff's office about bees?

Answer: Inform callers to contact a local pest control company or bee removal company. Since not all pest control companies perform this type of service, it may be necessary for the homeowner to call several companies before finding one willing to perform this service.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture does not recommend capturing swarms from unknown sources since the bees could be Africanized. However, if the caller insists on contacting a beekeeper, you can refer them to the Georgia Beekeepers Association (www.gabeekeeping.com/). Additionally, the local county extension agent (1-800-ASK-UGA1) may also know local beekeepers.

Question: Isn't it illegal to kill honey bees in Georgia?

Answer: No. This is a common misconception, even within the pest control industry. Although the Georgia legislature named the honey bee as the state's "official" insect, the designation does not offer any legal or regulatory protection.

Question: What if the property is abandoned or in a wooded area?

Answer: It is still the responsibility of the property owner to control pests on his/her property. A city or county may choose to perform these services (or hire a company to do it) if it is deemed to be in the best interest of its citizens.

Question: What is the cost of bee removal?

Answer: The costs vary greatly. Costs can range from \$100 to \$650 or more.

Question: What should the sheriff's office do if a citizen calls reporting "killer" or Africanized bees?

Answer: The caller should not attempt to control the bees but contact a pest control company or bee removal company.



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BEE CONTROL AND REMOVAL QUESTIONS

Question: What type of companies can perform bee control or removal services?

Answer: In Buildings: Any person or business that removes or controls bees in a building such as a house, garage, school or business must have a Structural Pest Control License in Household Pest Control

Outside of Buildings: Any person or business that controls a bee nest or swarm by applying any type of pesticide must be licensed either in Ornamental and Turf Pest Control, Public Health, or Industrial, Institutional, and Health. For more information on these license categories, please contact the Pesticides Section at 404-656-4958.

Individuals or companies removing swarms or bee nests from a yard, tree, utility pole, etc. without using any pesticides are not required to be licensed by the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

Question: Does the Department of Agriculture recommend companies that will remove or control bees in or around my house?

Answer: The Department does not recommend specific companies for bee control or removal but we do offer general guidelines. We recommend that you:

- hire licensed bee removal, wildlife removal, or pest control companies;
- hire individuals or companies that have liability and workmen's comp insurance; and
- have a written contract.

If honey bees have started a nest in your home, their removal or control is only the beginning of the process. Bees begin honey production very soon after establishing a colony. The honey and comb must be removed or they will begin to sour when the bees are gone and likely attract ants, roaches, or rodents. Frequently, a wall must be opened in to successfully remove all comb. Be sure to understand if this is your responsibility or the company's responsibility. Once the bees and comb is gone, you or a handyman will need to complete the wall repair.

Question: Can I contact a local beekeeper to remove bee swarms around my home?

Answer: Yes, beekeepers can remove swarms around your home. However, unless licensed in Household Pest Control, a beekeeper cannot remove a nest that is established in any type of building.

Because of Africanized Honey Bee establishment in Florida and detections in 2 Georgia counties, we recommend contacting a licensed bee removal, wildlife removal, or pest control company. If a local beekeeper is contacted, it is important that the beekeeper immediately re-queen the swarm or colony with a queen known to be genetically European.