

Bee Rescuing 101

Please be sure they are wasps and not honey bees!

Many beekeepers head out to collect a swarm only to find that the insects are wasps. Callers who are unsure about the correct identification should submit a photo to the beekeeper. Supply as much information as possible--location, accessibility, size and height—to prevent surprises.

Do not attempt to remove a swarm of honey bees yourself!

In most cases, a honey bee swarm does not pose a threat to people, pets or buildings. They are not defending their colony but are on the move for a new home. If the swarm is in clear view or within the height of a ladder, an experienced beekeeper can collect a swarm within a short period of time.

Please do not spray the cluster or kill them!

Swarming is the way honey bees reproduce. Do not kill them; we want to try to rescue and relocate them. Unfortunately, the honey bee population has dwindled over the past decades. Honey bees not only pollinate our crops, but they also pollinate a wide variety of plants that support other wildlife. Only the strongest and healthiest of colonies produce swarms. Destroying them destroys the good genes.

The bees are vulnerable!

When honey bees swarm, they cluster or “hang out” on a branch, a roof overhang or some other structure that offers some protection. They are very vulnerable. The “swarm” is a collection of young and older bees and usually one queen. The queen is unable to fly far due to her comparatively short wings. While they are clinging together, the “scout bees” are out searching for a new home for the colony. Once that new location is identified and selected, the bees will fly off to establish their new home. Often a swarm will leave before you even notice it’s there!

